Practising equity: The activation and appropriation of student equity policy in Queensland higher education

David Robert Peacock

Bachelor of Commerce; Master of Divinity; Master of Continuing Education

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at

The University of Queensland in 2014

School of Education

Abstract

My thesis reports findings from an institutional ethnography of the outreach practices of university-based student equity workers. The study explored the way these equity workers engaged with students, schools and communities from areas in the state of Queensland, Australia, that are categorised as being of low socioeconomic status (SES). The focus of the study is how the ruling relations (Smith, 2005) of current Australian student equity policy have been both activated and appropriated by staff, through their day-to-day use of texts, as they accomplished their outreach work. The practices of staff from two specific universities are explored – the University of Queensland (UQ), and Griffith University – as well as the related activities of a wider, state level body of student equity practitioners and managers called the Queensland Widening Participation Group (The Group).

Since 2010, the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP) has been the Australian government's student equity program for funding universities to diversify their student populations to include people from low SES backgrounds. Financial incentives have operated to make these students more attractive to recruit and support, and to increase competition amongst universities to best provide outreach practices that 'raise aspirations' among school students in low SES areas. The problematic for the study was to account for tensions observed within student equity outreach practices as staff worked competitively to recruit disadvantaged students to their specific university, while collaborating with staff from other education institutions to expand opportunity for students more broadly and to develop their capacities for higher education more generally.

From the standpoint of where student equity outreach staff were positioned within their universities, the study sought to map how the complex and diverse set of student equity outreach activities were being coordinated and standardised by the use of texts. These key texts-in-action that coordinated student equity work included the Memorandum of Understanding forged by The Group that set parameters for competitive and collaborative university outreach in schools; institutionally specific social inclusion targets; and, crucially, HEPPP reporting and evaluation templates that were set by the Australian government for universities to complete on a quarterly and annual basis. As student equity staff activated these institutional reporting technologies in their evaluation practices, they truncated their more complex and nuanced work into the deficit-based categories of HEPPP policy that sought to 'raise the aspirations' of 'low SES' students. This is how student equity outreach activity became 'recognizable' as mandated government policy.

Yet my thesis claims that student equity also appropriated these ruling policy relations in various ways and depending upon their university's position within what I call institutional fields of action

for student equity practice in Queensland. Using methods of critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2003), I demonstrate how UQ staff hybridize the discourses of 'equity' and the recruitment of the 'best and the brightest' to construct the 'Young Achievers Program' that, with the help of school staff, selects and supports high achieving school students in schools in low SES areas. My analysis also works with Bourdieu's field theory and identifies specific logics of practice for widening participation that UQ and Griffith staff pursue as they appropriate HEPPP policy. In the case of Griffith, I demonstrate that its textual appropriation of HEPPP policy serves both institutional imperatives and the needs of students from Pacific Island backgrounds and students with disabilities. The Group, as a community of practitioners drawn from Queensland's public universities, appropriates HEPPP policy to distribute a greater share of funds to regional universities and school students, as well as for specifically Indigenous focused projects across the state.

Overall, my thesis provides an empirical account of policy enactment as the textually mediated practices of power involving individual people's activation and appropriation of the ruling relations of mandated policy. The HEPPP policy has both widened the scale of student equity outreach in low SES schools, but also narrowed the purposes for which student equity practitioners' work is held accountable. While opportunities for students from low SES schools to access university in South East Queensland have increased as well, these university places continue to be unequally distributed across a competitive and hierarchical higher education field.

Declaration by author

This thesis is composed of my original work, and contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference has been made in the text. I have clearly stated the contribution by others to jointly-authored works that I have included in my thesis.

I have clearly stated the contribution of others to my thesis as a whole, including statistical assistance, survey design, data analysis, significant technical procedures, professional editorial advice, and any other original research work used or reported in my thesis. The content of my thesis is the result of work I have carried out since the commencement of my research higher degree candidature and does not include a substantial part of work that has been submitted to qualify for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution. I have clearly stated which parts of my thesis, if any, have been submitted to qualify for another award.

I acknowledge that an electronic copy of my thesis must be lodged with the University Library and, subject to the General Award Rules of The University of Queensland, immediately made available for research and study in accordance with the *Copyright Act 1968*.

I acknowledge that copyright of all material contained in my thesis resides with the copyright holder(s) of that material. Where appropriate I have obtained copyright permission from the copyright holder to reproduce material in this thesis.

Publications during candidature

Refereed journal articles

Peacock, D. (2012). Neoliberal social inclusion? The agenda of the Australian Universities Community Engagement Alliance. *Critical Studies in Education, 53*(3), 311-325. doi: 10.1080/17508487.2012.703138

Peacock, D., Sellar, S., & Lingard, B. (2013). The activation, appropriation and practices of student-equity policy in Australian higher education. *Journal of Education Policy*, *29* (3), 1-20. doi: 10.1080/02680939.2013.839829

Book chapters

Peacock, D. (2013). Relating across difference: A case study in transformative learning. In Benham Rennick, J. & Michel Desjardins, M. (Eds.), *The World is my Classroom: International Learning and Higher Education* (pp. 160--191). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Publications included in this thesis

No publications included

Contributions by others to the thesis

No contributions by others

Statement of parts of the thesis submitted to qualify for the award of another degree

None

Acknowledgements

I wish to express my sincere thanks to all who have supported me through the past three years as I have written this thesis. Most importantly, I acknowledge the love, support and sacrifice that Bonnie, Aiden, Ellie and Rachael have made for me so willingly and without reserve. We have travelled this journey together through its highs and lows; you have supported me throughout its duration. It is my deep hope that you continue to share with me in the fruits of what is to come.

To my advisors, Professor Bob Lingard and Dr Sam Sellar, I am particularly grateful for your kindness, encouragement and gentle challenges to make this work as good as it can be. You have inspired me with your prodigious work ethic and capacities for original and critical insights into the world of education policy. Thank you, Sam, for your careful reading of my work and for your inspiring critique of the 'aspiration raising' discourses in contemporary policy. Bob, thank you for your gentle guidance throughout the project from its inception, for sharing with me the riches of a Bourdieusian sociology of education and for being open to the insights of Dorothy Smith and institutional ethnography.

Additionally, I would like to thank Professor Michael Cuthill for his guidance on community engagement processes in higher education, and to the QUT Critical Discourse Analysis group, whose receptivity to me and my project was invaluable. I also acknowledge and am grateful for the UQ Graduate Student International Travel Award which funded my participation in an institutional ethnography workshop at OISE in Toronto. There I was privileged to meet Dorothy Smith and Susan Turner and to seek advice on my thesis.

Finally, I wish to sincerely thank the informants of the study, especially the student equity outreach practitioners and managers, from UQ, Griffith and the Queensland Widening Participation Group. Your commitment to both student equity and the professional development of your field has been inspiring. Any inaccuracies in this work are my responsibility alone, and should do not reflect on the quality your practice.

Keywords

institutional ethnography, equity, education policy, higher education, critical discourse analysis

Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classifications (ANZSRC)

ANZSRC code: 130103 Higher Education, 40%

ANZSRC code: 160506 Education Policy, 30%

ANZSRC code: 160809 Sociology of Education, 30%

Fields of Research (FoR) Classification

FoR code: 1301 Education Systems, 40%

FoR code: 1605 Policy and Administration, 30%

FoR code: 1608 Sociology, 30%

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACU	Australian Catholic University
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CQU	Central Queensland University
DETE	Department of Education, Training and Employment, Queensland State Government
The Group	The Queensland Widening Participation Group
HECS-HELP	The Higher Education Contribution Scheme/Higher Education Loan Program, Australian Government
HEF	The Higher Education Forum, Queensland State Government
HEPPP	The Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program, Australian Government
JCU	James Cook University
LILAL	Launch into Life at Logan, Griffith's outreach program to primary school students
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding, Queensland Widening Participation Group
OP	Overall Position Score; used to rank tertiary applicants in Queensland
OPSSSE	Office for Prospective Students, Scholarships and Student Equity, University of Queensland
QTAC	The Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre
QUT	Queensland University of Technology
SCV	Special Category Visa; non-protected temporary visa given to most New Zealand citizens arriving in Australia after 2001
SES	Socioeconomic Status; as defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics
TTTA	Trans-Tasman Travel Agreement between Australia and New Zealand
UQ	The University of Queensland
USQ	University of Southern Queensland
VET	Vocational and Education Training

CHAPTER 1: PRELUDE

BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

Through the use of institutional ethnography, a sociological methodology flowing from the work of Dorothy Smith and her colleagues, this thesis explores the work practices of student equity and outreach staff from the University of Queensland (UQ) and Griffith University, in their engagement of marginalized students, schools and communities and through their participation in the Queensland Widening Participation Group community of practice. Specifically, I aim to map how these student equity practices are coordinated by textually mediated institutional relations, such as the Australian government's Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP). By taking a standpoint alongside student equity outreach practitioners, the aim is discover how their social practices are both constrained by, but also critically appropriate, these wider ruling relations, and so in doing so add to our knowledge of how institutional relations impact equity practices within Australian higher education.

Yet before I elaborate the problematic of the research and outline my thesis structure and summary, it feels important to me, and perhaps will be helpful to the reader, to provide an account of how it was that I came to this research project. That, however, is not a simple task. The reasons and circumstances that lead a researcher to conceive and construct a particular object of study are multiple; some present themselves to consciousness and so to explication, while others remain obscured by habitus, *doxa* and *hexis* (Bourdieu, 1977). I will outline here what I can of how I have come to the current research project.

The questions and experiences I bring to the study of higher education practices and policies around the engagement of marginalized communities have been formed over the past decade or so as I managed a community based-learning program in a Liberal Arts College at the University of Saskatchewan, Canada. My work involved connecting students, faculty and community partners in a common pursuit of social justice, as mutually articulated through a process of 'university-community engagement'. I experienced how it was possible for an institution of higher education to make real, though humble, contributions to building community capacity through partnering and resource sharing with food security groups, First Nations women's organizations, community health projects, and environmental NGOs. Of course I was aware then, and am even more so now, of how higher education institutions, especially the dominant, elite institutions, are as likely to reproduce inequality and opportunity as they are to mitigate it (Bourdieu, 1984; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). The process of universities collaborating with non-profit, community-based organizations

struggling alongside marginalized peoples is fraught with ethical considerations, especially when conducted within asymmetrical relations of economic, cultural and social capital, and therefore asymmetrical power, relations (Sunderland, Muirhead, Parsons & Holtom, 2004, pp. 44-47). Yet the search for equality, both within communities and the society at large, as well as within university structures, remains an ethical imperative for me and for many others.

My initial research into 'university-community engagement'[1] practices within Australian universities was somewhat disillusioning. Writing a critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2003) of the Australian Universities Community Engagement Alliance's (now Engagement Australia) 'Position Paper' (2008), I interpreted its construction of university community-engagement as an uneasy alliance of neoliberal, social inclusion and civic engagement discourses that work together to semantically privilege commercial forms of engagement (Peacock, 2012) . I began to see that, at UQ for instance, the discourse of 'engagement' was describing a number of practices, but perhaps most clearly the strategy of connecting with industry partners and alumni to generate research and supplementary income streams in the context of falling government revenues and reduced funding.

In 2011, I discovered the innovations that were taking place within equity practice within Australian higher education, inspired at least in part by the then federal Labor government's Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program, which sought to raise the proportion of students from low socioeconomic status (SES) backgrounds to 20% of total students in the sector by 2020 after the number had become fixed for decades at around 15%. Significantly, in this widening participation agenda the preferred institutional vehicles to secure access and opportunity at universities for marginalised students were equity outreach programs, rather than more broad-based 'university-community engagement' initiatives. Within Australian higher education, equity and Indigenous units are those places within the university most likely (although not exclusively) to be partnering with communities for the purposes of social justice. I decided that I wanted to study these equity outreach practices.

An invitation to observe an equity outreach workers' community of practice seminar, on July 15th, 2011, arranged by the Queensland Widening Participation Working Group of the Queensland Higher Education Forum, cemented my interest in equity practices. As the previous federal Labor government (2007-2013) sought to expand and make more equitable the higher education system in Australia, Queensland state government officials and the Vice-Chancellors of the state's universities used their Higher Education Forum to strategize opportunities for boosting the university participation of low SES students across the state. A Widening Participation

---

[1] University community engagement describes the process of universities forming partnerships with external communities for the promised generation of mutually beneficial and socially responsive knowledge, leading to enhanced economic, social and cultural development (Bjarnason & Coldstream, 2003; Holland & Ramaley, 2008).

Working Group (here after, 'The Group') of student equity practitioners and managers was created in 2009 to manage the task, and I joined them in 2011 at an outreach seminar.

How would I go about studying equity policy enactment and engagement with marginalized students, schools and communities, and the work of The Group? Thinking more carefully about equality and equity, in general, and then in higher education, I read Nancy Fraser's work (1997, 2007, 2009) and figured that socially just university-community partnerships must comprise a *recognition* of locally produced knowledge and cultural symbols, a genuine sharing in elite capital resources (*redistribution*), and genuine political *representation* of the community's voices and interests. All stages of such strategic partnerships, from conception of the problem to joint action to overcome it, would be mutually constructed and understood within a negotiated understanding of a common struggle for justice. Sen's 'Idea of Justice' (2009) offered a critique of Rawl's (1971) 'transcendental institutionalism' (Sen, 2009, p. 8) and founded Sen's reasonable and contestable notion of distributive justice upon personal capabilities and freedom instead of commodities. Marginson (2011) applied Sen's critique to equity in higher education, and argued it lends itself more to general social inclusion strategies with communities than a (for Marginson) myopic and unrealistic focus upon the proportional representation of low SES students within higher education institutions ('transcendental institutionalism'). It seemed to me, at the beginning of my research process, that one could still aim at imperfectly conceived aggregate approximations of institutional equity (see the discussion of the 'National Equity Framework' below), while still pursuing more locally inspired, contextually relevant partnerships and engagements with marginalised communities. Now at the end of this research process, I have concerns that the proportional representation targets for student equity have become a set of ruling relations for student equity practices which are not always conducive to these community development practices.

Yet while these literatures assisted my theorizing of social justice, they took me no closer to the practices of those social actors within universities engaged in the work. I was concerned not to construct an *a priori* ideal of social justice, or equity, and then to conduct a research project which, whether explicitly or implicitly, simply ranked the community interventions of universities according to that ideal. That result would simply dig wider the trench between theory and practice, policy and enactment.

After further reflection upon my observations at the equity outreach community of practice gathering, I turned to a text gifted me by a Canadian colleague in sociology, a primer on institutional ethnography (Campbell & Gregor, 2004). I began thinking about equity outreach practices being pulled in possibly divergent directions by what Dorothy Smith (2005) calls translocal, textually mediated ruling relations, intervening into practice via federal policy and other institutional imperatives. I realized I wanted to discover and map these ruling relations in practice,

as activated empirically by equity outreach practitioners, and not to pre-empt them. My own experiences working to link a university college and its faculty and students to community organizations striving for social justice suggested to me that the practices of equity outreach workers within Australian higher education would make for rich and illuminating data.

THE HIGHER EDUCATION PARTICIPATION AND PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM AND STUDENT EQUITY OUTREACH

Initiated by the previous federal Labour government in 2009/2010, and still being enacted across Australian universities, HEPPP represents in material terms the most significant equity policy intervention in the sector since the abolition of student fees under the Whitlam government in 1974. Since 2010, close to one billion dollars has been spent and/or promised (if the projections out to 2017 come to fruition under the current federal Coalition government) for the purposes of boosting the participation rate of low SES students (Department of Education, 2014). The HEPPP policy set the target that 20 per cent of domestic undergraduate students will be from low SES backgrounds by 2020. This equity target was situated within a wider, expansionary target that 40% of all Australians aged 25-34 will have attained an undergraduate degree by 2025.

It was the federal Labor government that articulated the rationale for such an attempt to change the composition of the domestic higher education student body in its 'Transforming Australia's Higher Education System' statement (Australian Government, 2009). Employing a variety of economic and social discourses, the statement argued that raising the participation and success rates of low SES students was necessary for national productivity ('stronger') and social inclusion ('fairer') rationales, and required universities to engage low SES students, schools and communities to 'raise aspirations'(pp. 5, 7). To enhance Australia's 'international competitiveness' and participation in a 'global knowledge economy', new student equity funding was to be provided through 'financial incentives' for universities to expand their intake and support of these students with the explicit intention 'to create leading practice and competitive pressures to increase the aspirations of low SES students' (p. 14).

The formal HEPPP policy provides for funds to be distributed via two programs, designed to both spur competition amongst universities and enhance cross-sectoral educational collaborations to achieve the government's goals. First, a 'Participation program' was designed to improve the participation, retention and success of low SES students via the development of inclusive entry processes, transition programs sensitive to culture and geography, adjustments to teaching and learning methods, academic supports and mentoring, offering scholarships, and conducting evaluation research on the impacts of these efforts (ComLaw, 2012, Sec.1.65.1). Universities were

rewarded for these efforts by receiving funds based on their participation rates for low SES student participation, and so universities have been effectively encouraged to compete with each other to embrace more low SES students. Second, a 'Partnerships' program was designed to develop partnerships and outreach activities with schools, vocational education and training (VET) providers, community groups, and State and Territory governments to 'encourage' the 'low' aspirations and capacity of people from low SES backgrounds to participate in higher education (ComLaw, 2012, Sec 1.70.1, 1.70.5). Universities here are encouraged to collaborate inter-sectorally in targeting low SES communities in which aspirations to higher education are assumed to be low or absent. In addition to guaranteeing a base level partnerships fund for each university, further grants are released after a competitive tendering process from these consortia. Exemplar 'aspiration raising' strategies include heightening awareness and understanding of higher education, and assisting in pre-tertiary achievement either by outreach in schools or via alternative pathways.

Gale and Tranter (2011) have noted how the HEPPP policy has proved a crucial catalyst in the reinvigoration of equity outreach programs in universities designed to encourage and enable the participation of a wider body of students in higher education. Existing equity programs have been extended, and new models of educational partnerships developed, with low SES schools and other bridging institutions. In their 'survey of the nature and extent of outreach activities conducted by Australian higher education', Gale et al. (2010) found that approximately 40% of the outreach programs into low SES schools and communities were funded by and situated within equity units. These equity units also provided an organizing role in collaborating with other university departments in the development of their own outreach initiatives. Nationally, 13% of the outreach programs were characterised as 'university-wide' (10%) or intrinsic to teaching and learning (3%). Indigenous units instigated 5% of the programs, while of the academic disciplines it was Education (schools, departments and faculties) that was most active (p.13). Marketing departments or units were responsible for 12% of the outreach initiatives (p. 13). Equity units, either directly or in collaboration with other university units, have been carrying the bulk of the work to engage low SES schools and communities in the pursuit of more equitable participation.

Higher education equity policy is thus identified by Gale et al. (2010) as being 'invested within an equity practitioner model' and both developed and implemented within the equity unit itself (p. 13). The authors note a possible danger here: the likelihood that equity units might be isolated from higher university management and thus the academic, cultural and pedagogical reforms required to fundamentally improve equity of participation. Their research called for more study of how the practices and policy of equity units correlated (or not) with other understandings of equity within the university, such as those operative within marketing departments. My research contributes to this knowledge within the Queensland higher education field.

Since the election of a new federal Coalition (Conservative) government in September, 2013, there has been uncertainty regarding the widening participation agenda in Australia. Prior to 2009, universities in Australia had a fixed student quota they would be funded for; from 2010, however, a 'demand-driven' system was installed by the Labor government and many universities subsequently expanded their intake of undergraduate students, in part through accepting more students with lower Australian tertiary admission rank scores (or ATARS, see Norton, 2013). In this sense, the goal to expand to 40% the proportion of Australians aged 25-34 who have attained an undergraduate degree by 2025 has been a necessary but insufficient condition for the parallel goal to boost low SES participation to 20% by 2020. Yet now there is concern amongst student equity practitioners around a federal commitment to both the expansionary goal and the future of HEPPP and funding for student equity outreach. At the time of writing, the federal Minister for Education had received recommendations from a review of Australia's university 'demand driven' funding system (Kemp & Norton, 2014). The Kemp and Norton review recommended to government to continue with a 'demand-driven' system and to resist a 're-capping' of university places. The review also, however, recommended against the continuation of either the attainment (40% by 2025) or low SES participation (20% by 2020) targets, arguing that they had been, in the author's view, set rather arbitrarily (p. 54). Kemp and Norton recommend instead funding providers, both for-profit as well as not-for-profit, to expand places to sub-bachelor degree pathway programs on the basis that these would more reliably support students from low SES backgrounds. There have also been indications from the Minister of Education that the targets for attainment and low SES participation will be abandoned (Hurst & Tovey, 2013). New Mission-based Compacts that the government has signed with each university for the 2014-2016 term have withdrawn the social inclusion targets and financial rewards for low SES participation that were present under the previous Labor government from 2011-1013, although an Indigenous student participation target remains (Department for Education, 2013). In this political context, student equity outreach practices funded by HEPPP are continuing, yet universities are reluctant to innovate and invest beyond their current commitments. The sun may be setting on an explicitly low SES targeted widening participation agenda within universities. This research, as an ethnography of student equity outreach, would then take on added saliency as a document of university practices in low SES schools in the HEPPP era.

THE FIELD OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN QUEENSLAND

There are nine universities in Queensland that serve a domestic[1] population of approximately 4.75 million and eight of these are defined as 'Table A Providers' under The Higher Education Support Act (ComLaw, 2003) legislation. Bond University, the State's only private university, is not subject to government student equity policy, although the Australian Catholic University (ACU) is a Table A provider and is subject to this legislation. UQ is the oldest higher education in Queensland, institution, founded in 1910, and until the founding of James Cook University (JCU, est. 1970) and Griffith University (est. 1971), UQ was the state's only university. Queensland University of Technology (QUT) became a university in 1989, but has a history of both technical and teacher education since 1849. UQ, Griffith and QUT have been based largely in the capital city Brisbane, while James Cook University (JCU) and Central Queensland University (CQU; est. 1992) have served populations in the tropical north and central and interior of the State. The University of Southern Queensland (USQ) emerged as a university in 1992 after functioning since the late 1960s as an institute of technology and then advanced education, while the University of the Sunshine Coast (est. 1996) and Southern Cross University are more recent additions to Queensland higher education, with the latter opening a campus building on the Gold Coast in 2010.

The field of higher education in the state of Queensland is hierarchical and competitive. Although there are world renowned academic fields represented across the different universities, such as tropical medicine at JCU, international ranking regimes consistently place UQ at the top of the field in Queensland, with QUT and Griffith being the other two universities in Queensland closest to embodying the comprehensive research intensive (and health science based) university model favoured by these rankings (Marginson, 2007). The highest proportion of students from Indigenous backgrounds or from areas defined as being of low SES status are to be found, in the main, within the universities outside of Brisbane: JCU, CQU, and the USQ (all of which have higher low SES participation rates than the state average of approx. 19%).[2]

---

[1] Queensland universities also enrolled just under 51,000 international students in 2012 approximately 16% of all students (Higher Education Statistics, 2013a).

[2] The average comes from the 2012 low SES postcode measure that is 'based on the students' postcode of permanent home residence, with the SES value derived from the 2006 SEIFA Education and Occupation Index for postal areas, where postal areas in the bottom 25% of the population aged 15-64 being classified as Low SES' (Higher Education Statistics, 2013b, footnote c).

THE PROBLEMATIC

The problematic (Campbell & Gregor, 2004; Smith, 2005) of the research arose during my observation of the university based equity outreach workers, Indigenous staff, and marketing/recruitment staff from all of Queensland's publically funded universities. On July 15th, 2011, these university staff were brought together by The Group for a seminar showcasing local university outreach programs in low SES schools. Collectively, this diverse group of university workers had previously written a communiqué specifying their understanding of the distinction between competitive recruitment and collaborative outreach, and had resolved to work and learn together. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) had also been developed, outlining a common Queensland agenda for the universities' engagement of low SES schools, which I will detail later. The problematic, as I heard it articulated that day, was the tension some equity outreach workers felt around recruitment and competition for students versus their collaborative efforts to introduce or reinforce higher education as a possible educational pathway. In other words, it was the tension experienced between working to assist a single university's financial imperative to recruit students (who were designated as low SES and therefore attracted a loading under the HEPPP policy), and working to expand opportunity and capacity for higher education more generally. My institutional ethnography was to provide for an account of how this practice based tension arose.

This disjuncture developed over the course of the research as a practitioner concern to construct locally relevant reporting and evaluating of student equity outreach practices yet also meet federal government requirements. As will be explained, federal policy, via the HEPPP Participation funds formula and Mission-based Compact that specified social inclusion targets, incentivised the short-term, institution-specific recruitment of students from schools in low SES areas. Yet federal policy, via the HEPPP Partnerships funding, simultaneously aimed to link together universities, schools and other institutions (Technical and Further Education [TAFE], community organizations) in longer-term capacity building to support educational achievement in schools and accessible pathways into higher education. The resourcing for 'Partnerships', however, has proved less generous. Competition amongst universities for students from low SES backgrounds is the preferred federal policy setting for widening participation, despite the collaborative modes of practice pursued by The Group. A fundamental tension remains between standardised, mandated reporting and accountability mechanisms applying to individual institutions and the collaborative work necessary to achieve broader cross-sectoral goals and policy aims.

AIM

This study takes the form of an institutional ethnography of the practices of equity outreach workers from UQ and Griffith University, as well as policy practices of The Group. It seeks to explore the

work practices of equity outreach staff engaging students, schools and communities from low SES areas. The study includes, but moves beyond, traditional ethnography in its intention to critically explore the ruling relations that coordinate the work practices of equity outreach workers within and across institutional relations (Smith, 2005, 2007). These ruling and institutional relations are mediated by texts, including the HEPPP policy as appropriated by The Group, and other institutionally specific texts acting through the day-to-day work practices of the student equity outreach workers. The study is aimed at providing 'thick descriptions' (Denzin, 1989) of equity outreach practices, and mapping from that standpoint how those practices are being coordinated by and in turn constitute these textually (policy) mediated ruling relations. By taking a standpoint alongside equity outreach practitioners, the aim is to discover how their social practices are both constrained by, but also critically appropriate (Levinson, Sutton & Winstead, 2009), these wider ruling relations. In doing so, I aim to contribute to knowledge of how institutional relations impact equity practices within the Australian higher education.

THESIS STRUCTURE AND SUMMARY

In Chapter 2 of the thesis I review the history of and literature on Australian student equity and policy practices that inform the contemporary context. I outline the quantification procedures and measurement practices that have precisely constructed and defined student equity as proportional representation and yet have failed to achieve their stated goals. Although these technical practices have provided much data about students (e.g. their socioeconomic status as based on their area of residence) and allowed for comparable data sets to establish policy objectives, they have also functioned as the 'ruling relations' (Smith, 1999, 2007) that have articulated the experiences of marginalised students in schooling and higher education into the categories and discourses of governing policy. One result of this quantification of student equity has been an elision of more critical analysis of the social processes generating poverty and low educational achievement and the active role that educational institutions themselves play in this reproduction of inequality. Bourdieu and Passeron's classic *La Reproduction* (1990) text, specifically its appendix on educational opportunity for and in higher education (pp. 221-233), is examined to understand the stratification of students into fields of study that reproduce their position within the social hierarchy. Bourdieu's sociology of higher education provides a salutary critique of more positivist and meritocratic accounts of 'widening participation' policies and goals that shift the responsibilities of improved social mobility onto the student. I also trace here the more recent qualitative research into student equity and the problematizing of psychological constructions of 'aspirations' for higher education, and review recent critical case-studies of outreach practices. Finally I argue for the place of the current thesis as an original contribution to knowledge on how the work of student equity staff, and

the experiences of the students they work with, are positioned by the textually-mediated ruling relations of current 'widening participation' policy within Australia's stratified higher education sector.

In Chapter 3, I provide the theoretical foundations for the analysis by working through the key insights of: Dorothy Smith's institutional ethnography and the ruling and institutional relations that coordinate social practices; Chouliarki and Fairclough's (Chouliarki & Fairclough, 1999; Fairclough, 2003) account of the textual and discursive mediation of those ruling relations; and Bourdieu's (Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990) notion of contested fields of practice. Building upon Levinson and colleagues' (Levinson et al., 2009; Sutton & Levinson, 2001) work on policy appropriation, I define policy as the textually-mediated practice of power (Peacock, Sellar & Lingard, 2013). Such theorisations are pragmatically oriented to an empirical account of the textually-mediated activation and appropriation of ruling policy relations within the student equity policy practices of UQ, Griffith, and The Group. Collectively these understandings enable me to depict a mapping of the extended social relations of student equity practices at both UQ and Griffith within an institutional field of action (Turner, 2006). Chapter 3 thus represents an innovation to institutional ethnography, one that offers a nuanced account of both the *activation* and *appropriation* of ruling relations within social practices.

Chapter 4 provides a more detailed elaboration of my methodology and methods, beginning with a statement of the evolving problematic of the thesis – the tension for student equity practice, provoked by HEPPP policy, between the short term recruitment of students from schools in low SES areas and a longer term engagement of students, schools and communities designed to support educational achievement. This problematic evolved as a conflict between desired modes of evaluation and accountability: practitioners sought to produce broadly conceived and shared outcomes for equity outreach work across education sectors and institutions, while the federal government sought narrower outcomes from each university. I provide a rationale for the selection of UQ and Griffith (institutions that are positioned differently within the hierarchical field of higher education in Queensland, and with differing logics of practice for widening participation) and The Group collective as research sites. I detail the gatekeepers across universities and schools who brokered my entrée into the field of student equity outreach practice, and describe the data collection strategies (observations, interviews, documents) and analytical techniques employed (including critical discourse analyses and the producing figures/maps of institutional social relations), as I traced the textual coordination of student equity practices. Finally, I provide a reflexive account of my own positionality as an apprenticed knowledge worker in the 'global knowledge economy'. As an APA funded PhD student I am subject (although differentially, and with more power) to the same neoliberal discourses and practices that undergird, at least in part, the

widening participation practices of contemporary student equity policy and frame the experiences of students in low SES schools (the need to build my human capital and sell my labour on globally competitive labour markets). My research is both a participation in, and activation of, these ruling relations of higher education policy; yet it is also, just as it is for student equity staff, a critical appropriation of these relations in the wider interests of educational goals, such as social justice, that lie outside these neoliberal strictures.

In Chapter 5 my analysis turns to The Group, a collective of student equity practitioners working under the auspices of the Queensland state government from 2009-2013 to collaboratively pursue greater participation of low SES and Indigenous students in higher education institutions across the state. I demonstrate how their negotiated Memorandum of Understanding articulated local policy practice to federal mandates. The MOU also circumscribed the competitive practices amongst Queensland universities to recruit low SES students within agreed guidelines and appropriated the federal policy to better reach the students in regional and remote areas of the State, while constructing Indigenous specific strategies. Through The Group, HEPPP funds were directed to students, schools and communities with the highest degrees of disadvantage.

The analysis in Chapters 6 and 7 turns to the practices of student outreach staff at UQ. In Chapter 6, I describe the historical context for outreach into low SES schools and the incorporation of student equity practices within student recruitment practices. I then undertake a critical discourse analysis of UQ's 'flagship' equity venture, the Young Achievers Program, as it appears in institutional texts and based on interviews from informants in the Office of Prospective Students, Scholarships and Student Equity (OPSSSE) at UQ. The Young Achievers Program is constructed as a 'selective equity' program for 'deserving students' within schools identified as serving low SES communities, and/or with higher proportions of Indigenous students. This construction involves University outreach staff and school staff jointly activating school-based institutional technologies to match textually mandated university criteria. Finally, I describe the hybridizing (Fairclough, 2003) of 'student equity' with the 'best and the brightest' discourses and practices by the OPSSSE unit and its outreach into a set of Brisbane schools known to UQ as 'equity schools'. These acts of discursive hybridity become the means by which UQ accomplishes student equity as a 'recognizable' (Smith, 2006) form of government mandated policy and as consonant with its position at the top of the competitive higher education field in South East Queensland.

Chapter 7 provides ethnographic description and interpretation of UQ's 'Rock and Water' workshops with Years Eight and Nine students in one school. Rock and Water is a program utilised by schools to support students with 'challenging' behaviour. The chapter empirically demonstrates how the subjects of widening participation policy and activity - students within schools whose 'aspirations' are presumed to be low - are objectified, or written up into texts that are sequenced

into reporting requirements for The Group and, through it, for the federal government. Finally, I depict an institutional field of action for UQ student outreach practices that positions UQ's Rock and Water alongside UQ's more 'selective equity' outreach practices.

In Chapter 8, I detail Griffith University's student equity outreach into schools in the Logan area south of Brisbane, a set of communities that are some of the most disadvantaged in Australia. I provide ethnographic description of the Launch into Life at Logan (LILAL) program, which was held on Griffith's Logan campus over two days in November, 2012. The LILAL program, and Griffith's student equity outreach to primary school students into Logan area schools, both activates and appropriates the ruling relations of federal student equity policy. I demonstrate how Griffith's work with students and communities in Logan is truncated down through evaluation practices that anticipate and articulate to the annual HEPPP reporting templates. The result is that Griffith student equity practitioner's more complex understandings of their work, and its broader community engagement objectives, are fitted to the ruling categories of federally mandated reporting and accountability texts. Yet, this activation of ruling relations is not absolute. Griffith creatively appropriates the HEPPP mandates to provide targeted outreach to Pacific Island background students and to provide social inclusion strategies to persons with disabilities. Griffith's position within the field of higher education as a less-selective university (particularly its Logan campus) with alternative entry programs, as well as its long standing commitments to social inclusion and social justice, produce the possibilities for textually-mediated appropriations of the ruling relations of federal policy to the benefit of local marginalised peoples.

Finally, in Chapter 9, I outline some of the implications of the thesis for both student equity policy and practice and demonstrate the theoretical, methodological and empirical significance of the research. The ruling relations of federal student equity policy position universities, and their student equity staffs, in competition for students from schools in low SES areas, whilst providing more modest resources to assist them collectively build the educational achievement of a broader cohort of university students for the future. This policy privileging of competition over collaboration, coupled with the demand for accountability practices that bias institutional and shorter term participation outcomes, exacerbates the competitive tensions amongst universities. UQ, Griffith and The Group all activate and appropriate the textually-mediated ruling relations of federal policy in their student equity activities and re/produce a competitive, hierarchical institutional field of action. Student equity practices, through the acts of appropriation, become recognizable as serving both government mandates and distinct institutional imperatives and logics of practice. For UQ, this means hybridizing student equity practices with the recruitment of the 'best and the brightest' students from schools operating in low SES areas. At Griffith, student equity staff exercise creative appropriations of officially mandated policies in the interests of marginalised

students, even as they reproduce the dominant discourses of these policies. The Group appropriates the HEPPP policy through collaborative textual practices that emphasise collaboration and mitigate somewhat the recruiting power of the more dominant universities in Queensland and ensure resources get allocated to the students, including Indigenous students, in regional and remote areas of the State.

SIGNIFICANCE

The research demonstrates how federal reporting templates, as activated by UQ, Griffith and The Group in their production of annual HEPPP reports, are the textual technologies through which the ruling relations of federal policy organize local practices. Yet this organization and coordination is not absolute. Federal policy mandates are also enacted within the limits of the competitive and hierarchical field of higher education in Queensland and appropriated in the interests of both specific universities and, at least in some instances, the students, schools and communities with which they engage.

Such mapping of the textually mediated ruling relations for equity interventions can provide both equity practitioners and policy makers with greater understanding of the challenges and possibilities for low SES student participation in higher education. It is hoped this knowledge will be beneficial to the equity outreach practitioners themselves, to their understanding of the constraints upon their work, while also affirming the participatory, democratic capacities of student equity outreach workers and their community of practice as local appropriators of 'official' or 'formal policy' (Levinson et al., 2009, pp. 767-768). The tracing of ruling relations across institutions and communities of practice can enhance knowledge of how local equity practices both activate authorised federal policy, while appropriating policy according to local imperatives. The research furthers the sociology of higher education policy, and institutional ethnography methodology, by providing an empirical account of how 'what gets done' in student equity practice is neither simple reproductive actions of extra-local discourses nor local, uninhibited innovative practice. Student equity outreach becomes recognizable to its practitioners as it is constructed both as an instance of authorised policy and as 'what gets done here'.

PERSONAL POSTSCRIPT

There are of course more personal reasons for a study of higher education equity. My ethical commitments to social justice, and the social responsibilities of higher education institutions, have been influenced by familial as well as professional life. Despite the privileges of healthy educational capital, poverty, disability and mental illness have been, in one way or another, a part of my extended family's experience; they have shaped our worldview, as much as the many other joyful moments of our lives. Marginalisation, social exclusion and the structural processes driving these dynamics, in higher education and elsewhere, have always been a preoccupation of mine, and continue to shape my political, ethical and epistemological concerns. The way that people both participate in and also struggle to remake the ruling social relations of higher education is the ultimate concern of this research.

CHAPTER 2: A REVIEW OF STUDENT EQUITY POLICY PRACTICES IN AUSTRALIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

The HEPPP policy is the latest, albeit grandest, in a series of federal government attempts to improve participation in higher education for students from low SES backgrounds. In what James (2007), echoing Churchman (1967), has called a 'wicked policy problem', the proportion of students from low SES backgrounds has been stuck at approximately 15% at least since the origins of Australia's contemporary equity policy framework in 1990 (Bradley, Noonan, Nugent & Scales, 2008). The most recent complete data set from the federal department responsible for administering the HEPPP has the participation rate of students from low SES backgrounds at just over 17%, where 25% is the figure that represents parity, or proportional representation, in the equity model used within Australian higher education.[4] There has been a small amount of progress that universities have made in reaching the government's target for 20% of undergraduate students to have come from low SES backgrounds by 2020. Yet it is estimated that at current rates of growth it would likely reach 18% by 2020, falling short of the policy's explicit goal (Naylor, Baik & James, 2013b).

This chapter seeks to sketch the contemporary antecedents of the HEPPP policy within Australian higher education, and to frame the official policy context within which equity outreach practitioners conduct their work today. Student equity practices are enmeshed in a type of quantitative 'matrix', which functions, as Hacking has insightfully described, 'as an idea, talk about the idea, individuals falling under the idea, the interaction between the idea and people, and the manifold of social practices and institutions that these interactions involve' (as cited in Thomson, 2013, p. 180). The 'idea' is low socioeconomic status, the policy problem is the underrepresentation of individuals assigned to this category participating at university, and the policy solutions involve the discourses and practices of 'raising the aspirations' of, and 'stimulating the demand' for higher education from these individuals in order to 'widen participation' in university institutions. The ultimate goal is utilitarian, couched in the dominant and globalized, neoliberal (Harvey, 2005) education discourses of boosting the stock of human capital within the nation state to better enable it to

---

[4] The current department responsible for Higher Education is the Department of Industry. 25% represents the proportion of the Australian population within the lowest quartile of socioeconomic distribution according to the Index of Education and Occupation of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (Higher Education Statistics, 2013b).

compete in a globalizing economy. In Dorothy Smith's (2005) terms, these are the 'ruling relations' of governance that articulate the diverse experiences of students in Australian schools into categories amenable to programmatic intervention. They are also textually mediated discourses that both constitute and reproduce student equity outreach practices in universities across Australia, aligning the complicated and diverse work of student equity staff into categories amenable to accounting and governance.

QUANTIFYING EQUITY

The policy foundations for contemporary equity policy arose with the election of the Hawke Labour government in 1983, the subsequent implementation of the Higher Education Equity Program and the Aboriginal Participation Initiative (Gale & Tranter, 2011, p. 36) and the publication of the Dawkins White Paper, *Higher Education: A Policy Statement* (1988). The Dawkins policy makes the following case for equity in higher education:

> The larger and more diverse is the pool from which we draw our skilled workforce, the greater is our capacity to take [economic] opportunities as they emerge. The current barriers to the participation of financially and other disadvantaged groups limit our capacity to develop the highly skilled work force possible and are a source of economic inefficiency (p. 7).

The older Whitlam-esque concern with higher education as a 'right' pertaining to the development of the person (Anderson & Eaton, 1982) becomes for Dawkins a question of equity as the prerequisite for economic efficiency, an alignment consistent with the wider socio-political shift from a Keynesian welfare provision to neoliberal competition policy setting (Rizvi & Lingard, 2011, p. 11).

Dawkins set policy to steer a 'long term expansion of higher education opportunities and greater equity of access to the system and its benefits' (1988, p. 13). The expansion was to be financed, in part, by a return to a user-pays fees system (the Higher Education Contribution Scheme, HECS), which signalled the neoliberal conception of the value of higher education accruing privately to individuals, rather than collectively as a societal public good. The Dawkins policy statement recognised that growth in higher education alone would not lead to more equitable higher education participation, and called for a more targeted approach informed by a statement of national equity objectives (p. 53-54).

Such a formal statement was developed by the federal Labor government in 1990 with 'A Fair Chance for All' (Department of Employment Education and Training). The 'Overall Objective' of equity policy in higher education was stated as follows:

> ...to ensure that Australians from all groups in society have the opportunity to participate successfully higher education. This will be achieved by changing the balance of the student population to reflect more closely the composition of society as a whole. (p. 2)

Equity became a case of proportional representation. In what was to fundamentally shape the equity discourse in Australian higher education until the present day, the statement identified six equity groups for targeted assistance: 1) people from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds (low SES); 2) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; 3) people from non-English speaking backgrounds; 4) people with disabilities; 5) people from rural and isolated areas and 6) women in non-traditional studies (pp. 2-3). Numeric targets were set for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People (increase of 50% by 1995), Women in non-traditional courses (up 40%; 15% in engineering), People with Disabilities (100%), while the remaining groups had more qualitative objectives set such as special entry arrangements for socio-economically disadvantaged students, established by 1992 (pp. 2-3).

The Dawkins reforms of the 80s and the new national equity strategy signalled the shift from targeted selection of individual disadvantaged students to wider group populations. Historically, equity initiatives in higher education were individually focused upon talented Year 12 school leavers from disadvantaged backgrounds (Anderson & Vervoorn, 1983). By providing extra financial assistance for tuition and accommodation, these students were assumed to be able to succeed in the elite world of university life, despite the students' differences in economic, social and cultural capitals (Knight, Kyle, Wright & Shaw, 1993). As universities expanded, and moved from elite to mass systems of education (more recently towards universal provision; Trow, 2006), universities made more deliberate attempts to target hitherto untapped 'markets' for students. Student equity outreach after Dawkins, such as the LINK program, funded federally from 1989-1991 and operating in three universities and two agricultural colleges universities, connected these post-compulsory institutions and disadvantaged schools and provided students with on-going support at university (Knight et al., 1993). In the expansionary era of the Dawkins reforms, these institutions pursued both an equity agenda and a student recruitment imperative to expand their undergraduate intakes (Knight et al., 1993, p. 16). This equity shift from the targeting of disadvantaged individuals to the targeting of traditionally disadvantaged groups can be seen as an efficiency measure, the most cost effective way of reaching the greatest number of students in the efforts to boost participation. Although the National Equity Strategy (Department of Employment Education and Training, 1990) explicitly acknowledged the potentially discriminatory nature of the

equity groupings for individuals, it nonetheless argued that the dual objectives of overcoming disadvantage and expanding the system required their employment (p. v).[5]

The National Equity Framework has been called an 'evidence-based' policy constructing equity as 'the amelioration of under-representation of groups that are perceived to be disadvantaged' (Coates & Krause, 2005, p. 37). This 'policy by numbers' approach (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010) was further refined when Martin (1994) developed operational definitions for the equity groups and four indicators to measure institutional and sector performance in relation to these groups. James (2007) has summarised them as follows: *access* (the proportion of the equity group among commencing domestic students); *participation* (the proportion of the equity group among domestic students overall); *retention* (the proportion of equity group students who re-enrol at an institution in a given year compared with the students who were enrolled in the previous year, less those students who have completed their course); *success* (the mean student progress rate for the previous year for the equity group, meaning the proportion of units passed within a year to the total units enrolled); and *completions* (the proportion of students completing all the academic requirements of a course (p. 14). A finely tuned quantitative system was now in place to classify, manage, measure and monitor institutional performance and compliance with the national equity framework (c.f. Thomson, 2013) These have become the ruling relations of student equity practices that articulate student, and university staff's experiences, into statistically governable forms (Rose, 1999).

With the coordinates in place to measure proportional representation of equity groups, the philosophical assumptions around equity and critical analysis of the processes producing injustices and resulting in educational disadvantage were backgrounded in policy discussion. In her survey of equity policies from the 1990s, Ramsay (1999) notes this 'silence' in the documents and argues that this is a corollary of the quantification of equity and the influence of what others have named the 'new managerialism' (Marginson & Considine, 2000) within higher education and its techniques of quality assurance processes, key performance indicators and evaluation/compliance mechanisms (p. 178; see also Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). A more theoretically coherent understanding of the production of this under-representation and educational disadvantage, however, is crucial to the longer term success of student equity

---

[5] Of course, the designation of 'disadvantaged' can be discriminatory when applied to individuals as well, especially when university-school based interventions focus upon 'remedial' students instead of wider cohorts.

policy. Without such analysis, student equity will be forever addressing the symptoms of the problem (underrepresentation) without penetrating to its core.

As mentioned above, this National Equity Framework has been remarkably unsuccessful in improving participation for low SES and Indigenous peoples (Coates & Krause, 2005, p. 37). In fact there has been an almost melancholic resignation among researchers when confronted with the seeming intractability of inequality of participation within Australian higher education. The Bradley Review (Bradley et al., 2008), which made the most recent case to government for a renewed equity focus on low SES participation, notes the inability of policy to make Australian higher education participation more representative of society as a whole. It quotes James (2007) as follows:

> ...the fact that with typical variations of only tenths of percentage points annually, and no discernible overall trend – during a period of significant expansion in the number of domestic students in Australian higher education is amazing. It is tempting to conclude that university admission/selection processes are quite resilient in reproducing a certain social order. (p. 6, as cited in Bradley et al., 2008, p. 36)

The disillusionment echoes that of the earlier Anderson studies (Anderson, Boven & Powell, 1980; Anderson & Vervoorn, 1983) that similarly found no statistical difference in the participation of low SES students stemming from the Whitlam era commitment to universally free tuition for higher education. Anderson and Vervoorn write:

> Despite all the social idealism attached to education in the last decade, the hope that education would lead us to the threshold of a just society in which inequalities due to personal background and circumstances have been eliminated, higher education remains as much as ever the domain of those in least need of the greater personal opportunity and self realisation it commonly brings (1983, p. 2).

Since 1950, the patterns of participation for both high socio-economic backgrounds and low socioeconomic backgrounds have remained constant. The only positive thought that Anderson & Vervoorn (1983) consoled themselves with was the speculation that without all of the considerable policy and research effort, inequality might have in fact worsened (p. 170).

THEORIZING INEQUALITY IN EDUCATION

To make sense of the persisting failure of government policy to address inequitable participation in higher education, it is useful to turn to the sociology of education, both to situate the ideological underpinnings of Australian equity policy and also to examine other alternative constructions of the problem.

Theory from the sociology of education distinguishes between 'internalist' and 'externalist' accounts of the causality in educational inequality, with the former locating the roots of the problem within educational institutions themselves and the way they both reflect and reproduce patterns of marginalisation prevalent within wider socio-economic and political structures, while the latter locates the problem with the incapacities of families to equip their children for school achievement because of material, cultural or personal deprivation (Moore, 2004). Internalist accounts, according to Moore, are beneficial in taking the pedagogical process and schooling seriously, but can overestimate the degree of influence schooling exerts on students *vis-à-vis* broader processes of social change (2004, p. 19). Externalist accounts, associated with deprivation theories and compensatory education, sometimes are the bearers of unexamined normative assumptions stemming from white, middle-class privilege, and at their worst pathologize marginalised groups, misrecognizing their difference for deficiency (p. 18).

The differences between these 'internalist' and 'externalist' understandings of educational marginalisation are themselves rooted in meta-philosophical disputes dividing Liberal and Marxist conceptions of the purposes and functions of education. Moore (2004) has summarized these differences in the following way. Within the Marxist and Neo-Marxist stream of the sociology of education, the education system itself functions to reproduce the dominance of the ruling class through granting to the few a privileged access to elite careers and social positions. Neo-Marxist theory, known through the sociology of education as reproductive theories *à la* Bourdieu (1996; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990) and Bowles and Gintis (1976) among others, has been primarily concerned with analysis of class relations or the formation of class consciousness.

On the other hand, classical Liberal theories of education have sought instead the decomposition of class via policies directed at progressive social change and development. Moore (2004) summarizes these Liberal agendas as focused upon the development of human capital for participation in a globalizing economy, cultivating civic behaviours suitable for liberal democracy and promoting social mobility and meritocracy through selection systems ostensibly designed to reward ability instead of birth right. Whereas the economy in Liberal theory plays a neutral and potentially supportive role in the achievement of educational reforms, within Marxist theory the economy serves the interests of capital and the capitalist class. Historically, however, these ideal types rarely are instantiated precisely. Reproduction may only occur partially, and there is no precise relationship between the investment in

human capital and enhanced economic growth, or unassailable link between increasing economic growth and social mobility (Brennan & Naidoo, 2008).

Power, Robertson and Beswick (1985) and Marginson (1997) have also made useful distinctions between the use of the terms equality, equity and equality of opportunity within the Australian education policy. Power et al. distinguish between equality of opportunity and the ideal of an egalitarian society (p. 9-15). Equality of opportunity, as a 'soft' version of equality, fuses the idea of equality with the idea of merit. Within a liberal-capitalist society, according to the authors, competitive equality of opportunity for individuals does nothing to promote an egalitarian society, and preserves inequalities of wealth, power and prestige (p. 11).

Similarly, according to Marginson's analysis (2007), even during the Whitlam era, which was recognized as the 'apogee' of equality of opportunity in education in Australia, the concepts of equity and equality of opportunity owed more to 'liberal-democratic' notions of individual merit than more radical aspirations to raise the living standards of the entire working classes (p. 17; 37-42).

In light of these analyses one can clearly see the liberal-democratic bias of Australian equity education reforms under both Labor and Coalition federal governments. From Dawkins (1988) and the establishment of the National Equity Framework (Department of Employment Education and Training, 1990) to the Bradley Review (Bradley et al., 2008) and the commencement of a 'demand-driven' system of higher education - a direction most recently reaffirmed in the Kemp and Norton Report (2014) for the Coalition government - a (neo)liberal agenda of equality of opportunity has been rearticulated within a more dominant set of competitive market relations (Lingard, Sellar & Savage, in press; Rizvi & Lingard, 2011; Savage, Sellar & Gorur, 2013). Deeper structural analysis of the generation of educational disadvantage through educational institutions, imbricated in the wider social relations of capitalism, has been effectively jettisoned.

BOURDIEU AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Over 40 years ago, in their appendix to *Reproduction*, Bourdieu and Passeron (Trans. 1990, pp. 221-233) pursued a more critical research path, arguing that universities reproduced the wider social inequality within the French system. Because Bourdieu is the social scientist and sociologist who has produced the most influential sociology of higher education to date, it is beneficial to outline some of his key arguments here, as they form a prescient and cogent critique of the type of positivist and meritocratic policy setting through which Australian

equity concerns have been managed. Read today, their writings also caution against an overly optimistic view of any neoliberal inspired 'widening participation' policy, such as HEPPP, and its capacity to fundamentally restructure educational opportunity.

Bourdieu and Passeron begin with the key distinction between a democratization and redistribution of university education opportunities and the *upward translation* of the structure of educational chances across the system as a whole (the authors refer in a footnote to translation as a mathematical concept, meaning a change in place without a change in shape) (p. 233). The distinction is critical to understanding the difference between a statistically higher probability that a given student from a low SES school might attend university, and the probability that this individual student will be rewarded with enhanced academic and social mobility. The two phenomena are not the same thing, and under conditions of higher education expansion one can find more low SES student participation and a simultaneous entrenchment of their educational and social marginalisation. This is particularly the case today as a global field of higher education opens up opportunities for elite Australian students to pursue higher education abroad, for example, at 'Oxbridge' and Ivy League universities, leaving those who have newly entered higher education in Australia at a relative disadvantage in terms of the positional goods that they acquire through university study.

To understand the systemic relations, at any point in time, between education systems and the structure of social classes, Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) argue that what is required is a comparison of the proportion of those selected for university (the 'selection-survivors') in each category of student in relation to their category of social origin as a whole (p. 222). In fact, Bourdieu and Passeron go further and argue that one would need to compare the SES of the students and those from the general population of *the same age* and SES. The Australian higher education equity system, in contrast, refers to low SES 'participation' in terms that are less precise, focusing on 'enrolment share' or the percentage of domestic higher education students from low SES backgrounds (Kemp & Norton, 2014, p. 54). It compares this figure (currently approx. 17%) to the proportion of the population that is designated low SES (25%) by postcode as measured by an index of education and occupation (this is explained further in Chapters 2 and 5).

For Bourdieu and Passeron (1990), a perfect equalization of educational opportunities for students from differing socioeconomic statuses (or indeed ethnicities, or any structural differences) would mean that all students from all SES groups would have the same rate of opportunity equal to the overall rate of participation of students of that age group. A simple

rise in participation rates for all categories of students does not mean enhanced 'democratization', or in the Australian context an increased enrolment share of university places for low SES students (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, p. 222). One can see a relative worsening of educational opportunity, especially within elite schools and disciplines, for low SES participants in higher education, when related to their more privileged colleagues.

For Bourdieu and Passeron (1990), these objective relations of educational opportunity and social origin structure the individual's aspirations for higher education and social mobility via education. They write:

> Depending on whether access to higher education is collectively felt, even if in a diffuse way, as an impossible, possible, probable, normal or banal future, everything in the conduct of the families and the children (particularly their conduct and performance at school) will vary because behaviour tends to be governed by what it is 'reasonable' to expect. Because quantitatively different levels of the rates of collective opportunity express themselves in *qualitatively* different experiences, a social category's collective chances constitute, through the process of internalization of the category's objective destiny, one of the mechanisms through which that objective destiny is realized. (p. 226)

For Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) there is a cycle here: the habitus (see below for definition) of low SES students is structured by the objective inequalities in educational opportunity (and cultural capital, generally, as Bourdieu argue elsewhere), and so low SES students make the 'reasonable' assumption that higher education is 'not for them'. And so the inequalities persist.

Inequalities in the probabilities of university participation only begin to define what Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) call 'socially conditioned inequalities' (p. 228). The depth of inequality emerges when the question moves from *whether* a student participates, to *how* the student participates in higher education. In other words, in which university does the student participate, and in which discipline or faculty in that university? In Bourdieu and Passeron's (1990) research of the Parisian higher education field in the late 1960s (*La Reproduction* was originally published in French in 1970), lower SES students were disproportionately represented in the Arts and Sciences, while the privileged were disproportionately represented in the faculties of Law and Medicine (p. 229). They write:

> In short, the lower a student's social origin, the more his [sic] access to higher education had to be paid for by a *restriction* on choice, even to the extent of the more or less compulsory *relegation* of the least favoured categories into Arts or Science. (p. 229).

Even when the poor gain access to university, they do so overwhelmingly at the bottom of the academic hierarchy. These older statistics from the French system are replicated in

contemporary Australian higher education. James et al. (2008) show that although low SES students within the Australian system have some representation in teacher education and agriculture, they are particularly under-represented in medicine, law, architecture and the creative arts (p. 25).

Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) also find that these internal differentiations of disciplines are mirrored by the wider class of higher educational institution, so that those of low social origin were destined for education, in France in the 1960s, in the science faculties, for instance, but not in the *scientific grand écoles*, France's elite institutions. A similar stratification of the higher education field appears in contemporary Australia, where low SES students are relegated to institutions with less competitive entry. James (2008) finds that 'medium and low SES students are most highly represented in regional universities, while high SES students are most highly represented in the Group of Eight universities', the elite institutions in Australian higher education (p. 24). These 'Sandstone' universities' share of low SES students is 9.56%, well below the national average of just over 17%.

Without this kind of comparison of participation in the differing fields of universities and disciplines, Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) argue that one cannot determine any fundamental transformation of the relations between a higher educational system and the structure of the social classes (p. 231). They write:

> An approach which takes as its unit the individual student, ignoring the position that the establishment or course receiving him [sic] occupies in the overt or hidden hierarchy of the academic institution, misses the doubling-up of privilege stemming from the fact that the categories with the best chances of entering a given level of education are also the categories with the best chances of establishments, sections or subjects conferring the best chances of subsequent success, both academic and social. (p. 231)

As higher education expands, ostensibly for equity and efficiency purposes, these authors' work would caution the interpreter to be alert to new modes of differentiation, new definitions of academic criteria, and new discriminations flowing from the reduction in the scarcity of academic credentials (p. 231). Older and more blatant exclusions to higher education through admissions must in the new era, for Bourdieu and Passeron (1990), be 'artfully contrived and shrewdly dissimulated gradations which run from full recognition of academic citizenship to the different shades of relegation' (p. 231). The Kemp and Norton Review recommendations in Australia for publically funded, sub-bachelor places in for-profit institutions, as a market driven equity strategy, might well result in such a discriminatory differentiation for students from low SES backgrounds (Kemp & Norton, 2014, pp. 81-87)

This research has implications for the Australian higher education field, even if the class structure in France in the 1960s might be said to more sedimented than that for Australia in the early decades of the 21st century, and despite their being no simple local equivalent to the *grande écoles.* Even if the previous federal Labor government's HEPPP policy proved to be successful, and 20% of undergraduate students in higher education in Australia were to come from low SES backgrounds by 2020, there might still lurk exclusion, inequality, and no substantive shift in social mobility for those students in relative terms (versus their peers also in higher education). Income and educational opportunities and outcomes within Australia remain disturbingly unequal, and low SES and Indigenous students are drastically underrepresented within the Australia's elite universities and their most competitive schools.

THE MOVE TO QUALITATIVE RESEARCH WITHIN AUSTRALIAN EQUITY LITERATURE

The failure of the National Equity Framework for Indigenous and low SES students led to a turn to qualitative research and a rethinking of the conditions for educational disadvantage. In part the shift arose with the recognition of incongruence between national data and the localized experiences of equity practitioners. Summarizing the findings of a longitudinal study (1991-2002) of Australian higher education equity data, Coates and Krause (2005) point to a gap in understanding between national, aggregate data and university level programming. At the institutional level, equity concerns were typically related to individually nuanced accommodation, financial support and transition arrangements, which did not correlate with the national framework of groups and indicators (p. 45). They also noted the limitations of evidence-based quantitative approaches, and called for more qualitative approaches more concerned with questions of 'aspirations, values and perceptions in educational disadvantage' (p 45). This research also highlights the disjuncture between the experiences of student equity practitioners and the ruling relations by which their work is coordinated, yet critically examines the location of the problem of participation within individual students' 'aspirations'.

Subsequent qualitative research into the social and schooling conditions underpinning educational disadvantage has sought to move beyond a 'deficit' approach that locates the problem of participation within individual students or their families. Ferrier and Heagney (1999) searched outside the 'equity groups' framework for causes of inequality of participation in higher education. They argued that universities themselves were at least

partially responsible for inequity through 'inflexibility in the policies, activities, rules and regulations of the institution and the understandings of its staff' (Ferrier & Heagney, 2001, p. 15). When these institutional inflexibilities were combined with the challenges of 'the demands of employers or families, low and changing incomes, changing hours of work, accommodation needs, family support and responsibilities, violence or abuse', students faced 'dynamic disadvantage' that was not detectable under the existing equity categories, and existed outside of under-representation (2001, p. 15).

In their study on the aspirations of Australian teachers, students and parents for higher education, Alloway, Gilbert, Gilbert and Muspratt (2004) sought to 'give voice to the experience of people in regional areas – their aspirations and expectations, and the webs of discourses and narratives within which these views of the future are formed' (p. 3). They found that most students interviewed aspired to some form of further education when they completed their compulsory schooling, and knew well their post-school educational options, including articulated pathways. Within what the authors called 'economically vulnerable communities', student aspirations to 'be someone' became associated, however, with leaving their communities (p. 247). Alloway et al. (2004) found that each of these wider social discourses shaped student discourses on their dreams for their futures and constrained their expectations of what was possible.

In three other innovative qualitative studies, the capacity for schooling to reproduce inequality was examined using the theoretical insights of Pierre Bourdieu. Bland (2002), Tranter (2003) and Bok (2010) used Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus' to understand how aspirations of low SES students to higher education were shaped by wider economic, social and cultural capitals. In Bland's study, despite the differences between the school and low SES student habitus, the students nonetheless managed to strategically gain enough cultural capital for 'self-improvement' through the education system. But academic success came with a clean break from the communities and cultures in which they were raised. For Tranter (2003), similarly, there was a chasm between the habitus of the communities of the disadvantaged northern suburbs of Adelaide, Australia (and the secondary schools Tranter studied) and that of the universities. In fact, for the vast majority of students at these schools, university was an alien and inaccessible concept, and special entry schemes had little impact on attitudes and aspirations. To succeed in gaining access and persisting at university, these students required a higher level of motivation than most middle class students, 'for whom family and school support guide them through the uncertainties and distractions of adolescence to achieve the expected goals of a satisfactory Year 12 score and entry to

university' (p. 15). Drawing on Appadurai's (2004) notion of 'aspiration' as a cultural capacity to be developed instead of an individual psychological trait, and employing Bourdieu's habitus-capitals-field nexus to develop a non-deficit approach to understanding primary school student aspirations for higher education, Bok's (2010) research challenged the assumed relationship (sometimes shared by teachers and principals) between low SES and low aspirations. In fact, all that her students lacked was the access to the 'scripts', the economic, social and cultural resources, that enabled the 'production of the performance' to realize their aspirations for higher education (p. 176).

More recent research has questioned the dominant discourse of 'raising aspirations' within and for higher education. Sellar and Gale (2011) and Zipin, Sellar, Brennan and Gale (2013) describe the necessity for student equity outreach to build the capacities of students from marginalised backgrounds to imagine 'alternative futures in open-ended ways' for themselves and not simply reproduce culturally normative rationales for further education. Sellar (2013) traces the concerns for the lack of aspiration in the working classes (a 'poverty of desire') back to the British socialists of the early 20th century, and critiques the contemporary cultivation of 'market-rational behaviour and dispositions to maximise self-investment in human capital', when the payoff for such labour is so uncertain given the diminishing value of higher education as a positional good (p.245). Aspiration raising becomes the production of the ideal neoliberal subject who is a competitive, entrepreneurial and handsomely compensated agent whose success 'stimulates desire among the many' (p. 251).

EQUITY OUTREACH PRACTICES

In contrast to the frequent, large scale quantitative evaluations of the National Equity Strategy, and the qualitative studies of low SES students and their schools, a relatively smaller range of studies have focused upon the role that equity and outreach workers in universities have played in their daily outreach and engagement activities to marginalized communities and schools.

Bowen's (1992) case study of the development of UQ's equity policy characterises the establishment in 1989 of the UQ-Link program as a direct implementation of the Dawkins (1988) plan to recruit more low SES students into the system. Borrowing the idea from Monash University, the UQ-Link program involved low SES school linkages (outreach to schools, visits to campus), scholarships, accommodation assistance, a residential orientation program, ongoing support such as peer tutoring and an affirmative action styled,

compensatory reservation of university places for low SES students. By 1992, the UQ-Link program established partnerships with 57 schools (33 rural) and had set aside 75 places for low SES students.[6]

Knight et al. (1993), in their evaluation of the 'Link' programs in Australian universities that were designed to promote university-school partnerships, noted the conflicting agendas sometimes at play between student recruitment and equity objectives, in line with the increasingly competitive higher education sector. Ramsay, Tranter, Charlton and Sumner (1998) sought to improve the University of South Australia's special access scheme and its 'outreach, access and support' model by undertaking a case study of other university programs. Of particular note here is how the outreach into schools was coordinated between UQ (UQ-Link, estab. 1989) and QUT (U-Step, estab. 1992). Collaborative promotional activities, for instance, included 'the use of common application forms, resulting in a cost saving, increased profile and less administrative burden on applicants' (Ramsay et al., 1998, p. 57). Yet Ramsay et al. also note that these activities for QUT's Q-Step program were not large enough in scale to make a difference to increasing the proportion of low SES students, and indeed the number of participants was impacted by 'increasing competition from other Low SES access schemes in the area (e.g. UQ and Griffith)'(p. 56).

Stewart, McLachlan and Dale (2007) describe a rejuvenated UQ equity outreach model that sought to broaden the focus from schools to university-community engagement across multiple sites, across the university and community, building trust and mutual benefit, and in the longer term gradually increasing student participation from a marginalized community (p. 87). More recently still, the UQ's Boilerhouse for Community Engagement in Ipswich, west of Brisbane, had been theorizing and practising an 'engaged outreach' model (Cuthill & Schmidt, 2011; Cuthill & Scull, 2010) to anchor university interventions into low SES communities within a 'community-based participatory action research approach' (p. 63). Their work with the Pacific Island community[7] has been innovative in its involvement with community leaders, educators, youth, parents and others in the process of relationship and trust building through joint task planning and action to improve higher education access.

---

[6] In a practice that continues today in the HEPPP policy enactment, UQ then partnered with Education Queensland for the identification of low SES schools. These were identified through the federal "Disadvantaged Schools" program, in Queensland known at the time as the "Special Program Schools Scheme", then more recently as the National Partnership Low SES Schools Communities Program.

[7] The Pacific Islander community located in the Logan to Gold Coast areas south of Brisbane, and the Logan to Ipswich areas south west of Brisbane, is mostly populated by emigrants from Polynesian backgrounds. These include people from Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Tokelau, the Cook Islands and Niue (Kearney & Donaghy, 2010).

There has also been some publishing of Griffith University student equity practices, mostly via conference proceedings. For instance, Broughton and Merley (2003) describe how Griffith's Uni-Reach (low SES schools), Tertiary Access (Logan TAFE) and Uni-Key (first year support) programs collectively work to engage aspirations in students through fostering 'academic excellence, support networks, role models, information sessions, targeted activities, informal and formal encouragement strategies, and successful completion' (p. 9). These practices have been evolving at Griffith since 1989. Wilkinson (2010) writes of Griffith's practices:

> ...our outreach programs work at many different levels: with schooling, with VET [Vocational and Education Training], and with specific cohorts – Indigenous students, students with disabilities, Pacific Islander students. While our focus is on low SES, this is not a homogenous group. These programs involve long-term relationship building with educational partners. Uni Reach, our flagship school-based program which works with students from Years 8-12, has been operating since 1996.

Within the Queensland university context, the government's HEPPP policy funding has certainly energized student equity and outreach programs, yet there is a considerable history and praxis of engagement of low SES students, schools, and to a lesser extent perhaps, communities by these equity units.

Gale et al.'s (2010) surveys and Sellar et al.'s (2010) case studies of equity outreach programs into low SES schools and communities provide rich description, model best practices and distill equity orientations most conducive to enhancing the participation of low SES students. These authors identify 10 characteristics of successful interventions into schools: 'collaboration; early, long-term and sustained; people-rich; cohort-based; communication and information; familiarisation/site experiences; recognition of difference; enhanced academic curriculum; and financial supports and/or incentives...' and 'research-driven interventions' (Gale, Tranter, Bills, Hattam & Comber, 2010, p. 4). They also identify three equity orientations from their research informing these interventions: 'researching "local knowledge" and negotiating local interventions; unsettling deficit views; and building capacity in communities, schools and universities' (p. 4)

RESEARCH GAPS

These equity outreach studies listed above illuminate the diversity of contemporary student equity outreach programs, yet do not, as Gale et al. (2010) acknowledge, specifically address how the institutional contexts for equity programming impact the experience of equity

outreach practices, and how they constrain or enable certain actions over others. For instance, Gale et al. (2010) note the need for research into the extent to which university equity policy is 'quarantined', or is positioned *vis-à-vis* other more commercial imperatives to market the university and to recruit students (p. 6). There is currently no research that focuses directly upon the experiences of student equity and outreach workers as they are positioned by universities and the HEPPP policy to recruit low SES students and collaborate with other institutions and groups (communities, universities, schools, etc.) to foster school achievement and generate interest in higher education as a possible future. Through an institutional ethnography, this study examines the re/production of educational disadvantage empirically via people's active participation in the textually mediated ruling relations of federal student equity policy and a competitive and hierarchical field of higher education. It is to this area of equity outreach practices, and how they are coordinated by the textually encoded ruling and institutional relations, that this study seeks to make a contribution. I turn now, in Chapter 3, to the task of constructing a more theoretical account of how the ruling relations of federal student equity policy are both activated and appropriated by UQ, Griffith and The Group within an institutional field of action.

CHAPTER 3: SOCIAL RELATIONS, FIELDS OF PRACTICE, AND POLICY

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I aim to think through my approach to this institutional ethnography of student equity workers' practices with the assistance of a diverse set of social theorists. My aim is to explore how the ruling and institutional relations coordinate social practices though a process of textual and discursive mediation. My primary interlocutors are Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990; Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), Fairclough (Chouliarki & Fairclough, 1999; 2003, 2009) and Dorothy Smith (Smith, 2005, 2007, 2006b). I also draw on Levinson and colleagues' (Levinson et al., 2009; Sutton & Levinson, 2001) view of policy as appropriation and practices of power, and work this together with Smith's insight into the textual mechanisms for the local activation of ruling power relations, so that policy is conceived as *textually-mediated practices of power.* My thesis is that federal student equity policy (HEPPP) enactment is a textually-mediated practice of power articulating local student equity practices to the ruling neoliberal policy discourses. Yet the local policy practices of staff from UQ, Griffith and The Group do not simply reproduce these ruling relations, but also simultaneously appropriate (Levinson et al., 2009) them, within limits to be explored, according to local field and institutional imperatives.

At the level of particular university institutions, these policy practices are occasioned by the position the university occupies within a field of organized activity, or a field of action, in which practices are both organized and reproduced. The final section of the chapter seeks to provide an account of how Bourdieu's and Fairclough's insights into *contested fields of practice*, as mediating between the more abstract social structures and concrete interactions, might be worked together with Smith's (1990a) and Turner's (2006) *mapping of extended social relations within an institutional field of action*. The goal is to account for the textually mediated activation and appropriation of ruling policy relations within the student equity policy and practices of UQ, Griffith and The Group.

Such theorizations might seem, at first glance, exotically eclectic and even a rather arbitrary synthesis of sociological theory. These critiques have indeed been levelled against Smith's work (Collins, 1992; Connell, 1992), which combines Marxist, phenomenological, ethnomethodological and feminist sociological theory to produce her institutional ethnographic method (Laslett & Thorne, 1992). Yet like Smith, I seek neither to impose a

transcending theoretical unity or synthesis among these diverse researchers, notwithstanding their common commitment to social practice [or for Smith, 'work knowledges' and embodied 'lived experiences' (2005, p. 224, 229)] as the empirical and material site of investigation. Rather, I pragmatically employ their insights to better comprehend how the work practices of equity outreach staff both reveal their social coordination by wider ruling relations, and the conditions and possibilities under which they might speak back to and even reconfigure the shape of these wider power relations. That is, I put these theorists to work in an empirically driven institutional ethnographic study of these social practices and the textually mediated ruling relations that coordinate them. I realize my own working together of Smith's institutional ethnographic methods with the concepts and methods of Bourdieu and Fairclough (themselves quite interdisciplinary in their thinking) is unlikely to be universally accepted by institutional ethnographers committed to Smith's founding visions for research practice. Yet I do take comfort from Smith's (1992) own words in response to her critics, on how she approached her research goals:

> …critics treat what I'm doing as derived from or as a synthesis of previous sociological theories. Collins is critical of my "grounding . . . work in sociological theories, yet refusing to embrace fully any one theoretical perspective," and describes it as eclecticism. Connell views it as "synthesis". But if we're talking about actual people and the actual ongoing concerting of activities, there's a common ground-a real world, if you like-to which we can refer. If you're seeking to learn how things actually are put together, that dialogue with the world constrains you. You or I draw on what is available in sociology that we can use in developing inquiry and methods of inquiry. This is neither synthesis nor eclecticism.

For Smith, and indeed for my reading of her work, the research practice of drawing on sociological concepts from a variety of sources is chastened through a 'dialogue with the world' and 'disciplined by its engagement with the actual' (Smith, 1992, p. 93). It is my contention that this chapter provides the conceptual work necessary to account for the student equity practices of UQ, Griffith and The Group as they engaged schools and communities to 'widen' university participation.

SOCIAL PRACTICE

To enable my enquiry into student equity policy enactment processes, and to map how local student equity practices are both coordinated by, but also appropriate federal policies, it is useful to delve deeper into the notion and experience of social practice itself. For a number of contemporary social theorists, such as Bourdieu (1977, 1990), Giddens (1984) and

Fairclough (2003, 2009), a theory of social practice serves as a means to overcome the antinomies of structure and agency, individual and society, and by implication, policy production and implementation.[8]   Social practice becomes, in differing ways for these authors, the 'site' or 'moment' where they mutually bring each other into being (Levinson et al., 2009, p. 780).

For Bourdieu (1977, 1990), social practice is patterned activity (individual or collective) that, although purposeful and efficacious, is not rule bound (*à la* Saussurian structuralism) or the product of conscious reflection (Jenkins, 2002; Rawolle & Lingard, 2008; Wagenaar & Cook, 2003).   Instead, social practice is improvisational and strategic, enabled by an actor's 'feel for the game' (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 62), and inherently related to other actors and collectives within the wider social field.   The activity of improvisation and strategizing activity is limited by the actor's habitus, a 'system of durable, transposable dispositions which functions as the generative basis of a structured, objectively unified practices' (Bourdieu, 1979, vii, as cited in Mills, 2008, p. 80).   So habitus describes a dialectic between an individual and her or his context, in which the material conditions of the wider social fields of operation structure the space of the individual's possible improvisation and tactics, activities which in turn reproduce those fields in the individual's activities upon them (Postone, LiPuma & Calhoun, 1993).   I shall return to Bourdieu's notion of the field below.

For Wagenaar and Cook (2003), the move from a modernist and technocratic understanding of policy requires the supplanting of 'the primacy of the epistemological' with the concept of *practice*: what they call a distinct form of practical reason (*phronesis*, or practical wisdom, from Aristotle) that cannot be reduced to technical rationality (*techné*), or scientific reasoning (p. 141).   Practice, in which action is embedded, is a way of engaging with the world and 'being attuned to the pluralistic, open-ended and moral-political character of the everyday world' (p. 141). Practice, for these authors, has its own pragmatic and purposeful logic; its own interactive, moral and emotional orientation to the world; and its own image of society as a constellation of interdependent communities (p. 141).   Practice so defined is thus a crucial, irreducible element to the formation and discourse of policy (Wagenaar & Cook, 2003, p. 143).   Far beyond merely 'doing', practice is practical reason, and cannot be seen to be universally abstract or value free.   It is contextual, disciplined by

---

[8] For a recent survey of various sociologies of practice, including those from Bourdieu and Giddens, and other ethnomethodologically inspired accounts of patterned activities, see Gherardi (2011).

community, custom and moral-political convictions yet open to critical scrutiny and competing values and discourses. Wagenaar and Cook (2003) also observe a parallel dialectic between social practices and discourses, including languages: practices and the discourses we use to describe them bring each other into being (p. 147).

Fairclough (2003, 2009), however, delineates the dialectical relations between practice and its semiotic realisation more precisely. He begins by noting that social processes (relations, power, institutions, beliefs etc.) are dialectically related to their semiotic (or discursive) representations, in the sense that each internalizes the other without being reducible to the other; neither exists independently of the other. Fairclough (2003) then argues that social practices exist between more concrete social events and more abstract social structures. For instance, social structures such as an economic system, an educational system, or language system define a set of possibilities for individuals, although actual social events are not determined completely by these social structures, but rather are mediated by social practices, a more intermediate series of activities such as financial market trading, teaching, and 'orders of discourse' (p. 24). From the most abstract to the most concrete, social structures, social practices and social events are semiotically realized in languages, orders of discourse and texts respectively (p. 24). Fairclough's dialectical understanding of the relations between social practices and their discursive representation is employed here particularly to analyse how student equity practices appropriate the ruling relations of federal student equity policy.

Ruling Relations

Dorothy Smith, the Canadian feminist sociologist, has since the 1980s developed with other researchers her 'institutional ethnography' as an alternative sociology, and a 'Sociology for People' (Smith, 2005, p. 2). Although her work, and that of other feminist thinkers, was practically ignored by in mainstream sociology up until the 1990s (Laslett & Thorne, 1992), her research practices have been increasingly influential internationally within sociology, but also in fields such as nursing, social work and education (DeVault, 2006). Smith (2005) regards institutional ethnography as more than simply a methodology. Her original goal was to write a sociology for women that refused to leave behind women's' embodied lives, knowledges and social practices in the theoretical construal of what properly constituted the object of sociological enquiry. By way of example, Smith points to her frustrations in feminist activists proposing to sociologically theorize the 'women's movement' as an *object*,

instead of assuming a 'standpoint'[9] *within* this movement and critically thinking through their participatory knowledge as activists and subjects (Smith, 2007, p. 411). She establishes a radical contrast in method in commencing research in discourse, the abstracted categories through which individuals and their activities are defined, and from a standpoint alongside and within the social relations through which the researcher and the informants are jointly, though differently and with often differing purposes, active.

The mapping of how the social world is put together in peoples' work practices involves, in institutional ethnography, an analysis of social relations, or 'the sequences of action in which people are involved at different stages but not necessarily directly engaged in a shared work process' (Smith, 2007, p. 412). Institutional ethnography involves exploration of how people's activities are 'articulated to and coordinated with the relations that are institutionalized', or the 'ruling relations' defined by Smith as 'translocal forms of organization', and 'objectified forms of consciousness and organization based upon textual technologies...' (p.412). Elsewhere she has written of the relations of ruling more descriptively:

> They are those forms that we know of as bureaucracy, administration, management, professional organization, and the media. They include also the complex of discourses, scientific, technical, and cultural, that intersect, interpenetrate, and coordinate the multiple sites of ruling. (Smith, 1990b, p. 6)

Key to Smith's institutional ethnographic methodology is the tracing of the coordination of people's activities to these 'ruling relations' that constitute contemporary capitalist societies. Ruling relations are 'text-mediated and text-based systems of communication, knowledge, information, regulation, control and the like' that translate and articulate peoples' work practices to 'technological and technical specialization, elaboration, differentiation, and objectification' (Smith, 1999, p. 77). Thus ruling relations are an organization of power. The textually mediated relations that are produced between, for instance, a government and a university or a university and a school are 'the forms in which power is generated' (p. 77).

---

[9] Epistemologically, institutional ethnographic methodology eschews the 'bird's eye' or logocentric view from no-where overlooking the social world, and instead insists upon locating the researcher's stance within the social and institutional relations within which both s/he and the informants together are (albeit differentially) situated. Dorothy Smith and institutional ethnography assume this 'standpoint' or 'partial perspective', which holds that a localized position within the social relations situating the researcher is the only possible entree into an understanding of social processes. This theory trajectory has been articulated variously by feminist scholars such as Collins (1991), Haraway (1988) and Harding (1991). For a summary, see Longhofer, Floersch & Hoy (2012). For Smith, however, the concept of standpoint, like all abstract concepts, is an orienting concept, and she has resisted the theorization of this concept as an end in itself (Smith, 1992).

Texts examined under institutional ethnography have included, among other things, policies, medical charts, enrollment reports, and strategic plans; they have been analysed in so far as they have emerged as instruments coordinating activity across differing social sites (DeVault, 2006).

Smith argues one cannot reduce ruling relations to 'relations of dominance or hegemony' and that their operation is not 'monolithic or manipulated' (Smith, 1999, p. 79). Federal student equity policy, for instance, although participating in and constituting the ruling relations for Australian student equity practices, cannot be automatically assumed to be an unambiguously negative force within the lives of university staff and students who have been historically excluded from higher education. Yet the analytical trajectory of Smith's institutional ethnography has been deployed to critically examine how 'ordinary' peoples' lives and work are articulated into forms amenable to neoliberal governance and economic policy (Griffith & André-Bechely, 2008; Smith, 2005). Smith's account of ruling relations has also been useful in explicating the discourses, impacts and practices of contemporary neoliberal education policies as they are locally accomplished or enacted (André-Bechely, 2005; Gerrard & Farrell, 2012; Kerr, 2006).

TEXTS AND DISCOURSES

Smith (2005) does not theorize texts *per se*, but describes them according to their material properties which enable the replication of what is 'written, drawn, or otherwise reproduced' (p. 228). The task within institutional ethnography is to see these texts 'enter into and coordinate people's doings' as they are 'activated' in what Smith calls the 'text-reader conversation' (p. 228). The text-reader conversation posits texts as an 'actual' exchange, located in time and space, between a reader's activation of a text and her or his responses to it. This exchange between reader and text takes place in concrete material conditions and in sequences of action that can be documented in institutional ethnography[10]. Texts are thus

---

[10] Smith's understanding of the materiality of texts does not, unlike some contemporary accounts of a sociology of practice such as that of Gherardi (2011) that are inspired by the so called 'new materialism' (Tuin & Dolphijn, 2012) in social science philosophy, grant agency to the texts themselves outside of people's use of them. Whilst within institutional ethnography, 'the relationality of the social world and materiality can be subjected to inquiry' (Gherardi, 2011, p. 51) through an analysis of the textual mediation and organization of activity (via the text's materiality and replicability across sites of activity or practice), the methodology pursued here does not assume what Gherardi calls an 'ecological model of practice' in which 'agency is distributed between humans and non-humans' (2011, p. 51). In what might be called a more anthropocentric account, Smith emphasizes instead the text's irrelevance to activity *except as activated* in a text-reader conversation, an encounter in time with the artifact that subsequently positions the reader.

seen as active, in action, and embedded within social relations; indeed they connect the reader to translocal ruling relations.

Smith (2005) builds upon Foucault's understanding of *discourse* as 'conventionally regulated practices of language that formulate and recognize objects of knowledge' (p. 224). Yet she links discourse to the work of 'translocal relations coordinating the practices of definite individuals talking, writing, reading, watching, and so forth, in particular places at particular times' (p. 224). For Smith, people '*participate* in discourse, and their participation reproduces it' (p. 224, emphasis mine). Yet for each instantiation of discourse as action 'both reproduces and remakes' the discourse, suggesting that the possibility for discursive and social change (p. 224). How UQ and Griffith student equity staff 'remake' the ruling discourses of 'widening participation' practices, or appropriate them, as I argue, will be detailed in chapters 4 through 7.

In her essay *Femininity as Discourse* (Smith, 1990b, pp. 159-224), Smith elaborates her understandings that discourse ought to be 'investigated as actual social relations ongoingly organized in and by the activities of actual people' (p. 160). The primary reference point here is not the 'text', but rather the social relations that people both are caught up in and also create; social relations here being understood 'not as fixed relations between statuses but as an organization of actual sequences of action in *time*' (original emphasis, p. 160). Smith follows Marx in her understanding of social relations as extending beyond the reach of any individual, and yet individuals' activities 'give power to the relations that overpower them' (Smith, 1990b, p. 161; 2004). Analysis of extended social relations involves the use of concepts and the properties of social processes which cannot be reduced to 'individual practices and intentions' (1990b, p. 161). Similarly, discourse cannot be reduced to 'individual utterances and speech acts' (p. 161). Nonetheless, for Smith, the concept of social relations preserves the presence of the subject in her or his co-production of 'ongoing organization and relations coordinating multiple sites' (p. 161). Whilst Foucault prioritizes the textual within discourse, Smith seeks to unravel the 'social relations in which texts are embedded and which they organize' (1990, p. 162). Discourses in contemporary societies are 'textually mediated'; they are 'addressed as a complex of actual relations vested in texts' (1990, p. 163).

Fairclough (2003) is similarly influenced by Foucault in his Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) methodology, yet he theorizes text, discourse and language as the dialectically internalized and non-reducible, semiotic moments of social events, social practices and social structures, respectively. Discourse analysis for Fairclough involves

"oscillating' between a focus on specific texts and a focus on what [he] call[s] the 'order of discourse', the relatively durable structuring of language which is itself one element of the relatively durable structuring and networking of social practices" (p. 3). Chourliaraki and Fairclough (1999) describe an order of discourse variously as 'the socially ordered set of genres and discourses associated with a particular field' (1999, p. 58), as well as a 'network of discursive practices' (1999, p. 41).

TEXTUAL AND DISCURSIVE MEDIATION

In what follows I rehearse some of the theorizations offered by Chourliaraki and Fairclough (1999) as a way to retain the insights of Dorothy Smith into the textually mediated character of social life under contemporary capitalism whilst, I believe, contributing further to an analysis of the possibilities for a discursive appropriation of the ruling relations entangling all practices. Chourliaraki and Fairclough took Smith's work seriously in this engagement (unlike many other social theorists of the time) and embraced her insights as well as providing their own critique of them. I want to resume this dialogue here and recall its terms to establish my own account of how people can empirically activate the ruling relations of policy while simultaneously, depending upon their positioning within a field of institutional relations, appropriating these texts according to local imperatives.

While Smith (1990a, 2005) writes of the textually mediated character of contemporary social life, and the textually mediated flow (via TV, magazines, books etc.) of extralocal ruling relations into local activities, Chourliaraki and Fairclough (1999) begin to explain this mediation by distinguishing between mediated interaction and quasi-mediated interaction. In the case of a mediated interaction where there is no longer face-to-face interaction (a phone call, or a written letter, an email, or a text), the communication is still interaction between *specific persons* (1999, p. 42-43). What changes is the insertion of a technology, and an increase in time-space distanciation. Mediated quasi-interaction, however, according to Chourliaraki and Fairclough, occurs in mass communication where there is any number of 'receivers' of the communication. This kind of communication is more monological (p. 43). The authors argue that it is this kind of mediated quasi-interaction that is examined so potently by Smith as the 'ruling relations' that, via various mass communication forms such as TV, newspapers, the internet etc., penetrate local discourses and practices and hook people into the social relations of consumerism and capitalism.

Yet Chourliaraki and Fairclough (1999) also argue that the intersection of mediated quasi-interactions and local interactions produce contradictory social relations of struggle.

This intersection of interactions (local unmediated or 'conversation discourses', and mediated interactions and mediated quasi interactions arising from outside of local contexts) also enables people 'unprecedented access to immense resources with which they can enrich their lives' (p. 43). That means, for the authors, there is always a 'colonisation/appropriation' dialectic between mediated quasi-interactions and conversational (local) discourses, and that local and more conversational discourses can appropriate and transform the mediated quasi-interactions and their discourses in diverse and unpredictable ways (p. 45). How successful this appropriation of the ruling relations of capitalism (arriving in quasi-mediated interactions) can be depends on 'how the moment of discourse is dialectically related to other moments in a particular practice' (p. 45.).

Chourliaraki and Fairclough (1999) thus understand the 'text' to be a form of communicative interaction that is 'designed in one context with a view to its uptake in others' (p. 45). Texts are produced in mediated and mediated quasi-interaction but not in face-to-face interaction, although a research interview can be transcribed, and thus face-to-face interaction is then transformed into mediated interaction. Texts are interpreted broadly as written, spoken, visual and all multimodal combinations of these. The authors contrast and compare their understanding of text with Smith's work in *Texts, facts and femininity* (Smith, 1990b). They note that Smith seeks to focus upon people's activation of 'concrete texts', and Fairclough frankly acknowledges that some of his own critical discourse analysis has been remiss in its analysis of discourse in abstraction from specific texts and their uptake by people in their daily lives (what he calls the level of 'interaction', p. 46). The authors concede to Smith 'it is important not to lose this focus' in analysis (p. 46).

Fairclough and Chourliaraki (1999) categorize the 20th century debate within linguistics as dominated by the structuralists such as Saussure and the socio-linguists and their conception of the *langue* or language system as distinct from *parole* or the social act of language's use. The latter, however, was also contested by a smaller group of interactionists or constructivists (the authors reference Schutz's phenomenology and Garfinkel's ethnomethodology, which have been key influences on Dorothy Smith's sociology) for whom language in interaction constitutes or accomplishes the social world (p. 48). For Chourliaraki and Fairclough it is only a dialectical theory of language that can overcome the antinomies of structure and action. They write:

> Structuralism and constructivism are not real alternatives, in social science generally…or in the theorization of discourse and language. Our view of discourse as a moment in social practices and as a form of social production ('joint action') in practices entails a constructivist

focus on social life as produced in discourse, as well as a structuralist focus on the semiotic (including linguistic) and non-semiotic structures, which are both conditions of possibility of discourse and products of social (including discursive) production (1999, p. 48).

The authors claim their dialectical understanding has roots in the theories of Russian philosophers of language such as Vološinov and Bahktin, whose insights Smith herself has also employed throughout her sociology (e.g. Smith, 2005). They argue that their version of CDA enhances Smith's account of the textual mediation of the social.

In this thesis I proceed by accepting Fairclough and Chourliaraki's (Chouliarki & Fairclough, 1999) view of the colonization/appropriation dialectic between local practices and discourses and what Smith would call 'extralocal' ruling relations and discourses. We participate in the ruling relations, but also, depending upon our position within a field of institutional relations and actions, are able to appropriate these ruling relations as well. But in fidelity to Smith, I seek to anchor the analysis of textual mediation within the empirical practices of student equity and outreach workers as they read and process texts within their work settings (or at the level of interaction), even as they appropriate these ruling relations and discourses by drawing on orders of discourse that occupy a space (within a wider field of institutional relations) beyond the organization of work sequences mapped in chapters 4 through 7. In this way Chourliaraki's and Fairclough's (1999) CDA method can enhance the latent potential within institutional ethnography to document how individual actors, while still being enmeshed within the ruling relations, can 'remake' (Smith, 2005, p. 24) or appropriate them in the course of activating them, and thereby acknowledge and ultimately strengthen an agentic resistance for those subject to these ruling relations from afar.

AN INSTITUTIONAL FIELD OF ACTION

I develop in this section an operating conception for the thesis of a 'field of institutional relations' that is both produced and reproduced by student equity and outreach workers in their practices. To do so, I continue thinking across Smith's notion of the extended social relations that both entangle yet become activated by individual people's activities, and Bourdieu's more structuralist conception that sets the conditions of possibility both for the reproduction but also disturbance of the field of social practice.

While Fairclough (2003, 2009) employs the concept of social structure to describe the social as it conditions human activity, Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993; 1992) uses the metaphor of the 'social field' as the encompassing arena of struggle that establishes the conditions for social practice. For Bourdieu, social fields comprise a network of relations

positioning agents (both individuals and collectives) competitively and hierarchically according to a distribution of capitals, power and their habitus (Jenkins, 2002; Rawolle & Lingard, 2008; Rawolle & Lingard, 2013). Actors are positioned within relations of domination, subordination or equivalence, depending upon the allocation of economic, social, cultural and symbolic capital within the field (Jenkins, 2002; Peacock et al., 2013)

One of Bourdieu's most potent critiques of social life in general is his mapping of the dialectical relationship between dominant symbolic and cultural capitals and forms (as manifested in higher education institutions, for instance, in terms of proficiency in and appropriate aesthetic dispositions for 'high' cultural expression) and economic capital, the basic condition of possibility for these other capitals. Although cultural (or symbolic and social) capital cannot be simply reduced to economics and to social class, it nonetheless remains for Bourdieu that:

> ...the ultimate principle of intelligibility of the relations of symbolic fields remains that of the relations of the economic field. Although at a distance from it, and reversed, the logic of symbolic fields is homologic with that of the field of production. (as cited in Moore, 2004, p. 90)

Each field for Bourdieu (to a greater or lesser extent, *vis-à-vis* the ultimately dominant political fields of power and gender), has its own autonomy, valorisations, beliefs, and logics that are both interiorized by individuals and subsequently projected back onto the field to constitute it (Grenfell & James, 1998). Yet individuals within the field are likely to 'misrecognise' their own knowledge, competences or positionings as accruing from the conditions of production intrinsic to the field, rather than in relation to the power relations of the economic field (Moore, 2004). So, within higher education for instance, when elite universities justify their grandeur according to a notion of prestigious tradition and 'pure' research as the pursuit of knowledge as an end in itself, they (unconsciously or otherwise) misrecognize, obfuscate and distance their objective dependence upon the power relations that provide the conditions of possibility for their distinction.

As Bourdieu (1993) has noted, within cultural fields, such as the field of higher education, there are two oppositional sub-fields – that of the elite and restricted production of a product with high prestige and autonomy, and that of the mass produced product with low prestige, less autonomy (more heteronomous) and more dependent upon other fields and the wider field of power. Such insights are useful when considering a higher education field within Australia, wherein the elite universities (the 'Sandstones', or 'Group of Eight'), which

position themselves as global research players, have significant cultural and symbolic capital (prestige), are (relatively[11]) less obviously commercial in temper (more autonomy from economic power), and are more able to define themselves according to their own self-understandings and as providing an education for its own sake (Gale, 2011b; Marginson, 2008; Marginson & Considine, 2000).

A field of higher education in Australia can be represented by the self-groupings of the universities that have occurred since the mid-1990s. The Group of Eight institutions clearly sit at the top of the field, and, with the exception of the University of Tasmania, lead the Australian field in international rankings, systems of measurement and comparison that both constitute and reproduce an international field of higher education that exacerbates the global stratification of universities (Pusser & Marginson, 2013). These universities have higher cut-off scores for tertiary entrance and the lowest proportions of Indigenous students and students from low SES backgrounds (Gale & Parker, 2013). Two other groupings of universities comprise the broad, middle range of Australian universities. Both groupings were established a decade ago because of the similar foundational histories of their members– the 'Innovative Research Universities' founded in the 1960s and 1970s, and the 'Australian Technology Network' that comprises institutions previously founded as Institutes of Technology[12]. At the base of the field in Australian higher education are the 'Regional Universities', with explicit community economic and cultural development agendas, and other urban but more recently (post-1987) established universities. In the Queensland context, UQ is the elite Sandstone institution, while QUT ('Technology' network grouping) and Griffith ('Innovative' grouping), with campuses in in Brisbane and the Gold Coast, vie for the Queensland's second most significant institutional research profile. Queensland's five other publically funded universities (Central Queensland, James Cook, Southern Queensland, Sunshine Coast, and Australian Catholic University [ACU]) belong to the 'regional' network or, in the case of ACU, are unaligned. These newer, regional and more vocationally oriented universities will tend to be more obviously dependent upon economic power.[13] Newer

---

[11] One could make the case that elite 'Sandstone' Australian universities would demonstrate less autonomy from the fields of power (politics) and economics than the *grande écoles* of Bourdieu's studies, and that their autonomy may even be in decline.

[12] Marginson and Considine (2000) have named these groupings the 'Gumtrees' and 'Unitechs'. The Gumtrees refers the natural setting of many of these 'Innovative Research' universities built in the 60s and 70s.

[13] ACU is a complicated case, as it profits from the pre-established cultural capital of Catholicism generally, and the economic capital of its followers and supporters, yet occupies a lower status than the major research…

universities, and regional and more vocationally oriented universities, will tend to be more obviously driven by financial imperatives for enrolments. They have lower cut-offs for tertiary entrance scores, can be more innovative with alternative entry procedures, have higher proportions of low-SES and Indigenous students (Gale & Parker, 2013), operate without the same research intensity and subsequently have a lower reputation.

The field of higher education in Australia, and Queensland, is stratified vertically, as institutions within the field occupy different positions within the academic hierarchy. Yet it is also horizontally stratified within single institutions as indicated in chapter 2, as certain disciplines (often biosciences and life sciences) accrue more prestige and economic power (Marginson, 2008). These disciplines attract a larger proportion of high-SES background students, while humanities and social science disciplines sit at the base of the academic hierarchy attracting a higher proportion of low-SES background students (Gale & Parker, 2013; James, 2008; James, Baldwin, Coates, Krause & McInnis, 2004).

As Naidoo (2007) has argued, despite the basic commonality of interests and values amongst universities and the social actors within them that is required to constitute a field, there is never consensus or unanimity within the field, but rather an ongoing state of conflict and tension. This conflict arises, Naidoo explains, because agents' position–takings are 'inseparable from the objective positions occupied by the agent or institution as a result of their possession of a determinate quantity of specific capital' (p. 216). This competition amongst differently positioned actors ensures that the field itself is not static structure but rather a site or space of struggle. Whether a specific actor will move to 'reserve or subvert the structure of the field' will depend upon the actor's 'social trajectory' and how the quantum and composition of capital within the field are moving over time (Chouliarki & Fairclough, 1999, p. 101). Thus fields and actors' positions within them can be and are 'redefined, strengthened or weakened' in specific interactions (p. 101).

Yet higher education fields are also susceptible to disturbances in wider and more dominant political and economic fields; for instance, when governments require universities to expand their intake of students in an effort to boost their stock of human capital for international competition in a globalizing economy (Thomson, 2005). This research attempts to map how the widening participation policies of the previous Australian Labor governments (i.e. HEPPP) have produced a disturbance to the field of higher education in Australia (specifically Queensland) that has led to increased competition amongst differently

---

…universities in Australia and is less selective in its student recruitment processes than, for instance, Group of Eight institutions.

positioned universities to recruit students from low SES backgrounds. The HEPPP policy, however, presents more of a challenge to the logics of practice (Thomson, 2010) of the elite Group of Eight universities in Australia and has occasioned new discursive practices to assemble equity and 'quality' discourses. As will be demonstrated in chapters 5 through 8, for Griffith, social inclusion and widening participation practices are necessary for its growth as a University, and so its ongoing financial viability, especially for its Logan campus. For UQ, however, which wishes to re-balance its student population in favour of postgraduate students[14], a widening participation agenda for undergraduate students is more difficult. What is at stake here is whether HEPPP policy effects in Queensland result over the longer term, not only in a more socioeconomically diverse student body in aggregate, but also in an equitable distribution of low SES students across a hierarchical higher education field.

It is possible to work together Bourdieu's notion of the 'field' within Smith's institutional ethnography methodology. The social relations coordinating student equity activities can be mapped upon this field of Australian and Queensland higher education, so that the field is understood to be an 'ongoing concerting of activities' (Smith, 2005) accomplished and re/produced in practice, and not simply understood as an *a priori* category into which certain social actors or institutions are pigeon-holed. In fact, Smith's understanding of social relations lends itself to a conceptualisation of a space-time expanse, as an unfolding course of actions and activities. She writes:

> I wish to emphasise the linearity and temporality of the concept of social relation. As I have come to use it, it analyses contexts of texts, speech, or acts not as limited by a time-bound frame – setting, occasion, etc. – but as constituents of a sequential social course of action through which various subjectivities are related. (Smith, 1990b, p. 221)

Social relations here map out a space-time, which encompasses texts and activities across multiple sites and settings, or sequences their organization across time and space. As Smith says elsewhere, 'discourse, and the ruling relations in general, are, ontologically, *fields* of organized activity' (Smith, 1999, pp. 75, emphasis mine).

Institutional ethnography seeks to map these extended social relations to demonstrate how local sites of practice are organized via texts/discourses and hooked into ruling relations originating elsewhere. The actual mapping within institutional ethnography studies is useful to examine, to determine how space and time are depicted and within what parameters. Susan Turner (2001, 2006) has perhaps more than any other institutional ethnography scholar

---

[14] In its 2011 Annual Report (The University of Queensland, 2012, p. 21) UQ set a goal for a 60% undergraduate, 40% graduate student participation by 2020.

honed the skill of mapping of social relations. She represents her findings as maps of institutional action sequences, or extended work processes across time, and as mapping an institutional field of action (Turner, 2006). Turner describes her mapping of social relations by referring to a particular planning process as follows: 'We can treat the complex of work processes…visible as an institutional field of action that is organized and reproduced in these multiple coordinated work processes' (p. 146). In Chapter 6, my study adapts Turner's representations of the field of institutional action in to map the student equity practices of staff from UQ. Crucial to this mapping, however, is the focus upon the specific textual activities of individual actors (and not 'institutions'), even if unidentified within the institution, as they activate and appropriate the textually mediated ruling relations of federal student equity policy. The discursive appropriation of these ruling relations is thus examined and mapped 'in specific communicative interaction and practice' (Chouliarki & Fairclough, 1999, p. 104).

POLICY

This institutional ethnography of student equity practices has also been designed as a policy enactment study. In this final section of the chapter, I develop an operational conception of policy best suited to the mapping of the textually mediated ruling policy relations of student equity practices through The Group, UQ and Griffith universities.

There have been many studies by institutional ethnographers that have dealt with the effects of policy changes in, for instance, health reforms (Rankin, 2001; Rankin & Campbell, 2006), school education (André-Bechely, 2005; Comber, 2012; Griffith & André-Bechely, 2008; Kerr, 2006; Nichols & Griffith, 2009), higher education (Jackson, 1995; L. McCoy, 1998), social welfare (Ridzi, 2003) and shifting labour markets (DeVault, 2008). Eastwood's (2005, 2006) institutional ethnographic accounts of the social organization of policy making for forestry at the United Nations have been particularly useful in documenting how the agendas of non-governmental organizations are, and are not, able to surface in the prodigious production of policy texts at the U.N. In all of these studies the concern has been to trace the coordination of people's activities and practices via textually mediated changes in government policy and/or management practices.

I wish to build on this work in this thesis, particularly Griffith's (1992) account of policy as 'talk and text' and as accomplished in the everyday local activities of student equity and outreach workers through their participation in widening participation discourses and the 'textually-mediated relations of governance' (Nichols & Griffith, 2009, p. 1). Building upon

the work of Comber (2012) and Nichols and Griffith (2009), I seek to draw together insights from critical policy sociology (Gale, 2001) to better demonstrate how the local processes of policy production and enactment are both a participation in (and activation of) the ruling, textually mediated relations of governance from afar, but also an appropriation of these ruling, textually mediated discourses. The sequencing of talk and text by individuals within institutions responding to government mandates is not a linear and uncomplicated process, but one fraught with contradictions and possibilities (Ball, Maguire & Braun, 2012). The dominant discourses of mandated policies can be both activated *and* appropriated, within the limits of their social field of action, in ways that resist both a totalizing reproduction of the ruling relations and an unbounded creative interpretation of mandated policy and its coordinating relations.

Levinson, Sutton and Winstead (2009), building upon their earlier work outlining a critical practice approach to policy through a synthesis of critical anthropology and educational policy (Sutton & Levinson, 2001), seek to interrogate policy as a kind of social practice. These authors argue that the ethnographic study of policy, as a practice of power, can serve to enhance participatory democratic capacities of local interpreters and appropriators of 'official' or 'formal policy' (Levinson et al., 2009, pp. 767-768).

A 'sociocultural approach to practice' (Levinson et al., 2009, p. 769) shares with other critical policy theories a challenge to technical, empirical accounts of policy implementation that fail to adequately theorize policy itself (Ball, 1994; Bowe, Ball & Gold, 1992; Gale, 2003; Lingard, 1993; Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard & Henry, 1997; Troyna, 1994). Without a critical interrogation of what policy is and what it does, policy implementation studies tend to codify, reproduce and amplify the interests of the dominant classes through the effects of power. Modern-rationalist, large scale and quantitative social policy measurements, such as the construction and measurement of SES as outlined in the previous chapter, in particular are prone to reproducing the inequality they purport to document, as they both assert scientific control over and shape the social and physical environment according to a pre-established ideal (Wagenaar & Cook, 2003). Yet Sutton and Levinson (2009) argue that a further shift in thinking is necessary, where the critical questions become 'who can do policy?' and 'what can policy do?' (p. 769). Their 'sociocultural approach to policy as practice of power for democracy' thus seeks to democratize the policymaking process to include the local and often 'informal' practices of social agents (p. 769).

Policies, as texts, are conceptualized by Levinson et al. (2009) as a 'reified' instance of a broader chain of socio-cultural practice (p. 778). Instead of focusing upon policy

implementation, the authors foreground the social practice involved in the formation, negotiation, and appropriation of policy, manifest not simply among authorized policy elites, but at differing social arenas in which the interests and vocabularies 'comprising a normative policy discourse get negotiated into some politically and culturally viable form' (p. 778). Negotiation is both political, as policy gets negotiated among divergent interests, and sociocultural, where 'meaning-making' is a negotiated beyond policy formation and across institutional and micro-institutional sites as policy flows and takes shape (p. 779). Levinson (2001, 2009) employs the term 'appropriation' anthropologically to refer to "the way creative agents [primarily a community of socio-cultural practice, rather than individuals[15]] interpret and 'take in' elements of policy, thereby incorporating these discursive resources into their own schemes of interest, motivation and action" (p. 779). The authors are not simply interested in the recognition and valorising of local, unofficial policy formation, they also see local sense-making, and appropriation, as pointing to a possible 'recursive influence of local actors on the formation of authorized policy' (p. 779).

For Levinson and colleagues, local appropriation of official policy is inevitable, but also potentially impacts authorised policy in ways conducive to the interests of local actors. The practice of policy is a practice of power, whether enforced from afar to coordinate local practices (Griffith, 1992; Nichols & Griffith, 2009) or produced more locally, as the appropriation of ruling relations to accord with localised practices to the extent possible (Sutton & Levinson, 2001).

The work of Levinson et al. is a useful addition to the perspectives afforded by Bourdieu and Smith, because neither of the latter has written explicitly about policy or the policy field (see van Zanten, 2005). Levinson and colleagues (Levinson et al., 2009; Sutton & Levinson, 2001) see education policy in practice as being appropriated to local conditions, providing a way of thinking about what traditional policy literature called 'policy implementation' (Honig, 2006) and what more recent literature calls 'policy enactment' (Ball et al., 2012). Levinson et al.'s 'sociocultural approach to policy as a practice of power', and their understanding of appropriation as 'creative interpretive practice' (Levinson et al., 2009,

---

[15] The notion of cultural appropriation in anthropology borrows (appropriates?) a hermeneutical theory of appropriation developed in the phenomenological analysis of an individual reader's encounter with a text, which, for example, Ricouer explains as follows: "an interpretation is not authentic unless it culminates in some form of appropriation (*Aneignung*), if by that term we understand the process by which one makes one's own (*eigen*) what was initially other or alien" (Ricouer, 1981, p. 178).

pp. 767-768), are useful concepts for understanding how local collectives negotiate and appropriate policy arising from afar. In the process these collectives produce local policy that more adequately meets the needs of local circumstances and cultural practices.

The definition of policy employed in this study bridges Levinson et al.'s view of policy as appropriation and practices of power, and Smith's insight into the textual mechanisms of the local activation of ruling power relations, so that policy is conceived as the specifically *textually-mediated practices of power.* Bourdieu's conception of agentic possibilities within limits is also utilised to understand the distribution of these textually-mediated practices of power across the variously positioned universities, whose representatives comprise The Group.

With this concept, the thesis developed here contributes to knowledge of how neoliberal education policies, as textually-mediated practices of power, insinuate themselves materially into local policies and practices, and how local policy actors and practitioners activate, but also appropriate and reconfigure, globally influential education policy discourses such as 'widening participation' and their rearticulation at regional and local levels.

CONCLUSION

To account for the diverse practices of student equity outreach at UQ, Griffith and the practices of The Group, and to examine how these institutions have both produced and enacted student equity policy, I have sought in this chapter to position my thinking in relation to the sociological theory and practices of Dorothy Smith and her colleagues, Bourdieu and his interpreters, Chouliarki and Fairclough (1999), and Levinson et al (Levinson et al., 2009; Sutton & Levinson, 2001). Dorothy Smith's concepts of ruling relations and their textually mediated activation have oriented the thesis, but are supplemented both by Chouliarki and Fairclough and Levinson's notion of the appropriation of these textual relations that organize local practices. This appropriation happens through drawing on, within specific instances of talk and text, differing 'orders of discourse' that enable more localized discursive practices to serve local imperatives. The organization of local practices to official mandates produced from afar is never absolute, and policy production and enactment are necessarily always negotiated and appropriated.

Yet the extent of this appropriation is dependent, to an extent, upon the field of institutional action that is produced and reproduced by local actors as they enact policy. The hierarchical and competitive field of higher education in Queensland shapes how student equity and outreach workers practice their craft, and the way they activate and appropriate the

ruling (neoliberal) policy relations of HEPPP. As textually mediated practices of power, student equity policies at the federal, state (The Group), university and even school level are activated and appropriated differently, in ways that are recognizable (Smith, 2006a) to the members within these institutions as how student equity work 'gets done'. How federal student equity policy gets accomplished in Queensland is the analysis to which the thesis now turns.

CHAPTER 4: PRACTISING INSTITUTIONAL ETHNOGRAPHY

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I define institutional ethnography as the primary methodology employed within the research and identify the key, practice based problematic. Next, I elaborate the research design, my data collection procedures and analytical steps. I attempt to provide a reflexive account of the research process and my own positionality as a knowledge worker within the institutional and ruling relations that both the student equity workers and I, albeit differently, are immersed.

INSTITUTIONAL ETHNOGRAPHY

Smith's (2005) defines institutional ethnography as follows.

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

Smith's 'sociology for people' grounds social science in people's activities and their conditions, and takes a standpoint 'in the actualities of people's embodied beings' (Smith, 2007, p. 411). This is the first step for the institutional ethnographer: to explore the social world 'as it is known experientially... as actual people's activities or doings in the actual local situations and conditions of our lives' (p. 411). The next step is 'to discover and map that world so that how it is being put together can be made observable from the view point of those caught up in it' (p. 411).

It is important to note that Smith does not suggest that attention to empirical practices does not proceed without theory, and she explicitly notes the influences of Marx and Engels, Mead, Vološinov, and Bakhtin (Smith, 1999, pp. 6, 98). The researcher cannot avoid interpretation before the data, nor employing concepts in the capture and analysis of data. But the difference in institutional ethnography is the researcher's disciplined commitment not to straitjacket the data with rigid theory, and instead to engage in a more sustained and

dialectical process of learning from people's concrete practices as experienced and spoken, then shifting the field work and analysis in light of the emerging data (Smith, 2007). The task in institutional ethnography is to commence the investigation from somewhere, in specific people's empirical practices and experiences, instead of in theory or the logocentric view from nowhere. Only then is it possible to render an empirical account of how these practices participate in and are coordinated by translocal ruling relations.

Smith's ontology of the social has implications for how the university institutions in this study – UQ, Griffith, and The Group – are conceptualised. Institutions are, for Smith (2007), not regarded as independent existences with distinct histories and cultures that can be brought into view as objects of knowledge, but rather are 'functionally specified complexes within the ruling relations', such as education, health care and so forth' (p. 412). These institutions, or functional complexes, are themselves situated and tied into 'a wider organization of interconnecting translocal relations and into the social relations of capital' (p. 412). The institutional ethnographer accesses these ruling relations that both constitute and flow through these universities by analysing 'texts in action', such as policies and institutional reporting forms, which are used to capture the actualities of every day work so they can then be institutionally actionable (p. 412).

In this institutional ethnography of the equity outreach practices of higher education workers who engage with the students, schools and communities in low SES areas, the HEPPP policy and other institutionally specific policies were analysed not as distinct and separate phenomena, but as they were activated in the day-to-day activities of what Smith (2005) calls the 'text-reader' conversation (p. 228). Within this text-reader conversation, the reader both activates the text or policy, and becomes activated by it, becoming the policy's 'agent' (Smith, 2005, p. 120), while also negotiating and appropriating it in whatever way is possible (Levinson et al., 2009; Sutton & Levinson, 2001). Campbell and Gregor (2004) understand institutional ethnography as concerned with how social organization, or ruling power, comes from the mediation of texts, such as policies. Dorothy Smith called this ruling process 'textually-mediated social organization' (as cited in Campbell & Gregor, 2004, p. 29).

THE PROBLEMATIC OF THIS STUDY

The problematic (Campbell & Gregor, 2004; Smith, 2005), or experience of disjuncture or conflict within practice, for the study was suggested by my observation of an equity outreach workers' community of practice, a grouping of equity, marketing, recruitment and Indigenous

practitioners from all of Queensland's public universities. On July 15th, 2011, the Group of convened a seminar show casing the best in outreach practices amongst the member universities. The problematic, as I heard it articulated that day, was the tension some equity outreach workers felt around, on the one hand, the necessity for student recruitment and the competition for low SES students amongst universities, and on the other hand their concurrent work to collaborate and partner with institutions to offer these school students information and encouragement to pursue more generalised pathways into further education. The tension in practice was articulated as working to assist a single university's financial imperative to recruit students (who, being defined as low SES, attracted a financial loading under the HEPPP policy), and working to expand opportunity and capacity for higher education more generally. This tension in practice, however, was further heightened by another federal policy.

Running parallel to and supporting the HEPPP agenda was the social inclusion target setting for universities as a part of a negotiated Mission-based Compact process. Since 2010, each university in Australia has entered into Mission-based Compacts[16] with the federal government to align a university's specific goals with government agendas for the sector, including the goal of moving the sector in aggregate to a participation rate for low SES students of 20% by 2020. Within these compacts, there were extra 'performance funding' incentives for universities, with two 'social inclusion' targets specified (Gale & Parker, 2013). Based upon a base measurement from 2009 and/or 2010, a low SES student participation rate was set for each year of the compact, moving incrementally higher over the life of the agreement. Most universities in Queensland had also agreed to an Indigenous participation rate target although they were also able to choose another equity grouping such as students with disabilities. A formula was set to allocate the reward funding should the target be met, with many Queensland universities standing to gain well over a million dollars of performance funding for achieving both targets. Crucially, however, despite references within HEPPP Participation guidelines to student retention and support, the key policy driver lever for improving low SES participation rates was for individual universities to recruit, as quickly as possible, as many low SES students as they could. There were no retention or success performance targets set. The result was that for both HEPPP Participation fund

---

[16] These Mission-based Compact low SES social inclusion targets, however, have been dropped in the most recent round of Mission-based Compacts (2014-2016) signed with the new federal (Coalition) government. The Indigenous performance indicators and targets remain in place for universities (Department for Education, 2013).

guidelines, and for Mission-based Compact performance funding targets, universities were positioned as competitors with each other vis-à-vis low SES students and, in Queensland, for Indigenous students, particularly those universities with relatively weaker low SES or Indigenous participation rates.

This competition/collaboration problematic oriented the study initially, providing a point of departure, and a vantage point, for subsequent analysis of how their social practices in engaging marginalized students, schools and communities are connected into wider 'ruling relations', at the institutional and federal policy level. As the study progressed, and as I both observed further The Group meetings and seminars, and gained access to The Group's archived files, this basic tension in practice manifested itself particularly in concerns around the reporting and evaluation of student outreach activities. The tensions between the necessity of short-term, institutionally specific recruitment of students from schools in low SES areas, as incentivised by Mission-based Compact agreements and HEPPP Participation fund disbursement formulas, and longer-term capacity building and community engagement initiatives in schools and communities to support educational achievement in schools, were traced textually via the Group's reporting mechanisms and those of UQ and Griffith.

The key problematic for the study, arising from my observations of student equity 'talk' in a Queensland forum, and developed in the field subsequently, can be summarised as follows. Student equity practitioners, in differing ways, experience a tension in their work because of federal policies that privilege competition amongst universities in the recruitment and support of students from schools in low SES areas. Accountability relations established between the federal government and the universities for social inclusion outcomes also produce tensions in practice between activities that serve longer-term school and community capacity building goals and shorter-term student recruitment activities. The study seeks to explicate these textually mediated tensions across three sites of student equity policy production and practice - UQ, Griffith, and The Group - and describe how student equity practice is hooked into these ruling relations. It also describes how student equity staff appropriate these relations, within limits to be described, in lieu of local institutional imperatives and the needs of students from schools in communities in low SES areas.

RESEARCH SITES RATIONALE

THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND

UQ was selected because it seemed practically to offer me ease of access to staff for interviews and observations. This was proved to be the case, although gaining internal low

SES student participation and retention data proved more challenging, as I will describe below. As a Group of Eight, 'Sandstone' and internationally recognized university, UQ also consistently enrolls the lowest proportions of low SES domestic students[17] in the State, suggesting rich possibilities for examining student equity practices in this particular context. UQ's Boilerhouse Centre for Community Engagement, which until 2012 was operational and housed on the Ipswich campus, also provided a non-equity based site that has produced with a range of partners a distinctive 'engaged outreach' and 'widening participation' model and practices (Cuthill & Scull, 2010; Stewart et al., 2007) that were worth examining.

GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY

My participation in The Group seminar in 2011 also afforded an opportunity to see a presentation by a manager of student equity give a presentation on Griffith's extension of its existing 'Uni-Reach' activities in schools to a 'Careers' focused event for Year Six children. HEPPP funding was enabling Griffith to expand its student equity programming, and to intervene earlier in school children's learning to 'engage' their 'aspirations' for post-secondary study and university participation. What distinguished Griffith's approach was its community engagement framework and consultative processes throughout the planning of the project with the ten primary schools and with the Queensland Department of Education and Training (as it was then called). I was also aware of the high regard within the equity field in Australian Universities for Griffith, and its recognition from the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) for its 'Uni-Reach' program. The Uni-Reach program had also been 'commended' by Australian Universities Quality Agency (now renamed as the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency) and appears within this organization's 'Good Practice Data Base'. Griffith has also won recognition for its widening participation work from the Office of Learning and Teaching (the ALTC's successor) for its 'Uni-Reach Drama', constructed by staff from the Applied Theatre school, which 'tours an educational theatre piece in 12 schools across the region, raising aspiration in Year Eight pupils to consider tertiary education'(Griffith University, n.d.-b). Additionally, Griffith's programs were highlighted in case study research conducted by the National Centre for Student Equity in 2010 (Sellar et al., 2010). Claims by Griffith that 'Uni-Reach is consistent with the [former] Commonwealth government's Equity and Quality agenda and with Griffith's

---

[17] For instance, 2012 figures from the Department of Industry Higher Education Statistics pages indicate UQ with a participation rate for all domestic, low SES undergraduate students (as measured by the Census District formula used for reward payments under the Mission-based Compacts) of 10.37%. QUT is at 11.38%, Griffith 13.89%, James Cook 22.4% and CQU at 35.61% (Higher Education Statistics, 2013a).

commitment to social inclusion and social justice' (Griffith University, n.d.-c) suggested that Griffith's student equity practices would be worthy of a study that seeks to map how student equity practices were 'hooked' up into the wider 'ruling relations' flowing through the HEPPP policy from the federal government. A study of UQ and Griffith's diverse practices also highlights how the enactment of federal policy in universities will be, to a certain extent, dependent upon the university's position within the field of higher education, and the differing logics of practice producing and reproducing that position (Bourdieu, 1990; Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993). Just how these differences unfolded, and how the field was constituted, were, however, matters for empirical discovery in the research process.

Despite UQ's position as the elite, Group of Eight, university in Queensland, a position both constituted and reproduced in international rankings regimes (Pusser & Marginson, 2013), and Griffith's position as an aspirational University[18] whose *raison d'être* historically lay in acting for educating for social inclusion, both universities share similar discursive and practice based struggles to reconcile student equity goals and commitments to academic excellence and its concomitant reputational capital. In her case study of Griffith's student equity initiatives, Tranter (Sellar et al., 2010) noted that an internal review had been conducted in 2007 by a leading scholar in the equity field who, in addition to finding a well-executed and integrated set of equity strategies, found a tension between Griffith's equity mission and the concurrent strategy to recruit a greater number of school leavers with a high Overall Position (OP) entrance score to maximize student success and increase institutional prestige. In Griffith's 2009-2013 Strategic Plan, for instance, there was a goal that by 2013 it would 'enrol 15% of all OP 1-8 eligible students applying to Queensland Universities', to be operationalised through a 'student recruitment strategy' that 'rests on close partnerships with key schools and a generous package of financial assistance and enrichment experiences for high achieving students' (Griffith University, 2009).

Such tensions were evident at UQ in 2011 as well. Staff then had perceptions that UQ branded itself as elite university, and in practice committed more energy in nurturing relationships with private, feeder schools than low SES state schools and communities (Cuthill & Schmidt, 2011). UQ's Annual Report of 2011 (2012a) boasted its academic and reputational capitals with coloured bar charts measuring UQ's dominant share of students achieving an OP from 1 to 3 before commencement. UQ's current Strategic Plan (2013) aims

---

[18] For instance, Griffith uses QS World Rankings of 2014 to market itself as a university in the club of the 'Top 50 under 50' and within the top 100 in the world for three of its disciplines (Griffith University, 2014).

to both attract and recruit the 'the brightest and best' students as well as to 'improve the participation and success of students from low SES and Indigenous backgrounds'. These strategic objectives are practically brought together in the offering of traditional scholarships to low-SES students who meet existing entry requirements ('the best and the brightest'), and with other supports to 'deserving' low-SES students who clearly demonstrate interest and motivation at Year 10 for university education (University of Queensland, 2011).

THE QUEENSLAND WIDENING PARTICIPATION GROUP

The final 'site' I ethnographically researched The Group 'community of practice'. Entry into this student equity practitioner space was opened for me by my primary advisor, who had worked with the Chair of the Group in work around the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education. I was received warmly by the Chair, and invited to observe the seminar in 2011. In Chapter One I described this group's ongoing function and purposes. Here I add that this community of practice seems to have been influential in appropriating the HEPPP policy according to local conditions and articulating back to federal policy bureaucrats a localized form of policy production. [19]

The study examines the first project the Group set for itself: a 'Coordinated schools outreach' process. An outline of some of these activities formed the basis for the 2011 seminar. In 2011, this collective had sought to maximize the effectiveness of the State's universities' responses to the needs of low SES students and schools by constructing a joint bid for additional government 'Partnership' funds to provide 'widening participation' activities in low SES schools and also in distinct Indigenous community engagement initiatives across the Queensland. At the time, even before I discovered The Group had been successful in securing over 20 million dollars, I recognised that such negotiating practices (both with universities and government) suggested a substantial power to localise the policy production process, engage local interests, and better mediate alternative modes of policy to 'official' policy makers (Levinson et al., 2009). A study of the social practices of this community of (equity) practice was undertaken to elaborate the function this group also plays in mitigating competition among universities in their equity work. The Group practices were also a site that enabled me to analyse whether this localized policy production would activate,

---

[19] Responsibility for higher education policy within the federal bureaucracy moved from the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations to a Department of Innovation, Industry, Science, Technology, and Research. Under the new Coalition government, higher education has moved to an 'Education" ministry.

and perhaps appropriate, 'ruling relations' for local student equity outreach in Queensland universities.

RESEARCH DESIGN

ETHICS PROCESSES AND GATEKEEPERS

Ethics approval processes proved complicated for the study, not primarily because of the nature of the research but because of the multi-sited data collection points and systems of ethical governance operating across these sites. UQ's full institutional approval came relatively quickly. After email correspondences with UQ's Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Pro Vice-Chancellor Indigenous, who enabled me to approach other UQ staff, I arranged for 'gatekeeper' meetings with the following:

- Director of Office of Prospective Students, Scholarships and Student Equity (UQ)
- Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Education)
- UQ Planning Director

These meetings placed the following parameters around the study. First, I would not be able to conduct ethnographic observations upon UQ staff acting in UQ's Young Achiever Schools (they were the focus of another study), and instead was to do field work on UQ's 'widening participation activities' in its 'widening participation' schools. I negotiated with the Director that I would be able to interview staff about the Young Achievers Program, and also collect data on the program for staff and managers. Second, the Pro-Vice Chancellor Indigenous from UQ expressed to me a concern that my study not focus upon 'past restructuring' and its impacts upon staff, and instead upon new activities coming on stream, it was anticipated then, by the end of 2012 after the release of a new UQ Indigenous Learning Strategic Plan. Third, according to Planning Office staff, I would not be able to access data that was 'owned by QTAC' (Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre) and used by UQ for internal planning purposes. Although there was an initial offering to work with me to provide some 'aggregated data', and a consent form signed, there was no subsequent correspondence with me despite repeated email communication. Whilst part of this communication breakdown could be attributed to some staff turnover throughout the period of the study, my assumption is that the data I asked for (e.g. commencement, participation and retention rates broken down by SES and school, and particularly scholarship details) was regarded as belonging to QTAC, and not able to be made public. Although these data were not essential to the thesis, and my intent was to interview Planning staff over how they produced such data (not the numbers *per se*), the experience suggests to me the sensitivity with which questions

of social class, participation and access to scholarships are regarded in a Group of Eight university such as UQ. As predominantly government funded institutions, the expectation of public transparency in universities appears also to be balanced against the need to safeguard competitive, 'market sensitive' data sets that here would describe UQ's 'market share' of various student 'segments' (the terms come from UQ's own data sets and staff informant discourses). Finally, there is an irony that QTAC will not let UQ share its (QTAC) data with me when QTAC is effectively 'owned', through its founding, by the universities of Queensland.

I was able to work around this dilemma by accessing other internal reports from UQ detailing some of the most pertinent data around low SES participation and commencement rates and, more importantly, strategic planning texts. My applications to gatekeepers also recognised the sensitivity of the study in general. In a highly competitive market for higher education, particularly in South East Queensland, I was careful to communicate the following:

> The study does not seek to evaluate, or compare, the results or impacts of these equity practices upon either low-SES student participation rates, or the success of equity or Indigenous staff and their administrators in 'raising aspirations' for low-SES students. Instead, what is sought is an analysis of the coordinating relations *across* UQ and Griffith and the Queensland Widening Participation Working Group, and how each institution enacts its equity practices in light of wider policy objectives and in light of its own specifically situated agendas and strategic objectives.

From Griffith, by way of contrast, I was provided access to a large quantity of internal, institutional data that I used to inform my understanding of the processes leading to strategic decision making around HEPPP fund deployment.

I secured ethical approval from Education Queensland and Brisbane Catholic Education to follow University staff into schools (and on campuses and other community sites with their students) to observe their outreach practices. Key to my application was a distinction I made between collecting data from the University staff, and not directly from their students via recorded interview or video. School students would be observed in interaction with University staff, but they were not the focus of the study. I realize this is not an absolute distinction, and that observing University staff interactions with students inevitably involves observing and noting their reactions and responses. Yet the goal with these observations, as mentioned below in more detail, was quite specific: to trace the

'immanent presence' of extra-local social organization within the work of student equity practices (Diamond, 2006)**.**

Nonetheless this issue of not focusing on the students was raised in the separate institutional ethics approval process demanded by Griffith University. After a period of negotiation and explanation, and some internal discussions amongst Griffith executives, it was agreed that the study could proceed with a student friendly, simple, one page explanation sheet explaining that the students were not the focus of the study. I kept this at all times in case there were questions from students, parents or others around the purposes of my presence at the location and the study. After ethical clearance from Griffith, I had to seek gatekeeper approval from Griffith's DVCA and DVC Provost, upon receipt of which I met with the Director of Student equity, and with the manager of educational partnerships. These Griffith student equity managers were, as with UQ's Office of Prospective Students, Scholarships and Student Equity (OPSSSE) staff, open to assisting with my thesis, yet (in Griffith's case) could not find time either for my presence at their activities (with one exception), or for staff interviews, until the last quarter of 2012.

These realities meant I would focus my data collection strategies during the first half of 2012 upon UQ programming and on The Group's activities and documents. After meeting with the Chair of the Group and the Queensland Department of Education and Training Project Officer supporting the Group, and their subsequent consultation of Queensland's student equity practitioners from its eight publically funded universities, I gained approval to be an observer of their meetings. At the first meeting I participated in, during June, 2012, I gained their consent, and gained this again from new participants as they arrived. I also decided to interview staff (obtaining separate consent) from two other Queensland universities (JCU and CQU) about their workings with The Group to get a sense of how their practices, more remote to Brisbane, were impacted by The Group's activities.

Because of the nature of these meetings, I was able to access Griffith and other universities' student equity policies and data (including evaluations, strategies etc.) throughout the first half of 2012. The Group Chair and Secretariat also provided me with access to minutes and documents going back to 2009. The state government kept these documents, and those released did not include all data from the Departmental Project Officer to Group members and its correspondents (e.g. emails to university Vice-Chancellors), nor the confidential ranking of schools by precise SES indicators. After consistent communication, however, I did gain access to a substantial amount of documentary data, including the allocation of schools (and demographic, SES data, and transition rate to higher

education data) into clusters for each university. All of this data, except for the minuted meetings from the Higher Education Forum to which the Group reports, has not been in the public domain.

DATA COLLECTION

Introduction

Institutional ethnography employs any combination of the traditional qualitative data collecting methods such as observations and field notes, interviews, focus groups, document and textual analysis, and reflection upon the researcher's own experience (DeVault & McCoy, 2001). In each case, however, what is distinctive in institutional ethnographic use of these methods is what is being searched for: the relations of ruling that coordinate everyday experiences and practices. In this study I employed the methods of ethnographic observation, semi-structured interviews, and textual and discourse analysis.

Data collection proceeded by two analytically, if not sequentially, distinct steps. First, I positioned myself as a researcher from a standpoint within student equity practices, specifically as they engaged schools, students and communities located within low SES areas. This involved exploration of the settings for this work, and the day-to-day experiences and work practices of staff interacting there. From this 'entry level data' (accessed via observation, talk and interview), the problematic was detected, and the disjuncture or tension was named (as above) and checked against a number of differing persons within the same sites and across these sites (UQ, Griffith, and The Group).

The second step of data collection involved specifically attending to the translocal, textually mediated ruling relations flowing through administrative and governing processes that structure the daily work practices of the group this study was located alongside. This involved a move beyond the ethnographic documenting of the work practices and 'processing interchanges' (see below) themselves into 'macroinstitutional policies and practices that organize those local settings' (DeVault & McCoy, 2006, p. 29). As Smith (2006b) notes, this requires 'interviews with institutional functionaries, observation of institutional work processes, or examination of key institutional texts' (p. 124). Student equity practitioner informants (entry-level data) offered clues to who these functionaries were, and what institutional processes and texts located 'outside the setting' of the informants themselves were to be scrutinized in the second step of data collection (Campbell & Gregor, 2004; Deveau, 2008). Observations, interviews and textual/discourse analysis were conducted with this dual purpose in mind, to gain data on equity outreach practices and to trace the

coordination of these practices through extra-local texts and discourses. Anticipating ahead of data collection that the HEPPP policy would be a key, textual mechanism by which student equity practices would be coordinated, and having had this confirmed at the Group seminar in July, 2011, my data collection then oscillated, in a sequential sense, between 'entry-level data collection' (observations of student equity practices, interviews with student equity or outreach staff) and 'secondary' data collection from those University staff either managing these student equity units and then higher level managers and executives of universities outside of those units and whose textual work (policies, strategies, evaluations etc.) coordinated the work of student equity practices.

Interviews

Twelve (12) semi-structured interviews were conducted with those student equity staff and managers from UQ and Griffith whose day-to-day work involved participating in outreach activities with schools and communities in low SES areas. These were conducted over the course of 2012, with Griffith staff interviews conducted in December. Although I had intended interviewing each informant twice, it became apparent that this was not necessary (nor possible within the time-frame) because of my on-going email communications with these staff, phone calls and informal conversations in the course of my ethnographic field work.

These interviews were not used as windows into the informant's inner experiences, but rather to gain clues to the 'relations of ruling' shaping their local practices (DeVault & McCoy, 2006, p. 15). That is, interviews were used to inquire into the way things worked, as practised, and were connected within a sequence of activities and texts, known in institutional ethnography as 'processing interchanges' that, although often experienced as by informants as 'natural' and unremarkable, accomplish much of the ideological work of the institution (Pence, 2001). Interview questions thus asked for descriptions of work practices, how these practices were evaluated, what other offices or departments from within the university impacted their work (from where and how), and whether any agencies or partners outside the university impacted upon their student equity practices (See Appendix 1 for Interview Guides). My previous experience in a Canadian university had shown me the significance of evaluations, and here in this study I recognized their function as key 'processing exchanges' that articulate the messiness of work into categories that are institutionally actionable.

All of the student equity interviews were conducted at the informant's office or space connected to their place of work. Interviews took on average an hour, although some were considerably longer (in one case closer to two hours). Of the 12 student equity staff

interviewed from UQ and Griffith, there were two men and 10 women, of varying ages (early 30s to mid-50s). There was only one person who was a visible minority amongst these student equity staff interviewed, although both UQ and (especially) Griffith employ a very diverse group of student mentors to assist them in these engagement activities. Student equity practices involve both direct interactions with students in schools in various programs as well as mediated interactions via these university student ambassadors or mentors.

There were varying degrees of experience and practical knowledge of student equity practices communicated and demonstrated by these informants. At UQ, there had been a considerable degree of institutional restructuring for student equity initiatives since the release of the Bradley Review in 2008, including a move of the student equity function from Student Services to the Office of Student Recruitment and Scholarships (now the Office of Prospective Students, Scholarships and Student Equity; see Chapter 6). Another complicating dynamic was that the staff person at UQ most knowledgeable and experienced in student equity practices was not operationally responsible for these outreach practices as they had been arranged, and instead provided more of an equity policy consultancy to the university. The gap in knowledge and experience in student equity policy and practice at UQ between the practitioners and the advisor became particularly apparent at the Group meetings. When this equity advisor was present at these meetings, UQ's presence was felt more significantly.

UQ structures its work in low SES schools according to 'widening participation' programs and activities with the cluster of schools allocated to it under the Group process, the 'Young Achievers Program' - UQ's 'flagship' yet 'selective equity program' for 'deserving' low SES students from across Queensland, but particularly the South and Central West - and its work with Years 10-12 students in 'equity' schools in the Brisbane area. I was able to interview staff responsible for each of these programming initiatives. I also interviewed UQ's equity advisor in the second stage of interviewing as described below.

A number of the Griffith student equity staff and managers (who also exercised considerable hands-on supervision and participated themselves in equity and outreach events) were very experienced, and some even were involved with the founding of the signature 'Uni-Reach' program in 1996. There was clearly an *esprit de corps* amongst the staff, who called themselves a 'team', and through interviewing and observations there appeared considerable knowledge about how their work was situated within Griffith's mission and objectives around 'social justice'.

My interviewing of Griffith's student equity staff engaged with the Uni-Reach, Uni-Drama and Adult Social Inclusion programs and took place in a focus group setting. The decision to conduct a focus group arose in response to time constraints communicated by Griffith and concerns around releasing their staff in the midst of a busy season of outreach. I had some prior experience with focus group research, and when faced with a decision to either shorten the individual interviews for each of these three informants, or gather them into a focus group and extend the time available, I chose this latter route. In focus groups there is always a concern for 'group think' or a consensus emerging amongst participants (Barbour, 2007). My first questions were sequential amongst the informants focused upon individual responsibilities and practices. As I followed up further with questions probing deeper into organizational processes performed by individual informants I encouraged other informants to join in what became more of an open-ended and free-flowing discussion. I found the informants to both affirm and also challenge each other's responses, although there was deference shown to particular areas of expertise and years of experience. One result the focus group achieved was a fuller account of the relationship between student equity outreach practices into low SES schools and the more generalised recruitment processes (through the Griffith Connect Program) in those same schools. Whilst there has been a distinction drawn sharply by the practitioners at Griffith, UQ and in the Group around 'widening participation' work and 'student recruitment' work, in practice these processes are more integrated, as staff from these differing units are in communication with each other to mutually support each other's tasks.

My study had originally intended interviewing (but not observing) Indigenous Unit staff from both UQ and Griffith about their Indigenous specific outreach and engagement practices. Although I had agonized about how I would do this for some time, by the beginning of October, 2012, I decided I would not be seeking to include Indigenous staff in my study from UQ and Griffith. This meant that I would be restricting my study to the student equity practices of Griffith and UQ in schools with students from low SES backgrounds, and not additionally upon Indigenous specific activities coordinated by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (ATSIS) units.

There were a few reasons for this decision, both pragmatic and theoretical. First, because UQ's Indigenous educational initiatives had been recently rethought and a fundamental restructuring was taking place, there appeared little new ATSIS initiatives stemming from HEPPP policy funding. Data collection opportunities were thus substantially curtailed. Designed as an institutional ethnography of student equity practices, my study's

lack of access to Indigenous specific activity meant that I could not make a substantive contribution in this area. This being the case, the reasons for approaching approach Griffith's GUMURRI's unit (Indigenous learning) became less clear.

I had always been aware of the possibility, and this became more acute as the study progressed, of the danger of the inadvertent conflation of the low SES and Indigenous categories in my analysis, through a constantly repeated discursive construction of 'low SES and Indigenous students' in my conversations and writings. Indigenous specific outreach and engagement is different than that for 'low SES' schools and students, even if the Group still specifies that general outreach into low SES schools must be 'Indigenous friendly'. I thought the danger of reproducing a deficit approach to Indigenous students was a real one given the way the study had been initially constructed. As a white male researcher unknown to the local university-based Indigenous scholars and professionals, I was also conscious that more time would need to be taken to develop relationships to a point where my study would be accepted as relevant and meaningful. My initial contacts with UQ Indigenous staff were positive. Yet because of UQ's restructuring, and lack of new HEPPP activity to document and analyse, I thought it best to withdraw from my plan to interview Indigenous staff at UQ, and subsequently Griffith. I communicated this to the PVC Indigenous Office on October 16th, 2012, after prior discussions with my advisors. A full policy enactment study of the HEPPP policy would undoubtedly attempt to include reference to Indigenous activities. Indeed, Indigenous programs and students, despite no formal reference to them within the HEPPP guidelines, have substantially benefited in a financial sense from HEPPP policy disbursement in Queensland. It will require further empirical study of Indigenous specific student equity outreach to ascertain whether the findings of this thesis relate in any way to the experiences of Indigenous university staff.

Each interview conducted with student equity staff suggested differing texts for collection and analysis, texts that played some sort of coordinating function in either assisting or constraining the practitioners' work. I have attached a list of interviews and subsequently collected texts in chronological order signifying the flow of data collection (Appendix 1). At the level of student equity staff engaged in outreach, the most important texts in their daily work were their correspondences with schools, evaluation forms for participants, and reports of their activities via managers and to the Group and the federal government. These were the key 'processing exchanges' (Pence, 2001) through which texts were activated, appropriated, and passed along in organizational sequences that are critical to institutional ethnographic analysis.

I conducted **three interviews with student equity staff acting in their capacity as Group members**, as well **one with the Project Officer to The Group** from the Department of Education, Training and Employment. Two of these interviews, with staff from JCU and CQU, were conducted via Skype (video and audio) and recorded (audio). These universities were deliberately chosen because their equity outreach programs substantially benefitted from the Group fund allocations. Serving some of the most remote students in Queensland, and communities with the highest proportions of low SES and Indigenous students, these equity staff and managers (one held both roles, the other more managerial responsibilities alone) were able to provide details around the division and deployment of HEPPP monies (Participation and Partnerships) and how their activities were coordinated with both The Group reporting processes and federal government policy requirements. Although not analysed specifically and in more detail, the informants from JCU and CQU provided interview data which confirmed that the HEPPP policy provided additional resources to expand their student body as much as change the SES profile of their student body.

An interview with the Department of Education, Training and Employment Project Officer to the Group lasted for almost two hours as I sought to ask questions surfacing from my readings of the many documents (over 120 in total) he was able to share with me detailing The Group's work since 2009. Finally, an **interview with the Chair of the Group**, gave me the opportunity to ask questions encompassing the full range of activities I had been following since July 2011, spanning the Group's agenda, politics, textually-mediated consensus building activities and strategic directions. This interview in particular enabled me to see how the mediation of federal student equity policy was occurring in Queensland, and the extent to which the Group was able to appropriate policy to local needs and concerns. For both of these interviews – with the Project Officer and the Chair – my interviewing style shifted somewhat. Even if I had not quite entered the world of the 'elite', these policy practitioners were clearly knowledgeable, experienced and took the opportunity of an interview to communicate what they wanted me to know (Batteson & Ball, 1995). As a result, my questions became more pointed, and at times less open-ended, to focus the discussion on my interests (Odendahl & Shaw, 2002), which were the tensions in student equity practices, and the role that key texts played in the coordination of local practices to the ruling relations established by federal policies. For instance, I asked specifically whether and how the informants thought that The Group had impacted the design of the HEPPP policy guidelines. I was conscious of the necessity in these interviews to both establish credibility by demonstrating mastery over the discourses of contemporary student equity practices, and

allowing space for and noticing any disjunctures between experience and institutional discourses. This is the trap Dorothy Smith (2005) alerts the researcher to, that one can become 'institutionally captured' in interviews with experienced, expert practitioners, where each participant speaks through dominant institutional discourses to each other and assumes the actualities to which they each refer are understood (p. 225). These two informants presented this challenge differently (bureaucratic reticence and caution, and more active control of the interview process). Nonetheless both interviews yielded vital data for the study, as will be analysed later in Chapter 4.

These challenges of 'interviewing up' continued as my data collection expanded beyond the student equity practitioners themselves to those informants, both referred to me by these staff and chosen by me intentionally, whose work practices coordinated these equity outreach staff. **In total, 19 interviews were conducted with 24 informants across UQ, Griffith and in schools located within both UQ and Griffith clusters allocated under a Group process** (see Appendix 2). A UQ administrator responsible for HEPPP budget and reporting was formally interviewed twice as internal policies shifted; and a focus group was held for Griffith's Student Equity Program officers.

These interviews followed a similar pattern, with questions designed to investigate the sequences of organizational processes involved, paying particular attention to the use of texts used for reporting functions, and how they coordinated the work experiences of student equity staff within institutional and ruling relations flowing through these universities. For example, after gaining general descriptions of these often more senior staff's work as it intersected with student equity staff and policy, I asked 'What activity and/or outcome reports to you collect from your staff?' 'What do you do with this data?' I collected data on how student equity practices were reported both internally and externally to government and the Group, and where possible I collected the textual instruments involved in these processes. See Appendix 2 for a list of the most relevant documents arising through this process.

I became aware throughout the interviewing process that a key text coordinating the shape of student equity practices was the Mission-based Compact agreement of the university, and specifically the 'Social Inclusion' targets each university had agreed it would try to meet in discussions with the federal government. Griffith had been set targets for 2011 of 13.38% participation rate for low SES and 1.85% Indigenous students, while UQ had targets of 10.55% and 0.64% respectively for the same student equity categories. Reward funding accrued to each University if it met its targets. Griffith was successful in meeting these targets, and so received over one million dollars in reward funding, while UQ was only

successful in reaching its Indigenous target, missing the low SES target and so missing out on around $600,000 or so of reward money. So while the HEPPP policy and funds were a critical text in coordinating student equity practices, these 'social inclusion' targets impacted the strategic planning of both universities and so were impacting student equity practices, particularly at UQ. Griffith's internal strategic documents revealed that student retention was its major concern, and HEPPP Participation funds had been used to address the issue with a range of measures designed for students who are 'first-in-family', an institutional proxy for low SES, to go to university. The retention of low SES students after they have accessed university is important in meeting these social inclusion participation targets. In contrast, UQ spent most of its HEPPP funds on outreach activities (Indigenous and low SES), staff costs and scholarships, seeking to boost its low SES student participation rate.

School Interviews

Schools were identified early in the study as a critical interface with the universities in shaping student equity practices. My selection of schools and staff to interview came from both opportunity and by design. I deliberately chose schools in which there was activity from both UQ and Griffith to discover how widening participation work related to more general recruitment work. Whereas Griffith staff saw widening participation work taking place from Year levels Six-12, UQ saw it beginning at Year Eight and ending in Year 10, at which point open competitive recruitment was in play. As will be seen in my analysis, The Group MOU was a critical text that aligned student equity practices in Queensland with competitive, neoliberal policy settings from the federal government.

I asked school principals about how they negotiated with universities and what practices were taking place in their schools. Particularly for schools within Griffith's cluster, the issues involved in the exclusion of New Zealand citizens from HECS-HELP loans to pay for their university education were raised repeatedly (see Chapter 8). With Guidance Counsellors I asked detailed questions around school based, student selection processes of students for widening participation activities. How were students identified and selected for various activities with universities? How did each university with whom the school partnered articulate its criteria for these processes? On which bases were these decisions made, and with which data? There was considerable diversity amongst schools around these practices, and students were identified by schools as more likely to benefit from particular university activities than others. It became apparent, for instance, that in one school the 'Rock and Water' program used was for students who were regarded by the school as having 'behaviour

issues', and who from my observations appeared to be some of the most marginalised children in the school.

Interview Data Management

The interviews were transcribed by a private company or by me (over half). In each case, my interview process involved recording the interview, listening to it soon after it had finished, making preliminary notes, and then importing the audio and notes into the NVIVO qualitative software program. My use of the NVIVO program was primarily for data management purposes. Some initial 'coding' was done around themes arising from the research problematic, such as 'competition and collaboration', as well as more discursive categories such as those phrases attempting to articulate a relationship between 'equity' and 'best and 'brightest'. Data were collected initially into 'shells' that contained particular program documents and interview data (e.g. Young Achievers Program texts). The data were then rearranged into 'processing exchanges' (Pence, 2001) to map how the thesis' informants actively handled, edited and passed on institutional texts, generated from and or coordinating student equity practices, in organizational work sequences. I identified the annual accountability cycles of HEPPP reporting as key processing exchanges for the articulation of student equity practices to the ruling relations of both federal and state mediated student equity policy. Government reporting templates, articulated to HEPPP Guidelines, were passed along to universities, whose staff then constructed institutional reports articulating student equity activities to the categories and discourses of these templates. Student equity activities were then written up using these categories and templates, and forwarded back to government. A similar processing exchange of selection procedures for student equity program participants, accomplished by both universities and schools, was also identified. The HEPPP reporting cycles and selection procedures acted as 'institutional technologies' that organized work practices (Pence, 2001, p. 204).

Although the NVIVO software has its design origins anchored in Grounded Theory methodology, my use of coding was not conducted to develop theory 'over and above' the activities of the informants, as in some kind of abstracted phenomenological or essentialized meaning of the experiences, but rather to assist in tracing the coordination of these student equity practices via textually mediated ruling relations. Transcriptions, once completed, were sent back to the informant for verification, and also for the opportunity to rework or rephrase that which might cause some kind of social or reputational risk within her or his institution or networks of practice.

This concern to protect individual's social and professional reputations arises in part because of the decision taken early in the research design process that that I would be naming the universities involved in the study – UQ and Griffith. It would have become practically impossible to preserve the anonymity of the institutions, given the particular geographies and socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of the communities and schools described in the study. My concern with identifying differing logics of practice for widening participation/student outreach practice for universities, according to their position within a field of higher education, also required a specific analysis of institutional processes that could not, realistically, but have led to the identification of the universities involved. Interview transcripts were thus importantly constructed as negotiated texts between the informants and me. This dialogical process (conducted by email and 'track change' functions in documents) was well utilised by staff at both Griffith and UQ. In some instances there were small re-phrasings, or updates to reflect shifting practices. In other cases, such as for managers at both UQ and Griffith, there were more detailed edits that made more formal the colloquial expressions used in conversation so as to prevent confusion from other staff. In other instances, opinions of other staff's work practices were removed. In short, the interview transcripts were approved by informants as texts that adequately expressed how they did their work and protected their social reputations amongst their peers. If questions arose for me in light of the interviews or other program observations, including my developing understandings of what was happening in staff practices, I would often additionally email these informants outside of interviews. These emails also enabled informants to clarify their accounts of how they were undertaking their outreach practices.

Ethnographic Observations

Observational field research in institutional ethnography begins from a specific place, continues over time and through motion, and seeks the immanent presence of extra-local social organization within local situations (Diamond, 2006). Although participant observation and a more generalized field observation can be thought of as methods along a spectrum of engagement with or alongside people and their activities, neither involves neutrality nor epistemological objectivity (p. 47). The standpoint or space occupied by the researcher, alongside those whom she or he talks and observes, is a subject position that is local, particularized and embodied (p. 48). My observations proceeded from the standpoint of student equity or outreach workers from universities as they, and their assistant student ambassadors, engaged schools and communities in low SES areas. It was from here, from

this particular position within the institutional relations of the university, that I attempted to describe the social as in motion and as an 'ongoing concerting of activities' (Diamond, 2006, p. 60)

Field observations in institutional ethnography need not, therefore, replicate the more 'naturalistic' style of traditional ethnographic observation and description and prolonged, immersive experience in the field. Within institutional ethnography the goal is different and quantitative measures of this immersion or length of time in the field are not as critical as the accomplishment of the goal of observing the presence of extra-local social organization at play (Diamond, 2006). Nonetheless, as well as determining the extra-local textual mediation of student equity practices via document analysis and interviews, my institutional ethnography did indeed use ethnographic field observation of particular outreach programs for both UQ and Griffith. My objective in these field observations was the same as it was for interviews and for the texts examined: the tracing of textually mediated extra-local relations within local practices and settings. Having identified evaluation processes as critical 'processing exchanges', I decided to observe specific outreach activities conducted by both UQ and Griffith staff as they progressed through an evaluation process and beyond. The goal was to follow these practices as they became hooked into extra-local discourses and ruling policy relations. In doing so, I also hoped to contribute some 'rich and thick' descriptions of contemporary student equity outreach practices, as embodied in particular times and places and individuals (Denzin, 1989). In this way I hoped to move beyond the existing case study literature on student outreach practices of Australian universities, which, although revealing much of worth (e.g. Sellar et al., 2010), do not demonstrate empirically how these practices occur through particular times and places, or how they are articulated to or appropriate the ruling relations of government policies.

I conducted field observations of UQ and Griffith's interactions with schools and students, as well as the meetings and seminars of student equity practitioners and managers in their capacity as members of The Group (see Appendix 3). In total, **I was engaged in formal field observations for approximately 96 hours across these three sites: UQ (48.5 hours observations) Griffith (23 hours) and The Group (25 hours).** Sometimes during the event, sometimes after, I would compile notes informed by an observational template (see Appendix 4) that sought to identify discourses (oral, written, body positioning, dominant voices), space and time settings (who is organizing whom, physical settings, agenda time blocks etc.) and intertextuality (Fairclough, 2003; Smith, 1999). My guiding question for the ethnographic observations was 'Which translocal, textually mediated ruling relations are suggested by

these student equity outreach practices and discourses?' Informant details considered noteworthy, such as his or her position within the institution, and his or her use of discourses in speech or style of practice (Fairclough, 2003) were also noted, although my concern was not so much with individual differences as how individuals were being coordinated by, but also appropriating, texts in their work practices (L. McCoy, 2006). Although some institutional ethnography projects involve no field observations outside of interviews and documents, I found these field observations of direct practice to be very helpful in witnessing the spontaneity of discourses and experiences not typically captured in interviews and texts. The observations also yielded insights into how student equity practices with school students are often improvised and open-ended, and have their own pragmatic and purposeful logic that is often deeply interactive, moral and emotional (Wagenaar & Cook, 2003).

Although I was unable to observe planning, strategy and evaluation meetings conducted by Griffith and UQ in their separate work (this was not ruled out in principle, but in practice did not eventuate), I did observe these same activities through The Group meetings. There the most dominant voice and presence was the Chair of The Group, a highly respected equity practitioner in Australian higher education from a Brisbane based university. The meetings followed a pattern of input from the Chair, canvassing the updates to federal policy and budget changes, and updates on the progression of The Group's Projects between meetings (often beyond what I was specifically tracking, the outreach of universities into schools in low SES areas, and into areas such as Careers advising and TAFE relations). This was followed by universities representatives presenting updates on their widening participation activities. Student equity staff from both JCU and CQU held considerable respect amongst their peers as they met around the Group table. There was an interesting relationship between what one might call, following Bourdieu, the academic and reputational capitals of the universities and the status that their equity staff occupied within Group meetings. Whilst JCU and CQU do not command the same institutional prestige as the Brisbane based universities, their student equity practices and staff very clearly do. Their voices mattered in The Group deliberations, as did the input from Griffith student equity managers. The UQ presence at The Group meetings was a more muted one, and with the occasional exception of when the equity advisor from UQ participated, UQ staff spent more time listening than speaking. The textual production of The Group was quite intensive, and the archives released to me for the study comprised over 80 texts. Observations of Group meetings have given me insight into the collaborative text handling processes of local policy

production that took place within The Group before my study commenced and as were recorded in The Group's MOU and early concept papers.

The field observations in schools proved critical in tracking the school mediation of student equity practices according to their own discourses and practices around Senior Education and Training (SET) plans, careers awareness work, and 'social-emotional learning' objectives. One school within UQ's cluster of schools allocated to it by The Group for widening participation activity provided me opportunities for an interview with a Deputy Principal who explained the selection processes that were involved in populating UQ's widening participation programs. This same school was the site for my observations of the Rock and Water Program conducted by UQ outreach staff, described in Chapter 6.

The field observations produced more data for analysis than was utilised, an experience common to institutional ethnographies, in which the goal is not to comprehensively describe a nexus of institutional relations as much as a pull out a 'specific thread of social organization' (DeVault & McCoy, 2006). The opportunity to trace a particular thread of the social organization of student equity practices arose differently for UQ, Griffith and The Group. With Griffith, the invitation to observe its 'Launch into Life at Logan' days offered the chance to trace the coordination of practices in motion, in time, over two days, culminating in the institutional technologies of instantaneous evaluation. UQ's Rock and Water program similarly provided me the opportunity to observe a work process in its entirety, over three separate days, finishing in an evaluation process that articulated UQ's practices, and the students they were interacting with, into a textually mediated form that sequenced into a reporting process to The Group and federal government.

The observations of student equity practices analysed in the thesis are not forwarded as comprehensive accounts of UQ and Griffith's outreach activities. There are indeed many activities (e.g. Pacific Island community engagement for Griffith) that were not observed What instead guided the selection of activities for observation were pragmatic concerns (e.g. timing of program in the academic year, university set parameters of the study such as no observation of Young Achievers Program activities in schools) and a progressive sense throughout the data collection process of the most significant textually mediated mechanisms that were orienting activities to federal and institutional prerogatives. My extended narration (tracing activities across time and in specific places) of the Rock and Water program (UQ), and the Launch into Life at Logan Program (Griffith) in Chapters 6-8 also serves to juxtapose the complicated, messy and often improvised interactions of student equity staff with their truncated representation in evaluation texts that hook into the ruling relations and discourses

of federal student equity policy. This rearticulation of experience into the ruling categories of governance is an act of power. There is admittedly a shift in tone, and style, in the write up of the research between these more 'naturalistic' ethnographic descriptions and the analytical interpretation surrounding them. Perhaps I open the text and myself up to divergent readings/meanings through the naturalistic descriptions. For me, however, the purpose of this strategy was to highlight the articulation of very human educational processes into the more reductionistic representations of federal policy categories; fundamentally a process of misrecognition of both student equity staff and student experiences. I also wanted to highlight my own positionality in the research, in a first person account, despite the hermeneutical ambiguities to which this may give rise.

Texts in Institutional Ethnography

The student equity outreach practices of university workers at Griffith, UQ and The Group community of practice have been coordinated by a series of equity texts, or policies, which have been both appropriated from external sites and produced by these groups endogenously. These include the federal HEPPP policy, the Memorandum of Understanding among the Queensland universities appropriating the HEPPP policy for the Queensland context, institutionally specific low SES participation and retention strategies, and the Mission-based Compacts formed by the federal government with universities specifying 'performance' and 'reward targets' for equity groups in relation to proportional participation.   Textually mediated relations of ruling also coordinate practices through evaluation forms, both at the programmatic level (such as a student activity evaluation) and institutional level (an equity unit's monthly summaries and annual report of its work to executives) as they objectify the experiences of student equity staff so they might be institutionally actionable for reporting and funding purposes. These texts, which functioned as translocal social relations that permeated and organized local practices, were identified and traced *within* the student equity informants' actions and as *occurring* within their day-to-day practices (Turner, 2006).

I was conscious in this study of an 'intertextual hierarchy' (Smith, 2006a) in which certain texts regulated other texts in this process. Authorized texts within institutional complexes organize peoples' activities by providing the 'concepts and categories' through which what is actually done 'can be recognized as an instance of expression of the textually authorized procedure' (p. 83).   I discovered the federal government HEPPP activity templates, sent to universities to assist their reportage, and the Group's evaluation and activity templates, to be extralocal texts with this power. Internal texts such as UQ's low

SES strategy documents compiled by its Planning department, or Griffith's monthly reporting structure and templates provided to its student equity managers are other examples of texts with regulatory power. Appropriation of these authorized or official texts by student equity managers in the accountings of their work practices inevitably drew on these regulatory texts, and thereby involved a participation in the ruling relations the official texts establish. Work practices were thus discursively organized, and I sought to render this organization transparent to the reader of the thesis. To assist in my mapping of this 'intertextual hierarchy' I constructed some figures that situated and related texts with each other as just described.

ANALYSIS

My data analysis aimed to reveal the translocal, textually mediated, coordination of local practices; the relations of ruling not fully in view from the originating standpoint and location of the study. The analysis proceeds in alignment with Smith's (2005) sociology of knowledge and the materiality of the data (Campbell & Gregor, 2004). Yet my working together of Smith's understandings with Bourdieu, Fairclough and Levinson meant that I also used critical discourse analysis to more precisely account for the activation and appropriation of policy texts within student equity practices. Institutional ethnographers, especially those tracing policy effects within education (André-Bechely, 2005; Griffith, 1992), often perform discourse analysis upon the texts that coordinate local activity. Within institutional ethnography, discourse refers to a field of relations comprised of texts, intertextual conversation, and, critically, also includes 'the activities of people in actual sites who produce them [texts] and use them and take up the conceptual frames they circulate' (DeVault, 2006, p. 44). Discourse comes into actuality within this methodology when activated by the subject within a 'local moment of use' (p. 44). Although Fairclough's critical realist ontology and positing of social and semiotic structures as conditions of possibility for empirical practices represents a break from Smith's constructivist ontology of extended social relations and individual activation of textually mediated ruling relations, there is, it seems to me, a way to productively bring their insights together in this study. In the chapters on UQ and Griffith's activation and appropriation of the textually-mediated ruling relations of the federal and Group policy, I keep the analysis anchored in the way individuals process texts in an organizational work sequence, but demonstrate how they also draw on wider (orders of) discourses in the appropriation and reconfiguring of these textually-mediated relations.

Fairclough's (2003) concept of 'interdiscursive hybridity' was employed to analyse the mixing of equity and 'best and brightest' discourses and concomitant shifts in student

equity practices within the Young Achievers Program texts. I also argue that Griffith appropriates the ruling relations of student equity policy by drawing upon social inclusion discourses from other Griffith policy texts to resist the narrowing of policy to students defined as low SES so as to encompass students from Pacific Island backgrounds and students with disabilities.

The representation of these analyses follows conventions established by other institutional ethnography scholars such as Smith (2006a) and Turner (2001, 2006). For the chapters on UQ student equity practices, I constructed a figure of an 'institutional field of action' in which student equity practices were produced and reproduced, adapting Turner's (2006) work to the current study whilst including in the analysis more narrative ethnographic writing to demonstrate how individuals were activating and appropriating texts in their practices. Analysis of the textual coordination of Griffith's Launch into Life at Logan Program adapts Smith's 'intertextual circles' and 'intertextual hierarchy of texts' model (2006a). It shows how Griffith staff from across the university were engaged in producing annualised reports articulated to the ruling, textually mediated relations of federal policy, and 'recognizable' to Griffith staff as how widening participation 'got done' there. This analysis follows a narrative description of the Launch into Life at Logan Program (LILAL). These narratives of student equity practice, oriented to the discovery of the textual mediation of student equity practices, are therefore selective representations of what was seen and 'what happened'. It is entirely likely that other narrative styled ethnographies of the same events will have focused on other details and elements of these occasions. My analytic goal, however, was to specifically map the social organization of institutional relations and practices, or the way UQ and Griffith's student equity practices are put together and coordinated.

This cartography of social relations, as an institutional ethnography, aims to be both objective and provisional. Smith illuminates her understanding of the kinds of knowledge claims made in institutional ethnography in the following text, written before *Institutional Ethnography: A Sociology for People* (Smith, 2005) and the application of her method beyond feminist sociology, and in response to a special edition of *Sociological Theory* written in response to her work (Laslett & Thorne, 1992):

> If we are going to do a sociology that serves women, perhaps people in general, it is crucial to get it right. This objective makes no claim to a unitary, absolute, or final truth… I've used the analogy of a map. We have maps, we use maps, we rely on maps in a perfectly ordinary and

mundane way. I'm not aiming for the one truth. I'm aiming rather to produce sociological accounts and analyses that can have this kind of credence: Here is how you get from the Bloor-Bathurst intersection to Ossington on the subway line. The map extends my capacity to move about effectively in the city. It does not tell me everything about the subway system in Toronto (its technology, operations, organization), but it does tell me the sequence of stations and gives me some idea of the distance between them. I'd like to develop a sociology that would tie people's sites of experience and action into accounts of social organization and relations which have that ordinarily reliable kind of faithfulness to "how it works." (Smith, 1992, p. 94)

Like Smith, I am concerned not to absolutize the map I have produced for UQ and Griffith (they are not exhaustive, but provide a practical utility) and also to posit the materiality of social relations and 'actualities' (Smith, 2005) beyond these figures, and to which they refer. Institutional ethnography clearly resists certain postmodernist moves which allow no such escape from textuality (Smith, 1999), while also, for the purposes of this thesis, enabling me to find some common ground with the knowledge claims of both Bourdieu and Fairclough (Chouliarki & Fairclough, 1999) who posit the objectivity of social and linguistic structures even as they are provisionally known and represented.

There are, however, various practices within institutional ethnography to hone the analysis, or check the utility of the knowledge claims made via member checks with those whom the study begins its enquiry. I gained acknowledgement and verification from Griffith staff of the tension within their practices between 'building aspirations' for Pacific islander students and other New Zealand citizens within their local schools only to see their access to university blocked because of financial loan exclusions for non-Australian citizens and permanent residents (see Chapter 8). The time I have spent with student equity staff and managers, and conversations both formal and informal (for instance, via email in the negotiated interview transcription process, or in conversations in vehicles on the way to and from observations) have seen me begin the process of my sharing an analysis of how I could trace how their work was being coordinated. Their responses have been used to nuance my analysis as it is emerged. For instance, Griffith student equity staff were less impacted by Mission-based Compact targets in their day-to-day practices than were UQ staff, and more impacted by other internal texts on disability and Pacific Island community issues.

I took my ethnographic descriptions and representations (maps and figures) back to key informants from UQ and Griffith for their feedback. I was concerned to make sure they did not feel they were being represented in a way that placed at risk their institutional and

professional reputations. In the case of UQ, I was told mine was a 'fair description' of the Rock and Water Program in one school, and that UQ had innovated its practices since my observations to include some lower grade primary school students. The feedback affirmed my understanding of the appropriation of student equity policy by the schools, as well as universities, and alerted me to the reality that my observations and ethnography were indeed time-bounded and represented relatively fluid practices (observations were from 2011 (The Group) and 2012 (Griffith and UQ and The Group). My two hour briefing of a Griffith staff person also led to feedback that, although the study focused on one program of Griffith's suite of student equity practices (the LILAL Program), it did help in identifying a source of tension experienced around federal government evaluations and the frustrating articulation of Griffith's work into its categories.

This cartography of social relations inevitably is bounded and limited because of its commencing place within the institutional and ruling relations. The analysis in this study thus does not try to produce social theory supposedly capable of encapsulating the social relations of UQ, Griffith, the Group or any social field. Instead, what is hoped for is an analysis of specific social threads of student equity practices across particular Queensland Universities, and how those practices are hooked into wider social 'fabrics'.

It is my hope that this research into the ruling relations entangling local practices, such as the neoliberal policy settings within the HEPPP privileging competition amongst universities, can assist local actors to more clearly understand how their practices take shape as they do, and so provide a reflexive space for them from which to continue to improvise and strategize differing practices more aligned to their contextual, practice infused knowledges. The goal is not to disempower the 'ruled' through a deterministic account of the controlling discourses operating in the individual or group's practice, but instead to provide a 'map' to guide those practitioners through the complex ruling apparatuses and identify opportunities for intervention, local appropriation, and social change (DeVault & McCoy, 2006, p. 19; Levinson et al., 2009).

REFLEXIVITY AND POSITIONALITY

Both Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) and Smith (2005, 2007) furnish the ethnographic researcher with accounts of a critically reflexive practice, which foreground the process of the objectification of the research subject, and the relations between the researcher and the researched. As a doctoral student conducting an institutional ethnography of the student equity outreach practices, there is a need to account for both my own positionality in

the social field, the decision to adopt the 'standpoint' of the equity outreach practitioners as an entrée into the research process, and a narrative of why and how the object of study was chosen (Grenfell & James, 1998; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010; Smith, 2005, 2007, 2006b).

My positionality with the academy is an Australian doctoral student with a (Canadian) university based history of constructing learning experiences with faculty, students and community-based organizations in a common pursuit of social justice (see Chapter 1). This work is not identical to equity outreach; universities have a role to play developing community capacities outside of developing future university students. Yet these experiences sensitized me to the practices of community engagement, of which the interventions into low SES schools and communities are a form.

Although I share to some extent a dispositional affinity with student equity outreach workers (or more precisely those that approach their work from a social justice commitment), my research commitment to take the standpoint of those workers as they experience and articulate the world from their differing perspectives is not rooted in my familiarity with them or from a desire to be an advocate for these staff within their institutions. Rather, the standpoint alongside student equity staff anchors the perspective of the study, and becomes the site from which the ruling relations are discovered through sustained attention to the practitioners' activities. The student equity practitioners themselves are not the objects of study, or the research 'subjects' in any traditional sense. Instead, these workers are in this study 'the knowers' and the 'subjects of knowledge' (Smith, 2007, p. 409), as they experience the problematic of the study identified earlier. Thus within this institutional ethnography I do not proceed via an objectification of a student equity staff, as in a theoretical construal over and against a phenomenon, but with a standpoint alongside the 'actualities of people's embodied beings', and beside their activities and work practices (p. 411).

Critical analysis of the practices of student equity practices cannot proceed in institutional ethnography however, or for that matter in any Bourdieusian inspired sociology, except in a dialogical sense that recognises the researcher's embeddedness within the social relations established by the research act itself, which situates and is situated by the informants, the researcher, and the socio-politico and institutional context for the research. To bring under critical scrutiny the researcher's social scientific objectification of the informant's social world, and so undertake an 'objectivation of objectivation' (Bourdieu, 2003; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), requires not simply an autobiographical account of the researcher's biases, but also an account of the conditions of possibility of her or his

researching. As Smith (1999) has said of the purpose of institutional ethnography: 'The aim is not to explain people's behaviour but to be able to explain to them/ourselves the socially organized powers in which their/our lives are embedded and to which their/our activities contribute' (p. 8).

This thesis, as a textual representation and analysis of student equity and other University staff experiences, is itself situated within the textually mediated ruling relations of the UQ's PhD requirements, which again align to federal government policy objectives for the higher education field. The APA Award from the federal government that funds my research is another text to which my thesis is materially aligned. In sum, I am positioned as an apprenticed knowledge worker within an increasingly globalized higher education sector producing newly skilled workers for a globalizing and internationally competitive economy. In this sense, the conditions of possibility for my research align with the current discourses justifying widening participation activities from student equity workers from universities into low SES schools (widening participation leads to enhanced economic competitiveness globally). So although my status as a privileged knowledge worker certainly positions me above the students in schools designated low SES – the putative objects of student equity policy – and alongside (and below) other University staff encountered in the field, we are commonly (albeit differentially) situated within the ruling relations of government higher education policy.

This recognition means that a mapping of the social and institutional relations of student equity workers is also a mapping of the social and institutional relations of me as a researcher, and the ways that the texts that I produce are aligned to, and also to an extent appropriate, the ruling relations flowing through the higher education sector. As alluded to in the ethnographic narratives that follow in Chapters 6-8, my positionality as a researcher from UQ as the dominant university in Queensland affected, in part, how I was received in the field as I sought interviews, observational opportunities, and programmatic texts for analysis. In one instance, a Guidance Counsellor from a school associated with Griffith University relayed a story about a UQ Open Day. The Guidance Counsellor drove into the parking lot at UQ with her daughter, who was looking into studying there. 'I parked between a Maserati and a Mercedes', the Guidance Counsellor said, and her daughter turned to her and asked, 'Oh is UQ for rich people?' This institutional privilege as a UQ researcher over and against the students in one school was clear, and signified by the institutional technologies I was employing in the data collection (iPad) which were recognised by students as status symbols distancing me from them. Concerned to not exacerbate the existing power relations in the act

of research, I moved from an iPad to a pen and paper to make field notes. I was also ironically aware of how my observations of student equity staff and student interactions were writing up into my PhD thesis the experiences of these staff and students, and so to a certain extent objectifying these relations. Yet I also sought to appropriate these ruling relations flowing through my researching acts, seeking through the act of ethnography to reveal how these staff and students were being written up into the normalised discourses and ruling relations of widening participation policy. My ethnography, like UQ and Griffith's practices, inescapably reproduces the ruling relations of the federal and state governance of university practices; yet it also, as do the student equity staff, simultaneously appropriates these relations in the act of reproducing them, with sometimes unpredictable consequences. My hope is that the through these appropriations my study is able to open some critical spaces within widening participation practice both for student equity staff and, for the university field in Queensland more generally.

This task is as difficult to accomplish as it is imperative to the ethical quality of the research with regards to its informants. For the latter, my accountability arises from my fulfilment of the ethical conditions of the study, and also from these informants recognition of, if not complete agreement with, the mapping of the ruling relations situating their practice. Yet the product of this research, as text, must also identify opportunities for intervention, local appropriation, and social change (DeVault & McCoy, 2006, p. 19; Levinson et al., 2009) in the scholarly process itself, to prevent a material and symbolic reproduction of the institutionalised discourses and ruling relations of student equity policy and practice. By seeking to demonstrate an alternative methodology for higher education research that contrasts with the dominant neo-positivist accounts of student equity policy and outcomes, I believe I am going some way to preventing such a reproduction of ruling relations.

CHAPTER 5: THE QUEENSLAND WIDENING PARTICIPATION GROUP

INTRODUCTION

Current student equity policy in Australian higher education is set within a broadly neoliberal framework that privileges inter-institutional competition over collaboration. As a consequence, practice based tensions can arise as universities strive to meet specific institutional targets for low SES and Indigenous student participation, whilst attempting to broaden participation more generally within the sector.

This chapter provides an account of how the Queensland Widening Participation Group (The Group) both activated and appropriated the ruling relations of federal student equity policy for universities, schools and students in Queensland. In this chapter, the archives of The Group's meetings, seminars and correspondences, in addition to interview data from Group leaders will be used to analyse The Group's textual coordination of student equity practices in Queensland over the period of 2009-2012.

I begin by noting the historical context to the Group's activities, and the strategic positioning of the Queensland equity practitioners through this Group to maximize the possibilities of funding in the immediate aftermath of the Bradley Review of Higher Education (Bradley et al., 2008). Through the coordination of a series of meetings and seminars amongst equity practitioners and managers, and their co-production of texts feeding both into the Higher Education Forum of the Queensland state government and to the Vice-Chancellors of Queensland's universities, the Group is shown to textually coordinate and align Queensland higher education student equity practices to federal mandates in order to produce a joint bid for HEPPP Partnership funds from the federal government. Yet this local production of student equity policy does not simply reproduce the contemporary neoliberal articulation of student equity. The process of collaboration leading to the production of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), and the agreed rules of engagement for university outreach in schools in low SES areas also sought to constrain the competitive pressures amongst universities in the interests of a more comprehensive activity of service provision across the state. As well as accomplishing federal mandates, the practices of the Group simultaneously pulled in another direction to actively reconfigure the shape of power relations in respect of local low SES and Indigenous student needs.

This analysis works together Dorothy Smith's (2006a) insights into the textually-mediated activation of local practices with Levinson and colleagues' (Levinson et al., 2009; Sutton & Levinson, 2001) concept of the local appropriation of authorised policy, and Bourdieu's notion of the contested field (Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993). The latter is demonstrated though an analysis of how Griffith and UQ activate the Group's MOU and rules of engagement for widening participation practice with differing logics consonant with their distinctive positions within the higher education field in Queensland.

THE GROUP

The Group is a collective of university based, equity and Indigenous unit practitioners and managers that reports to the Higher Education Forum (HEF) of the Queensland state government. The Group is coordinated by a Chair and a Department of Education, Training and Employment (DETE) Secretariat/Project Officer. Up until the recent change of government in Queensland in 2012, the HEF was comprised of the Minister of DETE, policy advisors from DETE, and the Vice-Chancellors of Queensland's universities, and existed to advise the Minister with regards to higher education policy issues at the federal level and to work towards policy for Queensland in the sector.[20] The following analysis is based upon documentary data I gained from the HEF minutes and from access to the Group's digital archives stored by the DETE Project Officer to the Group.

The Group's members – the student equity and Indigenous unit practitioners and managers – had a history of cooperative relations and planning activity before the advent of the HEPPP policy. An internal UQ proposal in 2004[21] detailed a model for cooperation amongst universities in southeast Queensland, as a partnership with Education Queensland, which sought state funds to provide university outreach into schools in disadvantaged areas. The report advocated a new model for cooperation amongst universities, in light of a decade or more of failed attempts to make university more accessible for students from low SES backgrounds. Traditional university marketing efforts assume students are ready to choose an institution and focused upon one particular choice, whereas a cooperative approach to

---

[20] The Office of Higher Education within the Department of Education and Training was disbanded after the new Liberal-National Party government restructured it in 2012 (now Department of Education and Training and Employment, or DETE). This occurred, in part, because of DETE's loss of regulatory function for higher education in Queensland to the federally established Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA). Prior to the restructuring of DET/E, the minutes to the Higher Education Forum were publically accessible via its website. This is no longer the case. The Higher Education Forum still continues its work.

[21] Shared in interview with a UQ student equity advisor

outreach by universities into low SES schools and communities would instead seek to encourage students to consider a university pathway in more general terms. Although the project did not succeed in gaining funding from Education Queensland, the report demonstrates both the willingness to innovate new approaches to student equity practice in Queensland and a desire for at least some staff in universities to work cooperatively in their outreach into schools.

As student equity staff and managers prepared for the policy changes arising from the Bradley Review, they convened an 'Equity and Indigenous Roundtable' in March of 2009 to further explore non-competitive relations for university outreach. A document was circulated in advance of the meeting to participants delineating 'traditional marketing/recruitment' from outreach and marketing from 'aspiration building outreach' (Background Paper 2, Queensland Widening Participation Group, 2009, p. 17) Traditional marketing and recruitment was understood to be competitive, focused on enrolments for a particular institution, and assumed students already aspired to university and were ready to choose an institution at the moment of the activity. Aspiration building outreach, in contrast, was thought to be collaborative, promoting post-schooling pathways in general. This way of working assumed that students had not necessarily thought about university before and might experience barriers ('real or imagined') to access university. Collaborative outreach activities are to 'influence the life-choices' of students via 'myth-busting, encouragement, inspiration (e.g. role models), and practical assistance (scholarships/bridging programs etc.)' (p. 21). Whereas recruitment assumes a single moment of choice for an institution, aspiration building outreach is staged over time, varies for differing cohorts of students and possibly sees more institutions involved. In short, the message is 'any university, any time' (p. 21).

Yet discussions from the student equity practitioners suggest that this binary construction was more fluid and complicated in practice. It was noted that '[a]n individual activity can share characteristics of both aspiration-building and promoting the institution', and that because student cohorts undergoing an activity were often a mix of 'privileged and disadvantaged' students, one activity could deliver both a recruitment and an aspiration building message simultaneously (Background Paper 2, Queensland Widening Participation Group, 2009, p. 18). Further, collaborative outreach did not have to involve more than one institution providing the activity; indeed this has proved rare in Queensland. Nonetheless, the distinction between competitive recruitment and collaborative 'aspiration building' was critical for the student equity practitioners' translation of the meaning of the emerging widening participation agenda to their host university administrators.

The Bradley Review agenda also provoked action from the Queensland state government. In April 2009, the HEF called into being a number of Working Groups, one of which, the Widening Participation Group, was tasked with developing strategies for the national achievement of the 20% low SES student target by 2020.[22] In Queensland, however, as the HEF minutes showed, some universities had already achieved this benchmark, and that there was concern that the policy not 'dilute' these efforts, nor concentrate low SES enrolments 'in particular institutions' (p. 4). Further, there was disappointment from the Queensland Universities' Vice-Chancellors in 2009 that there was no recognition and reward for the three universities that had already achieved the national targets (JCU, CQU, and USQ). Nonetheless, and as for the other Working Groups, The Group was tasked with contributing to Queensland higher education policy making, and promoting collaborative work within the sector to maximize the possibility for gaining resources from the federal government for the higher education in Queensland. In 2009, the HEF saw that collaboration amongst universities was the most efficient way to maximize financial benefit for all Queensland universities from federal funding.

An early proposal paper of the Group outlines the case for collaborative work in widening participation, and also names some of the conditions that would lead to non-competitive cooperation amongst the universities involved (Queensland Widening Participation Group, 2009). The Group anticipated funding activities from 'each institution's enrolment loading money' (what would become Participation funds under HEPPP), and noted that efforts to address high disadvantage in particular areas without historical linkages to university partners need additional financial support. For instance, Partnership funds could come via a bidding process from the federal government. Further, and contrary to the prevailing view within the federal government at the time which held that a 'performance indicator framework' was required to measure social inclusion targets for universities, the Group discussed the idea to 'track outcomes by individual school and by region, and not just by institutional enrolment' (p. 10). This would reflect the 'spirit of the outreach effort', it was noted, with its goal to promote interest in post-school pathways and aspirations in general, and not simply individual institutional enrolment (p. 10). Similarly, The Group document noted that creating

---

[22] Higher Education Forum Minutes, April 15, 2009. All HEF minutes were retrieved in April 2012 from the Queensland Department of Employment, Education and Training website - http://education.Queensland.gov.au/students/higher-education/services/skillsplan/forum.html. These wider set of minutes are no longer publically available. The April 2009 minutes, however, are still accessible at http://education.Queensland.gov.au/students/higher-education/resources/forum-minutes-150409.doc, Retrieved March 14, 2014.

targets for retention should measure 'systemic retention', not simply 'individual [student]retention', and should thus not 'not be biased against regional universities that often see students leave for other urban institutions yet get counted as lost to the regional institution' (p. 11).[23] The document specified how individual universities, as Group members, might evaluate and report to government about their widening participation activities:

> ...it may be possible to argue that all Queensland universities, having embarked on a State-wide, organized approach, should be measured and rewarded on an input parameter, being the degree of active participation in the Queensland plan...be measured and rewarded on shifts in post-school destination data by school, or shifts in regional rates of tertiary participation; and not just on individual institutional enrolment figures. (p. 10-11)

Such measures of success were intended to militate against competitive practices amongst individual universities and to strengthen the role of the Group as a policy setting body. The Group proposal paper acknowledged the difficulty in producing the conditions for non-competitive, local student-equity policy by noting the tensions between widening participation and student recruitment to institutions.

> There is an inherent tension between acting collaboratively for a broad State/sector/national outcome, and being measured and rewarded individually, and the Working Group needs to explore ways and means of resolving that contradiction with [the federal department]. (p. 11).

The WP Group's negotiations with the federal government were not, however, able to 'resolve the contradiction'.

Minutes from a meeting on November 27, 2009, recording feedback from the Chair of the Group about discussions with federal department officials, are instructive. Government officials confirmed that the Group's plans 'fit well with their directions' and that although the federal government was 'keen to see collaboration happen', The Group's Chair reported that 'the federal government intended to allocate funding by formula for this year which [did] not facilitate such collaboration'.

The draft HEPPP guidelines were released in late December 2009 and sent to key actors within the sector for feedback. These confirmed that outreach activities envisaged by the Group would come from the much smaller 'Partnership' funding component. There was no

---

[23] The innovation of the Commonwealth Higher Education Student Support Number (CHESSN) identifier has subsequently enabled universities to determine a more accurate rate of student retention and distinguish students who have dropped out of the system entirely from students who have merely switched to another university (see Gale and Parker, 2013, p. 13). Although Griffith University in 2010 had the highest rate in the Australian higher education sector for student transfers to other institutions (9.28%), UQ also had 6.63% of its undergraduate students transfer to other institutions (p. 13).

reference to performance funding or outcome measurement in the draft HEPPP Guidelines (nor their final iteration), although it seemed clear then that a 'bums on seats' (Gale, 2012; Thomas, 2000) bias to low SES participation was evident.

Texts from 2009-2011 from The Group archives reveal the desire to establish the principles and to create the conditions amongst universities for a collaborative approach to widening participation work in low SES schools and communities, as well as the intent to pave the way for a joint bid for partnership funds from the federal government. The latter was determined to be in the interests of all universities in the state as the best way to maximize the total funds allocated to the state's universities in a competitive bidding process.[24] These texts produced the consensus amongst universities to formalise a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) amongst the universities that would both define the 'rules of engagement' for student equity practice and enable the joint funding bid to occur. The Group proved very effective, collectively bidding for and winning over \$20 million dollars (AUD) for HEPPP Partnership activities across Queensland universities, for 'raising aspirations' to and building educational capacity for higher education through a low SES school intervention approach, as well as a distinct Indigenous community engagement project. Although this local policy practice represents a successful collaborative achievement that was instrumental in leveraging substantial federal funding, The Group's MOU simultaneously preserves, and authorizes, the continuation of competitive recruitment practices for low SES and Indigenous students.

Before I analyse the MOU in more detail, it is useful to represent the HEPPP policy funding flows and institutional relations between universities and various government bodies in Figure 1. To simplify the analysis, only two universities are depicted in the figure: Griffith and UQ. The arrows indicate funding or service delivery (universities to schools) and reporting and accountability relations. Both Griffith and UQ receive HEPPP Participation funding based upon their proportion of low SES students within the sector within a given year (see below). Both universities also receive a common allocation of base Partnerships funding.

The triangle represents The Group's competitive bid allocation for their Project 1, the 'Coordinated approach to all students in low SES schools'. All low SES schools within Queensland were divided into clusters and allocated to a university for widening participation activities (awareness raising, aspiration building, experiences of campus life, literacy and

---

[24] Higher Education Forum minutes, 2009

numeracy activities, etc.), based upon the 'traditional' geographic 'catchment' areas of the institutions. The DETE Project Officer for the Group noted in interview how the clustering process worked practically:

> In a sense Queensland is lucky. Even in Brisbane, we have got the three main universities in separate spheres. We have got Griffith to the south, UQ to the west and QUT to the north. Of course, there are students who overlap but it wasn't too hard to draw - to say, 'Well, that is your patch.' In each of those spheres, there was a cluster of low SES areas, when you get to the outer areas; you know, the Logan [south] area, the Ipswich [west] area, the Caboolture [north] area. So that was pretty easy. I suppose the more you come to the centre, there just aren't any low SES schools. So for the city schools, where the most overlap was, there wasn't anyone to fight over. So that was pretty easy.

Where universities had long standing relationships with particular schools outside of their historical geographic recruitment areas, they were to negotiate with other universities as to how they would work collaboratively in widening participation activities. The cluster of schools allocated through this collaborative process to Griffith (in the Logan area and surrounds, south of Brisbane, see Chapter 7) and UQ (in Ipswich and Lockyer region west of Brisbane, see chapter 6) are represented by the second level of circles.

Figure 1. Institutional Relations for Queensland Student Equity Practice Established by the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program
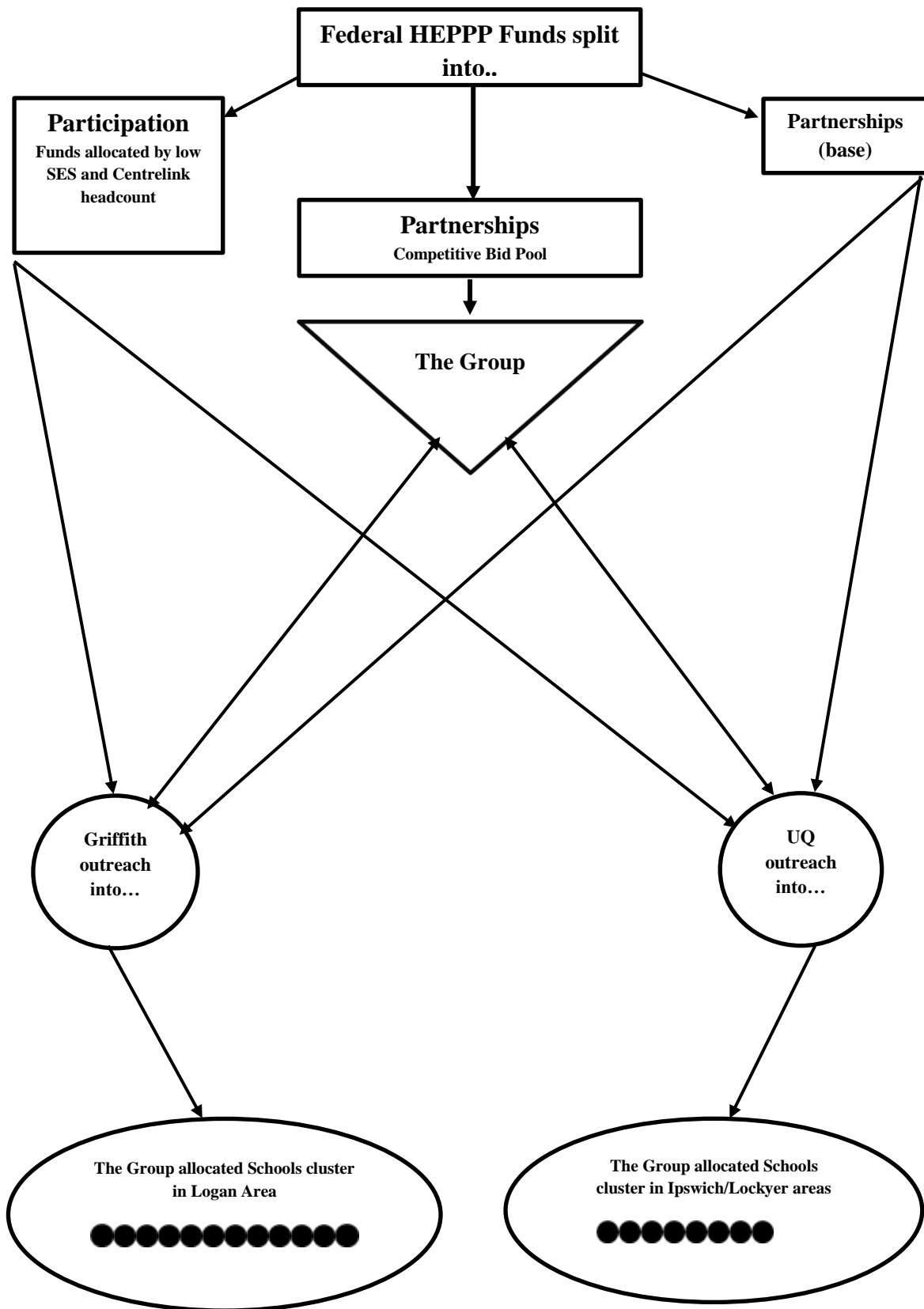
Interview and email correspondence with the DETE Project Officer to The Group provided more details on the methods of allocating schools. For the purposes of identifying schools most in need of widening participation activities in Queensland, a number of indicators of SES and/or disadvantage were employed by the DETE. First, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2006 Census) provided a Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA), specifically their measure of relative disadvantage (Index of Education and Occupation), at the geographic level of the census district (CD). This index ranks students' SES categories based upon home address within a census district, where the bottom 25% of CDs of the Australian population aged 15-64 are classified as 'low' SES. With this data the Queensland Department of Education and Training ranked its State Schools into four 'Broad Socio-Economic Groupings', or quartiles (low, mid-low, mid-high and high) based upon the known home addresses of students in 2007. Other student demographics such as the proportion of Indigenous students, and students from 'Non-English Speaking Backgrounds', were factored into school selection, as was State survey data tracking student progression matriculation rates to university. The designation low SES, then, is an aggregated and imputed measure, and cannot be relied upon to identify individuals and their relative SES or disadvantage.

The measure of the proportion of low SES students participating within universities in Australia, and also used to set universities their performance targets, is slightly different to the simple 'postcode' measure of low SES. It attempts to build into the formula a measure of individual SES. So the SEIFA Index of Education and Occupation from 2006 Census data were combined with a measure of the number of university students receiving selected student income support payments from Centrelink, the federal government's agency responsible for welfare and support payment provision. The two internal categories of this 'Interim Measure of Low SES' (Department of Industry, n.d.-b) are weighted differently. Firstly, two-thirds of the weighting is given to the '…number of domestic undergraduate enrolled students whose home addresses are in low SES Census Collection Districts (CDs)' (Department of Industry, n.d.-b). Secondly, a one-third weighting is given to the number of students at a university who are recipients of the selected Centrelink payments.

The construction of SES measures has major impacts in Australian education policy. Although designed to more precisely allocate funds to individuals in need and the educational institutions they participate in, the construction of low SES is also a form of governmentality that renders people subject to government intervention. SES indeed becomes the policy mechanism that justifies interventions into schools, whether directly or via university student equity outreach practices, according to the mandates of wider government policies promoting

participation in a globalizing and competitive economy. In this sense 'SES', however measured, is a 'conceptual practice of power' (Smith, 1990a) that articulates peoples' experiences into categories that 'stand in' for the complexities of individual people's lives and produces the ability to govern. Although The Group's mapping and division of Queensland's students into 'clusters' for university intervention can be seen as an effective and efficient way to distribute services equitably, it also hooks these students into the ruling relations of government policy, and is done without the consultation and deliberative involvement of the 'ruled' or governed.[25] This is particularly the case for universities that have little prior relationship with the schools in low SES areas that they are required to engage with (see Chapter 6). For Griffith, the widening participation mandates of HEPPP policy, mediated through the Group's MOU, insinuate themselves into long established university-school relations, which have been developed more collaboratively with schools and communities that have exercised more agency in the contours of these partnerships (see Chapter 8). Nonetheless, The Group's division of Queensland schools into quartiles of SES and distribution amongst university partners happened without the involvement of schools and communities in the first instance. To this extent the development of the Group's MOU and bid for federal government funds is a textually-activated articulation of ruling federal policy relations locally.

ARTICULATING LOCAL PRACTICES TO RULING FEDERAL POLICY RELATIONS
The Group's MOU (Higher Education Forum, 2011) functions as a key local policy text that articulates local student equity practices to the federal government agenda. Signatories to the text included two Queensland State Ministers (Education and Industrial Relations, and Employment, Skills and Mining) and the Vice-Chancellors of Queensland's eight publically funded Universities. It is an ambitious plan, spanning six project areas: outreach into low SES schools (Project 1), Indigenous engagement and access (Project 2), Adult Learners and Vocational and Education Training (Project 3), Going deeper in places of need (Project 4), Careers education and advice for cluster schools and high-disadvantage areas (Project 5) and

---

[25] The Group's principles for Project 2, Indigenous specific engagement initiatives, are more clearly focused upon community engagement principles to build the capacity of existing Indigenous institutions and community based organizations and leaders. Although outside the scope of this research to examine further, the point here is that unlike for Indigenous engagement initiatives, where there is an explicit warning in the Group's MOU that 'improving participation cannot rely solely on outreach to education institutions (schools and VET)', Project 1 seems to assume the opposite, or at least that the school or educational institution is the primary place and mode for outreach, and that DETE can represent these schools' interests directly and without their direct involvement (Higher Education Forum, 2011, p. 2).

State-wide joint activity among the universities (Project 6). In this study I focus on Project 1, the intervention into low SES schools.

The MOU set the 'rules of engagement' for universities to partner with schools, and other community groups, to collaboratively work towards raised participation rates for low SES and Indigenous students in Queensland universities. It was constructed in a collaborative process over two years that was designed to organize the student equity staff and managers to produce a joint bid to the federal government for HEPPP 'Partnership' funds that were being allocated in addition to base funding for all universities. Although this local policy practice represents a successful collaborative achievement that was instrumental in leveraging substantial federal funding, it simultaneously preserves, and authorizes, the continuation of competitive recruitment practices for low SES and Indigenous students.

The MOU on 'widening tertiary participation' is described as follows:

> Eight universities in Queensland and the Queensland Department of Education ... agree to collaborate in their efforts to stimulate interest in tertiary study, and to widen the tertiary participation of low-income people and Indigenous people. (Higher Education Forum, 2011, p. 1)

The MOU proposes that a collaborative approach to widening participation is more likely, in the Queensland context, to offer economies of scale and allow individual universities to either meet their expansion agendas or low SES targets. The distinction here was crucial. The 'business case'[26] for collaborative widening participation work was premised on two realities. First, some universities (JCU, CQU, USQ) had already achieved comparatively high low SES participation rates (well above the 20% national target), and so widening participation work was more clearly aligned with their expansion objectives. For Griffith University, widening participation activity was also strategically linked to its plans for 'growing strongly' its undergraduate and graduate student cohorts (Department of Industry, n.d.-c, p. 11). Second, universities such as UQ, which had no significant expansion plans at the undergraduate level,[27] nonetheless could benefit, according to the MOU reasoning, through 'sowing the seeds' of aspiration (Group informant interview) for more low SES students in the sector generally and eventually diversifying their student body and receiving associated financial rewards.

---

[26] The term does not appear in the MOU text, yet appears in other Group discussion papers and minutes, and was used to persuade the Higher Education Forum and the Queensland Vice-Chancellors of the merits of collaborative action.

[27] UQ's Mission-based Compact with the federal government (Department of Industry, n.d.-d, p. 21) notes the aim to move to a 60:40 ratio for postgraduate to undergraduate enrolments by 2020.

There is also a 'social justice' case for collaborative action within the MOU text, expressed as an 'entitlement' that all low SES students have to 'an appropriate level of tertiary awareness and tertiary preparation, so that their choices are informed by an understanding of tertiary options and possibilities, and by a positive attitude towards their own capabilities' (p. 1). Yet it is clear that this 'social justice' case is not strong enough, on its own, for collaboration to occur. As the Chair of the Group noted in interview, the collaborative division of widening participation activity amongst universities required the 'business case' as well:

> So part of the business case was the gap between how many people had degrees and how many didn't; how many low SES people there were in unis and how many weren't. In Queensland, there were huge gaps, big gaps. And then we looked at where people lived; where the poor people live, the distributed nature of the population... Then we looked at the universities' interests and we split into two camps on this matter; those that wanted to change their mix and those that wanted to grow. But because we had done the sums, we knew neither could reach those ambitions without stimulating demand, because there weren't enough people to either change your mix or grow in the way that people wanted to. So the clever part of the business case, I think, was being able to define the issue of stimulating demand for tertiary study; that is, making more people interested as a common interest; whether you wanted to change your mix or grow. And that was, in a way, the concept that got people over the line.

All universities had an incentive to collaborate because only 'widening participation' activity amongst low SES students would 'stimulate' enough 'demand' and encourage enough students to enrol in universities to meet targets either to grow or diversify enrolments (see also Gale, 2011a).

There are key passages in the MOU that preserve spaces for competitive recruitment practices, alongside more collaborative, non-university specific outreach activities. For example, there is effectively a competitive proviso clause that specifies 'recruitment activities clearly targeted at students who are ready to choose a course or institution are unaffected by this agreement' (Higher Education Forum, 2011, p. 2). In other words, practices to recruit high achieving students from low SES defined schools are legitimized, 'when they are ready to choose' a particular institution, although exactly when that might be has proved difficult for the Group to agree upon. The minutes of the Group meetings and discussion documents suggest some university representatives believed students in Years 10-12 were able to make this decision, while others noted that even within Years 10-12 there are still those, particularly within low SES schools and communities, who had not made firm decisions about tertiary study. Indeed, the MOU calls for 'tertiary awareness' programs for students in

schools from 'year 6 to year 12' (p. 2) and so implicitly envisages 'widening participation' work happening alongside more targeted 'recruitment' work in these years. Additionally, the cohort engagement model stipulated for widening participation activities by the MOU, where individuals are not targeted but rather entire year cohorts, makes adjudicating between those 'ready to choose' and those who are not difficult to do in practice.

Whether a particular university interpreted the Group MOU to authorise 'open competition' for students in low SES schools in Years 10-12, or at a more imprecisely defined time when they 'were ready to choose an institution', I argue that this competitive proviso is a key, textually mediated mechanism by which the student equity practices in Queensland are articulated to the wider ruling policy relations established by HEPPP. Specifically, this competitive proviso clause becomes the textually-mediated mechanism by which local practices align with the dominant Participation funding envelope provisions that privilege recruitment to specific institutions through the low SES student loading. Although Participation funds are used by universities to support existing students from low SES backgrounds on campus, they are also deployed to provide more accessible pathways and articulation arrangements to specific institutions, and for scholarships designed to recruit students to specific institutions. Minutes from a 2011 briefing with federal officials in the lead up to The Group's bid for competitively allocated Partnership funds confirm that Participation funds could indeed be spent on the marketing costs of promoting a particular university to students.

Yet the competitive proviso clause also, I argue, articulates local equity practices to another intrinsically related policy textual practice, the Mission-based Compact the federal government had negotiated with each university. As was explained previously in Chapter 4, the HEPPP Participation fund guidelines and the Mission-based Compact 'performance' funding targets positioned universities as competitors with each other vis-à-vis low SES students and, in Queensland, for Indigenous students. This was particularly the case for those universities with relatively weaker low SES or Indigenous participation rates. In contemporary Australian higher education equity policy, competition trumps collaboration.

Institutionally specific 'social inclusion' targets for low SES and Indigenous student participation, however, did not, as noted above, support The Group's objective for cooperative 'Partnerships' activity to 'raise aspirations', and stimulate low SES student 'demand' more generally to higher education. So the Group, in preserving space for competitive recruitment practices in its MOU, articulated Queensland practice to the ruling

policy relations of the federal government, whilst simultaneously valorising more collaborative activity. It accomplished the ruling relations of federal policy.

THE ACTIVATION OF THE MOU BY GRIFFITH AND UQ

The tensions between competitive and collaborative practices in outreach into low SES schools that are heightened by federal policy, and textually activated in the Group's MOU, are in turn textually activated by universities, although differently, depending upon each university's position within the competitive and hierarchical field of higher education in Queensland.

Griffith University activated the MOU rules of engagement through practising widening participation activities for students from Years 6-12, but it also has had separate 'external relations' or marketing teams involved at different times in those same schools with students in Years 11-12. In response to a series of questions about the relationship between widening participation outreach and its more recruitment focused activity in low SES schools, a Griffith Student Equity staff informant noted the following:

> ... if possible we do try and work in partnership and do that in synch with each other. So we can go in first, and sow the seed and go, 'ok this is inclusive…open your minds', and then External Relations, who are much more on a recruitment drive can come in, and they can give the actual hard and fast figures about which campus you go to and what you do for what and what degree leads to what career and outcome.

Although there is a different agenda at play for the student equity staff at Griffith than for the External Relations team – 'social inclusion' versus 'recruitment' – they are attempting to integrate their activities for the benefit of their university and students in schools.

UQ outreach staff activated the Group MOU by dividing their outreach practices so that Years 10-12 remain 'open for competition' and student recruitment, and widening participation activities occurred for students in Years 8-10. A UQ director, overseeing both widening participation and student recruitment activity, described the negotiation process within the Group meetings, and UQ's decisions, as follows:

> There was a push to work in primary school years on that [Group] working party and some universities said 'we will' and others said 'we won't'. We always made it very clear that was not where we saw ourselves going. Our Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic was absolutely clear that it was not where we saw ourselves going…We had a list [from the Group] and it had primary schools and high schools and we always said 'we will only be in high schools at this point in time'. The decision was taken in consultation with the DVCA and taking account of

> scarce resources. We chose to work intensively with the high schools. Year 10, 11 and 12
> was always open competition.

UQ's decision to work on widening participation activities from years 8-10, and not with primary school students, was based upon a strategic decision to invest resources so that they might best result in enrolments to university in general, but also specifically to UQ in the medium term.

After a century of cultivating deep partnerships with the elite high schools in the State (both government and non-government), UQ's move to systematically establish mutually beneficial partnerships with schools in low SES areas, as per the HEPPP Partnership Guidelines, is a long term task that necessarily falls beyond HEPPP funding provisions. [28] Assuming that it was not going to lower its tertiary entrance scores (Overall Position Scores, or OP's; which are application score cut-offs that effectively produce and reproduce a hierarchical field of institutional prestige), UQ's options to meet its progressively rising social inclusion targets were limited. It would have needed to need to either radically escalate its compensatory 'bonus points' scheme to improve low SES students' tertiary entrance scores and/or more systematically and strategically recruit 'the best and the brightest' from two new sources: low SES schools, and schools with a higher proportion of Indigenous students.[29]

I asked a UQ manager explicitly about the impacts of the Mission-based Compact social inclusion targets and whether they were affecting student equity practices. The manager replied directly:

> Yes − at the moment − with limited resources, we have got to be realistic and we have made
> the decision to work intensively with a small number of high schools [rather] than to try to
> be all things to all people. Not every student is going to come to this university. We need to
> go and find the ones from low SES backgrounds that have the potential to come here;
> prepare them as well as we can and get them in the door. To some extent, the focus on how

---

[28] As will be demonstrated in the next chapter, UQ has had some relationships with low SES schools in the past, and variously positioned staff have demonstrated on-going commitment to student-equity initiatives. What is argued here is that the current HEPPP policy and the preceding Bradley Review have forced the University to respond more systematically to these concerns than was previously the case.

[29] UQ's scheme is called UQ-Link-Access, and it grants five bonus ranks to an admission score for entry to UQ for students from financially disadvantaged backgrounds (The University of Queensland, n.d.-a). The systems is administered by QTAC ('Educational Access Scheme'), and those students who apply to QTAC and meet all of its 'financial hardship' criteria can gain access to the UQ-Link Program as well as $500 establishment costs and opportunities for further competitive scholarships (Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre, 2013). QTAC administers similar systems for other Queensland universities including Griffith. UQ also offers 'bonus ranks' to students with strong high school achievements in languages other than English, as well as Maths C. These bonuses are offered to recruit high achieving students and are not designed as an equity measure.

> scarce resource is invested is dependent on the leadership and practitioners in the universities. Equity practitioners will always have a very different mindset to a commercial person who, with limited budget will be very focused on outcomes.

In their pursuit of social inclusion targets, UQ was not directly providing widening participation activities to primary school students[30], but recruiting ex-students from these schools as 'role models'. Expressing an intimate engagement with student equity practices at UQ and also a clear distance from other student equity practitioners and their approach to widening participation, the manager argued for a commercial logic to drive student equity practice. This was going to be more effective for UQ, according to the informant, in an era of social inclusion targets[31].

Competitive pressures to recruit low SES students created by HEPPP Participation funding and the social inclusion targets have caused tensions, on occasion, amongst Queensland universities. A Guidance Counsellor informant from one of Griffith's partner schools expressed disappointment that UQ were conducting outreach into Griffith's allocated cluster of low SES schools, and thought this action was unnecessarily competitive. However, this strategy was understood by UQ outreach staff as a legitimate practice for the recruitment of Years 11-12 students who were ready to choose an institution, as per the MOU 'rules of engagement' and as authorised by HEPPP Participation funding guidelines. Further adding to the sensitivities involved between these two universities, the very highest achieving students from low SES backgrounds from some schools in Griffith's 'catchment' area had hitherto often chosen Griffith rather than UQ. As will be elaborated in the next chapter, federal policy settings were activated by UQ staff, at least since the beginning of 2011, through internal strategic planning texts and teaching and learning documents that articulated the need to attract a niche of the student market that now holds increased economic value: the highest achieving low SES and/or Indigenous students.[32] This has been the contemporary 'equity premium' within Australian higher education.

---

[30] More recently (since 2012) UQ has decided to begin some outreach into a small number of primary schools. Nonetheless this represents a small fraction of UQ's outreach activity.

[31] The different habitus of the manager and of other equity advisors at UQ, and their different positioning within the University, are also important to understanding the appropriation of national policy to the logics of practice of UQ. What is argued in the research, however, is that the movement of student equity outreach to the office of this informant, as detailed in the next chapter, was occasioned by the advent of the HEPPP and social inclusion incentives to recruit low SES students.

[32] Under formulas that were operative between 2010 and 2011, each low SES student attracted what amounted to approximately $1800 in extra government funding. After the federal budget of 2012 the figure was cut to approximately $1400 per student (Department of Treasury, 2012).

I can now re-draw the institutional relations for student equity practice, in Figure 2 below, that were established by HEPPP and the Mission-based Compact Social Inclusion targets negotiated by the federal government with each university. The dotted line represents UQ's activation of the social inclusion target texts through outreach practices *outside* of its allocated cluster of schools in low SES areas as specified in the Group negotiation process.

Figure 2. Institutional Relations for Queensland Student Equity Practice Established by the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program and Social Inclusion Targets

Federal HEPPP Funds split into..

Participation
Funds allocated by low SES and Centrelink headcount

Partnerships
Competitive bid pool

Partnerships (base)

The Group

Griffith outreach into…

Mission-Compact Social Inclusion Targets

UQ outreach into…

QUEENSLAND WP allocated Schools cluster in Logan Area

QUEENSLAND WP allocated Schools cluster in Ipswich/Lockyer areas
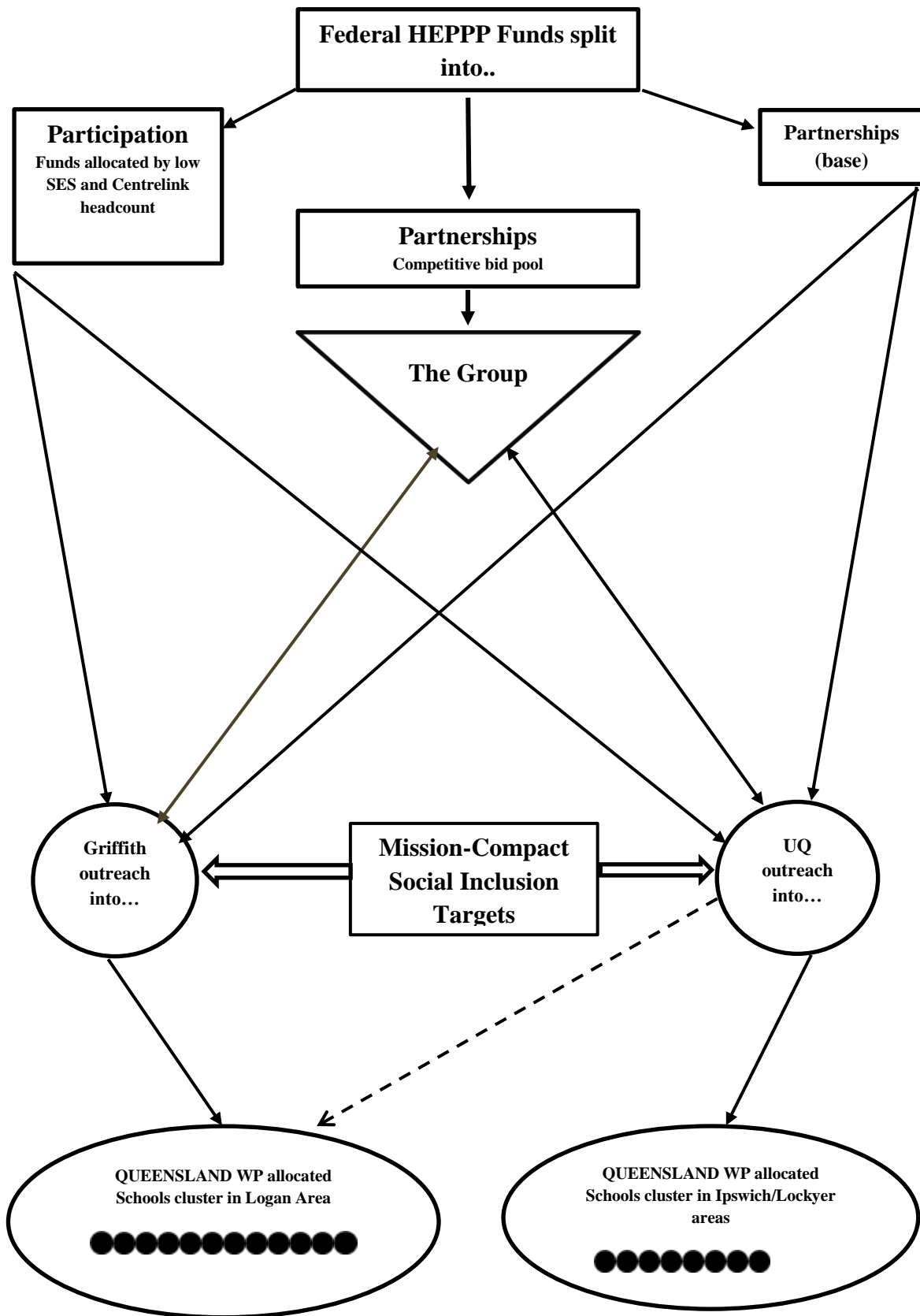
Despite this outreach to Year 10-12 students by UQ staff into the Griffith cluster of schools, a condition of Group funding allocated to UQ is that the work its outreach staff does in schools for students in lower grades be less focused upon academically elite students. Indeed, the director of both student recruitment and equity outreach at UQ notes that in these widening participation activities:

> …we don't select those students; the schools do. So some schools just hand it out and say, 'Anybody that wants to come can come.' Other schools might nominate; some schools say Year Eight, some say Year Nine, some say Year 10. We are in the hands of our partners there. There are a range of WP activities and our aim is through one activity or another, to get to all students in Years eight to 10.

Although UQ competes for high achieving students in low SES schools in Years 10-12, cutting across widening participation activities of other universities in those schools, its own widening participation activities in the Ipswich and Lockyer region west of Brisbane are potentially more accessible to a broader group of students, depending upon selection processes in schools (see Chapter 7).

Yet these widening participation activities are less well-resourced than other more targeted recruitment programs within UQ, which aim to provide opportunities for the 'best and the brightest' within low SES schools, both within its cluster of schools and across most of the state. According to a UQ staff informant within the student recruitment unit, the 'flagship' 'selective' equity program that has most financial support and prestige within the university provides opportunities for a small number of students per school, and is considered more likely to make an impact upon achieving the government imposed targets.[33] The equity outreach practices it conducts in line with the Group MOU, while important to UQ's standing within the Group, are not as critical to achieving its social inclusion targets.

UQ's participation in The Group, and its concern to be accessible to low SES students, were also matters of reputational prestige, or symbolic capital (Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993). In an interview with a student equity advisor at UQ, the importance of the university's participation was explained in the following way:

> It's a reputational thing. You couldn't have the only … Go8 [university] in the state … saying we're not going to do this because we don't care. And I think to be totally honest there are a lot of people that do care. I mean you've got some senior staff at the University who are very committed to this kind of stuff, whether they're necessarily going about it the right way is

---

[33] 'The Young Achievers Program', detailed next Chapter

> another question. But I think there's a very genuine commitment and concern about the fact that we haven't been able to improve our access figures; that we have a role in the state as UQ to be able to get all the kids in.

Despite the 'genuine commitment and concern' of individual staff at UQ to make the institution more accessible to low SES students, the strategic decisions taken in pursuit of that goal have been aligned with the preservation of its status as the dominant institution in the field. UQ has been inclined to strategically cooperate with other universities in The Group, while the focus has been upon expanding the 'base' of the system with low SES students. Cooperative student equity practices amongst universities become strained, however, where there is a potential change in the allocation of academic and reputational capital within the field and a disturbance to the existing institutional hierarchy of the field. Tensions arise when, from UQ's perspective, there is resistance to its recruitment of the 'best and the brightest' low SES and Indigenous students. From Griffith's perspective, tensions arise when UQ is preoccupied with recruiting high achieving students from the high schools allocated to Griffith's cluster under the Group's MOU and doing little to support the educational achievement of students from primary school years. An outreach staff member from UQ explains the strategy to improve low SES participation rates:

> I think ultimately we are trying to get the highest achieving lower socio-economic and the highest achieving Indigenous to almost fit in within the other aspects of what UQ prides itself on...we have those high standards and it's very - you know, set standards and they are driven by demand and calibre of applicants and quotas and things like that. So I think, yes, ultimately, that is the mix that fits in best with where - you know, with what UQ can attract.

UQ's privileged position in the field, its 'high standards' and its ability to attract high performing students are regarded as 'natural' unfolding of the market mechanisms of supply and demand. It appears obvious to this practitioner that neither UQ nor any other university would interfere with this outcome.

Bourdieu's theory of conflict within fields enables the strategic positioning of UQ and its collaboration within the Group process to be understood as consistent with its privileged position in the field (Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Marginson & Considine, 2000; Naidoo, 2007). While other universities such as Griffith are more reluctant to recruit students from the low SES schools allocated to UQ, over-extended as they are with their own set of low SES schools in their 'catchment' areas, UQ's recruiting reach extends beyond its cluster of schools into those of other universities such as Griffith. HEPPP policy

effects can be understood as changes in the political field producing a disturbance in the field of higher education in Queensland. Incentivising low SES student recruitment via financial payments heightened competition amongst universities for high achieving students in low SES schools. Yet they do not seem likely to have fundamentally altered the distribution of academic and reputational capitals amongst the universities, nor the prevailing distribution patterns of students across the universities as measured by SES. Student equity practice at UQ becomes recognizable (Smith, 2006a) to its staff as federal and Group mandated policy, when it activates internal strategic texts aimed at both improving its proportions of low SES students and maintaining its commitment to recruiting the 'best and the brightest'.

CONCLUSION: COLLABORATIVE APPROPRIATION OF FEDERAL POLICY

Despite the competitive market for low SES students encouraged by the HEPPP policy, the Group seems to have manifested a capacity and power to negotiate and appropriate (Levinson et al., 2009) the federal government's competitive equity policy relations in accordance with its members' own practices. There are five instances of this appropriation that are significant. First, The Group was able to impact the shape of the final HEPPP guidelines and thus federal government policy. The Chair of the Group submitted a response to the Draft Guidelines, advocating for more funding of collaborative, non-competitive widening participation approaches. This advice, along with the model of the collaborative state-wide process and collective bid, impacted the final Partnership guidelines. This demonstrates an interesting blurring, as well as interactions, between sites of policy production and policy enactment. Specifically, in this case, the state sites of enactment affected federal policy production, offering a challenge to linear accounts of policy processes (Peacock et al., 2013).

Second, the DETE secretariat and Project Officer to the Group noted in interview that the federal government subsequently encouraged other states to become involved with their universities' widening participation effort in a similar manner:

> What happened in Queensland was really what the Commonwealth [the federal government] wanted to see happening around the country. They really wanted to see universities collaborating on this stuff. They, at one stage, contacted every state government to see what they were doing in terms of working with universities. So, yeah, what we were doing fitted very nicely with the Commonwealth. What the Commonwealth was doing, it fitted nicely with what we wanted to do. We were very nicely aligned. So, yeah, we did have an impact.

Although the Group could not impact the shape of the Participation guidelines under HEPPP, it was instrumental in having the Partnership guidelines recognise and call for collaborative and coordinated approaches in the bidding process. Collaborative activity was encouraged by the HEPPP policy within an enveloping set of competitive student-recruitment relations.

Third, the concerns around the balance between the Participation and Partnerships components within the HEPPP funds were also referenced by The Group's steering committee in other conversations with federal officials. The Chair of the Group was often consulted directly by these officials around related policy matters. Within the final HEPPP guidelines (ComLaw, 2012, 1.50.5), there appears a provision for universities to move Participation monies to Partnership activities, should they wish to do so, which suggests that there was some responsiveness to the Group concerns here, and also the concerns of other equity practitioners in Australia. The rate at which universities did indeed shift these funds across was particular to the institution's requirements. Internal documents suggest that UQ, for instance, did not shift over substantial amounts of funds to support widening participation outreach activities. Although Griffith's deployment of HEPPP Participation funds was mostly aimed at supporting existing low SES and 'first-in-family' students, there was a more substantial movement of funds across to the Partnerships and outreach practices.

Fourth, the HEPPP Guidelines for the funds do not reference specific Indigenous project funding (this appears under a separate scheme). However, The Group was successful in making this a key component of its bid, and now funds have flowed through to Indigenous Units on university campuses across the state. The refracting of this policy towards local Indigenous student concerns was a key appropriation of ruling policy relations (Levinson et al., 2009).

Fifth, and finally, because of cooperation amongst Queensland's public universities, most of the Partnership bid money went to regional universities, who were judged by The Group as having the most complex service provision to communities and schools with the largest low SES and Indigenous populations, and which enrol mostly regional and remote students. The collaborative bid and common agreement over differentiated funding amongst the Queensland's universities meant that most of the funds went where they could be used most efficiently and for greatest impact.

In conclusion, the Group has proved its capacity to reconfigure or appropriate federal policy more appropriately to local needs and circumstances. The Group has gained influence within the national equity field, and, I argue, impacted federal policy for the better. It has

not, however, disturbed the meta-policy setting and the fundamental structures of the higher education field in Queensland.

CHAPTER 6: THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND AND 'SELECTIVE EQUITY'

INTRODUCTION

Having analysed the 'widening participation' practices of the collective of student equity practitioners and managers comprising The Group, and its textually-mediated activation and appropriation of the ruling (neoliberal) policy relations arising from HEPPP, I turn specifically now to an examination of the University of Queensland (UQ) and to its student equity practices.

From the vantage point of student equity outreach workers and the social relations within which they are embedded, both within the wider university and in the Queensland field of higher education more generally, I seek in this chapter to achieve four tasks. First, the chapter begins by providing an historical context for outreach into low SES schools from UQ, and the policy movements producing a local incorporation of student equity practices within student recruitment practices. This movement represents a re-configuring of student equity practices at UQ, which I argue affects the alignment of UQ practices with government policy, but according to UQ's dominant position within the Queensland higher education field.

Second, I examine the discursive construction of UQ's 'flagship' equity venture, the Young Achievers Program, as it is articulated in institutional texts and by informants from the Office of Prospective Students, Scholarships and Student Equity (OPSSSE). The Young Achievers Program is constructed as a 'selective equity' program for 'deserving students' within schools identified as serving low SES communities. It is intertextually related to the UQ's strategic Learning Plans to recruit the 'best and the brightest' students, as well as higher numbers of low SES and Indigenous students.

Third, by examining data gathered from a school Guidance Counsellor interview, I explain how the construction and selection of 'Young Achievers' involves both University outreach staff and school staff jointly activating school based institutional technologies to match textually mandated university criteria. Employing Smith's (2006a) notion of an 'intertextual hierarchy of texts' that regulates and standardises other texts and the textually-mediated organization of student outreach practices, I describe the textually-mediated practices that were produced and reproduced by UQ staff's active appropriation of regulatory texts (HEPPP) from 2007-2010.

Finally, I describe the hybridizing (Fairclough, 2003) of 'student equity' with the 'best and the brightest' discourses and practices by the OPSSSE unit and its outreach into a set of Brisbane based schools known to UQ as 'equity schools'. I map the textual coordination of UQ outreach in low SES schools to represent how UQ accomplishes student equity to serve both government

mandates and its own interests as the dominant university in the state. 'Outreach into low SES schools' is an act of discursive hybridity (Fairclough, 2003), mixing practices of recruitment of high achieving students and more general support for wider groups of students in low SES schools. It is a discursive act that becomes 'recognizable' (Smith, 2006a) at UQ as government mandated policy and consonant with its position at the top of the competitive higher education field in South East Queensland.

CONTEXT

Despite the fact that the UQ is the Queensland's dominant university, and historically the most difficult to access for school students from low SES backgrounds, UQ has had made periodic attempts to engage schools with low tertiary education transition rates. The UQ-Link program was designed in 1989 to provide school outreach in disadvantaged areas, special scholarships and supports and reserved places for disadvantaged students (Bowen, 1992). Yet, with personnel changes at UQ, there was, according to a high school principal informant in this study, a gradual withdrawal in the 1990s from school outreach practices in low SES areas as OP entry scores at UQ became higher: 'So it certainly was unfortunate then during that time that we weren't able to maintain those relationships with UQ'. The shift of focus in the 1990s away from this kind of school outreach also coincided with the establishment of Griffith's suite of outreach programs for schools in low SES areas (see Chapter 7), and the expansion of QUT's work in the same field.

UQ staff became more active in the 2000s at least at a policy level with models for cooperative outreach work amongst universities and the need for sustained efforts to provide greater opportunity for students in disadvantaged areas from across Queensland (Stewart et al., 2007). An internal report in 2004 detailed a model for cooperation amongst universities, in partnership with Education Queensland, which sought state government funds to provide outreach into disadvantaged areas. UQ staff also articulated a renewed vision for student equity practice at UQ that sought to broaden the focus from schools to university-community engagement across multiple sites, building trust and mutual benefit (Stewart et al., 2007). They described the need for UQ to rethink its engagement with marginalised communities.

While UQ's commitment to the social inclusion of disadvantaged students might have waxed and waned historically, a resurgence of energy within the student equity field arose with the Bradley Review (Bradley et al., 2008) of Australian higher education, which clearly reasserted the strategic importance of both expanding the numbers of students with a tertiary education and raising the proportion of those students from low SES backgrounds participating. The Bradley 20/40 participation and attainment targets and the promise in 2008 of significantly more funding (see

Chapter 2) became the catalyst for UQ's (and other universities') expansion of outreach and support practices for low SES students.

An internal mapping document of UQ's outreach and engagement of low SES communities and schools, conducted in 2009 by the Boilerhouse Centre for Community Engagement[34] based at UQ's Ipswich Campus, located west of Brisbane, found that practices across the university as they existed then were poorly coordinated and proceeded without any clear strategic directions from university leadership. Staff felt that the community maintained perceptions of UQ as an elitist university and one without a clear understanding of the needs of low SES students.

RE-CONFIGURING STUDENT EQUITY

An institutional restructuring for student equity and outreach initiatives at UQ soon followed the production of this mapping document. The most significant decision involved the centralizing of all outreach into low SES schools by moving the student equity function from Student Services to the Office of Student Recruitment and Scholarships (now the Office of Prospective Students, Scholarships and Student Equity, or OPSSSE). The reasons articulated for the shift in the site of student equity practice are diverse and reflect in part the positions the informants occupy within the university.

Student Service outreach (or student equity strategies) at UQ in 2009 were described by an informant, as s/he recollects that time, as follows:

> With Student Services, the focus was identifying what educational disadvantage means and overcoming that. So instead of picking the 'low hanging fruit'… it was actually going about having a cultural change with the schools. So identifying the schools that don't have high OP eligibility… So for targeting we looked at everything from low-income districts, right through to identifying those [in the schools] who were clearly not aspiring to university, or who had aspirations but were not following up on them. A lot of students actually have aspirations to go to University but by the time they get to grade 10, 11 and 12 those aspirations have been quashed, for whatever reason. From parenting, from the school, from the community, so it was about going in and changing that and working with them in their senior year to have them actually achieve, as they could, overcoming educational disadvantage at the school level, as opposed to having to give additional OP points or other things at the university. We had limited money as well, of course, not like HEPPP funding, so looking at schools willing to work with us and schools that clearly needed to be worked with as opposed to somewhere that already had 75% of their students doing an OP eligible pathway.

The Student Services staff informant here recalls the existing UQ student outreach strategy from 2009 as targeting schools with low proportions of students undertaking 'OP eligible' pathways and

---

[34] The Centre was closed by UQ in 2011/2012.

therefore with significant populations of students not on track to gain entrance to a university.[35] She contrasts this with the strategy of 'picking low hanging fruit', an expression in student equity practice referring to selecting and recruiting the highest achieving students from these low SES schools, or from low SES schools with higher proportions of 'OP eligible' students on a tertiary education pathway. The informant's recollection of the strategy also manifests the contradictions in widening participation discourse around the need to 'raise aspirations', which is built on assumptions of individualised deficit and the imposition of middle class values (Burke, 2012), and a more nuanced approach which sees aspirations as socially constructed, fluid, and often misrecognised by schools and universities (Appadurai, 2004; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Zipin et al., 2013). Another important strategy was to assist in the student's school achievement before s/he left school (in this case, in Year 12), instead of relying on compensatory bonus rank schemes to adjust his or her tertiary entrance score.

The same Student Service informant also suggested that current UQ student equity practices had changed since the move of the student equity function from Student Services to OPSSSE. S/he described current OPSSSE practices as follows:

> My understanding is that there's two strategies, a widening participation one, where they go out to schools and where 'every child gets a prize', where everybody gets some kind of interaction with a university, and then there's the ones where we target heavily and go, ok these are the schools we want to work with; a go to market and recruit and get the students to us, so still looking at the high achievers. So both strategies going on.

Contemporary student equity practice at UQ, according to this informant, involves both a widening participation strategy, which brings the university experience to all students within the school, and then a more targeted recruitment of high achieving students to UQ. As will be seen later, the 'prizes' on offer to the school students differ remarkably between high achievers, who comprise UQ's target market, and the rest.

An informant from the OPSSSE unit, established in 2010, describes the rationale for the shift of the student equity function from Student Services differently:

---

[35] The Overall Position Score (OP) is scored in 25 bands, from 1 (the highest) to 25 (the lowest) based a comparing students' overall results in Years 11 and 12. In 2014, the minimum OP score required for any UQ undergraduate degree program was an OP score of 16 (The University of Queensland, 2014a). As has been reported in Queensland newsprint, since 2009 there have been increasing numbers of Queensland school students gaining entry to tertiary places without an OP score, a result of students choosing/being placed on alternative Vocational and Educational Training (VET) pathways (Chilcott, 2013). These students' school results are converted to a 'ranking' by the Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) which is then converted to an equivalent-OP score for universities. There is also a wider trend for an increasing number of students to complete Year 12 in Queensland without being eligible for an OP score. Although there has been a rise in the absolute numbers of Year 12 students eligible for an OP score since 2008, the proportion of the total count of Year 12 students eligible for an OP score has been declining (Allen, 2013). The OP is scored in 25 bands, from 1 (the highest) to 25 (the lowest), based a comparing students' overall results in Years 11 and 12. In 2014, the minimum OP score required for any UQ undergraduate degree program was an OP score of 16

> …there was a division made around prospective and current students. I think to have all engagement with schools being managed by one division is a smart move; not only insofar as from a school's perspective, so they get to know the similar people, they know who to contact for different things. I see Student Services very much as a current - you know, supporting current students; helping to retain current students.

The organizational shift is viewed pragmatically here, and the OPSSSE informant's distinction between 'current and prospective students', and the term 'prospective' in the title of the new unit responsible for student outreach and engagement, reproduces the language of the HEPPP policy that was drafted in late 2009 to legislate the federal government's policy agenda. In Smith's (2006a) terms, the HEPPP policy becomes a regulatory text, and constructs the resources (discourses) from which UQ then produces subordinate texts as recognizable instances of this regulatory text. Government policy to incentivize the recruitment of prospective low SES students from schools and support the current enrolments seems at least partially responsible for the shifting of student equity practices to a unit previously concerned with student recruitment of high achieving students. As this OPSSSE informant, with responsibilities across widening participation and recruitment activities, explains:

> …we have undergone a series of changes/mergers, whatever you want to call it, over the last two to three years that has definitely seen our focus very much be evenly split now between, you know, trying to attract the best and brightest students and - you know, keep that high-end recruitment type up - and also the aspiration and the equity building programs.

The federal government's student equity agenda is appropriated by UQ's strategic and historical practice to recruit the so called 'best and the brightest', or students from the 'top end', so that building aspiration and equity among, by implication, bottom end students, is activity set within a set of student recruitment relations.

FROM POLYVISION TO YOUNG ACHIEVERS

The shift of the outreach and engagement function from Student Services to OPSSSE was accompanied by a discursive shift at UQ. I am representing this shift with reference to the differences between the two forms of social practice undergirding the 'PolyVision' program, through which UQ engaged Pacific Island students and communities, and the Young Achievers Program, which has become for UQ its 'flagship' equity program. The shift is signalled with the move from the model of 'engaged outreach' to marginalised students and their communities, to a 'selective equity' program seeking to reward the higher achieving 'deserving' students (see below). This discursive shift accompanies the government incentives, via HEPPP participation funds and

Mission-based Compacts, to recruit low SES students according to a 'bums on seats' approach (Gale, 2012; Thomas, 2000).

In 2007, the Boilerhouse Centre for Community engagement and the UQ-Link unit had been working with Pacific Island communities and students on the 'PolyVision' project, which was 'designed using a reflective, collaborative process with local Samoan and Tongan communities, to identify and address issues impacting on higher education access for young people' (Cuthill & Scull, 2008; UQ News, 2007) The project sought to 'inspire' these students from high schools in the Inala to Ipswich corridor[36], west of Brisbane, 'to broaden their horizons and consider higher education' (UQ News, 2007). This PolyVision project was developed after the Boilerhouse Centre's 18 month community based participatory action-research project, which designed and modelled an engaged outreach approach to student equity practice amongst marginalized communities. The aim was to 'shift outreach models from a traditional, school-based focus to identifying, engaging and collaborating with the full range of stakeholders who impact or otherwise influence the decision to go to university' (Cuthill & Scull, 2010, p. 62). The participants in the research created several products including DVDs and the PolyVision outreach program itself. The project was also referenced in the internal UQ mapping document mentioned above, which recommended that this model of engaged outreach with the Pacific Island community be strengthened through the appointment of a Pacific Island liaison officer.

An informant, who worked previously at the Boilerhouse Community Engagement Centre, described what happened after the PolyVision program and the community-based research study with the local Pacific Island community, in light of the federal government's renewed low SES student equity policy agenda.

> I heard that there was going to be a major equity project at UQ. It was happening not long after we finished the Pacific Islander project and we were trying to move the practice understandings gained through that Pacific Islander project into a much broader university context. When we heard that there was going to be major equity initiative around widening participation [a UQ Equity Advisor] and I put forward a position that the idea of engaged outreach which we had developed be applied through - or that that funding be applied through an engaged outreach approach. Now, that was knocked back.

Instead, the Young Achievers Program was to emerge as the 'flagship' equity program at UQ. An informant from the OPSSSE unit describes the program's origins as a 2009 conception aimed at a

---

[36] This space encompasses a range of communities that are ethnically diverse, include a higher proportion of Indigenous and Pacific Island peoples than the Queensland average, and are measured by the Australian Bureau of Statistics' socio-economic indices as particularly disadvantaged. For earlier attempts by UQ researchers to work with community partners to address some of these issues, see The Goodna Service Integration Project (Muirhead & Woolcock, 2008; Woolcock & Boorman, 2003) and the Positive Links between the Universities and Schools (Mac Neil, 1999) projects.

substantial donor to the university. It was successful in raising a large donation, which was to be used for scholarships and bursaries connected to the program, while UQ was to provide 'in kind support – operational and administrative support'. The Young Achiever Program is variously described in UQ texts (web-based, brochures etc.) in the *Table 1* below:

Table 1. Discursive Construction of the Young Achiever

Text	Form	Function/Activity
UQ's Young Achievers Program has been established to help students who may not otherwise have considered university as an option…to raise the aspirations of high school students… particularly those who have been disadvantaged through financial hardship, geographical isolation or their Indigenous background	2010 UQ Website (The University of Queensland, 2010b)	Promotion of program to wider university and community
The UQ Young Achievers Program (UQYAP) is an exciting initiative which aims to build the tertiary aspirations of deserving secondary school students who might not otherwise have considered university as a post-school option.	Current UQ Website (The University of Queensland, 2014b)	Promotion of program to wider university and community; information for schools and students re program requirements and selection processes
Building the aspirations of deserving students	Brochure (2012b)	Marketing of program to university, schools, parents, donors and community via student testimonials and program highlights
The UQ Young Achievers Program (UQYAP) was developed by UQ in 2009 to provide a pathway to tertiary study for deserving secondary school students who have experienced educational disadvantage.	Terms and Conditions of Program (The University of Queensland, n.d.-b)	Consulted by schools, parents and students for compliance

Text	Form	Function/Activity
Raise the educational aspirations of secondary school students who might not otherwise consider a university education… To develop tertiary educated, civic-minded leaders and role models, motivated to give back to their communities To increase the number of low income and Indigenous students enrolling in and graduating from university To establish a sustainable mentoring program (UQ student volunteers)	UQ OPSSE Outreach Plan 2012/2013[37]	Details strategic and operational plans, 'target markets' for OPSSSE staff

Table 1 Discursive Construction of the Young Achiever

---

[37] Internal OPSSSE text accessed in interview

The 'Young Achiever' student in these texts is constructed as a member of the 'deserving-Poor'. The discourse of the 'deserving-poor' harkens back to the English and Welsh 'poor laws' of the late 16th century, but has persisted in social policy through the development of the welfare state into contemporary times (O'shea, 2006). Rowlingson and Connor (2011) summarise the three ways social policy makers have divided the deserving poor from the underserving. First, those who were disabled or lacking in capacity have been thought to have been not responsible for their situation, and so 'deserving' of assistance. Second, a poor person's 'proximity' to or identification with a geographical or identity-based group boundary has provided for a principle of division. Thirdly, a poor person's psychological affect and behavioural dispositions have provided for an historical principle of social division (cf. Gewirtz, Ball & Bowe, 1995). Those poor who have been seen to be passive and grateful have been considered especially deserving.

In these texts the Young Achiever is a member of the deserving-poor, in distinction to her or his classmates, because s/he is able to meet the following criteria, specified in a UQ document sent to parent(s) and staff[38]. Eligible students must have demonstrated high 'achievement' at school or 'have the potential to transition and succeed at university on completion of Year 12'; they must be OP eligible, come from a 'supportive family environment' and maintain a 'school attendance rate of at least 85%' (The University of Queensland, 2014c). A history of leadership and community service through the school is also looked upon favourably.

A deserving student then is one who is institutionally defined and organized via extant equity policy categories (low SES) and comes from a school identified by UQ for the program. Such schools are typically categorised as low SES as per state and federal government aggregate indicators and/or are schools from which students have had a relatively lower transition rate to university. These organising definitions provide the 'proximity' principle for those who are deserving (Rowlingson & Connon, 2011). Additionally, the individual is assessed for 'financial disadvantage', which is defined as low income and assessed through the parents/caregivers' tax returns and government payments, or 'Indigenous Australian' status, which is assessed via a 'Confirmation of Aboriginality document'. The deserving student is one who, despite these institutionally defined disadvantages, is understood to be academically competent, not missing too much school time and from a 'supportive' home environment, which is assessed at least in part by the school or university selection committee according to whether the parents/caregivers giving permission for the students to attend camps.

---

[38] 'Information for Parents and Guardians', internal text

In each of the schools there are approximately three students who potentially can become Young Achievers (the limit comes from the University side, and the financial costs of the program), and there are approximately 40 schools which are invited to nominate and endorse Year 10 students deemed 'motivated, with the potential to succeed at University' (Internal OPSSSE Outreach plan, 2012-2013).

I asked an OPSSSE staff person explicitly about the term 'deserving' in interview. The informant replied:

> The aim of the program isn't to emphasise any particular level of disadvantage. But I guess it [the term deserving] flags it because if the students have worked hard throughout their year levels leading up to the point at which they are nominated, then they have obviously shown that they have that potential to go on and do something further… the students deserve to be given the opportunity to go on and make the most of their academic potential.

The deserving poor are also those students who have 'worked hard' to achieve sound academic results. For this informant, these students are distinguished from their peers at school through their behaviour or work ethic and thus 'deserve to be given an opportunity'. The informant further describes the student's 'academic potential' as follows:

> I wouldn't say that they are always the highest of achievers, insofar as they are not always 'A plus' students. Some schools, certainly, yes, they may be. But in other schools, you know, they may be more of their upper mid-range students - predominantly receiving grades of A and B; you know, with this particular program, with this chance, they could improve. I think certainly over the last couple of years we have tightened the academic selection criteria standards. The nomination and selection process is very closely tied to overall and long-term program outcomes. So we do go through and see how they have gone; not only in terms of their results but also, you know, their behaviour… it is a UQ and donor funded program, that we need to be, you know, quite tight in the students who we are selecting for the program.

For the students who pass through the 'tight' selection process and become Young Achievers, the 'deserving-poor' who fit institutionally organized categories of disadvantage and display the appropriate 'behaviour' and academic dispositions, there are impressive benefits. Financial assistance is provided to Young Achievers whilst they are in Years 11 and 12 ($1000 per year), and mentoring and support is provided by UQ students, including advice and assistance with career planning, university pathways and application procedures. Students participate in residential camps to 'demystify' university life and build self-confidence, leadership and communication skills. Should the student choose to enrol at UQ, the benefits really begin to

mount. There is a bonus five points added to the student's tertiary ranking score, and then there is the scholarship of $6,000 per year for up to 4 years (University of Queensland, 2012b).

The Young Achiever Program is thus, as one OPSSSE informant describes it, a 'selective equity program' designed for 'aspiration building and increasing enrolments of low socio economic and Indigenous students'. Yet the selectivity of the program relates not simply to the costs to the donors and the university. The practices and discourses of the Young Achiever Program also are intextually[39] related to the UQ's strategic Learning Plans that are renewed each year. Two core objectives relate to UQ's recruitment of students—it seeks the 'best and the brightest' and higher numbers of low SES and Indigenous students. For instance, a strategic text on learning at UQ (2010a) quotes the OPSSSE Director as follows:

> Winning the hearts and minds of the country's best young talent is a critical strategy for a university focused on research excellence and UQ therefore has a strong emphasis on attracting high-achieving students…At the same time we are very conscious of the need to ensure that deserving students from a wide range of backgrounds can also realize their educational ambitions at UQ. (p. 11)

The document (The University of Queensland, 2010a) more formally sets the dual strategy to 'seek to attract, support and retain high-achieving students, giving additional priority to the participation and success of students from low-SES and Indigenous backgrounds' (p. 12). In the letter introducing the same document, former UQ Vice-Chancellor and President Paul Greenfield made it clear that high achieving students meant 'the best and the brightest' (p. 5). Commanding the greatest proportions of high achieving students measured by OP score, and the most selective cut off scores for access, UQ as the dominant university in the Queensland field of higher education appropriates the widening participation agenda to produce the Young Achievers Program, which contributes to the discursive construction of the 'deserving-poor' student who achieves academically. This discursive hybridity functions to articulate UQ's strategic plans to recruit 'the best and the brightest' with HEPPP policy and the requirement to 'raise aspirations' for low SES and Indigenous students.

SELECTING 'YOUNG ACHIEVERS'

The construction and selection of Young Achievers is a laborious process accomplished by Student equity staff and school staff. I present here an analysis of selections of an interview with a

---

[39] I am using the term intextuality in the research after Fairclough (2003) and Dorothy Smith (2006a). It refers here to the 'relations between one text and other texts which are 'external to it, outside it, yet in some way brought in to it' (Fairclough, 2003, p. 39), including in part or in whole the assumptive world of the external text. Yet, as DeVault and McCoy (2006) note of Smith's understanding of discourse, I also extend the notion of intertextuality to encompass the 'field of relations' comprising the activities and practices of individuals interacting with, handling, and passing on texts in organizational work sequences.

Guidance Counsellor/Officer from a school that has been allocated to UQ through The Group process for widening participation activity. It is also a site of recruitment for students for UQ's Young Achiever Program. I am interested here in the use of institutional technologies involved in the selection of Young Achievers, and how school and university outreach staff are activating these textual technologies in the process of constructing UQ's 'Young Achiever' student.

Since 2007 Education Queensland has required school staff to actively construct the 'OneSchool on-line data base' so that the school and the education department can 'meet its duty of care to all students and staff members' and 'administer and plan for providing appropriate education and support services to students' (Department of Education Training and Employment, 2014). In an interview with a Guidance Counsellor informant from a school allocated to UQ by The Group, I was shown how the database was constructed. After enrolment forms are collected, data is entered into this on-line database, and progressively updated by staff with responsibility for specific data domains. It is represented below as Table 2.

The OneSchool database becomes, for the Guidance Counsellor informant, 'part of our filtering system' to determine which students should participate in certain widening participation activities. The filtering parameters are defined by UQ's own requirements for participation. UQ requires that the school itself, through the school principal, 'nominate up to three eligible and deserving students' for the Young Achiever Program. In this school, the Guidance Officer explains the selection process as follows:

> We ask students to self-nominate, and (we) promote it on assembly so all Year 10s hear about it for a number of weeks. Kids tend not to come forward so we ask teachers to find students who fit UQ's criteria. In my experience we've only had one student who has nominated himself.

Next, to ascertain whether a student has 'financial hardship', the OneSchool database is accessed for enrolment data specifying the employment status of the student's parent(s) or caregiver(s).

Table 2. OneSchool Data Base Selection Technology

Student	Contact with Parents/Agencies	Career	Academic	Behaviour Profile	Extra-Curricular Activities	Absences	Specific Learning Needs
Photo; Parents employment status; Medical conditions (disabilities); Notes if student "in care" of the State; NESB; Disability; ATSI	A journal kept by staff detailing their significant correspondences with parents and caregivers	Career aspirations from school surveys; and Senior Education and Training plans (SET) completed in Year 10	School Reports NAPLAN results Competitions Awards	'positive and negative'	School based activities outside of class hours recorded	Attendance record	Learning difficulties; special needs

The Guidance Counsellor explains how s/he made a list of the students in the year level who were potentially suffering 'financial hardship':

> Well last year I also had scholarship offers from The Smith Family and they're involved in the same sorts of things. So I took the time to go through 350 DETE enrolment forms - from 'OneSchool' information that has the parents' names and what their employment is. So if they work, both parents are working, I didn't call those families. So parents who were pensioners, single parent families, I just gave them a call. Called about 150 families. And had to find people who had healthcare cards, basically.

The Smith Family is a 'children's charity helping disadvantaged Australian children to get the most out of their education' (The Smith Family Foundation, 2014). Its 'Learning for Life' program supports students, identified by the schools, with financial assistance, tutoring and mentoring. The charity also partners with universities, such as UQ and Griffith, so that these students are linked into university supports and mentoring if and when they transition to higher education. The work of constructing both the 'Learning for Life' students and those deserving and eligible for the Young Achievers Program is a laborious process for the Guidance Counsellor/Officer, involving hours of data base research and personal phone calls. The Guidance Counsellor/Officer is assisted in this school in the selection of Indigenous students:

> To look at our Indigenous students, we have a Community Education Counsellor here (CEC), to liaise with. We look at the top Year 10 Indigenous students, and probably interviewed 10 of them, and explained to them individually what the Young Achievers Program was about. 10 out of roughly 35 Indigenous Year 10 students.

The OneSchool database is consulted again, says the Guidance Counsellor/Officer, to check the students for 'behaviour and academics', including 'absences'. Finally, a letter is sent home to the short-listed parents/caregivers inviting their participation and consent for their child to participate (also to satisfy UQ's requirement that there be a 'supporting family' background for the student). The end-result is the selection of three students. In 2012 two of the three Year 10 students chosen from this particular school were Indigenous. The use of the OneSchool data base by the Guidance Counsellor to assess students' academic promise meant that a range of indicators were potentially used: Year 10 school results, past NAPLAN scores, Senior Education and Training plans (SET Plans), prior expressions of 'career aspiration', and school behaviour and attendance. The Young Achiever student thus becomes the discursive accomplishment of UQ student equity staff and school staff through their activation of federal and state government equity discourses via the institutional technology that is the 'One School' database. This local co-production of student

equity policy works as a textually mediated practice of power to appropriate HEPPP policy to UQ imperatives to recruit the 'best and the brightest'.

Student equity practices at UQ by 2010 had, therefore, shifted in response to HEPPP. Small scale outreach to marginalised students and communities was replaced by a mixed set of practices involving both the recruitment of a relatively small number of higher academically achieving students from schools in low SES areas, and the development of 'widening participation' outreach in schools in response to the Group's negotiated MOU. These less selective outreach efforts included UQ's 'Experience US' activities and campus tours, goal setting workshops and the Rock and Water Program, each potentially available to the approximately 15 schools allocated to UQ through The Group's 'Widening Participation' Project 1. That work was funded by the separate HEPPP Partnerships grant, won by The Group from the federal government.

This mixing of discourses and practices was not achieved, however, without tensions and contradictions. There was, and remains, an apparent contradiction between the discourse of 'raising aspiration', as regulated by HEPPP policy and reproduced in internal UQ texts such as Young Achievers Program marketing, and as occurs within OPSSSE operational strategies. The Young Achiever criteria effectively assume the aspirations in students that the Program seeks to 'raise'. In consecutive annual reports of the 'Young Achiever Impact Study' (internal texts) originally designed by the Boilerhouse and now continuing under the auspices of the OPSSSE unit, it was found that 'most Young Achievers already had aspirations of going to university' before the school and UQ selected them. To be sure, there is no doubt that once selected, a Young Achiever is more likely to gain access to university. Eighty five percent of Young Achiever participants enrol in higher education and 'a substantial majority' approaching '75%' choose UQ specifically (UQ Senate, 2012). Further, UQ's Young Achievers are likely to be to be successful at university with the support of a very generous scholarship of $6,000 per year and other supportive programming. Aspirations to participate in higher education are a necessary but insufficient condition, and universities are funded through HEPPP to provide other supports required to improve educational opportunities for people from marginalised communities. Yet, although the participation of three students from the particular school I have highlighted here is welcomed and diversifies the socio-demographic participation of UQ students at the margins, the Young Achievers Program will not widen the opportunities for higher education participation for the vast majority of students from this school. Other strategies are required.

'EQUITY SCHOOLS'

In addition to the Young Achievers Program, and the widening participation activities such as the Rock and Water Program, Experience US and goal planning activities (further discussed in Chapter

7), UQ's OPSSSE also conducts 'outreach' into a set of Brisbane based schools known to UQ as 'equity schools'. The category of 'equity school' is unique to UQ, and represents another example of the hybridizing of 'student equity' with the 'best and the brightest' discourses and practices. In this section, I seek to demonstrate how the construction of 'equity schools' outreach practices is textually mediated by two regulatory texts: the HEPPP policy and the related Mission-based Compacts agreements between the federal government and UQ. These regulatory texts are taken up by differently positioned UQ staff through the production of two subordinate, internal texts: a UQ planning document, and the 'OPSSSE Outreach plan'. The activation of these texts, in turn, articulates UQ practices to the stipulations of student equity federal policy, while appropriating this policy in the interests of the institution as the dominant university in the Queensland field of higher education. Outreach into 'equity schools' becomes the practical accomplishment of UQ staff and school staff as they activate these texts in Brisbane schools. UQ's appropriation of federal equity policy, through its construction of 'equity school outreach', is both a logical response to government policy and a source, as Chapter 3 details, of tension amongst Brisbane's differently positioned universities.

The OPSSSE office has three teams of staff: a 'scholarships' team, a 'student engagement/recruitment' team, alternatively known as 'school liaison' team, and an 'outreach team'. The school liaison team divides schools into four categories, a process an OPSSE informant describes to me as 'market segmentation', or 'the way we group and market to the schools… grouped in terms of similarity - SES status, need, size, location, potential return etc.' S/he describes the segmentation as follows:

> For our schools engagement/recruitment efforts each year, we review the QTAC [Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre] data and organize groups of schools according to Top 20 (in terms of high achieving students), Tier 1 (140 schools), and a Tier 2 group, much smaller but important to feeding our residential colleges. We also have every year a TLC group - 'tender loving care' – generally based in Brisbane, where we believe there is greater potential than currently being realized. These are large schools in terms of tertiary bound students and we are of the view that there is potential for UQ to increase its share.

The relationships between SES, school achievement and access to UQ are reproduced in this schema: Tier 1 schools that provide UQ its greatest number of high achieving students include the Queensland's elite private schools, as well as state funded selective high schools. Tier 2 schools, from across the state, provide UQ with a revenue stream from College accommodation (fees from approx. $15,000 to $20,000 per year), while 'TLC' schools are Brisbane based schools whose (typically middle class) students are often as likely to consider universities such as QUT and

Griffith. As the OPSSSE informant describes in interview, this segmentation process is designed to 'recruit high achieving students'.

> We can't take our eye off the ball in terms of recruitment of high achieving students – that's our bread and butter. This is not just the job of the student recruitment unit but of everyone – in [the OPSSE group] and across UQ.

At the bottom of this market segmentation is what is known as 'equity schools'. The informant explains: 'In terms of outreach, we also have group of schools in Brisbane, selected by virtue of a combination of size/SES status/location to UQ'.

'Equity schools' are Brisbane based, low SES defined schools that have hitherto not provided UQ with a consistent source of enrolments, but which, because of federal government policy, have become targets for UQ recruitment activity. Or, more precisely, the high achieving students from these low SES schools have become targets for UQ recruiters. Although the informant places the 'equity schools' into the 'outreach' category, there is a blurring of the boundaries between 'widening participation' activities and 'recruitment' activities in these 'equity schools':

> UQ's widening participation activities are focused largely on years 8-10; recruitment is focused on Years 10-12. Again, there is an overlap there. That overlap is becoming increasingly important as we start to strengthen the outreach activity. But in order to meet government targets and institutional expectations we have to go beyond these [widening participation] schools and we're also looking at what we can do to raise the tertiary aspirations of students in selected Brisbane schools, focused on students in Years 10-12 (a competitive market), but using the outreach tools we have developed, and probably to some extent the outreach people we have developed. So if you like the outreach toolkit will be extended into our recruitment activities with a broader base and a different base of schools in Brisbane.

The OPSSSE informant articulates the work of student recruitment and outreach according to the provisions established by The Group MOU, which allocates the rules for widening participation activities, whilst preserving the competitive space for student recruitment practices (see Chapter 3), and also 'government targets and institutional expectations'. The government targets are formally regulated by the Mission-based Compacts and the 'institutional expectations' are set within internal strategic texts. The result is an appropriation of widening participation discourse by UQ, and its hybridizing with a 'best and the brightest' discourse, to enable UQ's elective recruitment of high achieving students from low SES schools.

UQ's Mission-based Compact (Department of Industry, n.d.-d) with the federal government for 2011-2013 stipulated the 'social inclusion targets' for low SES and Indigenous student participation. UQ was set a 'performance' target for low SES participation at 10.55% for 2011 and

10.95% for 2012. Internal texts at UQ suggest when UQ missed its low SES target for 2011 it subsequently lost approximately $610,000.[40] Gale and Parker (2013) have argued that the social inclusion targets in the Mission-based Compacts have not provided as much incentive as the HEPPP policy itself, yet staff interviewed at UQ maintain that the reward payments are a significant institutional motivator for engaging in student equity practices. One executive level informant notes:

> Informant: Yes I believe that there has been far more focus on this since there has been a financial incentive, it has certainly focussed attention.
>
> Researcher: UQ's budget is obviously much larger than the reward payments for Mission-based Compacts targets…
>
> Informant: But still, that can make a significant difference in order to support some of the activities in outreach and so on. So I think the university is looking longer term, too; not just one year. You know, accumulated over a number of years that makes quite a difference.

The UQ OPSSSE Outreach Plan also references the Mission-based Compact targets specifically in its overarching 'objectives':

> Increase the number of low income and Indigenous school leavers with a 1st preference for UQ/UQC [UQ College] in line with the University's Compact Agreement

This outreach objective, unlike the broader 'widening participation' strategies, is specifically geared to recruitment of students to UQ, and is directly sequenced to the social inclusion targets of the Mission-Compact for both low SES and Indigenous students. As an overarching objective, this outreach is the responsibility of both the school liaison and outreach teams in OPSSSE. For the OPSSSE unit, the HEPPP policy is practically fused with the Mission-Compact social inclusion targets.

The reference in the OPSSSE objective to increase the number of low income and Indigenous students' '1st preference for UQ' is intertextually related to another internal UQ text. An internal text from 2012, developed by staff from the Planning office, advised that UQ was going to continue to struggle to meet its targets because of its geography (i.e. the small number of low SES postcodes in the vicinity of its campuses, especially, St Lucia), and its history of escalating admissions standards. UQ would need to 'compensate for disadvantage' at admission and/or find 'alternative pathways' for 'academically able students from low SES backgrounds'. Yet the analysis also found that whereas UQ commanded the highest proportion of applicants with

---

[40] UQ did meet its Indigenous student participation target for 2011 (0.7%) and received approximately $610,000 in a reward payment.

OP 1-3 scores of any Queensland university, low SES applicants with the same OP 1-3 scores were 'considerably less likely to direct their first preferences to UQ than other students'. This was considered to possibly be a 'perception/aspiration problem', and the document speculates that other universities are perhaps perceived as 'more accessible, and 'offering better services' and 'links with schools in low-SES areas'. The Planning text argues that '[u]nderstanding the reasons why high performing low SES applicants are less likely to want to study at UQ will also be important for improving the university's low SES participation rates'.

This internal UQ Planning analysis directly led to the funding of a new study. To recruit the highest achieving low SES students, more targeted recruitment/outreach efforts were needed in Brisbane's schools in low SES areas. The new study, unlike the original Boilerhouse longitudinal Impact study, seeks to measure the motivations of low SES students participating in the Young Achievers Program. The OPSSSE 'outreach' plan text defines the parameters for the study:

> Quantitative research (from 2012) to investigate student motivations (theory of planned behaviour, incorporating perceptions of self-belief and self-efficacy).

OPSSSE has partnered with the UQ School of Psychology for the study, which assumes once more that 'aspirations' are individually constructed and remedied via individualised interventions. The goal, at least in part, appears to be articulated to understanding 'the reasons why high performing low SES applicants are less likely to want to study at UQ', as the UQ Planning text phrases it. The study is also referenced in UQ's Mission-based Compact (2011-2013) as 'market research…to be conducted on students from the Ipswich and surrounding areas to analyse "perceptions and aspirations" for university study'. The market here is the competitive field of higher education, particularly within the south east corner of Queensland, within which the students are positioned as consumers. Student equity research, as represented by the Boilerhouse work with the Pacific Island community and high school students, has shifted discursively to market research into consumer tastes and preferences for a particular product: a UQ degree.

The 'Equity School' strategy was expanded subsequent to the UQ Planning analysis to make the existing high achiever, recruitment programs more accessible to students from low SES and/or Indigenous backgrounds. Two programs are highlighted here to represent this overture to equity concerns: The Young Scholar Program (YSP) and the Enhanced Studies Program (ESP). Both programs had been designed explicitly to recruit high achieving students to UQ: to nurture and develop high achieving Year 11 students' (YSP) and to offer university courses in the first semester of Year 12 to students with an average of B+ or above in Year 11 (ESP). UQ's Annual Report (2012) describes the YSP program as follows:

The Young Scholars camps have proved very popular and highly sought after, especially for students/parents from some of Brisbane's most privileged private schools. In 2012 there were 373 applicants and 221 selected (OPSSSE informant interview). OPSSSE was concerned to make these camps more accessible to 'equity schools', and so offered fee waivers ($595) and transport bursaries ($250) for students 'experiencing financial hardship', which UQ judged to be a family income of $70,000 or less. In 2012 UQ received 19 applications from students in 'financial hardship' and awarded places to 13 of them. It also offered 4 transport bursaries. This modest opening up of Young Scholar places to students from financially disadvantaged backgrounds through financial assistance does nothing to address the nexus between educational achievement in schools and SES (e.g. Cardak & Ryan, 2009; Redmond, Wong, Bradbury & Katz, 2014; Teese, 2007). Instead it effectively displaces a small number of students from more privileged backgrounds, with the same academic achievement, to make some room for students that have become more attractive to UQ because of the HEPPP and the Mission-based Compact's social inclusion targets. In this sense it represents the HEPPP policy at work: financial incentives to recruit low SES students are changing the practices of university outreach and recruitment staff in one elite university.

The Enhanced Studies Program, or as an OPSSSE informant describes it, the 'try before you buy university experience', has also been adapted and marketed to students from 'equity schools'. UQ piloted a program in the summer of 2011/2012 in schools in the Ipswich/Lockyer area (UQ's widening participation area west of Brisbane) to assist students who had just finished Year 11 with a week long course in critical thinking and writing. It expanded the pilot to a summer-intensive course, labelled 'WRIT 1999', held at the St. Lucia campus in the summer of 2012. Year 11 students from the equity schools in Brisbane were invited to participate (The University of Queensland, 2012). The program was adapted to the needs of these students through a focus on 'academic preparedness' and a relaxing of the B+ average entrance score. As an OPSSE informant describes it:

> … because of the nature of this program, and our aim to improve the academic preparedness of the students, we were far more flexible in terms of their academic performance in Year 11, so students entered the course with scores ranging from an average C through to A minus and the majority did very well. Small classes and lot of support, and still passed the course. So we're trying to take, if you like, some of the University's products, and adapt them to the equity environment.

That is, a rebranding of the university's 'products', traditionally purchased by students from high SES backgrounds, is required to suit the taste profiles of the 'equity' student. But the WRIT 1999 program is also useful, as the same informant noted in interview, in 'preparing the students better that might be University bound anyway, to help them… to write effectively and think critically [which] has a significant impact on how they perform at University across all the disciplines'. Successful students in the program receive the same benefits as other Enhanced Studies Program students, such as the addition of one bonus rank to the students' tertiary entrance score.

UQ's construction of 'equity schools' and their new outreach/recruitment strategies in these Brisbane based schools has caused tensions within the higher education field in Queensland, especially within the South Eastern Corner. The hybridizing of 'equity' and 'young achievers/best and the brightest' discourses that these programs represent straddles the Group MOU dictates and government imperatives to raise the proportion of low SES students at UQ. As described in Chapter 3, UQ's outreach/recruitment in Brisbane based 'equity schools' occurs outside of the schools allocated by The Group for UQ's 'widening participation', and indeed in schools that have been allocated to other universities for widening participation activities. Yet UQ does not regard these outreach/recruitment activities as widening participation – it defines any activity in any school in years 10-12 as 'in the competitive space', or 'open slather' for competition (OPSSSE informant interview). Yet the appropriation of the 'equity' discourses for these competitive recruitment activities is necessary for UQ to articulate its activities to the HEPPP policy guidelines.

CONCLUSION: UQ'S OUTREACH INTO LOW SES SCHOOLS

To help represent the process of discursive hybridity involved in UQ's construction of outreach practices into low SES schools, I have developed *Figure 3*, which illustrates the textual mediation of UQ outreach in low SES schools (below). Recalling Smith's (2006a) intertextual hierarchy of texts, which distinguishes regulatory texts and the subordinate texts that are discursively structured to organize practice according to their mandates, I note that OPSSSE's 'Outreach Plan' document, an internal, subordinate text, articulates OPSSSE activities in two directions. First, UQ's 'Outreach Plan' is articulated to UQ's own Planning text (internal subordinate text) and the Mission-based Compacts (external regulatory text), and HEPPP Guidelines. Second, the work done in the schools in the Ipswich and Lockyer region that were allocated to UQ in The Group's process (analyzed in Chapter 7) is discursively constructed as 'widening participation' and seeks to 'raise the aspirations' of these Years 8-10 students. This becomes UQ's contribution to the widening participation agenda, and is articulated to the Project 1 Report of the Group, and through this collective, is articulated to the federal government's HEPPP Partnerships Guidelines. The intersecting area of the two circles in *Figure 3*, defined as 'outreach to low SES school students', represents the UQ

hybridrizing of student equity and 'best and the brightest' discourses, or their 'widening participation' and 'recruitment' practices. The collective result of this textual mediation of ruling relations is the accomplishment of 'outreach into low SES schools' by UQ OPSSSE staff that becomes recognizable as government mandated policy and consonant with UQ's position at the top of the competitive higher education field in South East Queensland.

Figure 3. The Textual Mediation of UQ Outreach in Low SES Schools
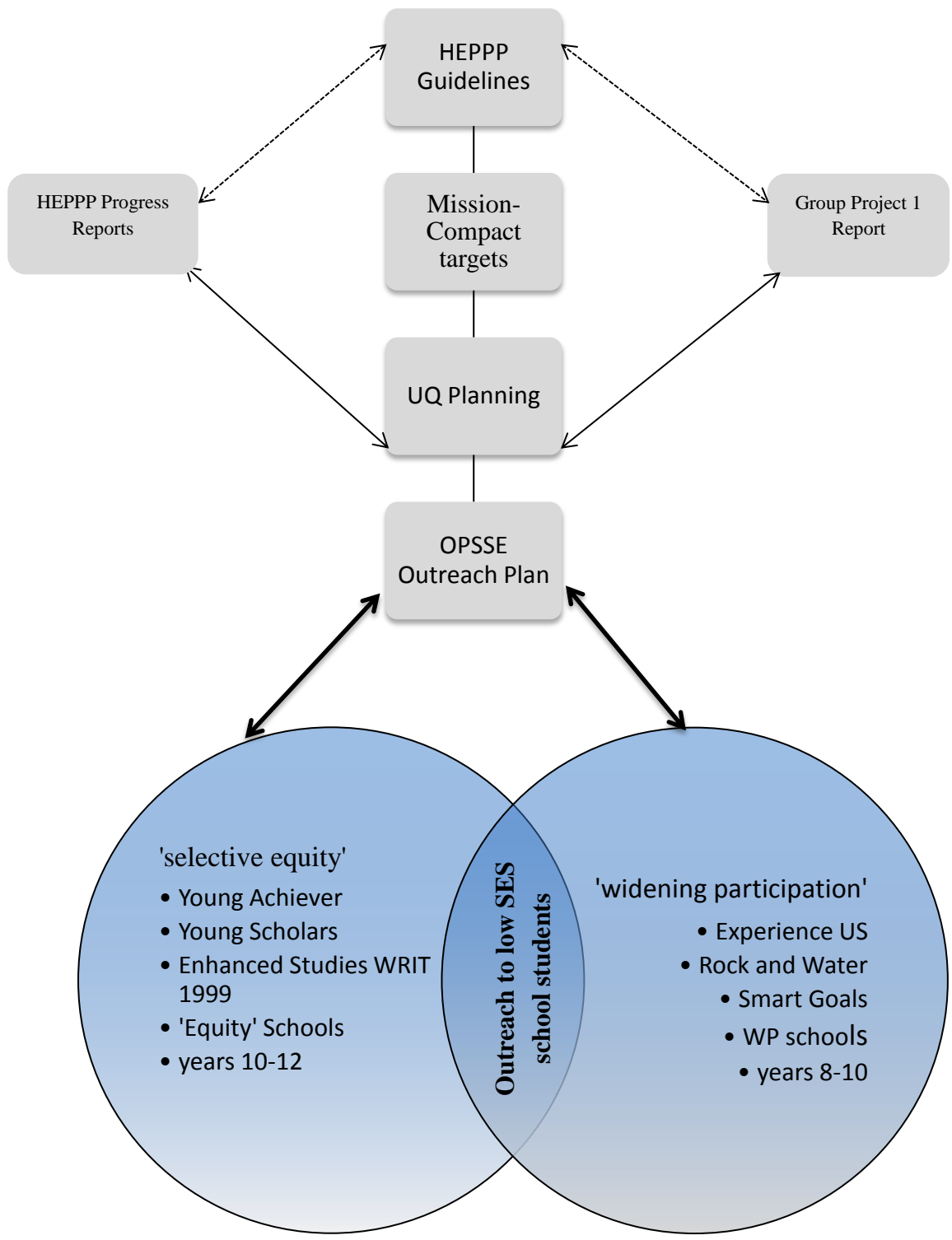
To conclude, I have argued in this chapter that that the advent of the HEPPP policy has precipitated at UQ a re-configuring of student equity outreach. Small scale outreach efforts into disadvantaged communities have been displaced by a larger scaled attempt to recruit the 'best and the brightest' from low SES schools in Brisbane and throughout the state. Through the discursive construction of the 'Young Achiever' and 'equity' schools, UQ staff have sought to appropriate HEPPP policy to UQ's position in the higher education field. I demonstrated how this was accomplished in one instance as school staff, following university criteria, activated the OneSchool data base to select students to populate the Young Achievers program. Through the expansion of recruitment programs to the high achieving students in low SES schools, UQ has constructed a 'selective equity' agenda.

Yet UQ's also conducts 'widening participation' programs in schools in the Ipswich and Lockyer region of Queensland (west of Brisbane), even if these are proportionately less well-resourced from HEPPP funds than UQ's 'selective equity' outreach practices. Outreach activities for a broader cohort of students are important for UQ's continued participation in The Group effort to provide services in low SES schools across the state. Through its 'University Experience' program and bus excursions to UQ campuses and CSIRO Science precincts, its goal setting workshops and the performance of the Rock and Water program in schools, UQ hopes to 'raise' students' 'aspirations' for university studies into the future. As the next chapter demonstrates, while these practices are unlikely to enable UQ to meet its social inclusion targets, they are important for UQ to maintain its reputational capital. These practices also, according to a UQ student outreach staff person, enable UQ to work with a more disadvantaged cohort of students than the 'best and the brightest' from schools in low SES areas.

CHAPTER 7: UQ'S WIDENING PARTICIPATION PROGRAM AND AN INSTITUTIONAL FIELD OF ACTION

INTRODUCTION

UQ aligns its student equity practices with the HEPPP policy mandates, the MOU of The Group, internally produced subordinate texts, and with specific school requirements. This chapter further analyses these textually mediated processes by providing ethnographic description and interpretation of UQ's 'Rock and Water' workshops with students in one school in Years 8 and 9. As well as providing 'rich and thick' (Denzin, 1989) descriptions of a form of contemporary widening participation practice, the analysis in this chapter empirically demonstrates how the subjects of widening participation policy and activity, the students within schools whose 'aspirations' are presumed to be low, are objectified, or written up into texts that are sequenced into reporting requirements for The Group and, through it, to the federal government. University-based student outreach informants, as well as school personnel informants, are shown to be actively participating in and constructing this organizational accomplishment. The social relations amongst students, school and university staff are reorganized in this process according to extra-locally determined discourses of 'raising aspirations' and 'widening participation'. UQ's Rock and Water program was conducted by its outreach staff and performed skilfully and with a demonstrable concern for marginalised students. This work was received well by school staff and is a significant part of UQ's contribution to student equity work in low SES schools, as regulated by The Group MOU. Yet, UQ's 'widening participation' work represents a small component of UQ's outreach into low SES schools.

Next, I map an institutional field of action for UQ student outreach practices which clearly positions UQ's Rock and Water and other outreach practices alongside the Young Achievers Program and more 'selective equity' outreach. These outreach practices are textually mediated by both regulatory texts (HEPPP policy and Mission-based Compacts) and activated by UQ staff through their production of three subordinate, internal texts: a UQ planning document, the OPSSSE Outreach plan and the annual HEPPP Progress Reports. Collectively, UQ staff activate and appropriate the ruling relations of HEPPP policy, accomplishing an institutional field of action that produces and reproduces the UQ's dominant position within the field of higher education in Queensland. UQ's enactment of HEPPP policy traverses a competitive field, the mediations of The Group's widening participation agenda, and the particularities of school programming. OPSSSE

student outreach staff's enactment of HEPPP policy is also a textually mediated practice of power that activates normalised discourses of student equity but, crucially, also appropriates them to its institutional imperatives.

UQ WIDENING PARTICIPATION

The influences of UQ staff's participation in the Group, and its MOU establishing acceptable practices for widening participation work amongst universities, have moderated the move to recruit the 'best and the brightest' students from low SES schools. From 2010 through to the present there has been a simultaneous development of widening participation activity in low SES schools outside of the Young Achievers Program and the Young Scholars and Enhanced Studies outreach and selection practices.

Within the 12 of the 15 schools high schools allocated to UQ, defined as low SES schools in the Ipswich and Lockyer regions west of Brisbane, widening participation activity began in 2011 for UQ through its 'University Experience Program' (UEP). In an information letter to schools, OPSSSE describes its UEP program as providing 'practical, on-campus experiences designed to introduce students to university life and some of the interesting career possibilities that can be achieved through tertiary study'. These involve bussing students to UQ campuses (Gatton, originally an agricultural college, Ipswich and St. Lucia), as well as CSIRO facilities located in Brisbane suburbs (Pullenvale and Boggo Road). Additionally, UQ encouraged schools to participate in 'follow-up in-school presentations and/or personal development workshops to "whole-of-year" cohorts' designed to 'build student confidence and to raise their educational ambitions'. The letter to schools explicitly calls for the opportunity for every student to have an experience of university in a year level ('whole cohort'), as this is "consistent with 'Widening Participation' agreement signed in 2011 by local universities and the Queensland government" (OPSSSE letter to schools).

In contrast to the previous practices of engaged outreach envisaged by the Boilerhouse staff and an equity policy advisor, in which the problem and possible solutions were mutually constructed, this model of outreach necessitated UQ *persuading* the schools that these programs were in their best interests. When I asked an OPSSSE outreach staff person involved about what most impacted his/her work practices on a daily basis, s/he responded:

> I guess the biggest thing is the fact that our schools that have been allocated didn't sign off on the [The Group] consortium to say that we will participate in WP activities. The universities decided what schools they'd engage with, but the schools haven't said, haven't written down, haven't signed anything to say that's a good idea, we'll engage. So it's very much about selling what we have to offer these schools, and selling that in a way that they see that as an advantage for their students to engage.

Whilst other universities, such as Griffith, had long established relationships with schools allocated to it in The Group process, UQ had to initiate relations with some low SES schools in its region. This required 'selling' their message that UQ was now interested in these schools and their students, even if it had not expressed this interest in this way before. In an internal report to The Group accounting for UQ's activities in these schools (Project 1 Report, 2012), OPSSSE noted that:

> …some schools [were] more enthusiastic and appreciative of the benefits for their students than others. While all schools were encouraged to participate in the full suite of offerings as a rounded 'aspirational' package, there was a tendency on the part of some schools to 'cherry-pick' from the list of activities offered.

The discourse of aspiration ('aspirational package') in this text here is transferred from the individual student to the school, while clinging to its deficit assumptions (i.e. Why wouldn't these schools participate in all of our programming?). Whilst 'cherry-picking' might be a respectable activity for universities to engage in (the picking of 'low-hanging fruit', or the high achievers from low SES schools, as discussed above), it is almost used pejoratively here when describing the terms under which low SES schools might engage UQ. Yet OPSSSE unit staff, in this text, clearly attests to a mediation of widening participation activities by schools, so that the practices of higher education outreach are appropriated by schools according to their own discourses, practices and needs.

SCHOOL MEDIATION OF WIDENING PARTICIPATION

An interview with a Deputy Vice Principal of a school at which UQ outreach took place is useful in describing the school appropriation of university-based widening participation discourses. The informant describes how the school set the parameters for the outreach:

> The school defined its needs and priorities as addressing the retention rate between years 10 and 11, as 30% of its students during this time left for work or traineeships (half of these) or for unemployment (the other half). So the school wanted to target this time – a focus on years 9 and 10.

Schools and universities have mutual interests in seeing the proportions of students who complete Year 12 and progress to further studies, and the school identified the end of Year 10 as the point at which these life decisions were being made. The most propitious time for intervention, for this informant and school, was through Years 9 and 10. Yet the shape of the programming had to fit with the school's 'Futures Program'. The informant describes this as a 'social-emotional learning program' that progresses from an anti-bullying and self-esteem program in Year Eight ('You Can Do It') through a 'Be Real' game covering 'careers and goal setting' and 'budgeting and money' in

Year Nine. S/he explains how students are then selected to participate in UQ's Experience US program:

> We survey them in Year Nine and ask for an indication of what they want to do. So anyone who expresses an interest in further study – not just university – we send them on this Experience US trip so they can see that, look, university is an option. A few kids have come to see me and say I never thought I could go to uni, didn't know what it was about, now I've seen what goes on there, that's a goal for me. And so those kids are starting to set higher goals for themselves.

University familarisation experiences are regarded by outreach practitioners as motivators for students to persist in their studies past Year 10 and to think differently about their futures. All Year Nine students at this school participate in at least one UQ Experience US day, and the particular campus visit they go on will depend upon their preferred career choices as determined by survey earlier in the year. The entire cohort model of engagement is preferable for UQ's widening participation activities, and for student equity practice as stipulated in The Group MOU, because there is less chance that schools or parents will stream their students and children away from higher education experiences. A barrier to the 'whole of cohort' engagement model in UQ's practice, however, is that the bus that it hires to take the students from school to campus/CSIRO facility and back holds only 45 seats for students. For some of UQ's allocated schools, this is enough room for the entire cohort to participate. For others, however, choices are made by the school as to who would most benefit from the experience. While UQ offers to come back on another day to offer the same trips, its practice has not been to fund two buses for these trips on the same day.

For Year 10s at this informant's school, the process works differently. There is an initial survey to garner interest, and then teachers are asked to nominate students who are 'on the fringes, that could do it but won't be putting their hand up'. The Deputy Vice Principal and teachers then inspect the lists and pull people off the list if they are expected to attend university:

> …we look at the lists, and go, ok, these kids, we know their families, we know them – they're going to go to uni. So they come out of the trip. If they're a kid that knows they're going to uni, that's their goal, they've got the grades, and they're going, we often don't allow them to go on that trip. To create space for those kids that may be unaware that it's a possibility and they've got the skills- that they could go.

One assumes that if there were an extra bus available then those students with an expressed interest in university would still be able to participate. There is, despite the act of exclusion, a clear intent to include those students for whom the school believes might never have considered university. Students are then asked about what particularly they wish to study at university and then are allocated onto the relevant bus trip:

[if you are] interested in nursing, medical, ok great, or ag[riculture], you're going to go to the first trip which goes out to UQ Gatton and UQ Ipswich. If you're more interested in the Arts, Education, Science, you're going to go to St. Lucia and CSIRO [CSIRO Pullenvale or Eco-Science Precinct]. So its interest based, and if they're undecided, then we send them on both.

The informant also distinguishes between the kinds of students that participate in the various UQ widening participation activities. S/he summarizes the divisions this way:

More often than not the students participating in UQ's programs would be from three distinct groups. There may be some overlap. The kids that participate in the Experience US days are the ones that have the results to show that they could go to university and succeed, but haven't even thought about it as a possibility. Or the ones who have thought about it, but don't know what university is. The Smart Goals program is for the entire cohorts of Years 10 and 11. The Rock and Water program is for students who are currently disengaged, but if they found ways and had skills to engage, there's no reason they couldn't see themselves going to uni. Rock and Water is targeting the Years 8 and 9, the Experience Days target 9 and 10, and the Smart Goals is targeting 10 and 11. So we're hitting people at different developmental stages.

The 'Smart Goals' workshops are designed by UQ to provide experiences and knowledge of goal setting and to communicate the supports offered to students to study at university. The Rock and Water Program will be described shortly. The point here, however, is that the widening participation activity is appropriated by the schools to support career planning activities, social-emotional learning, and is practically oriented to student retention across years 10/11. Student selection is also driven by the school in light of these objectives, which run parallel, sometimes overlapping and sometimes conflicting, with the whole of cohort student engagement model expected of widening participation practice. The Chapter now turns to my ethnographic observations of the Rock and Water Program in this school.

UQ'S ROCK AND WATER PROGRAM: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTION OF THE TEXTUAL MEDIATION OF WIDENING PARTICIPATION ACTIVITY IN A LOW SES SCHOOL

WORKSHOP 1

I accompanied an OPSSSE outreach worker, Paul, and a UQ student ambassador[41], Shelley, to the same school, identified as low SES and allocated to UQ by the Group, over three days of activities enacting a truncated version of the Rock and Water program. Reading the program notes in the UQ

---

[41] A Student Ambassador at UQ is a student than has been selected by the Undergraduate Office to both be trained in and to lead various student engagement activities. The students selected would typically be highly motivated, high achieving students with a history of extra-curricular activities at school and at university. The OPSSSE unit provides further training for outreach work into schools in low SES areas.

car on the way to the school on the first day, I saw the program was designed in the Netherlands, originally for boys, and seemed a mixture of martial arts philosophy and psychological constructs around discipline and resilience. It focussed on individual responses to conflict and obstacles, and was designed to be very physical and interactive. According to the program's originator, the Rock and Water Program aims to:

> …assist boys in their development to adulthood by emphasizing the importance of being conscious of their own power and responsibility within society.
> (Ykema, 2000a, 2000b, 2002)

Ykema (2000a) notes that the founding of the Rock and Water Program in the mid-1990s in Holland was in response to another 'Self-defence for Girls' program that began in the mid-1980s and that was 'a direct result of the women's emancipation movement', '[c]hanging role patterns and a growing sense of [women] being entitled to the same rights as men' (p. 2). Initially entitled 'Action and Reaction', the program was designed to teach boys in such a way as to 'prevent sexual violence', particularly against women, but then was broadened out in the 'Rock and Water' program by Ykema to include 'safety and integrity' on 'the path to manhood' (p. 3). Today the Rock and Water Program is taught both to boys and girls, in separate streams, although the higher lessons or stages, 9 to 13, are described by Ykema as 'more suitable for pupils from age 14, are gender specific and aimed toward boys'.

UQ has adapted what is a 14 week program into three gender specific workshops for schools for both boys and girls. Paul has a Social Work degree, although I was told by his manager that this was not the reason he was employed for the work. Shelley is a student studying Social Work and who wants to work with Indigenous communities. Both had been funded by UQ to undergo the Rock and Water training modules established to certify trainers and promote the program in Australian schools and communities. The training is costly – anywhere from $800-$1000 is needed to provide a person with the training and supporting resources to teach the program to students in schools (Family Action Centre, 2014). Schools in low SES areas in Brisbane also host these training sessions. As well as expanding to include a separate stream for girls, the Rock and Water Program had also been positioned as a program to assist students with autism, and was until 2013 being promoted by Education Queensland's 'Behaviour Support Services' division to State schools in Queensland.[42] Paul recommended this program to the school, and he said it had been very popular with the schools and Guidance Counsellors and Officers, who were also familiar

---

[42] http://www.learningplace.com.au/deliver/content.asp?pid=32059 Accessed September 20, 2013. This link has now been taken down.

with the program. 'It meets a school need', says Paul, and therefore 'is real outreach'.

When we reached the school on the first day, I interviewed the Deputy Principal. He said that the school 'debated about it long and hard whether it was useful for our students'. He continued:

> We get a lot of offers for a lot of programs to run. Very few of them are free of charge but they come thick and fast for social-emotional learning, goal setting, career development, all that kind of stuff from small private companies to big ones. And we look to see, if and when things come along, if they fit, and where they best fit into that. So with the Rock and Water, it is a program that I have used at other schools and we have been talking about, before here - usually it runs a lot longer, with more modules, but the modules that these guys [UQ] have chosen to run are the key ones, the ones we thought really targets Year Eights and Nines. This program fits into our 'Futures Program', into the development of social-emotional learning, understanding others.

UQ's offer to run a truncated version of the Rock and Water Program was worked into the school's existing 'social-emotional' learning goals, and because it was 'free of charge' to the school it was chosen among other options. As for other contemporary education policies involving school interventions, one of the effects of the HEPPP policy has been the support of the business models of various institutes (such as the Gaduku Institute that has been established by Ykema to provide the Rock and Water program) and training providers which are employed by schools and universities to resource their staffs.

The Principal of the school sat down to welcome Paul, Shelley and me into the school, and noted that 'there was some resistance from parents to their child's participation in the program'. He received phone calls from parents asking 'why is my child participating, what did they do wrong?' Clearly 'Rock and Water' was not seen within the school community as being for high achieving students.

After we walked as a group to a room in the library, separated from other rooms by retractable walls, I assisted in moving back the tables and chairs to create an open carpeted space. Paul and Shelley welcomed approximately 15, Year Nine girls and a (female) school chaplain into the room and sat down with them in a circle. I had moved to the back of the room with the stacked chairs and sat behind a small desk. Paul's introduction was brief – 'I'm from UQ and my job is to talk to students about some post-school options, how you might get there'. He introduced Shelley, a co-facilitator, and me, a 'researcher from UQ' who was 'watching how we do this stuff'. The students were excited and talkative, unsure about what was going to happen.

Paul began by saying the theme of the day was 'responses to conflict'. The first activity of the day was 'Chinese sticky hands'. The racist language was jarring, and reminded me of schoolyard phrases from my childhood such as 'Chinese burn', 'Chinese whispers' and 'German measles'.

There did not appear to be any students of Asian ancestry in the room. The goal, Paul explained, was to try to move one's partner off balance, your hands against theirs. Pushing forward with force into the other person's hands is like being a 'rock'. Falling, or letting the other person fall forward, overbalancing, is like 'water'. 'Both are effective responses', Paul said, and both need to be employed 'to win the game'. The students engaged quickly with activity, and were laughing throughout.

Paul called the students together again and sat on the floor with Shelley, explaining to the students that their second activity was 'Chinese boxing'. This time the open hands were used to hit the other person's open hands, in an attempt to make one's opposing partner overbalance. Once again Paul modelled the activity with Shelley – Paul, a smaller, muscular frame, Shelley, tall and athletic – and both were adept at all of the activities. The students engaged each other, and Shelley and Paul moved around the group assisting students and facing up to challenges from students.

The third game was 'finger fencing' (thankfully the 'Chinese' was dropped this time). Paul modelled with Shelley hands on hands in front of the body, index finger extended, in a 'boxing' stance. To win, one had to touch the knee of the other person with one's index figure or one had to cause the other person to overbalance. It is possible to win either way with the application of force ('rock') or by receiving the hands to overbalance the opposing partner ('water'). The students followed, engaging rigorously, while Paul encouraged students 'to work with force the other to your own advantage'. Paul spoke quickly, and expended high amounts of kinetic energy. He and Shelley were fully engaged physically with the students.

The fourth game was called 'walking as water, or walking as rock'. The energy levels of some of the students had begun to wane, and some started to lose their concentration. Paul and Shelley modelled the game by walking towards each other from opposite corners of the room. On their first pass, Paul bumped shoulders with Shelley, as neither deviated from their path. This was called 'choosing to walk as rock', or straight-ahead, without yielding to others, while also not moving to deliberately collide. On their second pass, Shelley walked as rock, while Paul adroitly stepped aside, while still moving forward, avoiding contact. This was 'walking as water'. 'You need to be able to walk both ways', said Paul. This game was tough for the smaller girls, one in particular, who did not really seem to have a choice but to 'walk as water'. In the midst of this activity one of the students asked Paul, "Why are we here?" Paul replied, 'to learn about some strategies and skills'. A puzzled look emerged on the student's face.

As each activity progressed, and 'winners' were established from each pair, the numbers whittled down until there was one student crowned as champion. But then she had to compete against Shelley, or Paul, and they 'never lost'. The first workshop ended with Paul's recitation of the Rock and Water philosophy: 'Water will always be our first response, but rock will always be

there to defend our deepest beliefs.'

Paul and Shelley, like the students, had exerted much physical energy through their contests, and they suggested we go and have lunch. We moved to a small room for staff and saw the Principal had catered sandwiches and drinks for us. The Deputy Vice Principal came into the room to speak with us. His manner was informal and conversational. He said that many of the students selected for the Rock and Water Program from the school had been handpicked because they had 'issues' such as bullying, violence, and 'sexting' (texting sexually explicit messages).

We moved back to the library space for the second workshop, this time with 18 Year Nine boys. It was a hot day, and the room became sweaty and smelly as the boys came in from outdoor activities. Like the girls, the boys were anxious about why they were there, and some began to make 'toilet' sounds and soon the room became noisy and chaotic. One boy openly challenged Paul about why he had to be there. He refused to sit in the circle. Paul and then Shelley, whose presence provided a focal point of attention for the boys, attempted to lay down the ground rules for the group and began challenging individual students to 'sit down', and 'show some respect'. The three rules for participating, Paul said, were 'respect each other and each other's property; you are not here to hurt anybody; and follow these rules and listen to the instructions'.

After one rude remark from a boy, Paul walked over to him, stood approximately 30 cm from him and looked him in the eye. The boy's physical presence loomed over Paul. Paul spoke gently, but his body language was strong, without being aggressive. 'You can choose to stay and participate or leave', said Paul. 'But I'm not allowed to leave', said the boy. 'Then you'll participate and show some respect'. The boy backed down from the challenge, and joined the group on the floor.

Paul modelled a kind of martial arts bow of respect, a ritual before the contest, and explained: 'Water will always be our first response, but rock will always be there to defend our deepest beliefs.' He added, 'make a rock over your heart with your left fist. Then put your right hand over your fist to symbolise water, our first response.' This is the 'Rock and Water Salute' that the boys were to begin their physical challenges with.

Shelley and Paul went through their series of activities: 'Chinese sticky hands', 'Chinese boxing' and 'finger fencing'. Some of the boys clearly delighted in the physicality of the challenges. Many of them were completely engaged, although their energy and concentration waned by the third activity. Shelley proved a popular partner for the boys, who were impressed with her physical prowess and athleticism. She skilfully interspersed highly energetic activity with responses to the boys' questions (What do you do at university? How old are you? Where did you go to school?). She engaged a boy who told her how his sister was now going to university.

Yet once again, as for the girls, there were some boys who could not compete, either as

'rock' or 'water', with the raw physical power of the dominant boys, and so moved around the room avoiding these challenges. I noticed that for both the girls and boys, the smaller, less confident students got eliminated from the challenges most quickly and spent the greatest amount of time disengaged. Paul and Shelley worked especially hard with these students to reengage them in the activities. The 'walking as a rock game' did not work with these boys. Two of the boys got hurt in the clashes of bodies, and withdrew to the sides of the room.

Another two boys come over to me, and engaged me in conversation. I was using an iPad to take notes, and the boys had noticed it, along with Paul and Shelley's mobile phones on the desk next to me, and they asked me about them. 'Is that yours?' one said, pointing to the iPad. 'Yes'. 'Are they yours', another said, pointing to an iPhone. 'No, that's Shelley's'. 'Oh, they must be rich', the boys said to each other as they re-joined the group. These kinds of technologies divided the boys from me, and functioned as desirable but unreachable status symbols for many of these boys at this point, at least, in their lives. I was jolted out of my complacent observer status into a more self-conscious participant observer, and worried about my participation in reinforcing the message to the boys that UQ was indeed a place 'for rich people'. Embarrassed, I put the iPad away.

Paul ended the workshop by telling the boys that 'you can't always be rock'. And 'you can't always be water'. 'Think about how you can be a bit of a balance between rock and water', he said. As some of the boys came up to challenge Shelley again (to no avail), I wondered whether these activities, for whatever good they might also have been doing, were reproducing existing power relations amongst the boys. Does each of us really have an equal choice to be rock or water? Or are our choices aligned to and constrained by other powers? Whatever the case, it seemed as if a particular construction of masculinity – competitive, physically active, risk taking – was being reproduced and rewarded in the exercises.

In the final workshop of the day, Paul and Shelley worked with Year Eight boys. The intensity level dropped and the boys seemed more cooperative. Paul began by saying his job was about 'post-school options, what you can do for a career, and what you need to do to get there'. Rock and Water, he said, 'is like life, about overcoming obstacles and challenges. It's about how we respond. There's a difference between reacting and responding'. As the boys progressed through the activities, similar patterns emerged: an initial burst of competitive energy and excitement, full engagement in the activities, and then, with the advent of the walking as rock game, the smaller boys moved off to the sides. Existing physical hierarchies were reproduced in the activities though acts of competitive dominance and the more vulnerable sat down. Once again, some boys continued to want to challenge the facilitators after the bell went for their next period at school. Paul always won. He 'hadn't lost yet', he told them. The Year Eight boys enjoyed challenging

Shelley as well, and she too proved too skilful for them.

WORKSHOP 2

A week later I travelled out again with Paul and Shelley to the school for the second of three workshops. Once again there were three cohorts to work through and I was a participant-observer in two of the workshops, with Year Eight boys and Year Nine girls. 'Today's workshops', Paul said on the trip to the school, 'are on the themes of "Developing Inner Strength and Focus", and being "Grounded, Centred, and Focused". After setting up the same space as last week (library room, retractable walls, chairs and desks pushed back, carpeted open space for activity, with me at the back of the room, this time with pen and paper), Paul introduced the themes to the Year Eight boys, and then 'Chinese sticky hands'. 'To fall over is to lose your centre; you need a strong core', said Paul. These were literal statements referring to body parts within the physical contests, but functioned figuratively as well in the program as strategies for life. When a student lost a contest, Paul asked him, 'Did you lose your grounding (feet), your centre/core (controlled by stomach/hips), or your focus?' (meaning getting distracted). 'My focus', the boy said.

One small boy decided to sit out after losing a few contests. He was visibly upset, and watched on from the sidelines. Paul attempted to engage him, but was unable to. He was already 'out of the game', the boy said. He left the room after Paul granted him permission to leave. Shelley tried to engage, but to no avail.

Paul finished the activity, asking the boys to sit in a circle on the floor space that had been cleared before the session. 'Now the most important question: so who won?' Just why the program assumes that competition is the most important value for boys is unclear, and Paul reproduced this assumption here and made it explicit, valorizing competitive behaviour among boys, as well as the values in being 'grounded, centred, and focused'. Competition amongst boys is heightened in the efforts to train them in these qualities, which are essential to winning. Paul then asked the boys what was most important to them in their contests. Most of them replied, 'focus'. Perhaps admitting a deficiency in a psychological trait comes more easily to a Year Eight boy than an admission of physical indiscipline or weakness? I was told, rather unexpectedly, by a staff member who came into the room, that there was one student in the room with a diagnosis of 'ADHD' (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder). Paul, however, explained to the boys that they lost the contests because they had a 'lack of focus'.

Paul and Shelley then modelled a new activity. Paul placed a thin strip of white masking tape across the carpeted floor. The 'white line' was to separate partners. Standing either side of the line, Paul and Shelley linked right arms and leant back, finding an equilibrium point with each other. Using their groundedness, centre/core muscles and focus, they then let go - without falling

backwards and moving their feet. After trying initially to let each other go deliberately so they might fall to the floor, the boys did the exercise properly and quickly got good at it. So Paul interjected: 'Let's have a competition' and the boys lined up against each other. This time the white line marked off two teams. The goal was to drag as many people across the line as possible. The boys were encouraged to help each other drag the bigger boys across the line. When a boy crossed the line, he joined the other team. 'I haven't lost yet' said Paul, 'so keep your focus, because I want to win'. The room descended into chaos, with boys grunting, groaning, falling on the floor, banging their heads on the carpet, crashing into each other's limbs. Heavy breathing, fun, sweat, improvisation, trying to drag Shelley and Paul, the boys enjoyed the contest. One boy hit his head and had to sit out for a minute against a wall. This was high risk physical activity designed to create bonds among the boys.

Paul restored order, and modelled the final 'Rock and Water Salute' for the boys to emulate. Right hand fist over heart as rock, protecting our deepest held beliefs and feelings, left hand over fist, open to communication with others, representing water. 'We always greet each other with water'.

After the boys left and Paul and Shelley got some water and had a short break, the Year Nine girls came back in. Shelley had positioned herself up high on a stack of plastic chairs, and soon the girls came in and sat on the floor at her feet, almost as if it was a staged Socratic dialogue. She engaged them in conversation. The girls chatted about 'hot boys', driving cars in paddocks ('nothing else to do in this town'), and asked Shelley about her car. 'Holden Astra'. 'Cool', one of them said. While we waited for the rest of the girls to arrive, Paul told me Shelley would lead the session. 'Better for the program', he said, 'when women lead girls and men lead boys'. The Rock and Water has clearly essentialist, gendered assumptions around boys and their learning – action oriented, physical, and competitive. The Program, I was told by Paul, has been developed for use with girls and up until this point I had seen no difference in practice.

 The students began their 'Chinese boxing activity' and laughed and enjoyed themselves. Two girls improvised and changed the game into 'A sailor went to sea, sea, sea to see what he could see, see, see'. They seemed to demonstrate some learning from the previous week, and appeared more competent in their performance of the games. Two girls confidently strode over to me, the observer, with pen and notepad, scribbling down notes behind a little desk shoved aside for the activities. 'So what are you doing?' 'I'm watching the way Shelley and Paul do their work with you guys. It's part of a study I'm doing at UQ'. 'Oh, that's interesting'. I was conscious of my observations of the girls in their physical exertions. My presence as an early 40s man with the boys seemed to evoke some kind of response to authority – 'hello Sir', 'see you Sir'. With the girls I felt more acutely the burdens of the ethnographer, introduced to the group as someone doing a 'PhD'

yet still strangely, voyeuristically present in the room. I wanted to let them all know I was a Dad with two young girls, but there seemed no appropriate moment for that. The girls were often self-consciously aware of their bodies in front of me in their activities, and I remained self-conscious of my impact as a mysterious male researcher in the room. When an awkward moment happened to one of the girls, I buried my head in my notes. Shelley's easy and confident rapport with me helped, I hoped, in reassuring the students I was there for 'official' reasons. At that moment I felt the irony of attempting an institutional ethnography of student outreach practices, and the way they organized and reproduced textually mediated ruling power relations, and the writing up of ethnographic notes that entered these anonymous Year Nine girls into an official UQ PhD thesis.

Paul re-entered the facilitator's role, calling the activity to a close, sitting on the floor, and asking 'So, the most important question, who won? What was most important to you: being grounded, centred, or focused?' He then introduced the 'leaning game', trying to disrupt a partner's 'castle', or stance. One smaller girl responded to Shelley, 'but I'm too weak'. 'No you're not', said Paul. But she did not try it and withdrew. Shelley then helped her and she completed the activity. Paul summarized by saying 'we need to be strong, centred and focused *to be able to support someone else*' (emphasis added). That phrase, 'to support someone else' was jarring to me, as it was the first time it was used. Was this phrase only used for girls in the program? Or was Paul improvising with it? Why was it important for girls, and not the boys, to be strong 'for someone else'? Like all of these Rock and Water phrases, it had a literal referent within the competitive interaction of the game, but worked on another figurative level as a value statement about how one should live. These hints of gender essentialism lurked throughout the Rock and Water program, but this phrase seemed to reproduce the worst kind of sexism that assumes that men are/should be focused on themselves, at best for the sake of their families or others, while women fulfill their own destinies by being 'for others'. Rock and Water, as a widening participation related program coordinated by UQ staff, would then ideologically embed the message that higher education for women is for the benefit of others, and not in the first instance, for themselves.

The students continued with their activities, fully physically engaged, testing the limits of their balance, strength and flexibility. The white line tug of war game began, and the chaos commenced. Screams, gasps, giggles, bodies were flailing. One student hit the ground hard, breaking into tears and withdrawing for a time.

Paul reminded the students of the purpose of the activities. We need to 'fix our castles…when our shoulders are strong, we have a strong core. When your hips are steady, we are grounded. We are becoming more aware of ourselves and ready to challenge whatever comes our way'.

I had not experienced a pedagogical, or even therapeutic, intervention where such physicality is involved between facilitators and students. Paul's role was prominent, as the masterful, powerful, grounded, last-one-standing facilitator. He was very physical, as was Shelley, with other participants. They grabbed, pulled, yanked and heaved arms and even legs. I was impressed by the physicality, but concerned by it as well, both from a student safety perspective, as well as from a 'boundaries' perspective between student and pedagogue. Paul is a trained Social Worker, although that was not the reason that he was employed to do widening participation outreach into low SES schools. This gave him some confidence in the Rock and Water Program, which is used in the Australian context not only in schools and their 'social-emotional' and 'anti-bullying programs', but also with foster-care children and children who are wards of the State (Raymond, 2005).

Perhaps because of this Social Work background, and his sensitivity to working with highly marginalized youth, Paul mentioned to me after the session that he saw signs of self-harm on some of the students' bodies. As their arms locked and they grabbed, dragged and pulled each other through the various activities, Paul noticed some girls with these telltale signs of trauma and often very difficult home lives. Knowing that, raised my concerns even more about the incredible physicality of these activities and whether they would in turn provoke other unintended responses from and within the students. This was, for UQ especially, a radical form of 'widening participation' into higher education.

In the car on the way back to the university, I asked Paul about the links he saw between the Rock and Water program and widening university participation. 'Rock and Water', he said, 'taught basic self-discipline and self-confidence strategies, techniques to groundedness, core stability, and focus. These capacities are essential to succeeding at school and gaining the educational success necessary to create pathways into higher learning, training and work'. All of these strategies and techniques are focused upon individual instruction and change. There is a clear assumption that individual traits, characteristics and skills ('self-confidence', 'self-discipline') are ultimately what determine individual success at school and university, and through those enhanced social mobility. In that sense, although the 'Rock and Water' program is a radical form of widening participation activity for an elite university, it nonetheless reproduces the dominant 'meritocratic' assumptions around higher education opportunity, as well as gendered assumptions. Furnishing students with training in self-discipline, developing self-confidence and other appropriate individual dispositions, and providing students with tailored information and support, collectively, within this model, provide the necessary opportunities for students to choose higher education.

Paul describes his understanding of 'outreach' in interview as follows:

> …outreach is about providing people options. Showing what the benefits are, the pros and cons for each choice that they may make and letting people make decisions for themselves. But at the end of the day I see outreach work as providing choices, not recruitment.

In contrast to UQ's work with in other schools, 'outreach' in the schools allocated to UQ for widening participation activity is not focussed upon recruitment to UQ. It is instead providing individual students with 'options'. However, the social construction of those options for the students, and the complex process of aspiration construction as it is mediated by socio-economic status, gender, race/ethnicity (Burke, 2012), school cultures and so forth are not seriously engaged with in this outreach practice.

Nonetheless the schools, said Paul, 'have really liked Rock and Water'. They knew of its existence, and were very pleased that UQ was offering the program. UQ has invested in its staff and a small number of student ambassadors, like Shelley, to become Rock and Water trainers. For Paul, it is the widening participation program where he feels he is truly doing 'outreach' by providing a program to schools which have expressed a desire for it, and specifically for some severely marginalized children. Whether the schools understand this work as part of their own anti-bullying strategies, or as part of a 'widening participation' agenda from the universities, is not what is important for Paul. Whereas UQ strives to recruit the 'best and brightest' students to its gates, including those from low SES and Indigenous backgrounds, it is the Rock and Water program that is providing outreach to some of the most marginalized children in UQ's widening participation school cluster and even beyond. A Guidance Counsellor from another low SES school, outside of UQ's widening participation 'cluster', also noted:

> Now that was a guidance initiative there to get Rock and Water in at [the school] so that their jacaranda shirts [UQ staff polo shirt colour] can be seen, and that they [UQ] can be seen as another option there. It was great to see UQ offering something that was practical. That was on the ground - and they were really skilled providers, they were terrific – and the profile UQ has is that it is unattainable, elitist, and here were these three very practical, skilled… they were relating really well with the students, they did a fine job. And also the staff, the admin, could see, 'oh, well maybe UQ has got something to offer'.

When the elite university in Queensland is seeing as doing something practical, and perhaps without immediate 'pay-off' in terms of low SES enrolments, then according to this experienced Guidance Counsellor, UQ begins to be seen differently. As I observed the Rock and Water Program unfold, I too was struck by Paul and Shelley's skills, and how these interactions presented a different face of UQ to schools in lower SES areas. Although this outreach in schools remains uncritical of and without a response to the institutional misrecognitions of students in these 'low SES' schools, the Rock and Water Program is positioning UQ more favourably amongst some of these same schools.

In the break between sessions, I had an encounter with an experienced teacher at the school in the library. He told me he had taught many of the students' parents, and so had a relationship with the 'kids' that enabled him to challenge the students on their behaviors and academic performance. Because of that relationship, he said, they will accept it from him. Many of the children, said the teacher, come from very difficult families, 'see the shenanigans at home', and 'repeat them at school'. The school is also losing students, he said, to the private schools (he named a couple specifically, known well to UQ recruitment staff). Five teachers had been employed at this teacher's school, lasted a year or so, and then taken positions at these schools as well. 'So we get what's left here', he said. 'Oh well, we'll take them'.

WORKSHOP 3

After another week we returned to the school for the third and final workshop, in which the theme was to be 'intuition', demonstrating the concepts of 'personal space' and 'personal awareness'. During the workshop with the Year Nine boys, I interviewed the Deputy Vice Principal of the school about the selection processes for student participation in the Rock and Water Program. The program contains students constructed by the school, via the OneSchool data base and from personal contact, as 'offenders' or 'disengaged', 'really good kids' and 'born victims'.

> Informant: We went through our behaviour records and identified, of the 15 kids who went into it, about 70% of them were offenders. The other 30% were either really good kids that had friends that they needed to help with these strategies, so we thought that if they learnt them they might be able to pass them on through peer mentoring. And some of the others are born victims who just need some more skills to deal with situations like that.
>
> Researcher: What do you mean by offenders?
>
> Informant: The kids constantly identified as bullying, harassing other kids, not being able to focus in class, just disengaged, I suppose. Probably a better way to describe them.
>
> Researcher: How do you identify those students?
>
> Informant: We use the OneSchool data base that has information on students whether positive behaviours, negative, disengagement, and we just have a look. And just being in the school, we work with specific year levels and we know who are the kids who need these things just in our conversation with them.

The school felt it could not bring the students with histories of harassment ('offenders', 'bullies' and the 'disengaged') together with the same students they had harassed (the 'born victims'), and so the school also picked the friends of the 'victims' to participate in the hope that they would pass on, in a more informal and peer-to-peer process, some of the strategies from the workshops. The informant acknowledged that they were 'assuming a lot there'. Whatever the success of this strategy to build resilience and offer alternative modes of conflict resolution, it is clear that the

Rock and Water Program at this school was hybridizing 'widening participation' or 'outreach' strategies into the discourses and practices of 'social-emotional learning' and 'anti-bullying practices'. This is the school's appropriation, or mediation, of the government's HEPPP agenda. Yet it also represents Paul's own particular genre (way of interacting) and style (mode of identifying) of 'widening participation' activity, and an appropriation consonant with his own social work background, and 'habitus' (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Fairclough, 2003).

I returned to the library and to Paul and Shelley. They seemed a little deflated and tired after their final session with the Year Nine boys. There were 27 of the boys that week, a few of them new to the group having come back from suspensions. Paul told me the more reflective 'intuition' and 'bodily awareness' component of the Rock and Water program was truncated for these boys. 'They weren't there', he said.

I resumed my observations with the Year Eight boys. 16 students were participating, two of them for the first time. Some faces smiled in my direction, acknowledging my increasingly familiar presence. Another round of 'Chinese finger fencing' began. A student asked spontaneously at the beginning of the activity: 'Why is everything Chinese?' Paul replied, 'I don't know, that's a good question'. Yet one Paul had no time for in the thick of competition. The students then lined up on either side of the line created by the masking tape across the carpet. 'Chinese wrestling' began, and soon enough chairs and tables were being knocked over, bodies flailing across the room, crashing into desks and limbs. I moved my position behind a desk further back to prevent the boys hitting their heads on the steel legs. It became chaotic, and out of control. Paul decided to bring some order back to the group: 'very few of us have focus today. Let's all do the Rock and Water salute'. This was used here to re-'establish the rules, and respect amongst students'. A student, one whom I had noticed over the last two weeks as strong and somewhat disruptive, punched another boy in the shoulder. Paul reprimanded him in the corner – slowly, deliberately, and quietly. He had to sit down on a chair in the corner and watch for a while, until he could demonstrate he had regained his 'focus'.

Paul introduced a new activity to the boys to explain 'personal space' and a 'personal bubble'. Five empty chairs were lined up out the front, and the students sat against the back wall looking at them. It was a 'waiting room for a doctor's surgery'. A volunteer was recruited to come and sit by Shelley who had occupied one of the seats. The volunteer sat down, two chairs away from her. 'Why did you sit there?' asked Paul. 'Because it was blue' (it happened to be the only blue chair, all the rest were yellow). 'Why didn't you sit here?' Paul asked, pointing to the seat beside Shelley. 'Because it was too close to her', the boy said. 'Yes. So we're talking about our personal space that we need, our personal bubble we have, which is different for different people', Paul said.

This time, the volunteer had to walk towards Shelley across the room, eyes locked, until the other observing students were tasked with shouting out 'stop', when they thought Shelley's personal space was being 'invaded'. Perhaps predictably, a few of the boys called out 'stop' straight after the volunteer's first step, but after a few of these calls, the boys demonstrated a lack of ability to be able to imagine the 'personal space' of Shelley, and instead turned the exercise into one where they themselves would feel comfortable approaching a tall, female university student. So they still called out 'stop' well before Shelley felt uncomfortable. When two students were asked to walk towards one another, the on-lookers did not call out 'stop' soon enough. 'Personal Space' proves a difficult concept for the boys to engage with in this activity.

Paul brought the students back to the carpet, and they were seated in a circle. He recapped their learning, and I wondered if he was preparing the discursive terrain of the evaluation forms, which were to be distributed momentarily. 'Week 1: Rock and Water, Week 2: grounded, centred, focused, and Week 3: Intuition' (it was the first time he had used this word with the students) and 'personal space, other people's bubbles'. There was no opportunity for the boys to give oral feedback about their experiences in the program. A written response was required, according to the parameters set by the evaluation form. I felt a little deflated not being able to hear what the boys thought and might say.

The evaluation forms were then handed out – a 1 page sheet asking for demographic information that would then be fed into a data base and used to account for the use of HEPPP Partnership funds. The first questions asked for details on the boy's 'School', 'year level', 'gender', 'Indigenous' identity, and 'First in Family'. Then followed three, 5 point-Likert scale questions, from "disagree" to "agree": 1) 'the workshops helped me to develop self-confidence', 2) 'the workshops have provided me with practical skills that I can use in my everyday life' and 3) 'I enjoyed the presenters' delivery of the workshop'.

After those, two open ended questions asked about 'the two main things you will take away with you from these workshops', broken down into a) 'One thing I learned about *myself* is...', and b) 'one skill that I will use from the Rock and Water Program is...'. The final word on the form was the brand, 'Uni-Yes I Can', a brand that appears on ambassador T-shirts without ever being explicitly referred to.

As they completed the questions, one student yelled out to Shelley, 'What does the second question mean?' (the one asking about their 'Indigenous' status). Another student asked 'What is this form for anyway?' Shelley responded, 'for feedback on the program'. The bell went, and the students had at most four minutes to complete the form. Comments were made as students left the room, including 'thanks for the lessons', and 'I wanna keep the [UQ] pen'.

After they left the room, and we together cleaned it up, Paul and Shelley quietly read the evaluation forms while seated on the floor. There were no outward signs of happiness or disappointment from them. After a while, Shelley offered me the opportunity to look at them. I confirmed with Paul that I could note what they said. My record of what the students noted appears in Table 4.

Table 3. UQ Rock and Water Program Student Evaluations in One School

Learned about self	Skill acquired	First in Family	Indigenous
my rock and water things	dont' hit people	✓	
nothing	nothing	✓	
comutication	strongest feelings first	✓	
how to use my strength better	centre, grounding, focus, strength	✓	✓
both rock and water	I can use both	No response	No response
that don't always use strength	don't hurt people	✓	
to not fight everytime - lol	water – lol	No response	No response
to not fight all the time – lol	water-communication	No response	No response
I need to use grounding, centre, and focus to stay still	strength	No response	No response
only fight if its worth it	No response	No response	No response
is that you use self-control	never get angry	No response	No response
I know my rock and water things	don't hit people	✓	No response

So what do these comments mean? In institutional ethnography, this question is eschewed in favour of the question as to how these questions were generated (discourses and practices) and what actions they assisted in accomplishing. In conversations with Paul, and through my observations of The Group, such demographic data, Likert responses and comments serve to compile statistics on the breadth of service delivery of widening participation activity in schools, and the number of students engaged.[43] That is, they report on how HEPPP funds have been used to 'cover' these 'low SES' students in their 'low SES' schools. Such evaluation forms also serve more internal programmatic needs, such as data to suggest program improvement and modification.

Yet I wondered whether what was being counted in these questions was in some ways irrelevant to any impacts that Paul and Shelley might be having with the students. As Paul had told me, and as I had observed, the students enjoyed participating in the activities (although the smaller, less confident students labour under the intense physical pressure of the activities). Walking through the school grounds with them, it was clear that Paul and Shelley were respected by the students, as they say 'hello' and 'thanks'. Paul wished he could come out for 10 weeks over the course of a term - 'That would make a real impact', he said. What seems clear is that the physically demanding tasks and activities build a kind of intimacy between the students and Paul and Shelley

---

[43] However, these comments tend to be used only when they appear to say seemingly beneficial things, such as when the self-identified Indigenous student, who has had no relatives attend a university to his knowledge, says that the program taught him 'how to use his strength better', and that he gained the skill of 'centre, grounding, focus, strength'.
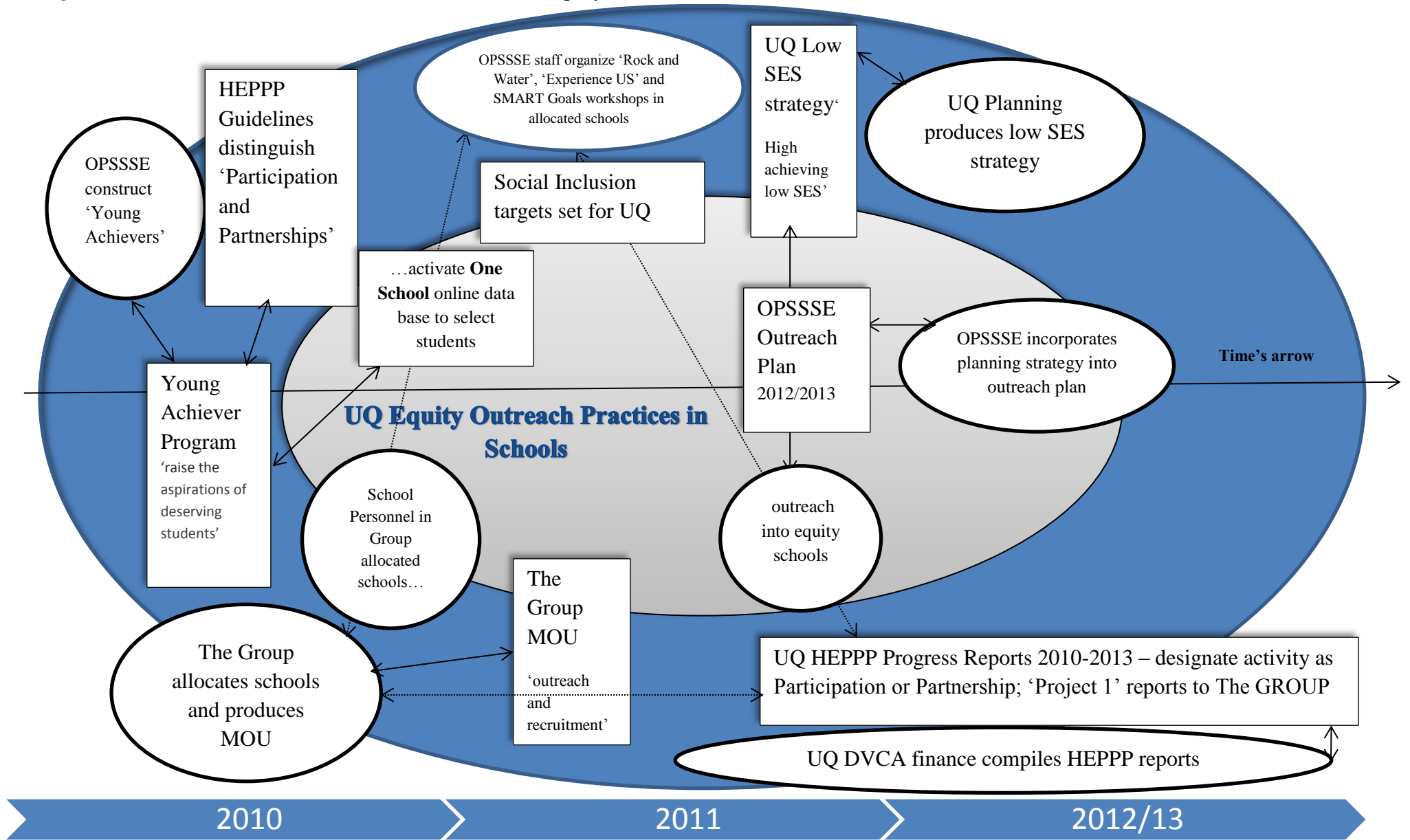
that would unlikely be replicated through three, 1 hour lectures on 'self-esteem', 'goal setting', or other more informational based activity.

Yet what was nagging at me, as I read the forms on the way back to UQ in the team car, was the silence of the students around the purposes and meanings of the program and their participation in it, despite the evaluation form. The students had been constructed as objects of intervention - by The Group and universities through statistical measurements of aggregate SES and university transition rates, and by the schools though assessment of deficit behaviours that needed correction. The students themselves were never asked, at least by UQ through Paul and Shelley, about what they saw as the important issues for them as they negotiated high school in a relatively rural centre known for its high unemployment, and what they dreamt of for their own futures. They did not get define themselves, and their hopes and ambitions. They were instead, as Foucault and following him Dorothy Smith might say, subject to a performative governmentality that rendered their circumstances intelligible and actionable via measures of school achievement and SES. These 'conceptual practices of power' (Smith, 1990a) not only abstract from the complexity of life experiences for these students, but also from the work of these university outreach workers. The work of Paul and Shelley has been articulated into a web of government-university funding relations via quantitative accounts of their very human, messy, physically exhausting, and emotional work with the students.

AN INSTITUTIONAL FIELD OF ACTION 2010-2013

I am now able to construct a figure representing the way that these 'Rock and Water' outreach activities in schools, or widening participation activities, are re/produced within an institutional field of action coordinated by texts. I adopt Turner's (2006) mapping conventions by representing texts with rectangles, and people's activation of these texts with oval shapes. The Rock and Water program is articulated to the textual stipulations of the HEPPP competitive grant and the discourses of widening participation that were normalised in the student equity field in Queensland universities. *Figure* 2 represents the linkages between The Group, the school personnel in low SES schools, and UQ's outreach (including Rock and Water Program). As explained above, the school's own social-emotional learning agendas and discourses also mediated UQ's Rock and Water program and other outreach activities, and school staffs working with UQ were jointly involved in the institutionalised selection and 'peopling' of the student participants in the programs operating via the institutional texts of government aggregated measures of SES and the OneSchool data base. The text box 'OneSchool online data base' and the dotted arrow linking the 'school personnel in Group Schools', UQ's outreach program (Rock and Water and others) to The Group represent these links.

Figure 4. An Institutional Field of Action for UQ student equity outreach 2010-2013

OPSSSE staff organize 'Rock and Water', 'Experience US' and SMART Goals workshops in allocated schools

HEPPP Guidelines distinguish 'Participation and Partnerships'

UQ Low SES strategy'

High achieving low SES'

UQ Planning produces low SES strategy

OPSSSE construct 'Young Achievers'

Social Inclusion targets set for UQ

…activate **One School** online data base to select students

OPSSSE Outreach Plan 2012/2013

OPSSSE incorporates planning strategy into outreach plan

Time's arrow

Young Achiever Program 'raise the aspirations of deserving students'

UQ Equity Outreach Practices in Schools

School Personnel in Group allocated schools…

outreach into equity schools

The Group MOU 'outreach and recruitment'

The Group allocates schools and produces MOU

UQ HEPPP Progress Reports 2010-2013 – designate activity as Participation or Partnership; 'Project 1' reports to The GROUP

UQ DVCA finance compiles HEPPP reports

2010   2011   2012/13

150

The Rock and Water Program narrated above becomes textually articulated to The Group's report to the federal government via UQ's 'Project 1 report' (dotted arrows, forming a triangle, trace the links between The Group, the Project 1 report from UQ, the Group Schools for UQ, the school mediation/selection processes, and the Rock and Water and other outreach activities).

The Rock and Water Program also becomes, for UQ, 'a recognizable instance' (Smith, 2006a) of the regulatory HEPPP Partnerships guidelines text, as mediated by The Group Project 1 grant. For instance, UQ's outreach programs are in this Project 1 Report described as 'designed to increase awareness of tertiary study as a post-school option and raise the educational aspirations of low-socio economic students'. Further, the Rock and Water Program is represented in this Project 1 Report as follows:

> The Rock & Water workshops in Semester 2, 2012 (engagement with more than 300 students, primarily in Years 8 & 9) have proved very popular. Generally focused on developing self-confidence in students…these have worked particularly well in engaging young males. (UQ Project 1 Report to The Group)

There are four claims made in the text to support/construct the Rock and Water Program as a widening participation activity: it has engaged many Year Eight and Nine students and has been popular, it develops self-confidence, and it works well with young males. Each of these claims could, if the need arose, be substantiated by UQ with data collected from students and schools from UQ surveys. The concern for 'young males' and their participation in Australian higher education does not come through strongly in The Group texts, but seems instead to be directed at anxieties expressed in the university and school sectors since the 1990s about the role of male students and their engagement in schooling and higher education. For instance, James and colleagues (2004) suggested the need to consider gender equity in a way that set targets for male participation in education and nursing.

The 'crisis of masculinity' discourses that arose in education in the 1990s were accompanied by popular concern that women's gains in higher education participation were coming at the expense of men's (Burke, 2006; Epstein, Elwood, Hey & Maw, 1998). The Rock and Water Program, as it is articulated to The Group's reporting to the federal government, seems to affirm the importance of marginalised boys as a distinctive equity category, and the boys themselves as objects of widening participation activity.

The HEPPP Progress Report for 2012, as for other years, specifically details and financially accounts for HEPPP funds spent by UQ. The Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic's (DVCA) office has central responsibility at UQ for accounting for activities and expenditures arising from HEPPP allocations. In compiling the HEPPP Progress Reports, a DVCA staff person solicits data from the units that undertake activities recognised as consonant with HEPPP guidelines. At UQ the areas that have received the greatest proportion of HEPPP funds are OPSSSE, Student Services (for retention related programming for low SES and/or Indigenous students), the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Support Unit, the Pro-Vice Chancellor Indigenous Education office, and the Equity Office. The DVCA office then compiles a list of activities and expenditures and sends them on to the federal government.

The 2012 document does not account for UQ's widening participation activities, such as Rock and Water, which take place in schools located in low SES areas allocated to UQ under The Group process. The HEPPP funds, as was noted in Chapter 2, are distributed by the federal government in two 'envelopes', Participation and Partnerships. The guidelines for their disbursement differ. Partnership fund guidelines discourage competition amongst universities where activities take place in the same region, suggest 'early intervention and continuing engagement' in students' 'pre-tertiary education years', advise university programs to build 'awareness, aspiration and achievement' in students, and are to 'promote the benefits of and encourage participation in higher education, generally', and not be 'directed at promoting the benefits of a single *provider*' (ComLaw, 2012, 1.80.5).

UQ's 2012 HEPPP Progress Report articulates the Young Achievers Program expenses, with the exception of its scholarship component, which is privately funded, as well as the expenses for the WRIT 1999 program (Enhanced Studies Program for low SES schools), to Partnership expenses. UQ is quite explicit in its report that the Young Achiever Program aims to *both* '[r]aise the educational aspirations of talented secondary school students who might not otherwise have access to university as a post-school option', and '[i]ncrease the number of low income and Indigenous students enrolling in and graduating from UQ' (HEPPP Progress Report, 2012). While for other universities, and The Group, the practice has been to read the HEPPP Partnership guidelines as relating to activities that do not promote the benefits of a particular university, and encourage 'cohort' based activity rather than activities targeted at individuals ('deserving', or as is expressed here, 'talented' students), UQ sees the Young Achievers Program as both promoting and supporting students accessing higher education in general, as well as progressing directly on to UQ. To express the outcomes of the program, as per government requirements, UQ notes the following:

> The high school retention rate for cohorts 1 and 2 (completed Y12 in 2011 and 2012) was strong (95%). 95% of the 2011 graduates submitted a QTAC application. 85% received a university offer (75% for UQ).

UQ's 'selective' support of 'talented' and 'deserving' students in Year 10 in low SES schools leads to a high progression rate to UQ specifically. The program is clearly being successful in the recruitment of students from schools in low SES areas. These students are recorded as mostly 'regional and remote' (70%), include a sizable proportion of Indigenous students (23%) and are in most instances the 'first in family' to go to university (80%). Nonetheless, the costs of this recruitment and support are high. UQ's HEPPP Progress Report of 2012 notes that approximately $450,000 of donor money was used to support scholarships and bursaries for students in the Young Achievers Program in 2012 (although the majority of this money comes to students only after they have enrolled at UQ). Although these students undoubtedly 'widen' and diversify the undergraduate student demographic at UQ at the margins, it is doubtful whether the Young Achievers Program alone will see UQ meet is social inclusion targets.

UQ's DVCA office has also articulated the WRIT 1999 (Effective Thinking and Writing) Enhanced Studies Course run 'exclusively for LSES students' to the HEPPP Partnerships guidelines and expenditures. UQ notes that this course has doubled in its enrolments in a year and that 'approximately 70% of students in ESP courses' are progressing on to UQ specifically. UQ defines the purposes of the WRIT 1999 program in this 2012 HEPPP Progress Report as follows:

> In essence, it is a booster program designed to assist students from low participation groups to become OP eligible for UQ degree programs.

The phrase 'to become OP eligible for UQ degree programs' represents another hybridizing of student equity discourses and 'best and brightest' discourses. The distinction between a high school student in Queensland being 'OP eligible' and 'OP ineligible' arises from their course of study at school and has consequences for their acceptance at university. Although, as discussed in Chapter 5, students in Queensland can progress to university without selecting a course of study at school that makes them eligible to receive an Overall Position Score at the end of Year 12, The Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (2014) notes the following caution to students considering this option:

> Students should be aware that the decision to undertake an OP ineligible program may make it difficult if not impossible to achieve the high selection ranks necessary for entry to very competitive tertiary courses.

UQ has the most 'competitive tertiary courses' in the state. In constructing the list of schools to be divided amongst the Queensland universities for widening participation activities, both the transition rates to university and the percentage of students with OP ineligibility were used as indicators of disadvantage. UQ, however, blends together OP eligibility with OP eligibility for UQ programs. As the dominant university in the state, UQ commands the highest OP score cut offs for its programs. To be OP eligible for a university placement, then, is not the same thing as being 'OP eligible for UQ'. The WRIT 1999 program, as well as the Young Achiever Program, aims to 'boost' students into the latter category so they may be accepted at UQ. Thus The Young Achievers Program and the WRIT 1999 program are produced by the UQ's DVCA and OPSSSE as recognizable instances (Smith, 2006a) of the regulatory HEPPP texts.

CONCLUSION

The analysis in this chapter has demonstrated how UQ's 'widening participation' activity, as narrated earlier in the Rock and Water Program, is constructed as a recognizable instance of The Group's regulatory MOU text. This work with a broad cohort of students has been received well by the schools, even if it reproduces meritocratic assumptions that refuse a more complicated reading of student aspirations to higher education as mediated by class, ethnicity and gender. This work is also important for the maintenance of UQ's reputational capital and its membership in The Group. Yet UQ also simultaneously appropriates (Levinson et al., 2009) HEPPP mandates by articulating its outreach practices to internal strategic texts: a Planning document, the UQ Learning Plan, and OPSSSE's Outreach Plan. I have mapped this production of student equity outreach practices at UQ in an institutional field of action in which UQ staff accomplished the textually mediated (ruling) relations of government policies that incentivize low SES recruitment, and actively appropriate these texts in the interests of preserving UQ's dominant position with the higher education field. Student equity at UQ is thus becomes, in large part, the 'selective' recruitment and support of the 'best and the brightest' from low SES and Indigenous backgrounds.

CHAPTER 8: GRIFFITH'S LAUNCH INTO LIFE AT LOGAN PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

Griffith University practices student equity outreach into schools and communities in low SES areas differently than does UQ, and with a logic that both produces and reproduces its position within the hierarchical field of higher education in Queensland. Whereas UQ hybridizes student equity discourses and practices with the discourses and practices of recruiting a smaller number of the 'best and the brightest' undergraduate students from across the state and beyond, Griffith is currently seeking to expand its undergraduate student base. As part of a large scale school and community engagement strategy, Griffith's student equity staff are targeting primary and secondary schools and communities around Logan, between Brisbane and the Gold Coast, that are some of the most disadvantaged in Australia (Vinson, Rawsthorne & Cooper, 2007).

This chapter demonstrates how Griffith University's student equity outreach staff construct the Launch into Life at Logan Program as a recognizable instance (Smith, 2006a) of federally mandated policy. I begin by providing ethnographic description and interpretation of the Launch into Life at Logan Program (LILAL), specifically the two days of the program that took place at Griffith's Logan campus in November, 2012. The LILAL program was funded, in large part, through HEPPP money arising from The Group's Project 1 (as described in Chapter 4), and represents a strategic expansion of widening participation work in Queensland into primary schools. To help the reader follow these ethnographic descriptions compiled over two days, I narrate the events in the present tense, and intersperse descriptions and interpretations of context to these events. Interview text from equity outreach staff is also used to help illuminate the ethnographic descriptions, as well as to assist in the mapping of the textual coordination of the LILAL program.

As part of an institutional ethnography, the purpose of my observations and descriptions is to map how Griffith's outreach practices to primary school children in the Logan area, south of Brisbane, are textually articulated to, and coordinated by, the policy mandates of the federal government. Yet this reproduction of the ruling federal discourses of 'low SES student aspiration raising' is accomplished alongside other creative interpretations and practices that align Griffith's equity outreach work to The Group's mandates and school level policies and community concerns. The analysis demonstrates this appropriation of federal policy within the LILAL program and its reporting, and as embedded within Griffith's

broader outreach and engagement of students from Pacific Island backgrounds and to students with disabilities. To map how federal HEPPP policy is enacted across these discursive state and local practice terrains, I construct an 'institutional field of action' that Griffith's student equity outreach staff re/produce through the LILAL program. It is precisely as mediated by The Group MOU and grant, and as appropriated by Griffith's social inclusion practices for students with disabilities and Pacific Island students, that the LILAL program provides 'a recognizable instance' (Smith, 2006a) of the regulatory HEPPP Partnerships guidelines for these local policy actors.

THE LILAL PROGRAM

The LILAL program represents one of Griffith's major new student equity initiatives enabled by the HEPPP funding of the federal government. It aims at 'growing the careers awareness of primary school students'[44] through curriculum related activities in schools before and after two days of activities on its Logan campus. LILAL was developed to expand Griffith's longstanding and nationally recognised 'Uni-Reach' outreach program in light of research encouraging earlier interventions into schools for 'raising awareness and engaging aspirations for higher education as a possible post-school option'(Project Summary, 2011, p.1). The project was designed collaboratively with the Queensland Department of Education and Training (currently this portfolio also now includes 'Employment', so now DETE), and has targeted 10 Logan area (south of Brisbane) schools that act as 'feeder' schools to the High Schools that currently are partnered with Griffith's Uni-Reach programs. The partners of the project, who were all represented on the management committee for the program, included the 10 primary schools, a Regional Executive Director for Schools from DETE, and what was then called the 'Every Child Counts' program of DETE[45], which provided funds to improve the learning of students living in low SES communities and in the same schools involved in LILAL.

The terms of an agreement were forged through Griffith's consultation process involving DETE and the Schools. At a widening participation seminar on 'best practices' for school outreach organized by The Group and held in July 2011, a Griffith staff presentation

---

[44] References to the Launch into Life at Logan Program that follow come from an internal, non-published, 'Project Summary and Agreement', dated May, 2011, which sets out terms for the project as negotiated amongst Griffith university, the Queensland Department of Education and Training (the Regional Office Executive for Logan area), 10 primary schools from the Logan area and surrounds, and the then state government's 'Every Child Counts' program. I shall refer to this as the 'Project Summary'.

[45] The program has since been discontinued.

on LILAL gave insight into the negotiations amongst the partners.[46] The Department agreed with the idea of primary school outreach from Griffith, but was keen to see that activities be designed to build 'educational excellence' through 'discipline-linked activities', and that activities not simply be 'experiences' of university life (Seminar Presentation, 2011). It was unable to provide any supporting funding to the partnership. The Department also downplayed the need, as had been envisaged through Griffith's community engagement approach to widening participation, for 'parental engagement', and argued that the 'focus should be on school settings' (Seminar Presentation, 2011). The schools themselves requested the teaching of 'future perspectives through age-appropriate activities' from 'Prep onwards', as well as for Griffith to host a 'junior careers fair' involving 'hands on activities' and providing 'role models' to their students (Seminar Presentation, 2011).

Griffith's response was to design a program with 'curriculum-embedded, career-related activities in the lead up to and after the event, linked literacy and numeracy activities, and hands-on student activities, in both the lead up to the event and at the event'. Griffith and the Department shared an interest in building educational attainment in schools, yet Griffith did not see the Queensland Education Department's enactment of federal government 'current school reforms', such as the National Assessment Plan for Numeracy and Literacy (NAPLAN), necessarily aligning perfectly with its priorities. Further, Griffith had always understood parental engagement to be critical to its widening participation efforts with schools and communities, and indeed important to its related adult social inclusion initiatives and educating the parents of students in its partner schools about their own opportunities at Griffith for further study (a description of this follows below). Griffith's experience of student equity outreach had taught it that 'student aspirations, engagement and achievement are influenced by a complex mix of socio-cultural factors' not reducible to the student herself (Project Summary, 2011, p. 3). So although there was a sufficient commonality of interest amongst the schools, Griffith and the Department for collaboration, the goals were not identical, and required negotiation.

The on-campus 'careers focussed' event, as negotiated by Griffith, the schools, and the Department, and as stipulated in the LILAL Project Agreement, was to serve these purposes:

---

[46] Launch into Life at Logan (2011), Griffith University. Widening Tertiary Participation (HEF) Seminar, July 15, 2011. Unpublished. The quotes in following two paragraphs come from this presentation/file, accessed from Griffith equity outreach staff. I shall refer to this text as 'Seminar Presentation'.

- to enhance students understanding of themselves and the world of work
- to raise student awareness of available career and life choices
- to develop understanding of the link between student attainment, self-identity and career possibilities and the relevance of school subjects to future study/career and life options
- parental/caregiver engagement (Project Summary, p. 2).

These goals represent a complex formulation for a university-sponsored widening participation activity. University participation is not an explicit goal, or presented as an end, but rather instrumentalised within a wider focus upon career and life-choice.

In an interview with the Project Officer responsible for this careers event and related school based activities, I heard that LILAL is about 'raising aspirations for middle year students, and broadening their horizons.' S/he continued:

> I see this as about promoting post-secondary education. It's not about recruitment for Griffith. Our funding is higher education and to me that means TAFE, University, anything that's going to improve their employability, and their mental health, and all the things that are associated with that. We talk about all sorts of options and promote ongoing education beyond high school.

University study, and the appropriate choice of school subjects, is a vehicle to achieve careers and life-options. The logo of LILAL similarly presents this negotiated understanding, where 'school, education, learning, life, jobs, learning and dreams' collectively frame the purposes of widening student participation at university. Federal government discourses of career competencies and life-long learning lay just behind these formulations, and the federal government's 'My Future' website (Department of Education, 2013), with its definition of a career, is specifically referenced in the project agreement. A career is defined as 'the sum total of paid and unpaid work, learning and life roles you undertake throughout your life' and thus for the government and the LILAL project partners involves all learning, training and work pathways (Department of Education, 2013). HEPPP funded widening participation work in this context is concerned with boosting, what the LILAL Project Officer in interview called, 'career competencies' for Year Six students.

In working with middle year students (Years Six and Seven) in widening participation activities, Griffith has innovated Queensland student equity practices. The rationale to work with middle school children arose, I was told by the Project Officer, from research that suggests that students at these ages are already ruling careers and possibilities out of their futures because of assumptions around SES and gender.

Theory tells us that at different stages of their development they [students] are looking at factors like, early on, aspiring to things that are not even real. So they want to be a mermaid or superman when they want to grow up. And they go through the next stage of development where they grow up and realize there are differences around gender, so they start ruling things out. So if I'm a boy, I'm not going to want to become more traditionally female roles like nurses or hairdressers. And vice-versa for girls; they're not going to go into engineering, or become a mechanic or plumber. So they're ruling things out. And one of the next things they start to recognize is difference around intelligence, and social status. So they start to realize there are these rich people and poor people; and smart people and not so smart people, and which category they fit in, and what that means for their occupational options. So they start ruling out…so university is not for me because that's for rich geeks. So they are not deciding [in their choices] that this is something they want to do for the rest of their life, but rather ruling some things out of their world…particularly based on the influences around them – parents being a key influence at that stage of their development.

Widening participation for Griffith, for middle year school students, thus becomes an intervention in the dreams, aspirations and future life possibilities of children before they begin to rule out certain options like higher education. Yet within the Logan context the work is complicated and difficult. The Project Officer explained:

So within this community [Logan] we have an overrepresentation of people from intergenerational unemployment, less likely to have post-secondary education; so they [the students] are aspiring to do things their parents are doing and not other things out there in the world. So we are just trying to open their eyes to all the options that are out there for them so they don't rule things out based on where they come from.

I was invited by Griffith's student equity team to observe a major component of the LILAL program: the on-campus activities, which were held at their Logan Campus over November 21 and 22, 2012. I narrate those events below, in the present tense, to provide rich descriptions (Denzin, 1989) of the events, but primarily to demonstrate how the multiple and complex activities of the student equity staff, mentors and other university staff, and the various experiences of the participating school students, were articulated to the ruling relations of federal student equity policy. As will be demonstrated, an evaluation process mediated by a 'real-time', institutional technology becomes the key mechanism through which this coordination of local practices occurs.

COMING TO LOGAN
'Welcome to Griffith' reads the familiar red sign and logo draped across the road that leads me into Griffith's Logan campus. Not a permanent fixture, the welcome is obviously brought

out for special events on campus, and this is clearly a special day. Maintenance staff rake garden beds, and security staff walk determinedly amidst black polo-shirted Griffith student equity staff, passing last minute messages as they await the series of buses carrying Year Six students from 10 local schools onto campus.

As I follow the path from the parking lot through the relatively new campus, behind the Griffith student equity staff organising the day, I see around 30 red T-shirted, undergraduate student mentors. There are approximately 600 Year Six students to be organized through the campus over two days, and to assist each school class Griffith has employed student mentors to ensure a smooth flow within and among events and to provide details on university life. Many of the students have been employed because they themselves have experienced Griffith's Uni-Reach outreach activities, and a decade earlier they were educated in these same primary schools. The student mentor employment strategy not only provides mentors whom the diverse group of students recognises as being 'like them', it also functions as a key retention and support strategy for these student mentors to succeed in their own studies.

I find my way into a large auditorium, and sit at the back. The school students flow in, and each school is distinguished from the other by the primary colour of its school uniform. At the front, below the platform, 15 or so student mentors face the incoming students with broad smiles, and groove along to the hip-hop music. Pacific Island, Māori, African, the mentors represent the ethnicities and cultures of the school students flowing into the auditorium in front of them. A photographer walks around snapping smiling students, who are turning to watch the striking figure on stage. A tall young man dressed in black academic gown and cap and tassel dances to the music he cranks out of the computer built into the lecturer's podium. He picks up a microphone and simulates drum sounds, providing the rhythm for the students to enter the rows and take their seats.

Our emcee, I am later told, is a recent graduate of Griffith, and has a small media company that works with video for local organizations. After a quick and raucous welcome that gets the students shouting back at him, Stanley[47] pays respect to the traditional Indigenous owners of the land, and quickly moves on to introduce the first speaker. Stanley is a performer, and alternates his accent between a kind of African-American hip-hop sound and what sounds something like an 'Estuary English' dialect.

---

[47] All names of staff in this research are pseudonyms.

'Darren,' a middle aged man from Griffith's Education School, dressed casually in polo shirt, welcomes the students. This day, says Darren, is all about 'what it's like to go to university…By 2018, you could be here, at Griffith University,' he tells the students. He concludes with remark that 'university gets you good jobs'. If careers are the focus of the project in design, this welcome suggests that university is the point of today, and not participation at any university, but Griffith university specifically. The tension between widening participation to any post-school education and recruitment to a specific university is a constant theme of contemporary student equity policy in Australia, and at Griffith it is present as well. With the exception of the student mentors' clothing, which sports the LILAL t-shirts, every other physical space, pamphlet, podium, powerpoint slide, and polo-shirt is branded, to a greater or lesser extent, with Griffith's insignia. Griffith's community engagement strategy is designed to, among other things, cement the connection between the referent 'university' and the brand 'Griffith', and it positions itself as the local, trusted, supportive university for these students. History has borne out that claim, and it is being further realized with the LILAL program.

The emcee continues his engaging and entertaining run down of housekeeping activities, and his casual, cool style resonates with the students, who seem to hang off his every word. Just like him, they can 'try on some graduation fashion' later in the day. Stanley explains the map on the screen describing the geography of campus and the routes for the students to walk, and peppers his phrasings with 'check it out', 'we got ya back', 'chill out, it's all good', 'hey, what's up'. He admonishes the students to drink their bottled water (it is November in Brisbane, and the students are to participate in outside activities with the Gold Coast Titans football team), asking them to say it back to him – 'drink-lotsa-water', which they repeat in an identical American style accent.

Over the two days of my observations, I see Stanley's welcome and concluding performances five or six times, and each time he thoroughly engages his students. As he moves to a more directive role, he switches to his English accent; when he wants a more boisterous response from the students, he moves to his American hip-hop stylings. When interpreting the map of the campus projected up as powerpoint slide, he notes the distinct black spot where the students are to get their picture taken with their cap and gown. 'Don't worry', Stanley says, 'they didn't do that just for me, just in case you we wondering and thinking, oh, that's not good'. He jokes about his racial identity, which seems as ambiguous, or constructed, as his performances of American hip-hop and English-styled irony. To some extent he embodies the diversity of Griffith's student body, especially at the Logan campus,

and his reception from the students suggests they see in him enough of them to enable a type of entertaining dialogue.

Stanley's music selection likewise is cool, even edgy. As students enter and exit the auditorium, they are propelled through hip-hop beats, booming kick drums, and sounds of Michael Franti (hip-hop mixed with funk, reggae, jazz, folk, and rock). The song is called 'Everyone Deserves Music' (Michael Franti & Spearhead, 2003). The sounds and phrases from the music are high energy, optimistic, yet real. In contrast to the musical repertoire aboard UQ's widening participation buses, there is no 'I wanna be a billionaire' (T. McCoy & Mars, 2010) in Griffith's iTunes library.[48]

HEALTH

The students move to their first activity, 'Health', and two Griffith staff from the health disciplines welcome the students and encourage them to 'have fun', the 'most important thing today'. A series of health/science stations are spread throughout the multipurpose room. There is a gurney with dummy, a plastic baby, CPR stations with mats and practice dummies on the floor, an anatomy station demonstrating the blood and nervous system, and exercise bikes and a balancing ball to stand on. 'Washing hands is very important', the 35-40 students are told, along with the five or six parents/caregivers present. 'We have put some special stuff on the babies today so that you will see how clean your hands are', the staff say. 'You must wash your hands before you hold a baby'. This piece of health advice seems to have a moralising edge to it. I wonder to myself whether the students from the school might be more experienced with caring for infants than the Health staff seem to assume.

The students are released to the stations. They play with stethoscopes and listen to their own heart beats and breathing. They have no precise instructions about what to do, or in what order, and they simply engage the activities as they wish. Red-shirted mentors assist and guide. Students ride bikes, bend and mould the anatomy display, and balance on an ankle exerciser. It is a very diverse room. There are Pacific Island, Indigenous, sub-Continental, and African (Sudanese?) students. Parents take photos, and assist their children to fill out a green sheet which evaluates their feelings (measured by emoticons) and

---

[48] The song's lyrics include 'I wanna be a billionaire so friggin' bad. Buy all of the things I never had. Uh, I wanna be on the cover of Forbes magazine. Smiling next to Oprah and the Queen'. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8aRor905cCw Retrieved November 13, 2013. The song came from a UQ mentor playlist, and was frequently played during UQ's widening participation bus trips.

impressions of their experiences. I am told that Griffith does not collect these forms. A teacher takes photos of a group of Pacific Island girls, each of whom takes a turn holding a baby. There's lots of laughter and noise. Finally, the two Griffith staff tell the students as they leave that 'these are all the things you can do with health'. There is no formal explanation of courses, subjects, or pathways from the staff, although student mentors answer questions around CPR, the nervous system, and germs. This is a simple, tactile learning experience for the students.

I have decided to follow the one school cohort through their activities for the day. Griffith staff did not in any way control my observations, and I was able to choose what I would observe and where I would observe it. We walk across to a large marquee tent for morning tea, taking bottled water and fruit and biscuits. The day has been organized well, and students, mentors, parents and staff are replenished and shaded. The school students bring their own lunches, but take extra water bottles and fruit from the tables. I wonder about the bottled water provision. I have experience with various international campaigns to prevent the commodification and privatization of water by multinationals such as Coke, Pepsi and Nestlé. Bottled water, and our changing consumption practices around water, is one of the most insidious forms of this commodification. At least there are recycling bins. I reflect on my disappointment that Griffith, a bastion of equity and social justice in the higher education sector in Australia, engages so uncritically, and pragmatically, in this practice, and decide that my sentiments are a little naïve. Griffith for instance is quite happy for social justice and equity commitments to sit alongside boasts that Griffith is an 'elite athlete friendly' University (an EAFU)[49]. Commitments to social justice and equity (including mine) are often partial and are certainly easier to maintain when they align with personal and or institutional interests.

Next we walk to a central space on campus in which one of the famous Griffith 'couches' holds pride of place. The Red Couch has become an iconic symbol for Griffith in public spaces and various media. Often depicted with just one person on it, either a student, or a friendly advisor to assist and listen, there is an extra seat for you, the viewer, on the Griffith Couch. It suggests participation at university is joining an intimate conversation. Griffith University feels comfortable, is personal, and is accessible. Today celebratory red balloons and white streamers flank the Griffith Couch. It is a graduation couch, a seat of

---

[49] Griffith has 'a strong commitment to sport and the role that it plays in a balanced educational environment. Fostering elite athletes and helping them to play sport whilst studying is a major part of that commitment.' (Griffith University, n.d.-a)

achievement. The students take turns to dress in academic gowns, caps and tassels, and to sit with two of their friends on the Griffith Couch. Two friendly Griffith staff are there to take the pictures. Student after student tries on their academic garb and is photographed with friends. Smiles, laughter, posing, strutting; the students enjoy the attention. Yet Griffith hopes that this is more than a game of dress up. This is a hoped for and anticipated future, and the future of the Griffith Logan campus in particular relies on these students and those of their school taking seriously this imagined future and 'trying on' the Griffith student life.

Framing the photograph of the Griffith Couch, and the future graduates, is the LILAL logo, as well as small white board inviting comments. One of the students writes the name of his school into his photograph. The links between Griffith and its local widening participation, or low SES, schools is strong. As we depart the space a Year Six student sees my Griffith name tag with 'David, UQ-Student' written on it. He asks, 'Who are you?' to which I reply, 'David, from another university.' 'Nah, Griffith's the best, eh', he says.

DRAMATIZING UNIVERSITY

We move across to another classroom auditorium for the 'Drama' session. A woman with striking, curly red hair is flanked by two other university students. A red-shirted mentor with crutches sits at the front welcoming us as we enter. We are welcomed by 'Natasha', a drama student from Griffith, who begins a singing and action game. We all stand and sing 'My Bonnie lies over the ocean' while moving up and then down every time we make a 'b' sound. Natasha's voice and presence are commanding. Many of the school students had not heard this old chestnut, but participated vigorously nonetheless. Next, two other theatre/drama students are directed by Natasha to act out on the spot a conversation about their first week at university. They begin in a lethargic fashion, and are admonished by the director, 'c'mon, you have to want to go to university!' The message is for the school students, as much as the actors at the front of the auditorium. The school students are encouraged to help these actors, and to suggest things to say and do. The director suggests trying 'soap opera style', and the male and female drama students embrace in an amorous hug, encouraged on by the school students. The student mentor yells out, 'try Kiwi' style, 'you know, fush and chups'. The audience breaks into laughter. The student mentor is from New Zealand, and there is a sizable proportion of Pacific Island students and parents in the room. Long term Australian residing New Zealand citizens, including Māori and those of Pacific Island descent, face additional barriers to higher education in Australia. They have been excluded from financing their tuition costs through the federal government higher education loan program (HECS-

HELP). Although Griffith staff and researchers have been actively engaged politically around the issue, and there is hope that the current federal Coalition government will follow its Labor predecessors with a plan to amend the legislation change from 2015 (see below), there has been, and still remains, a contradiction between 'engaging the aspirations' and 'building the career competencies' of the students from these New Zealand backgrounds and policy that effectively excludes them from participating in higher education. This policy contradiction has been the source of constant tension in Griffith student equity outreach into schools in the Logan area, some of which, a local principal told me in interview, have close to 60% of their students coming from Pacific Island, Māori and other New Zealand backgrounds.

Natasha invites the students to volunteer to join in the drama. Around eight or so students are divided into two teams, each coached by one of the drama students, supported by a mentor. They have two minutes to work together to do a 'freeze frame' image to represent university life. One group lines up across the front of the small auditorium, each facing the audience and frozen, over what we assume to be a computer keyboard. This is the serious side to university. The other team takes its turn, forms a semi-circle and extend their arms and hands to the ceiling, looking wistfully into the air. University makes your dreams happen. 'Are you open to your future?' they seem to be saying to the students.

Natasha questions the students, 'Is that what you think uni would be like? A lot of your assessment in drama is actually very cool,' she says. One of the Griffith students tells the school students she is an 'Applied Theatre' student. She explains that she gets to work 'in schools, in communities as a facilitator'. 'Griffith,' she says, 'has enabled me to create a drama workshop for the Cerebral Palsy League'. Then Natasha asks the students, 'What types of jobs could you get with an Applied Theatre course'? One of the school student's responds 'act in movies'. 'Yeah, maybe', says Natasha. The course is three years long, she says, and includes 'set design, theatre tech, singing, etc.' Another student asks a question about 'how you act in murder scenes'. Natasha replies, 'You get taught to use your imagination...'

A parent brings the conversation back to earth by asking, 'What should the kids focus on at school to get into this?' Natasha responds 'Drama and English'. The parent makes some notes. They finish the session and receive generous applause from the school students. 'Now pull out your boards and assess', says Natasha, and the students circle the emoticon face they like.

As the students file out the room, I note that widening participation activity for Year

165

Six students is as much about 'entertainment' as disciplinary rigour. University can be fun - there is singing, dancing, and acting. Who knows, maybe you could be a movie star? Unlikely, perhaps, and I am not sure the students understood the social role that theatre could play in their communities, as the Griffith student tried to explain. Nonetheless it's doubtful whether many of these students would ever have had university life represented in such an entertaining way, or had been encouraged to find their 'voice' and their 'song' through higher education.

SCIENCE

I travel with the wave of students, mentors, parents and teachers back to the main auditorium where we started the day. A vertical banner with 'Griffith University' and 'Science on the Go' is displayed prominently at the front. I saw this same logo on a mini-van in the parking lot on the way in. Today the 'Griffith Science Roadshow' has come back to campus. A man in his late 30s or early 40s stands on stage in a lab coat, and next to a table of bowls, water, styrofoam and other equipment that looks like it just might smoke up and explode. 'Do scientists wear lab coats?' 'Gary' asks. 'Some do, some don't', he says. So he takes his off, simultaneously reproducing and critiquing the stereotype of the scientist. 'Matter - solid, liquid, gas... I work with really cold stuff, like dry ice', Gary says, putting on his protective glasses. 'Science is about observation. What can we see?' Gary's hurried, urgent speech patterns, enthusiastic pace, and exaggerated physical gestures conjures the Dr. Karl Kruszelnicki genre within Australian popular science. He fires a Bunsen burner flame onto dry ice, then puts some into a container, and smoke bubbles over the container and billows everywhere. 'Ohhhh', students gasp. Gary provides a running commentary as he moves across the stage. 'Soda water? Carbon dioxide? Same as dry ice. Bubbling up the water... how can we test its gaseous properties? I know - we can set some fire to it! Nothing happened... Why didn't anything happen? A student yells out, 'there is not enough oxygen!' 'Yes!' Spontaneous applause erupts from mentors and other students.

Science as spectacle. Griffith's science show borders on the vaudeville and harkens back to older traditions of scientific phenomenalism in the US highlighting the bizarre and spectacular. Today, it is about lots of dry ice, and the show has a Thomas Dolby, 'blinded me with science' (1982) mixture of reverence and fun.

Two hundred hands shoot up in the air - all the students are engaged, and all want to volunteer. A loud bang resounds, and the soundwaves literally shake my pants as I sit at the back of the large auditorium. The students' excitement hits fever pitch and they all clap.

More sheepish volunteers and explosions, as the gas in the bubbles is changed to a mixture of hydrogen and oxygen, and helium balloons are heated with the flaming Bunsen burner. But the reasons are not as important as the spectacle and fun itself. Gary finishes his performance saying 'you can get a job in science and get paid lots of money for it! Hope you had a fun day today. Might see you in the future, doing science'.

ENGAGING PARENTS/CAREGIVERS

The students pile out of the main auditorium again and make their way to the large marquee tent for lunch. I decide to join in the 'parents session', organized by staff from Griffith's student equity staff from the Adult Social Inclusion Project. We travel through the bowels of the administration building, upstairs, down corridors and eventually to another multifunction space. There are a number of circular tables with Griffith-branded bags lying at each spot at the table. Inside the bag is a glossy 'Griffiti' magazine, advertising Griffith's programs and supports in high school friendly design. Postcard styled Griffith advertisements read 'Why go to university? Education opens a world of possibilities…', and 'How can I help my son or daughter get to university? Education opens a world of possibilities…' The latter postcard has a number of 'practical ways' that 'you' can 'support their aspirations and achievements', including 'have high (but realistic) expectations for them' and 'get to know your local university and/or TAFE (attend Open Days – Griffith.edu.au/open-day'). The photo on the front has a high school aged boy smiling, leaning over his mother (maybe caregiver), and the mother is smiling back and running her left hand through her hair highlighting a tattoo on her left hand that flows, almost as one design, into a piece of funk-art jewellery on her ring finger. Another postcard helps with explaining the costs of education. Its argument is that there are resources available, and that a long-term view is needed. 'Over their working lives university graduates earn 70% more than those without a post-school qualification', reads the bullet point. All universities advertise their products with these claims. Whilst a university education may offer an economic advantage for a student over other lesser skilled workers without higher education, the expansion of the pool of people with higher education also, within a globalized economy and higher education field, lowers the value of university credentials and the price that employers will be willing to pay for it (Brown, Lauder & Ashton, 2011). A university degree may well increase one's potential income, but the promise of enhanced social mobility through higher education is a relative promise, and not without its risks.

The Griffith staff invite incoming parents to get tea and coffee as the lunches are

arriving. Although there are over 300 students going through the LILAL activities, there are only a handful of parents/caregivers in the room. The Griffith staff seem a little anxious about this fact. As the lunches arrive, they say 'Please grab another bag, there's supposed to be more parents here. Double the amount.' The coordinator of the Adult Social Inclusion Project welcomes the group and encourages them to eat while she and her colleague give their talk. 'It's a privilege to speak to you as parents and guardians. You guys are critical to your students' success'.

'Liz' hands over to 'Jeff' to 'tell his story' as the powerpoint slides are projected onto the screen. Jeff came and studied at Griffith, Logan campus, as an adult. He had three children while at university and took six years to do his Human Services degree. To get into Griffith after an 'ordinary' high school experience, Jeff studied at a local learning centre for adults, or 'night school'. He describes his love of the local community, and his joy at his current work helping others to pursue their ambitions for university and new careers. He embodies a success story of an adult coming back to formal education at Griffith.

Liz then resumes her presentation, interpreting the slides about university fees, scholarships, alternative pathways and other university details. After a quick raising of hands, Liz notes that 'only a couple of you have visited a uni campus before, so this is for you too. Think about this for yourselves as well as your students.' These parents and caregivers are a key target market for Griffith's Logan campus, and this parental engagement session is as much about their educational futures as for their children.

A question from a parent, a Pacific Island woman, emerges from the group. 'I have a daughter who came with us from New Zealand after 2001. What advice can you give us about affording university?' The question acutely identifies the issue for many New Zealand citizens in Australia under 'non-protected Special Category Visas', whose children cannot gain access to deferred university fees. Liz and Jeff respond with compassion and further explicate the issues involved, yet are unable to offer many solutions.[50] Jeff noted that in some local schools over 50% of the students are New Zealand citizens, all of whom classify for higher education purposes as 'domestic' and so are eligible for a Commonwealth supported position, but many of whom cannot access the HECS-HELP financial assistance for the fees. 'But we hear you,' Jeff says. He also noted that there is a scholarship for a Pacific Island student available, although competitively, valued at $15,000 for three years.

---

[50] As will be explained further below, there was a promise of change to the policy that would commence from January 2015. At the time of the ethnography of the LILAL days in November, 2011, however, staff held little hope for any shifts in policy.

But the condition for this scholarship is that the student would have to study Human Services at Griffith's Logan campus. It was not clear whether the woman's daughter wished to study this degree. Liz suggested that the woman might like to consider dual citizenship for her daughter. I wondered to myself how easy that process might be in this woman's circumstances.

Liz finalized her presentation with a pitch for the economic benefits of a university education. 'It does look expensive, but if you look at it from a long term point of view, you will make more money' she says. Graduates in Australia, Liz said, are 80% more likely to be employed. She also mentioned to the parents the 'My Future' government website, especially its 'bullseye' connecting jobs with qualifications. The parents seemed interested in this site. Liz once again reiterated, 'You cannot overestimate how much you are important for your children's pathways.'

INSTANT EVALUATION

I find my way back to the rear of the main auditorium in which 200 or so students gather for their 'evaluation and wrap up' session. The hip-hop music pumps out, creating a cool space for their arrival. After Stanley, the emcee, introduces them, two adults take turns to provide 'interpretation for the hearing impaired'. Griffith staff are deeply committed to inclusivity for its widening participation events, and are consistently encouraging the schools to not leave behind students with various dis/abilities. They budget these interpreters into all of its activities and these interpreters had followed one group of students (including those with disabilities) around the series of activities. The inclusive message is doubled up through the presence of two Griffith staff – one on a scooter, and another whom, I am told by one of the Griffith Staff, is also hearing impaired. Griffith also intentionally employs student mentors that self-identify with disabilities for their outreach activities.

Stanley then invites 'Kathleen from student services' [a student equity manager], to the microphone and she thanks all the participants of the day. Fifteen Griffith student mentors line up along the front of the stage. Participation certificates are handed out for all students and other certificates are presented to those who entered the in-school Art competition activity that preceded the days on campus. Movie certificate prizes were handed out for the best artwork and letters completed during school activities linked to this day. For instance, students wrote a letter to their parents asking for their permission to participate and then inviting them to participate. These literacy based school activities were to continue after these days on campus.

Stanley hands out to the mentors boxes full of digital key pads. For the first time, Griffith is going to evaluate the students' experiences of the day with an instantaneous feedback mechanism that university students themselves are increasingly using in their classes. Stanley gees up the students, explaining what will happen, and effectively encourages a positive mood for their evaluations. They begin with gender and students are given five seconds to type in 1 for male and 2 for female. An instant powerpoint graph climbs dramatically up the slide projected to the front of the auditorium. There were 51% boys and 49% girls participating. The boys give a big cheer! Then they were asked which school they came from. One school had 55% of respondents (it is not clear from the slide how many respondents there were). They let out a big cheer. The evaluation itself at this point is a type of tribal competition. Then follows a question about whether the students' parents had been to university before, a measure to get at the 'First-in-Family' category. Students are given five seconds again, without explanation or interpretation of the question. Did 'going to university' mean visiting, or studying? 63% of the students said that their parents had been to university, 22% said no they had not, and 16% did not know. A previous interview with a Griffith administrator had revealed that some 70% of students at Griffith were First-in-Family to participate. Making decisions about programming and funding from these metrics derived from Year Six students under these conditions would seem an exercise fraught with ambiguity.

Students were given five seconds to decide upon their ethnicity/self-identity: the most popular choices were Māori and Australian and then Aboriginal. Around 17% identified as Māori, the same percentage as those identifying 'Australian'. The slide moved away too quickly so I could not jot down the other answers. Thankfully at this point there was no cheering for the result! Stanley announced the next question in his booming, cheerleading style: 83% of students liked the day, and most liked the science session, followed by lunch-time football with the Gold Coast Titans (a sports activity on the oval with some young footballers), and then the drama and the health sessions, respectively.

Did the school students 'learn about university?' 70% said yes, 19 % said no. Did the day on campus 'motivate' the students to do better at school? 70% said yes, 19 % said no. Would they like to visit university again? 86% said yes, 12 % said no. For a standard measure of 'aspiration' for university, the students were asked 'Do you want to go to university in the future? Yes, said 78%, no, said 13%, and 9%, pressed neither yes nor no.

Clearly there are difficulties in interpreting these data. Even if one accepts the claim that aspirations are individualised and can be quantitatively measured via survey item (see

below), the concept of a 'rise' in aspirations, or in any of these survey question items, remains problematic without a pre-intervention measure. Griffith staff show recognition of this dilemma through their design of the original program which included a research project to ascertain shifts in 'careers awareness' for one school's student cohort. In that case a pre-test and post-test measure was envisaged, although at the time of writing no research had been published with these results. Of course the group setting of the questionnaire and the encouraging role of the emcee further complicate a reading of these numbers. Amusingly, the students were also asked whether they would like to see this event repeated next year for other Year Six students. Some 75% of the students said no! A teacher later said to one of the Griffith staff, 'Don't worry about that, they just don't want other kids to enjoy what they got this year!'

Three other, paper-based evaluation forms record data from the day from parents, mentors and school teachers. A Likert-styled scale asked for the level of agreement of parents/caregivers around their learning 'about a range of career and study options for my child/ren', how they 'understand the importance of encouraging my child to achieve the best of their abilities' and whether they 'intend to talk further with my child about future job and study options'. The survey asks whether the event 'motivated me to think about my own study/career options' and whether 'my child has talked to me recently about study or work options for their future'. Only this last question seemed to presume the 'problem' of low aspiration to post-secondary study and work had a locus outside of the individual student (e.g. the school).

The parent/caregiver evaluation, and also the real-time student survey, effectively, though unintentionally, reproduced a deficit-view of the student and his or her parent(s) that articulates to the HEPPP policy guidelines. Specifically, it articulates to the assumption that 'aspiration' for further learning and future careers is an individual, psychological construct instead of a collective capacity (Appadurai, 2004; Sellar & Gale, 2011) that is distributed and then exercised unequally amongst students in Australia's socioeconomically stratified schooling systems. There is no question in the parent survey that asks, for instance, whether Griffith University, the federal government, or any other educational institution, is doing enough for the students to participate 'equitably' in higher education. The parental survey, as well as the student surveys that quantify shifting 'aspirations' to progress to university, abstracts from Griffith's student equity team's own experience and knowledge that aspirations are 'influenced by a complex mix of socio-cultural factors'. Aspiration, instead, is produced by the Year Six students in five seconds as they type letters into a key pad. Or

more precisely, the LILAL activities are articulated to the ruling relations established through the HEPPP policy, and relayed through Griffith's evaluation survey questions, which as I describe below, anticipate and are oriented to HEPPP reporting requirements.

TEXTUAL MEDITATION OF HEPPP POLICY

The key pad ('Keepad') technology, as activated by the students at the end of their LILAL days, provides the instant quantitative evaluation that materially coordinates and aligns Griffith's Student equity practices to the ruling policy relations established by HEPPP. These evaluative measures of the LILAL program are constructed to articulate to the expectations and requirements of all the local and extra-local policy actors involved in the program: the schools, DETE, Griffith, The Group and the federal government.

In the remaining sections of this chapter, I deliberately shift style from ethnographic description of the LILAL days at Logan to an analytical tracing of a sequence of reporting actions. My goal is to map the texts-in-action that coordinate the LILAL program as Griffith staff account to the federal government for their HEPPP programming and expenditures. It is through this evaluation and accounting process that the practices of student equity outreach, and the experiences of the students they work with, are articulated to the ruling relations of federal policy. I explain how the complex, chaotic and relational practices of 'engaging aspirations' (Griffith's student equity staffs' term) for students in Griffith's catchment area are abstracted from and reduced to the institutional categories required to produce the objective of 'raising aspirations' amongst students from low SES schools as per HEPPP mandate. Following this account of the activation of HEPPP policy, I demonstrate how the LILAL program, and Griffith student equity practices more generally, also appropriate these ruling HEPPP relations in the interests of the university and the local partners and students it works with.

Figure 5 represents the textual coordination of Griffith's LILAL program as enacted in 2012. Smith (2006a) has described how in the process of their enactment regulatory texts, such as polices and legislation, require the production of subordinate texts that articulate what people do as recognizable instances of the authorised text. She describes an 'intertextual hierarchy' between the regulatory text and the subordinate text, wherein the regulatory text establishes the concepts and categories, or one might say the discursive frames, for the subsequent production of the subordinate text. There is circularity for Smith in this process as the concepts of the regulatory text organize selective attention to the experiences of people,

and their subsequent representation in the subordinate text becomes readable and interpretable within the discursive frame established by the regulatory text.

The analysis commences at point 1 on the circle in Figure 5. Griffith's Academic Administrative Officer with responsibilities for HEPPP reporting constructs a HEPPP Quarterly Report Template for staff receiving HEPPP funding throughout the University to complete on a quarterly basis. This is an internal (subordinate) text that seeks to collate and corral the activities of staff across Griffith into the categories and concepts of the federal government's HEPPP Annual Reporting Template from 2011. This HEPPP Annual Reporting Template itself activates the government's own HEPPP Guidelines (the regulatory text).

The Academic Administrative Officer describes the construction of the internal, Quarterly Report Template as follows:

> The view was that I would then be able to use those [quarterly reports] at the end of the year, to write whatever it is I needed to write for the government, in the hopes that in some way I was collecting what they were going to look for.

The Officer constructs the HEPPP Quarterly Report Template so that it is oriented to the federal government's HEPPP Annual Reporting Template from the previous year, and so anticipates the reporting template to be received in the current year (2012). The Quarterly Reporting Template that was constructed was practically identical to the federal government's previous reporting template and asks 'what outreach and aspiration building activities did [your unit] undertake with HEPPP funding with the aim of increasing the number of people from low SES backgrounds who access and participate in higher education?' It is constructed as a spreadsheet with the headings of 'activities' (title, description, rationale, partners, objectives) and then 'progress towards meeting objectives' and 'outcomes' including 'measuring the performance' of the activity with 'both quantitative and qualitative data'. Clearly Griffith's student equity activities are to be aligned with the government's overarching goal of 'increasing the number of people from low SES backgrounds', and activities in service of this goal must be constructed as 'measurable'. To assist, the government template, reproduced here in Griffith's Quarterly Report Template, offers examples of 'number of students accessing programs' and 'data captured through pre and post student surveys'.

This internal HEPPP Quarterly Reporting Template is then sent to the units such as the student equity unit to coordinate their activities. As seen in the second rectangle on

Figure 5, Griffith outreach staff construct evaluation surveys for school students, Griffith student mentors, parents and teachers in light of this (and the year's previous) template. The primary school student survey for LILAL begins with demographic data requests. Griffith's question for the students on the 'how you would describe yourself' offered the following categories: Australian, Samoan, Māori, Asian, A&TSI, African, Cook Is, Tongan, Middle East, Other.

Figure 5. The Textual Coordination of LILAL in 2012

1. Academic Admin Officer makes **Quarterly Progress Report Template** for staff based on 2011 government HEPPP Reporting Template

2. Student equity staff construct **evaluation surveys** for students, mentors, parents and teachers

3. LILAL surveys conducted for 'aspirations', 'awareness' and demographic data drawn from field via 'keepad' technology and paper surveys

4. Admin assistant collects data and inputs into database

5. Student equity staff access database to produce **LILAL Summary Evaluation Report** and distribute to managers and partners

6. Student equity managers complete internal **Quarterly HEPPP Reports and include the LILAL data in 4th quarter**

7. **Academic Admin Officer completes 2012 Annual HEPPP Progress Report and sends to VCs (March/April 2013)**

8. VC's sign and send report to government (April 2013)

9. Government 'receives' report to release next year's HEPPP funds

In 2011, the survey even broke down further the 'Asian', 'African' and 'Middle East' categories, yet Griffith's experience suggested that the Pasifika delineations were most productive. As will be explained below, these New Zealand, Māori and Pacific Island items are an appropriation as well as activation of HEPPP policy.

The LILAL student survey also includes a 'First-In-Family' question that asks if the students' parents have been to university. This measure effectively becomes another contributing measure to SES, outside of the formal HEPPP specifications, yet in accord with student equity practice in Australian universities. A student equity manager describes here how the 'First-in-Family' category is employed at Griffith:

> Griffith has always had a 'Starting at Griffith' survey, sent out to students who were commencing after about week six, which is trying to get feedback about initial experiences at Griffith. The survey analysis was showing many of Griffith's students were First-in-Family, and almost, they [the survey's authors] were saying without any doubt, you could use First-in-Family as a proxy for low SES. And particularly on a campus like this [Logan] your data is quite different, the majority of students are First-in-Family, as well as the fact that people are coming from low SES postcodes and usually are on Centrelink benefits.

James and his colleagues (2008) have also suggested parental educational as an indicator of individual SES and argued that it is strongly correlated with student achievement and university participation. Universities throughout Australia have deployed HEPPP funding (especially Participation funding) to support students classified as 'First-in-Family' through this assumption. The category also has more a positive connotation than 'low SES'. Griffith, for instance, uses HEPPP Participation funds to support its wider expenditure on current 'First-in-Family' students (approximately 70% across its campuses according to a staff informant) through a range of academic and peer-mentoring programs across the student's life at university.

The survey for primary school students also has simple items measuring satisfaction, awareness of university, and future intentions with regards to schoolwork and university participation. These items are articulated to the Griffith's internally constructed HEPPP Quarterly Template (which reproduces the government's HEPPP Reporting Template) that seeks outcomes of 'aspiration building activities'. The survey items are also articulated to the underlying HEPPP Partnerships Guidelines informing the government's template that call for activities to 'build awareness, aspiration and achievement by engaging with people from a low SES background early in their pre-tertiary education years' (ComLaw, 2012 1.80.5b).

These surveys were used in the field over the LILAL days described earlier (3rd rectangle in *Figure* 5), and then the data collected was sent to and inputted by a student equity Administrative Assistant into a database (fourth rectangle). From here a Careers Coordinator staff person complied an internal 'Summary Evaluations' text of the LILAL Careers event. A footnote on the first page of this Summary explains that the 'Keepads (the brand name automated audience response system) were used for the first time with students and it wasn't possible to capture qualitative data from them using this system'. The newly trialled real-time evaluations system was unable to offer the participating students any way to make qualitative comments, unlike for the previous year. When asked about the introduction of the new technology into Griffith's programming, a manager noted the following:

> …the main reason for acquiring/using the keepads was to reduce the administrative load involved with data collation and reporting across our scaled up activities… They have an engagement value too as you will have seen, but with only one admin position…managing evaluation data in a comprehensive and timely way would not have been impossible and this was our key driver.

Collating, managing and reporting evaluation data is a labour intensive and expensive process for student equity activities in contemporary Australian higher education. The wider moves to an audit culture and performativity (Ball, 2003) within education have impacted higher education student equity policy and practices. Although the HEPPP Reporting Template, and Griffith's Quarterly HEPPP Template, reference the possibility of reporting 'qualitative' outcomes, the overarching concern is for quantitative data around numbers of students, numbers of partnerships, numbers of activities and quantitatively measured shifts in scales measuring awareness and aspiration. The move to a new technology further eclipses the voices of the objects of student equity policy – the students in these primary schools – and the voices of the student equity practitioners themselves in the interpretation of their work. The introduction of the technology is related to the need to comply with an increasingly burdensome reporting regime that requires a reduction in the complexity of student equity work to documenting supposedly shifting psychometric states.

Alison Griffith and Dorothy Smith (in press), building on Smith's description of the intertextual hierarchy noted above, have introduced the concepts of 'institutional' and 'accountability circuits' to describe this process of standardising and making commensurable the diversity of 'front-line work' practices. When deployed by student equity staff, technologies such as the 'keepad' activate these ruling relations that abstract from the

complicated and multidimensional activities of Griffith's student equity staff in collaboration with schools to render them actionable through the reporting cycle.

The LILAL Summary Evaluation sheet is subsequently sent on to a manager of student equity. S/he then uses this data to complete the internal HEPPP Quarterly Reports (rectangle 6) to send on to the Academic Administrator. The LILAL activities, written up in the fourth Quarterly Report, occupy one section of a wider document that details all activities such as outreach into high schools (Uni-Reach), an Adult Learner social inclusion project, 'aspiration' awards for Year 10 students and a project specifically organized with and for the Pasifika community and its students as they progress through high school and onto further education and training. The activity description and rationale of the LILAL Careers Project in the HEPPP Quarterly Report for 2012 is stated as follows:

> Given research evidence that commencing interventions as early as possible has the most impact, and following consultation with DET Senior Management and Logan school Principals, careers engagement with feeder primary schools for Uni-Reach partnership high schools in Logan was agreed in 2010.

Just as the survey items discussed above are articulated to producing the requisite outcomes called for by the HEPPP Guidelines (aspiration, awareness etc.), here the early intervention into primary schools is articulated not only to 'research evidence' but to outreach to students from low SES backgrounds 'early in their pre-tertiary education years' as requested by HEPPP Guidelines (ComLaw, 2012 1.80.5b). The specific careers focus to the engagement and the building of 'careers awareness' (Griffith Quarterly Report) represents an appropriation of these HEPPP Guidelines that I will return to shortly.

Griffith's HEPPP Quarterly Reports provide some of the metrics for which the federal government, through its HEPPP Annual Reporting Template, has called. The Program spanned '10 schools including 2 new (Catholic schools)' and 'approx. 840 students had multiple contacts through LILAL'. The internal report notes that in the lead up to the on-campus Careers Days there were 136 entries received for school based 'Art competition' called '*In the Workplace Everyone Belongs'*, 'compulsory DVD quiz lessons' in 10 schools and an 'optional parent invitation lesson' occurring in five schools. At the Careers Days themselves on the Logan campus there were 588 Year Six students, 64 parents, 30 school personnel and 36 Griffith mentors at work. Five schools also participated in 'reflection lessons' in school based on their experiences at the Logan campus.

These raw numbers read impressively and are supplemented with the survey results as follows:

81% of students would like to visit the university again; 75% would like to go to university in the future; 70.92% believed the event would motivate them to do their best at school to achieve their dreams…98% of parents 'agreed' or strongly agreed' that the on-campus event helped them to understand the importance of encouraging their child to achieve to the best of their abilities; 98% 'agreed' or strongly agreed' that they intended to talk further with their child about future job and study options.

The numbers are marshalled to satisfy the government requirements for 'outcomes' from 'quantitative data collected to measure the performance of the activity' (government HEPPP Annual Reporting Template). In response to Griffith's Quarterly Report Template and its call for 'data captured through pre and post student surveys' and 'qualitative data outcomes' (which again relays the government's request), the student equity manager's Quarterly Report lists some quotes from school personnel speaking to the success of the program and the children's' enjoyment of the activities. It also notes that a 'Research Report' has been drafted from a study in one participating school from the previous year's program in which there were both 'pre-program interviews (n=61) and post-program… interviews (n=60)'. The study design was described in the original Project Agreement for LILAL as a 'Revised Careers Awareness Survey' to be administered to the participating students, taking both pre and post intervention measures.

This study assumes a change in 'careers awareness' will correlate in some way with the students' changing career trajectories over time. Yet there are inherent problems in the assumption that any educational intervention, such as an equity and outreach intervention by university-based, student equity staff into schools, can be 'measured' precisely for its effects on individuals' career trajectories. In their recent research for the federal Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education (the department with current responsibility for HEPPP) on evaluation models for student equity activities, Naylor, Baik and James (2013a) argued against such crude measures within inherently complex and diverse contexts. Attempts to attribute causation and/or correlations around the decision of an individual student to attend university 'may be difficult, if not impossible', as are efforts in these circumstances, say the authors, to 'assess the efficacy of equity initiatives and programs with any reliability' (p. 7). The task is particularly difficult for individual initiatives (such as the LILAL program) to quantify 'a particular size effect for an initiative' (p. 35). Research on the UK's 'Aimhigher' widening participation programs has likewise been unable to make strong correlations between specific and local interventions and systemic changes in participation patterns for underrepresented students, and/or has

highlighted the complexities mitigating such attempts (Doyle & Griffin, 2012; Harrison, 2012). Yet Griffith, like all universities in Australia under the current HEPPP initiative, is being encouraged to construct such evaluation research projects for the purposes of accountability.

Griffith staff themselves express the difficulties inherent in fulfilling these expectations. A student equity manager notes that the internal Quarterly Reporting Template itself 'constrains' what can and cannot be said about the work of her staff to government:

> So you get constrained to working within those templates. People roll their [HEPPP] reports up and they are required to be simple. So it's a challenge to reflect the richness of what you do. I just don't know how a templated, rolled-up institutional report reflects all of that and probably other people in other areas might feel the same. In terms of quantitative data, it is quite impressive when you look at, you know, increased participation rates in programs. You still get some punch out of that sort of data, but it is the students' stories, the ripple effect; I just don't know how you capture that.

The use of these reporting templates abstracts from the richness of the students stories and the work of the student equity staff, as people's work and subjectivities are reduced into the categories and concepts authorized by the ruling relations of government policy. This is the textually mediated practice of power that is produced by the HEPPP policy texts and templates as they are activated by Griffith staff in the re/production of Quarterly Reports.

To try and communicate the 'richness' of their work, and the 'stories' of the students with whom they accompany, Griffith student equity staff and managers also publish and promote their activities alongside these objectified relations. One of the managers explains:

> I always try to look at other opportunities. Some of our image projects are You Tube clips; [we] get those out and about. That just gives a message in a way that you will never get with a written report. So we have done a fair bit of that with great success.

Examples of the YouTube clips include highlights of the 2011 LILAL activities, as well as the Pasifika outreach program workshops and the Pacific Island student graduation evening. Griffith also provide reports to community partners involved in their outreach work (schools, DETE, community groups in Logan) with more narrative approaches and images of the students themselves. The manager also attempts to provide more narrative description and images of events in reports to the Vice-Chancellor that go to the University Council. These reports, she says in interview, are not constrained by the templates, and are 'just craft[ed] from scratch', and serve her goal of 'keeping up the visibility of the work in the university

community'. The effort to promote student equity activity internally in the university is strategically designed to boost the profile of the work.

In rectangle 7 on Figure 5 representing the textual coordination of the LILAL program, the Academic Administrative Officer completes the government's Annual HEPPP Report for the 2013 year (arriving early March, 2013) using data from the student equity staff's 2012 Quarterly Reports of their activities. In this instance there was little change in the government's templates for the Annual HEPPP Progress Reports between 2011 and 2012. There is a further truncation of the student equity work, and the LILAL activities, into the template. The Academic Administrative Officer describes the report construction as follows:

> I said [to the units receiving HEPPP funds], 'I am going to write all of the components. The only thing that I want from you is case studies.' And I didn't send it to everybody for case studies; I picked four key groups that I knew would have good case studies and I said, 'I just want you to write the case study around your area. I will actually use the quarterly reports to pull everything else together. Sorry, but now that we have two weeks to do it, don't have time to collaborate. Yeah, collaboration is lovely but in a short timeframe, you don't get nearly as much of it.

The Officer fills in the template, and solicits from the units extra case-study material, although not from the LILAL programming of 2012. S/he also described in interview the time pressures involved in these reporting activities. The experience of both UQ and Griffith has been that the HEPPP Template Reports arrive with little time left for compilation (approximately 2-3 weeks), further constraining the collaborative work between units that might provide for richer data.

The Officer noted that the reports to government also serve the internal reporting requirement at Griffith as well, and that the quantification of experience and 'outcomes' focus for reporting is required by executive level university staff as well as government (which of course places similar reporting requirements across other universities activities). The Officer suggests a background in external relations predisposes one to this kind of reporting:

> From my ER (external relations) background, I refer to it is as 'she [the DVC] wants the sound bytes'. She wants the bits that would make the news that she can then report in counsel or equity committee. The outcomes that the DVC wants to see are, 'How many students on campus came to that event? How many schools?' That's what she's looking for.

The objectification of the work of student equity practitioners, and of the students' experiences that inform this, occurs via both government and university reporting processes. After the Annual HEPPP Reporting Template is completed by the Academic Officer (rectangle 7), s/he sends the report to the executive level for signature (rectangle 8) and then on to the federal department. The textual cycle concludes when the government officially 'receives' the report (rectangle 9), which releases the next flow of funding for the following year.

In summary, the textual coordination of the LILAL program in Logan schools occurs through the HEPPP policy discourses (the regulatory text) of aspiration, awareness, achievement, and low SES numbers of students participating, and the necessity for producing evaluative outcomes (especially quantitative) of specific individual and programmatic changes in these constructs through the intervention. More precisely, the textual coordination of the LILAL program occurs through Griffith's activation of these objectified relations via the construction of evaluation survey items and the internal Quarterly Reporting Template (both subordinate texts) that re/produce the categories and concepts of the federal government's HEPPP policy and Annual Reporting template (regulatory texts).

Yet as was indicated on occasion in the preceding analysis, there is a simultaneous *appropriation* of these ruling relations of federal policy. The activation of federal policy involves a creative negotiation of the policy in light of more local (state, university level) policy practices. It is to these appropriations that the analysis now turns.

GRIFFITH APPROPRIATIONS

The process of HEPPP policy enactment by student equity staff at Griffith activates, but also appropriates the categories and concepts of the HEPPP regulatory texts (Guidelines and Reporting Templates). I am defining this appropriation, after Levinson and colleagues (Levinson et al., 2009), as a form of 'creative interpretive practice' that involves the negotiation of federal policy in ways consistent with the interpreter's own established practices. These appropriations for Griffith include specific Pasifika student and community outreach initiatives, as well as social inclusion initiatives for students with disabilities. The emphasis upon 'careers' and 'careers awareness' in the LILAL program also represents an appropriation of HEPPP policy that occurred through Griffith's participation in The Group and its successful bid for HEPPP Participation funds for projects designed to meet Queensland's low SES and Indigenous students' needs. Griffith's LILAL program, designed to 'raise student awareness of available career and life choices' and 'the world of work',

represents them both as an appropriation of federal HEPPP policy as well as an activation of The Group's MOU text.

Following Bourdieu, these activations and appropriations of federal policy at the State and institutional level are understood as situated within an existing distribution of academic and reputational capitals in the higher education field in the Queensland. This distribution of capitals sees differing logics for widening participation practice: while UQ is less concerned with expanding its undergraduate places than with recruiting the 'best and the brightest' low SES students as measured by OP score, Griffith considers outreach into low SES schools and communities, from primary school upwards, as necessary for achieving its growth objectives, particularly for its Logan campus. Just as for UQ, Griffith's appropriation of HEPPP policy works towards institutional imperatives and interests arising from its position within the competitive and hierarchical field of higher education in Queensland.

CAREERS

In their discussions and negotiations around HEPPP funding applications, student equity practitioners in Queensland's universities expressed concern that students from low SES areas, and particularly Indigenous students, were being streamed away from higher education pathways through poor careers advice and guidance (The Group minutes, 2009). Although my analysis in Chapter 5 focused upon The Group's Project 1 outreach into low SES schools, the Group also was concerned to design programming so its members could incorporate careers advice and awareness for students. This was to be Project 5, yet it was never funded and universities to a greater or lesser extent developed their own activities in these areas.

During the consultations amongst the LILAL partners mentioned above, according to internal Griffith minutes of the consultation, both DETE and the schools emphasised the need for 'pathways and careers information' for students in Years Eight to 10, and requested Griffith host a 'Junior Careers Fair' for primary school students where 'career opportunities', 'career mentoring', and 'exposure to the world of work' and 'the range of available careers' would be highlighted.

This feedback from the schools reflected their concerns to enact Education Queensland's Careers Education Policy, which guidelines call for continuing career education activities designed to 'promote the notion of life-long learning' and provide 'young people with the opportunity to develop positive attitudes towards change, and the knowledge and skills to manage recurrent career transitions' (Education Queensland, n.d.). The school's concerns around the careers focus to outreach also reflects the local

demographic realities, as noted for instance in Vinson, Rawsthorne and Cooper's (2007) report documenting the high level of disadvantage in the Logan area, particularly intergenerational unemployment.

In May 2010, both The Group's MOU and Griffith's 'Project Summary Agreement' for the LILAL Project were formalised. The Group MOU reiterated the need for '[c]areers education and advice for cluster schools and high-disadvantage areas' and for universities to 'work in partnership with schools and relevant authorities to strengthen the careers education scaffold for middle and senior school students.' As was explained above, Griffith's LILAL anchored its understandings of 'career activities' with reference to the 'Australian Blueprint for Career Development Framework' and defined a 'career' as a 'continuing process of learning and development' and the 'sum total of paid and unpaid work, learning and life roles you undertake throughout your life' (Department of Education, 2013). The operating assumptions in these texts are that successful participation in a globalized, competitive economy requires students, supported by schools and universities, to undergo a process of self-capitalization to acquire the personal 'flexibility' and 'career competencies' to become productive citizen-workers. Growing up without the social, cultural and academic capitals of other students in Brisbane, students in Logan schools, even primary schools, are positioned by schools, government and universities to receive a utilitarian education oriented to the world of work.

The appropriation of HEPPP policy by Griffith and The Group includes a 'careers competencies' focus, which represents both genuine equity concerns and also the activation of the federal government's neoliberal discourses on the purposes of education. When educational systems and staff, families, and communities directly or indirectly stream children away from certain subject choices, occupations and careers through class and gender based assumptions, they participate in (or activate) the reproduction of the inequalities and disadvantage of Logan-based school students. Careers awareness activities can militate against these processes of exclusion. Yet through the construction of the self-capitalising neoliberal subject in the schooling process, governments and educational institutions also de-emphasise (or deny) the possibilities for alternative educational approaches that valorise critical engagement with the conditions generating inequality, and more humanistic ends to the educational process for the individual and her community. Being categorized for policy purposes as a student from a low SES school has real implications, not all of which can be assumed to be necessarily positive.

DISABILITY

As stated in the introduction to the research, the HEPPP policy represents the largest investment in student equity policy since the Whitlam policy to make tuition cost-free for students. The current HEPPP policy sees, according to an informant from The Group, a ten-fold increase on funding from the preceding Higher Education Equity Support Program (HEESP) policy. Since the release of the Bradley Review (Bradley et al., 2008) and the advent of the HEPPP policy, the dominant discourse for student equity in Australia has been the construct of SES and the need to 'raise aspirations' for students from these backgrounds for tertiary education. The narrowing of focus arose from an interpretation of data (James, 2008; James et al., 2004) that suggested that whilst some (marginal) improvement in participation had been visible for people with disabilities, for women, and for people from Non-English speaking backgrounds, when constructed and mapped on a scale of socioeconomic disadvantage people from low SES backgrounds, and Indigenous peoples more generally, were persistently underrepresented in higher education. Both Bradley (Bradley et al., 2008) and the HEPPP targeted students from low SES and Indigenous backgrounds as requiring intensified support.

This policy focus, however, has meant that fewer funds have been available for students who identify as possessing disabilities[51]. Universities are still funded to provide supports to and attract students with disabilities through a separate 'Disability Support Program'. Yet, as a Griffith student equity manager explained in interview, the funding has remained basically stagnant since the early 2000s as universities have increased their number of students.

> It [disability] is a separate category and I think the reason it has stayed a separate category is there are legislative and compliance related processes around it. But the Higher Education Disability Support Program has had no funding increase whatsoever, not even CPI, for many years, since 2002. It's about 6 .1 million and that's where it has stayed; it went up 100,000 one year and came back down another; it's like a fixed piece of pie. A university like Griffith has grown so that it's over twice the size as what it was when I started 15 years ago. When I started here you probably had 18,000 students at Griffith, and we're supposed to have 43,000 now… universities across the board would be saying there not getting the same equity funding they would have got through their DSP programs as they've had in the past. So that gap between what you get and what you spend is increasing.

---

[51] It is important to note here that the Bradley Review did call for a boost to disability funding to 20 million dollars per year, yet this recommendation (no. 31) was not picked up in the following policy responses from the federal Labor government (Bradley et al., 2008, p. 161). Of course student identities may be constructed/designated across these equity categories, with disadvantage compounding.

Funds to assist students with disabilities are being stretched across an expanding student base, says the Griffith manager, despite the costs of supporting an increasing number 'complex, high support need students'. Efforts to attract a greater proportion of students with disabilities to university also do not appear to be progressing quickly. The manager explains: 'And are they being attracted in greater numbers? No, probably not. Marginal increases… I know our participation data goes 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.2, 3.1, you know 0.1 or 0.2, it's nothing'.

The focus upon a student's SES in abstraction from his or her other circumstances, and/or self-identifications, can lead to inadequate support services for students. When asked in interview about the relationship between the HEPPP policy and Griffith's work with students with disabilities, the manager explained how SES should not be considered independently of other equity categories.

> If you look at all the data about disability and look at the impact of disability upon a person's economic, social and personal wellbeing, it's clearly a major factor for disadvantage. It's across the board, impacting housing, transport, employment, access to education, and participation. The issue is that people with disabilities can be very limited in their resources – economic and other capital – but they may for example still live at home in a high socioeconomic area, but personally have very limited resources. And if they had to go and fend for themselves they would be really challenged. Students don't fit into a single category. It's ridiculous to try to even do the task. So you've got a refugee student with a mental illness because of torture, anxiety, then what are you going to do? It's multiple and varied.

To attempt to keep a practice-based focus on support for students with disabilities, and to make university more accessible and attractive to them, Griffith has made conscious efforts to ensure its outreach programs into low SES schools have this social inclusion dimension. By deploying HEPPP funds in these ways, to supplement activities conducted through the Disability Support Program funding, Griffith appropriates the HEPPP policy according to its long standing social inclusion policies[52] and practice commitments to persons with disabilities.

This appropriation is also textually mediated. Although the HEPPP policy, and The Group's Project MOU make no reference to disability, the LILAL Project Agreement with the Logan schools and the regional DETE officials states that 'the perspective of such groups as Indigenous, Pacific Island and students with disabilities will be included to ensure project

---

[52] Griffith's 'Disability Action Plan 2000-2004', for instance, noted its Uni-Reach school outreach program involved inclusive practices for students with disabilities (as cited in Griffith University, 2008, p. 5).

activities are inclusive' (p. 4). In an invitation letter to the local principals for their school to participate in the LILAL program careers days, there is a promise of 'inclusive approaches (cultural perspectives, disability support)'. Similarly, schools are told of Griffith's desire that the events be inclusive and that the schools encourage 'full participation'. Teachers, students and parents are encouraged to complete a form to note special medical needs and supports required to enable the proper preparations to be arranged (e.g. 'bus transport with wheelchair access, Auslan interpreters, materials in alternative formats, etc.').

The LILAL days, as described earlier, also reflect this coordination, as Griffith staff provides interpretation for the 'hearing impaired'. The Griffith staff person, in a scooter and sitting alongside the student mentors and the staff person present and named as having a hearing impairment, embody these commitments for the students. Student equity's HEPPP reporting for 2012, channelled through the Academic Administrative Officer to the federal government, notes the provision of 'disability support' for the LILAL program, and the costs of the provision are included in the HEPPP acquittal.

Yet these inclusive practices do not always result in students with disabilities participating in Griffith's outreach programs such as LILAL. Despite Griffith's commitment to a whole-of-cohort model of widening participation practice, designed to reach all students in the cohort and not just those considered likely to progress on to university, there remain both entrenched cultures and practical difficulties at the schools that prevent all students with disabilities from participating. In their report to The Group for HEPPP Partnership fund expenditure, which is collated with reports from other universities and sent on to the federal government, the Griffith's student equity managers note the following:

> …school policies espouse 'inclusivity' and while Griffith actively promotes its activities and events as inclusive of all students (and provides accommodations and support for students with disabilities), there are still school-based barriers to realising this.

There exists a culture in some schools, notes a manager in interview, to stream students with disabilities away from higher education through assumptions that it is 'not for them', or that 'they couldn't do it'. The same manager, for instance, noted that although there were students with disabilities at the LILAL days, work still remains to ensure all students (including those with visual impairment) are provided opportunities to participate in Griffith's outreach programs.

Griffith's appropriation of the HEPPP policy with this social inclusion agenda for students with disabilities distinguishes its outreach practices in the higher education field in

Queensland. This social inclusion commitment for students as young as Year Six also means, in collaboration with Logan schools, that students from multiply disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to be streamed off to paths that preclude higher education participation.

PASIFIKA COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Griffith's five university campuses extend in a southerly direction from the centre of Brisbane (the Queensland College of Art, Griffith Film School and the Queensland Conservatorium all located at *Southbank*) to *Nathan, Mt. Gravatt* and *Logan* in Brisbane's southern suburbs and to the *Gold Coast*. This Brisbane-Gold Coast corridor is also the home to a large proportion and increasing number of long term Australian residing New Zealand citizens of Pacific Island backgrounds. Although classified as 'domestic', and 'Commonwealth Supported' students at university, these students (and other New Zealand citizen students, such as Māori) have not had access to federal government student loan support (Higher education contribution scheme-Higher education loan program; or HECS-HELP) to finance the costs of their higher education. They have subsequently been proportionally underrepresented in universities in Queensland and Australia.[53] In their response to a joint Australian/New Zealand Government Discussion paper on Trans-Tasman Economic Relations, staff close to student equity practices from Griffith and QUT jointly submitted a text (Griffith and QUT Universities, 2012) making the case that these students be made eligible for HECS-HELP to enable their more equitable participation at Australian universities.

The Griffith and QUT authors neatly locate the origins of this inequity to the changed visa conditions applying to New Zealand immigrants to Australia since 2001.

> …since 27 February 2001 New Zealanders moving to Australia have been granted non-protected Special Category Visas (SCV) which do not provide a pathway to permanent residency and citizenship.…unless New Zealanders qualify for permanent residency and subsequently gain Australian citizenship, they are ineligible for the HECS-HELP deferred payment scheme and must pay their university fees upfront. (p. 2)

Further, non-Australian citizens are not (with rare exception) eligible for various government support payments, such as Youth Allowance, Austudy, and Commonwealth Scholarships that

---

[53] '…18-24 year-old New Zealand-born Australian residents were half as likely as the overall population to be studying (22% compared with 44%)' (Griffith and QUT Universities, 2012, p. 9). These numbers may underplay the inequitable higher education participation of those Pacific Island students who lived/transitioned in New Zealand with their families before emigrating to Australia.

assist with the costs of higher education. In spite of these policy incentives to change their residency status, however, in practical terms it is extremely difficult for these students and their families to gain permanent residency and citizenship.

> Low SES New Zealand citizens are in a 'catch-22' situation as they are unlikely to ever qualify for permanent residency due to their inability to access the education and training that would provide them with the skills to qualify. (Griffith and QUT Universities, 2012, p. 2)

In their submission to the Productivity Commission, Griffith and QUT staffs provided some practitioner level data around school students from Pacific Island and Māori families in the Brisbane-Gold Coast corridor. In the Logan region, for instance, there are high schools currently with around 60% of their students coming from Pacific Island (Samoa, Tonga and the Cook Islands) backgrounds, while a high school closer to the Gold Coast reports almost 80% of their students as coming from Pacific Island or Māori backgrounds (Griffith and QUT Universities, 2012, p. 4). Not all of these students would be non-Australian citizens, yet student equity practitioner survey data from Griffith suggests that close to half of its students involved in a targeted Pacific Island student leadership project arrived in Australia after 2001, and so were non-protected special category visa holders and unable to access HECS-HELP (Griffith and QUT Universities, 2012, p. 4).

Residency in some of the most socially disadvantaged communities in Australia (Vinson et al., 2007), coupled with lack of access to English as a Second language support services because of residency/citizenship status contributes to the underachievement of many Pacific Island students in primary and secondary schools (Green & Kearney, 2011; Kearney, 2008). Lack of access to HECS-HELP loans also has meant that otherwise eligible students have been forced to take unskilled jobs after completing school, a trajectory that discourages school achievement for other family members and community members (Kearney, 2012).

Griffith student equity staff with specific responsibility for Pacific Island student and community engagement were interviewed and asked about the impacts of these government policies on Pacific Island students and families. One student equity staff person noted:

> Personally, I know of a number of head boys and girls in local schools, including (those from three Logan area high schools), who have all been affected by this. Of the six that I know of personally, only two have progressed through to university. Their families have had to take out loans to financially support them. Of the other four, one has gone on a [religious] mission and the other three have gone just into general employment. I know one was working at KFC. Even that alone, the message that it sends students that are coming up

> behind them, 'Well, if Johnny can't go and Johnny was head boy, then why should I even try?'

Families are sometimes forced through economic necessity to choose which of their children will receive the funding for higher education.

> …we actually have a student here at the moment that we are using as a case study for one of our brochures around this and her older brother - it was between her and her older brother who was going to go to university and the family made the decision that she would go. He's now working in a warehouse, supporting her to go through her university studies.

In the face of these exclusions, some of Griffith's HEPPP funded outreach work into low SES area schools and communities has targeted Pacific Island students and communities. Because of the 'whole-of-cohort' engagement model preferred by Griffith and as valorised by The Group, in which all students from a particular year level would be offered programming conducted by student equity staff, and not simply those whom the school might identify as likely to progress to university, Griffith's outreach into schools in the low SES areas surrounding Logan and some Gold Coast districts also necessarily involves outreach to Pacific Island and other New Zealand citizens. Nonetheless, internal correspondences between Griffith, The Group and federal government representatives reveal some bureaucratic uncertainty around this issue. The government expressed concern that HEPPP funds be only used to engage and support 'current and prospective domestic students' (ComLaw, 2012, 1.50.1) as they progress to and through university.

The category 'domestic' includes both Australian and New Zealand citizens. Pacific Island peoples in Australia have not been accurately identified by their place of birth in census data, and university enrolment data do not detail this information specifically for a Pacific Island cohort of students (Muticultural Health, 2013).[54] So there will be some Pacific Island students in Queensland schools, for instance, who will be domestic students according to HEPPP policy, and some who may not be, but accurate data on these distinctions are not available to universities. As Queensland universities prepared for their joint application for HEPPP Partnership funding under the auspices of the Higher Education Forum and The Group, federal officials expressed concerns around the targeting of Pacific Island students who were not New Zealand citizens (and so not 'domestic'), and refugees and/or asylum seekers. In response, Griffith and The Group leadership noted that there was no way for universities to practically make these distinctions for students from Pacific

---

[54] Internal Griffith student equity staff briefing notes of 2010 specify enrolment data procedures.

Island backgrounds, and that HEPPP guidelines effectively required them to target this cohort of students to fulfil the requirement that each university 'tailor their programs to address the specific disadvantage, as appropriate, to the demographics of their low SES student population and applicants' (ComLaw, 2012, 1.50.1). Further, according to HEPPP Partnership guidelines, universities were to 'concentrate resources to most effectively target low SES communities where aspirations to enter higher education are low and where matriculation to universities is poor' (ComLaw, 2012, 1.70.5). Griffith student equity staff in their representations to federal officials claimed that the Pacific Island student cohort were residing in these low SES communities, 'were not progressing through school-university pathways' and were identified as 'the most under-represented group at Griffith on the available evidence'.

Griffith's work with Pacific Island students in schools, with their communities and leaders, and after they progress to university represents a creative appropriation of the HEPPP guidelines that arises both from demographic necessity (particularly for future enrolments for the Logan campus) and an ethical commitment to support and advocate for the needs of a highly marginalised community in Australia. Its 'Pacific Island Project' and activities - spanning outreach into schools in low SES areas, specific careers awareness activities, the Legacy Education Achievement and Dream (LEAD) leadership and mentoring project in high schools, building the cultural knowledge of 'Teachers, Guidance Officers & Cultural Liaison Officers', general Pacific Island 'outreach and engagement' with parents, Church and community leaders and the large scale 'Griffith Pasifika Cultural Graduation' celebration evenings - are all reported back to government as HEPPP Partnership activities and expenditures. The LILAL Project Agreement, as mentioned above, textually appropriates the HEPPP policy through its commitment that 'the perspective of such groups as…Pacific Island students…will be included to ensure project activities are inclusive' (p. 4). Griffith then continues to account for its Pacific Island student and community engagement activities (such as the parental engagement sessions occurring at the LILAL days) through the HEPPP Reporting processes outlined above. Although not originally envisaged by federal policy, these activities, and more importantly their collaborative conception and enactment, have been successful in highlighting the specific needs and supporting the calls for justice from Pacific Island community organizations in South East Queensland.

Griffith student equity staff and action-researchers, as well as Logan area high school principals, have persisted for a number of years, along with other community based organizations, in their advocacy for Pacific Island students and their access to higher

education loans. For instance, Griffith student equity staff and researchers met with the First Secretary and the Policy Advisor from the New Zealand High Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, along with Logan area school and community representatives, on the Trans-Tasman Travel Agreement in December, 2012. They had collectively worked through their local Queensland Member of Parliament to advocate to the State and (then Gillard-led) federal government over the exclusion of Pacific Island students to HECS-HELP, and the policy's effect of contradicting the HEPPP policy goals of boosting the participation rates of students from low SES areas. The Productivity Commission's final report on Trans-Tasman Economic Relations accepted the argument of Griffith and QUT's submission, and called for work to open the HECS-HELP system to long term Australian residing, New Zealand citizens (recommendation 4.25, Productivity Commissions of Australia and New Zealand, 2012) When the former federal Minister for Tertiary Education, Craig Emerson, announced the policy change from the Labor government at Griffith University's Logan campus on June 11, 2013, many community activists, educators, students, and supporters of the Pacific Island communities in Queensland and beyond rightly celebrated their achievement. From 2015, proclaimed the then Labor Minister, New Zealand citizens who have been residing in Australia for 10 years or more will be eligible for HECS-HELP loans to enable them to access university[55].

With a change of federal government there was renewed uncertainty for Pacific Island background students, their communities and Griffith student equity staff. Initially, it seemed as if the current Australian Prime Minister, Tony Abbott, preferred the status quo on issues relating to the rights of New Zealand citizens residing long term in Australia.[56] Yet a Joint Statement from the Prime Minister Abbott and New Zealand Prime Minister Keys in February, 2014 provided confirmation that 'Australia would extend access to student loans under the Higher Education Loan Program to long-term New Zealand residents in Australia under terms announced last year' (Prime Minister of Australia Media Office, 2014)

There still remain ongoing challenges for Pacific Island students and their equitable participation in higher education. As a local school principal noted in interview, there would

---

[55] The announcement was made at Griffith University, Logan Campus, on June 11, 2013. The Minister's press release reads in part: "From 1 January 2015, New Zealanders with Special Category Visas will be eligible for HELP [loans] if they first entered Australia as a dependent minor aged under 18 years at least 10 years before applying; have been resident in Australia for 80 per cent of the last 10 years; and have been resident in Australia for 18 months of the last two years at the time of application" (Department of Industry, n.d.-a).

[56] 'I'm very happy with the situation that exists right now which is that Kiwis coming here know that they are expected to work and pay taxes from day one, as so many of them do'(Prime Minister of Australia Media Office, 2013).

be many Pacific Island students at her school that would not even qualify for the loans promised by because they would not have been in Australia for 10 years. Nonetheless, Griffith's Pacific Island outreach and engagement strategy represents a successful appropriation of HEPPP policy, and can be seen as the fruit of a widening participation strategy that is anchored in long term, mutually beneficial community engagement and capacity building projects. Griffith and its community partners have convinced the federal government that engaging the aspirations of students in low SES areas and schools for higher education is misguided, if not cruel, without expanding the HECS-HELP loans system to New Zealand citizens.

CONCLUSION: AN INSTITUTIONAL FIELD OF ACTION

It is now possible to map Griffith's outreach in an institutional field of action. The grey shaded oval area in the middle of Figure 6 below is the textually mediated institutional field of action that is organized and reproduced (Turner, 2006) by the outreach practices of Griffith student equity staff in Logan area primary schools and the LILAL program. Unlike the cyclical, annual textual coordination of practices represented by Figure 5, this figure emphasises the linear movement through time (2010-2013) of Griffith's activation, but also appropriation of the ruling, textually mediated relations of HEPPP policy. The rectangles represent texts of federal government policy, Griffith policy, and The Group mandates.

In each rectangle, text is **bolded** when there is an activation of the policy (or textually mediated ruling relations) by Griffith student equity staff and its partners (schools and state government bodies) and text is *italicised* when there is an appropriation of that policy within student equity practices and their textual reporting.

Griffith's LILAL agreement forged with Logan area schools and the Queensland Department of Education and Training both activates and appropriates HEPPP policy according to local practices. It activates the prescriptions for 'early interventions' into schooling to 'build awareness and aspiration,' as well as 'education programs for parents of low SES' students, as well as the call for outreach to the most 'disadvantaged' students and communities. It appropriates HEPPP policy by introducing a focus upon a specific awareness of 'careers and life-choices' (which is itself an activation of The Group MOU's call for this activity, and also the Logan area schools' desire to activate Education Queensland's Careers Policy). Griffith further appropriates HEPPP policy by incorporating 'perspectives of Pacific Island, Indigenous and students with disabilities' within its LILAL program (which is

simultaneously an activation of Griffith policy texts such as the 'Disability Action Plan' (Griffith University, 2008)[57]and the 'Student Equity Educational Partnerships 2011' strategy[58]). The concern to include the 'perspectives of Pacific Island' students arises from their exclusion from HECS-HELP, noted in Figure 6 as the Trans-Tasman Travel Arrangement (TTTA) and non-protected Special Category Visa (SCV) legal texts operational since 2001.

---

[57] A student equity staff person at Griffith was also involved in the construction of this policy.

[58] This document is no longer accessible and has been updated with the 'Student Equity Outreach & Educational Partnerships: 2013 Strategy' (Griffith University, 2013) which encapsulates and expands the previous text.

Figure 6. Institutional Field of Action for Griffith Student Equity Outreach 2010-2013

'Student Equity Educational Partnerships – 2011' calls for specific PI students initiatives and parental engagement activities 'tailored' to 'students with disabilities, Pacific Island students'

Griffith 'Disability Action Plan' requires inclusive practices

TTTA & SCV exclude NZ students from HECS-HELP

HEPPP Guidelines

'increase participation of current and prospective **domestic** low SES students'

'Early intervention'

'building awareness, aspiration and achievement';

'education programs for parents of low SES'

outreach to most disadvantaged

The Group MOU
Develop…

'*Careers education and advice for cluster schools* **and high disadvantage'** **areas**

LILAL Agreement

Griffith student equity, DETE, Schools

raise student awareness of *career and life choices*

perspectives of Pacific Island, Indigenous and students with

disabilities included **parental/caregiver engagement**

Griffith student equity outreach with Logan Primary Schools

LILAL Evaluation

Quantitative measures of '**aspirations**' using 'keepad' technologies

HEPPP Progress Report Template
'outreach and **aspiration building activities'** for **'low SES'**

The Group funding contract and KPI's for Griffith call for

Scale up of LILAL

Parental engagement

Griffith HEPPP Progress Reports –

evidence for '**early intervention**' and '*develop careers awareness*';

'**75% would like to go to university in the future**'

Inclusive of students with disabilities

The Group Progress Report to federal government – Griffith data

Focus on most disadvantaged schools in Logan

Parental engagement

Inclusion of students with disability

Cultural perspectives embedded

2010   2011   2012/13

The LILAL activities, then, are coordinated by the activation of HEPPP policy dictates for the evaluation of 'aspirations', as well as Griffith policy texts mandating the inclusion of perspectives and practices for Pacific Island students and parents and persons with disabilities. These social inclusion measures are, simultaneously, an appropriation of HEPPP policy.

In summary, the LILAL program practices and Summary Agreement text become, for Griffith, 'a recognizable instance' (Smith, 2006a) of the regulatory HEPPP Partnerships guidelines (and template) text, as mediated by The Group Project 1 grant, and as appropriated by Griffith's social inclusion practices for students with disabilities and Pacific Island students. The collective result of this textual mediation of HEPPP ruling relations is the accomplishment of outreach into Logan area[59] low SES schools by Griffith staff that becomes recognizable at Griffith and by its community and state government partners as federal government mandated policy. Griffith's position within the competitive higher education field in South East Queensland impels it to widen participation amongst low SES students for the sustainability of its Logan campus. This involves specific, Pacific Island student and community engagement initiatives that effectively appropriate HEPPP policy texts, and the strategic and determined inclusion of students with disabilities. These appropriations of HEPPP policy are produced both by the ethical commitments and practices of the student equity staff at Griffith, as well as by the institutional imperatives to widen participation amongst marginalised students, who might not otherwise access and participate in higher education.

Student equity practices are materially coordinated and aligned to the ruling policy relations established by HEPPP, but also appropriated by Griffith's school and state government partners. Whilst Griffith student equity staff activate the ruling relations of HEPPP policy, and thereby participate in objectification of their own work practices (and the experiences of school students) in schools, on the campus and in the community for the sake of government accountability cycles, they also appropriate these ruling relations to work with Pacific Island students and students with disabilities. The subsuming of student equity work into categories and concepts amenable to federal government policy and accountabilities is not absolute, and creative appropriations particular to the needs of local marginalised peoples, afforded by Griffith's position within the field of higher education in Queensland as a

---

[59] The LILAL program extends beyond Logan into North New South Wales, yet for the purposes of this ethnography, that work is bracketed.

growing institution open to enrolments from students with lower OP scores and alternative entry routes, remain possible.

CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION

I would like to conclude by suggesting how my research makes a number of contributions to the sociology of higher education, to the practice of institutional ethnography, and to knowledge of student equity policy enactment within Australian higher education. I document here both the theoretical and empirical contributions of the research, and claim that the study uniquely illuminates the empirical practices of student equity outreach in Queensland since 2009 and the advent of the HEPPP era. I finish with some comments on what I see as some implications for policy and practice for student equity outreach practices, and identify some fruitful avenues for further research.

KNOWLEDGE CONTRIBUTIONS

THEORETICAL

The research has generated original knowledge on equity policy enactment processes and their differential consequences across the stratified Queensland higher education field. What student equity practitioners do is both activate and appropriate the textually mediated relations of HEPPP policy and their own university's institutionally specific strategies. Staff from UQ, Griffith, and representatives of The Group produced their activities as 'recognizable' instances of HEPPP policy through the construction of evaluation technologies that articulated their practices, and the diverse experiences of schools students with whom they engaged, into the ruling categories of 'low SES' students with 'low aspirations' that needed, the policy assumed, to be raised. Yet local policy enactment is also simultaneously appropriation, textually-mediated from more local agendas, of federal policy that serves both institutional imperatives and, in some cases, the needs of more marginalised school students. The latter outcome depends upon the specific university's position within a field of institutional action; a position that staff both constitute and reproduce through their activities.

Such theorising of policy enactment attempts to avoid the tracing of official texts and the varying degrees of local compliance, an approach that privileges the ruling discourses of authorized policy. Policy instead as demonstrated through this research involves the textually-mediated practices of power across institutional and social relations by individuals occupying varying sites of work. Official policies, such as HEPPP, coordinate local social practices through their textually-mediated power to articulate local practices to ruling

discourses. Yet this process is never complete and the reproduction of official discourses is never absolute. Through their day-to-day activities and practices, people appropriate official policy in their own interests, in the interests of the institutions for which they work, and in the interests of others they work for or represent. These acts of local appropriation likewise are never complete, and there are limits to the creative rearticulation of the ruling relations.

By working together Bourdieu's and Fairclough's theories of contested fields of practice, occupying a middling level between more abstract social structures and the concrete activities of individuals in their day to day work, with Smith (1990a) and Turner's (2006) mapping of extended social relations, I arrived at a conception of the institutional fields of action that were both produced and reproduced in the day-to-day activities of student equity workers. Utilizing Levinson and colleagues' (2009) insights into local appropriation of authorized policy, these fields of organized activity mapped the empirical enactment of HEPPP policy and other institutional policies across UQ, Griffith and the Group. Working in institutions that occupy differing positions within the field of higher education in Queensland, staff from UQ and Griffith pursued logics of widening participation practice that differed in materially significant ways for students in schools in low SES areas. These insights into the work of student equity staff, and how they accomplish their work within contested fields of practice, move beyond the work on policy within institutional ethnography that existed previously (e.g. Eastwood, 2005). Although policy can be understood as both 'talk and text in action' (Griffith, 1992), acts of local policy appropriation are better accounted for, at least in this study, as the acts of drawing on differing 'orders of discourse' *within* specific instances of 'talk' and textual interaction. Local policy practices involve discursive practices serving local imperatives, a process I have described as textually-mediated practices of power.

METHODOLOGICAL

The thesis also innovates the field of institutional ethnography studies through its theorizing on, and practice of, critical discourse analyses (interdiscursivity and the hybridizing of discourses, Fairclough, 2003) and how these strategies can assist in the task of mapping the textually mediated activation and appropriation of official policies at local levels. There has been justifiable concern from some institutional ethnographers to the incorporation of critical discourse analysis methods. The reification of texts outside of people's use of them in their day-to-day activities is a persistent problem within sociological research. Yet this research has demonstrated that critical discourse analyses can be fruitfully employed to bolster the

primary tasks of institutional ethnography. How activities, such as those of student equity outreach, get accomplished in a particular site is process of the local activation and appropriation of ruling relations.

Picking up from Smith's (2005) recognition that each instantiation of discourse, understood as action, 'both reproduces and remakes' (p. 24) the discourse, I have incorporated Fairclough's understanding of how specific texts, such as HEPPP reporting templates, assemble together varying discourses through acts of discursive hybridity. That is, when people in universities complete texts such as HEPPP reporting templates they are engaged in the process of drawing on various 'orders of discourse' to make their activities 'fit' and become recognizable as instances of authorized HEPPP policy. As demonstrated with my UQ data and analysis, this involves the mixing of equity discourses and 'best and 'brightest discourses' or more broadly 'quality' discourses to align their Young Achievers Program with HEPPP mandates *and* university specific agendas. For widening participation to become a *UQ project*, it required the recruitment of the 'best and the brightest' from schools in low SES areas. For Griffith University, the HEPPP policy was appropriated by a mixing of social inclusion discourses with official 'low aspirations' discourses to create operational space for outreach to students with disabilities and Pacific Island background students.

As an institutional ethnography, my research has focused upon the material practices of student equity and outreach workers as they read and processed texts within their work settings. My use of critical discourse analysis also has been conducted on these texts in action, as the HEPPP templates and university evaluation processes outlined in Chapters 6-8 demonstrate. By incorporating critical discourse analyses, I have been better able to attend to the university staffs' appropriation of these ruling relations and discourses accomplished through their drawing on orders of discourse arising within a wider field of institutional relations beyond (yet in principle, still able to be mapped) the specific organization of work sequences mapped in Chapters 4 through 7. In the process, I believe I have demonstrated how institutional ethnography is better able to account for how official student policy 'gets done' at UQ, at Griffith, and through The Group's practices. I also hope I have offered a way for institutional ethnographical methods to be more closely attuned to the possibilities for the remaking and rearticulating of ruling relations in local activities via these discursive appropriations.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, this institutional ethnography makes a contribution to knowledge of student equity outreach practices beyond that found in either quantitative reviews of Australia's National Framework for Equity or in more recent qualitative case studies of student equity practices. The research involved data collection across three sets of 'institutional' practices (UQ, Griffith, and The Group) in 2011 and 2012, generated by interview, ethnographic observation, and accessing both public and internal, institutional documents. The initially observed problematic in student equity practice was the tension experienced by practitioners between a) collaborative work to provide support to marginalised students in schools in low SES areas and encourage their educational trajectories, and b) more competitive work to selectively recruit students from schools in low SES areas to specific institutions. To account for the production of this tension in practice, I positioned myself within the social relations of the universities alongside student equity outreach practitioners. I provided thick descriptions of their outreach practices and subsequently mapped how they were coordinated by textually mediated institutional relations. The initially observed problematic in student equity practice between collaboration and competition evolved in the field as a practitioner concern for the relevant reporting and evaluating of student equity outreach practices by the federal government. The standardised HEPPP reporting and accountability mechanisms applying to individual institutions worked against the collaborative work necessary at the local level to achieve the broader cross-sectoral goals and HEPPP policy aims.

The analysis involved the identification of key work texts, or processing exchanges, which coordinated student equity practices as they were activated by staff. These included HEPPP annual reporting templates, The Group MOU, and, particularly for UQ, Mission-based Compacts specifying 'performance' and 'reward targets' for low SES and Indigenous student equity groups. Federal HEPPP reporting templates, as activated by UQ, Griffith and The Group, in their production of annual HEPPP reports, became the textual practices through which the ruling relations of federal policy organized local student equity outreach. The quantification of student equity outcomes, a process that has developed since the late 1980s, and the performance of local evaluation practices articulated the experiences of both school students and student equity staff to the ruling categories and discourses of federal policy. Student outreach workers and managers across three complexes of educationally focused activity – UQ, Griffith, and The Group - were shown to activate the ruling relations of mandated student equity policy. They did so by producing activities that institutionally

constructed students as low SES and with low 'aspirations' for higher education. This occurred even when local research and knowledge suggested that students had many and varied aspirations for educational futures beyond school. Nonetheless, all three institutions were shown to have *appropriated* these ruling relations in their own institutional interests and the interests of students and communities with whom they worked.

As the dominant university in the State, UQ appropriated HEPPP policy by discursively constructing the Young Achiever, to enable it to pursue the recruitment of the highest achieving students in schools in low SES areas. Griffith, as a less selective university, particularly for its Logan campus, appropriated HEPPP policy to include outreach to Pacific Island background students and students with disabilities. The Group both re-authorized the competitive recruitment of low SES students in its MOU struck across Queensland universities, but circumscribed this recruitment activity within specified bounds, and appropriated HEPPP policy to direct funds and programs to remote, regional and Indigenous students. These acts of policy appropriation, however, did not fundamentally alter the distribution of academic and reputational capitals across the universities of Queensland and, at least at this point in time, the distribution of students from low SES backgrounds across them.

The research advances the studies of student equity practice and the sociology of higher education practices more generally by specifying the material, textual technologies that are deployed in the activation and appropriation of HEPPP policy at a local level and across two different universities. It has also has demonstrated an uneven path of higher education policy enactment across a competitive, hierarchical and field of action for student equity practices.

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

The research has implications, I believe, for both student equity policy and practice. By positioning universities as competitors for low SES students via HEPPP formulas and social inclusion targets, federal student equity policy as examined during the time of this thesis (2009-2012) did not lend itself to longer term community development processes in marginalised schools and communities.[60] It is arguable that student equity outreach would be

---

[60] These social inclusion targets, and their financial rewards, have been taken out of the most recent Mission-based Compacts that universities have signed with the new Coalition (politically conservative) federal government. This research has suggested that these targets had more impact on universities with lower, low SES student participation rates, although arguably not in the way that was intended.

better placed outside of student recruitment functions and relations, with dedicated staff encouraged to continue their student capacity building work in schools. The Queensland Widening Participation Group has clearly brought some collaborative coordination to student equity outreach practices in Queensland universities, despite its relatively informal structure. This model could be institutionally strengthened with a full time secretariat staff employed outside of a particular university to provide ongoing coordination of outreach efforts across universities, TAFES, other sub-bachelor and pathway programs and schools. The Council of Educators of Toronto, for instance, performs this type of coordinating function via a common web portal for access and outreach programs across universities, colleges, school boards and youth agencies (Council of Educators of Toronto, 2014; Miner, 2011). QUT's recently HEPPP funded 'Higher Education Portal' project for Indigenous student outreach also represents a model worthy of emulating for other coordinated and collaborative outreach efforts (Department of Education, 2014).

Additionally, student equity outreach work could accompany academic research practices such as participatory action research and community-based research that engage communities in the mutual construction of the problems and solutions to higher education exclusion. This already happens at Griffith, as student equity staff have worked collaboratively with academics around Pacific Islander community issues. It has been the case at UQ in the past as well, with academics from the now disbanded Boilerhouse Centre for Community Engagement working alongside other student equity staff and with communities in the Ipswich area west of Brisbane. Funding such place and community-based research, building on the strengths and capacities of local communities, as well as the research capacities of UQ staff, is arguably a better use of government funds than thinly distributed interventions in schools designed to 'pick the low hanging fruit' or the 'best and the brightest' from across the state.

Although the HEPPP policy has succeeded in making all universities do more to open themselves up to people from low SES backgrounds, including the elite Group of Eight universities, in the case of UQ it has created some unintended consequences. The inherent bias towards competition amongst universities achieved via institutionally specific financial incentives for low SES student recruitment and short term, narrow accountability mechanisms have encouraged UQ to practice 'selective equity' in favour of those students already succeeding academically at school (notwithstanding the more limited Rock and Water program initiatives). In all likelihood this outcome will not be unique to UQ among Group of Eight institutions, which command the highest entry scores for admission. Further,

it is also arguable that the activation of HEPPP policy by UQ has led not so much to a widening of participation at university in general but a re-direction of the preferences of high achieving students from these schools in low SES areas away from other universities such as Griffith. My research was able to gain data to suggest that this was precisely the intent of certain UQ practices, even though the outcomes of these strategies for the past two to three years, while known to UQ, have not been accessible to me (such data has been refused on account of its being either 'owned by QTAC', and hence to able to be shared, or as 'market sensitive' information). Designed to achieve the re-direction of preferences from students who were already likely going to university, UQ recruitment and outreach practices were not designed to overcome the correlation, evident at least since the 1970s in Australian schooling, between SES and educational achievement (e.g., Redmond et al., 2014), and so in that sense to 'widen' the participation of students at university. Instead they actively reproduced an existing hierarchy of educational opportunity for Queensland students (see Chapter 6). Individual staff members at UQ have in the past appropriated, and continue to appropriate, this logic of practice that hybridizes student equity and the recruitment of the so called 'best and the brightest'. Yet the HEPPP policy, while certainly expanding the resources for student equity outreach, has intensified this logic of practice in Queensland, favouring the competitive strengths of the Group of Eight institution to offer lucrative scholarships to 'Young Achievers' from low SES areas.

The experience of Pasifika students in South East Queensland has also led to cracks emerging in the policy wall between domestic and international students and their 'rights' to participate equitably within higher education systems. Griffith student equity practices have been caught between provisions of the Trans-Tasman Travel Agreement and non-protected Special Category Visa, which have structurally excluded a number of Logan area students from higher education access, and in trying to support the educational achievement of these same school students with 'widening participation' activities. There has been a cruel irony (see also the related notion of 'cruel optimism' in Berlant, 2011; Sellar, 2013) to government policy that has sought to build aspirations while fencing off access to higher education.

Widening participation policy needs to be expanded to incorporate those students residing within Australia who are positioned at the bottom of the global field of higher education. This field, in which Australian universities are active participants and handsome beneficiaries, offers vastly unequal social mobility and educational opportunities. The recently announced changes to the HECS-HELP system, first envisaged by the previous Labor government and now accepted in principle by the current Coalition government, are an

important step in recognising the claims of non-Australian citizens to higher education. But it does suggest a reconceptualisation of the national framing for student equity in Australian universities is required, and that future research is needed here to examine the educational opportunities of asylum seekers and non-humanitarian visa holding, refugees.

CODA

A final word, however, is offered for the (mostly) women and men engaged in student equity outreach from UQ, Griffith and the participants of The Group. Practising equity in higher education beyond a pastoral *noblesse oblige* has always been a complicated business. Immersed within a set of competitive student recruitment relations, many of the student equity outreach informants I encountered through this research acted out of a deep sense of social justice and commitment to the marginalised both on and off campus. They 'played the game' (Bourdieu, 1990) with a high degree of political sophistication and, in doing so, inevitably 'gave power to the relations that overpowered them' (Smith, 1990b). Yet they also creatively appropriated the ruling relations of student equity policy to form collaborative networks to support the interests of marginalised students and their own professional community of practice. Despite official efforts to widen university participation for students from socioeconomically marginalised backgrounds, and some modest successes in pursuit of this goal, Australian higher education is no egalitarian utopia, particularly within Group of Eight institutions. Yet through the efforts of student equity practitioners it is more inclusive than it would otherwise be.

References

Allen, R. (2013). Strengths and weaknesses of Queensland's OP system today. Brisbane: Queensland Studies Authority.

Alloway, M., Gilbert, P., Gilbert, R., & Muspratt, S. (2004). Factors impacting upon student aspirations and expectations in regional Australia. Canberra: EIP, Department of Education, Science and Training.

Anderson, D. S., Boven, P. J., & Powell, J. P. (1980). *Students in Australian higher education: A study of their social composition since the abolition of fees.* Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service.

Anderson, D. S., & Eaton, E. (1982). Australian higher education research and society. *Higher Education Research & Development, 1*(1), 5-32. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0729436820010102

Anderson, D. S., & Vervoorn, A. E. (1983). *Access to privilege: Patterns of participation in Australian post-secondary education.* Canberra: ANU Press.

André-Bechely, L. (2005). *Could It be otherwise? Parents and the inequities of public school choice*. New York: Routledge.

Appadurai, A. (2004). The capacity to aspire: Culture and the terms of recognition. In V. Rao & M. Walton (Eds.), *Culture and public action* (pp. 59-84). Stanford, CA: Stanford University.

Australian Government. (2009). Transforming Australia's higher education system. Retrieved March 13, 2014, from http://www.innovation.gov.au/HigherEducation/Documents/TransformingAusHigherED.pdf

Ball, S. (1994). *Education reform: A critical and post-structural approach.* Buckinham: Open University Press.

Ball, S. (2003). The teacher's soul and the terrors of performativity. *Journal of Education Policy, 18*(2), 215-228. doi: 10.1080/0268093022000043065

Ball, S., Maguire, M., & Braun, A. (2012). *How schools do policy: Policy enactment in secondary schools*. London: Routledge.

Barbour, R. (2007). *Doing focus groups*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.

Batteson, C., & Ball, S. (1995). Autobiographies and Interviews as Means of 'Access' to Elite Policy Making in Education. *British Journal of Educational Studies, 43*(2), 201-216. URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/3121938

Berlant, L. (2011). *Cruel optimism*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Bjarnason, S., & Coldstream, P. (Eds.). (2003). *The idea of engagement: Universities in society*. London: Association of Commonwealth Universities.

Bland, D. (2002). *Crossing the Line: A study of peer influence on students from low income backgrounds in transition from school to university*. Paper presented at the Conference of the Australian Association for Research in Education, Melbourne. http://www.aare.edu.au/publications-database.php/3387/crossing-the-line-peer-influence-on-students-from-low-income-backgrounds-in-transition-from-school-t

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: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17508481003731042

Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a theory of practice*. Cambridge; New York; Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction : A social critique of the judgement of taste*. Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1990). *The logic of practice*. Cambridge Polity Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1996). *The state nobility*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press.

Bourdieu, P. (2003). Participant Objectivation. *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, 9*(2), 281-294. URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/3134650

Bourdieu, P., & Johnson, R. (1993). *The field of cultural production: Essays on art and literature*. Cambridge Polity Press.

Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J. (1990). *Reproduction in education, society and culture.* (R. Nice, Trans. 2nd ed.). London: Sage Publications.

Bourdieu, P., & Wacquant, L. (1992). *An invitation to reflexive sociology*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bowe, R., Ball, S., & Gold, A. (1992). *Reforming education and changing schools*. London: Routledge.

Bowen, M. H. (1992). *Higher education equity policy : from national policy to programs in operation : A case study of The University of Queensland.* (Masters), University of Queensland, St. Lucia.

Bowles, S., & Gintis, H. (1976). *Schooling in capitalist America: Educational reform and the contradictions of economic life*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Bradley, D., Noonan, P., Nugent, H., & Scales, B. (2008). Review of Australian higher education: Final Report. Canberra: Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations.

Brennan, J., & Naidoo, R. (2008). Higher education and the achievement (and/or prevention) of equity and social justice. *Higher Education, 56*(3), 287. doi: 10.1007/s10734-008-9127-3

Broughton, S., & Merley, J. (2003). *Enhancing aspirations through access and equity programs: The Griffith University model*. Paper presented at the 7th Pacific Rim First Year in Higher Education Conference Proceedings. http://hdl.handle.net/10072/1849

Brown, P., Lauder, H., & Ashton, D. (2011). *The global auction: The broken promises of education, jobs, and incomes*. New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Burke, P. J. (2006). Men accessing education: Gendered aspirations. *British Educational Research Journal, 32*(5), 719–733. URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/30032845

Burke, P. J. (2012). *The right to higher education: Beyond widening participation*. London and New York: Routledge.

Campbell, M. L., & Gregor, F. (2004). *Mapping social relations: A primer in doing institutional ethnography*. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press.

Cardak, B., & Ryan, C. (2009). Participation in higher education in Australia: Equity and access. *Economic Record, 85*(4), 433-488.

Chilcott, T. (May 10, 2013). Record Queensland school-leavers without OP offered tertiary education places this year. *The Courier Mail*. Retrieved from http://www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/record-queensland-school-leavers-without-op-offered-tertiary-education-places-this-year/story-e6freoof-1226638935426

Chouliarki, L., & Fairclough, N. (1999). *Discourse in late modernity: Rethinking critical discourse analysis*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Churchman, C. W. (1967). Free for all. *Management Science, 14*, B141-B142.

Coates, H., & Krause, K. (2005). Investigating Ten Years of Equity Policy in Australian Higher Education. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management, 27*(1), 35-46. doi: 10.1080/13600800500045810

Collins, P. H. (1991). *Black feminist thought: knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. New York: Routledge.

Collins, P. H. (1992). Transforming the Inner Circle: Dorothy Smith's Challenge to Sociological Theory. *Sociological Theory, 10*(1), 73-80. doi: 10.2307/202018

Comber, B. (2012). Mandated literacy assessment and the reorganisation of teachers' work: Federal policy, local effects. *Critical Studies in Education, 53*(2), 119-136. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17508487.2012.672331

ComLaw. (2003). *Higher education support act*. Commonwealth of Australia. Retrieved from http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C2013C00472.

ComLaw. (2012). *Higher education support act 2003, Other Grants Guidelines (Education)*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia. Retrieved from http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2012L00281.

Connell, R. W. (1992). A sober anarchism. *Sociological Theory, 10*(1), 81-87. doi: 10.2307/202019

Council of Educators of Toronto. (2014). Post-secondary is possible.   Retrieved April 23, 2014

Cuthill, M., & Schmidt, C. (2011). Widening participation: Challenges confronting a research-intensive university. *Journal of Institutional Research, 16*(2), 13-25. URL: http://aair.org.au/articles/volume-16-no-2/16-2-widening-participation-challenges-confronting-a-research-intensive-university

Cuthill, M., & Scull, S. (2008). PolyVision: Pacific youth of tomorrow - a collaborative partnership between the University of Queensland and Pacific Island immigrant communities in Australia. *Journal of Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning, 10*(3). URL: http://wpll-journal.metapress.com/content/g51128v0tk445314/?p=19f8e9baa0a14b3da4e2e9b03e9322b5&pi=2

Cuthill, M., & Scull, S. (2010). Engaged outreach: using community engagement to facilitate access to higher education for people from low socio-economic backgrounds. *Higher Education Research & Development, 29*(1), 59-74. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07294360903421368

Dalby, T. (1982). She blinded me with science. On *Blinded by Science*. London: Venice in Peril.

Dawkins, J. S. (1988). *Higher education: A policy statement*. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service.

Denzin, N. K. (1989). *Interpretive interactionism*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Department for Education. (2013). Universities' 2014-16 Mission-based compacts.
Retrieved March 13, 2014, from http://docs.education.gov.au/collections/universities-2014-16-mission-based-compacts

Department of Education. (2013). My Future.   Retrieved March 13, 2014, from
http://www.myfuture.edu.au/

Department of Education. (2014). Higher education participation and partnerships program.
Retrieved March 4, 2014, from http://education.gov.au/higher-education-participation-and-partnerships-program-heppp

Department of Education Training and Employment. (2014). Information for parents and
caregivers.   Retrieved March 3, 2014, from
http://education.qld.gov.au/smartclassrooms/working-digitally/oneschool-parents-faq.html#access-info

Department of Employment Education and Training. (1990). *A fair chance for all: National
and institutional planning for equity in higher education : A discussion paper*.
Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service.

Department of Industry. (n.d.-a). HELP for New Zealanders who grow up here.   Retrieved
March 13, 2014, from
http://archive.industry.gov.au/ministerarchive2013/craigemerson/mediareleases/pages
/helpfornewzealanderswhogrowuphere.aspx.htm

Department of Industry. (n.d.-b). Low SES interim indicator.   Retrieved March 13, 2014,
from
http://www.innovation.gov.au/HigherEducation/HigherEducationStatistics/StatisticsP
ublications/Pages/LowSESInterimIndicator.aspx

Department of Industry. (n.d.-c). Mission-based Compact for Griffith University for 2011-
2013.   Retrieved March 13, 2014, from
http://www.innovation.gov.au/Research/MissionBasedCompacts/Documents/Mission
BasedCompacts2011-13/GriffithUniversityCompact.doc

Department of Industry. (n.d.-d). Mission-based Compact for University of Queensland for
2011-2013.   Retrieved March 13, 2014, from

http://www.innovation.gov.au/research/MissionBasedCompacts/Pages/Library%20Ca
rd/MissionBasedCompacts2011-13/UniversityofQueenslandCompact.aspx

Department of Treasury. (2012). Budget Expense Measures: Industry, Innovation, Science,
Research and Tertiary Education.   Retrieved March 13, 2014, from
http://www.budget.gov.au/2012-13/content/bp2/html/bp2_expense-15.htm

DeVault, M. L. (2006). What is institutional ethnography? *Social Problems, 53*(3), 294-298.
URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/sp.2006.53.3.294

DeVault, M. L. (Ed.). (2008). *People at work: Life, power and social inclusion in the new
economy.* New York and London: New York University Press.

DeVault, M. L., & McCoy, L. (2001). Institutional ethnography: Using interviews to
investigate ruling relations. In J. A. Gubrium & J. F. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of
interview research: Context & method* (pp. 751-776). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

DeVault, M. L., & McCoy, L. (2006). Institutional ethnography : Using interviews to
investigate ruling relations. In D. E. Smith (Ed.), *Institutional Ethnography as
Practice* (pp. 15-44). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Deveau, J. (2008). Examining the institutional ethnographer's toolkit. *Socialist Studies /
Études socialistes, 4*(2). URL:
http://socialiststudies.com/index.php/sss/article/view/63/59

Diamond, T. (2006). Where did you get that fur coat, Fern? In D. E. Smith (Ed.), *Institutional
ethnography as practice* (Vol. 45-63). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Doyle, M., & Griffin, M. (2012). Raised aspirations and attainment? A review of the impact
of Aimhigher (2004–2011) on widening participation in higher education in England.
London Review of Education, 10(1), 75-88. doi: 10.1080/14748460.2012.659060

Eastwood, L. E. (2005). *The social organization of policy: An institutional ethnography of
U.N. foresty deliberations*. New York: Routledge.

Eastwood, L. E. (2006). Making the institution ethnographically accessible: UN document
production and the transformation of experience. In D. E. Smith (Ed.), *Institutional
Ethnography as Practice* (pp. 181-198). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield

Education Queensland. (n.d.). Career education.   Retrieved March 13, 2014, from
http://education.qld.gov.au/students/service/career/

Engagement Australia. (2008). Universities and community engagement 2008-2010.
Retrieved October 31, 2013, from http://engagementaustralia.org.au/wp-
content/uploads/2012/09/universities_CE_2008_2010.pdf

Epstein, D., Elwood, J., Hey, V., & Maw, J. (1998). *Failing boys? Issues in gender and
achievement*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analysing Discourse: Textual analysis for social research*. London:
Routledge.

Fairclough, N. (2009). A dialetical-relational approach to critical discourse analysis. In R.
Wodak & M. Meyer (Eds.), *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (pp. 162-186).
London: Sage Publications.

Family Action Centre. (2014). Rock and Water.   Retrieved March 3, 2014, from
http://www.newcastle.edu.au/research-and-innovation/centre/fac/workshops/rock-
and-water

Ferrier, F., & Heagney, M. (1999). Re-thinking equity for students at Monash University.
Melbourne: Monash University-ACER Centre for the Economics of Education and
Training.

Ferrier, F., & Heagney, M. (2001). Re-thinking equity for students at Monash University.
Australasian Association for Institutional Research, 10(2), 1-15.

Fraser, N. (1997). *Justice interruptus: Critical reflections on the "postsocialist" condition*.
New York: Routledge.

Fraser, N. (2007). Re-framing justice in a globalizing world. In T. Lovell (Ed.),
*(Mis)recognition, social inequality and social justice: Nancy Fraser and Pierre
Bourdieu* (pp. 17-35). New York: Routledge.

Fraser, N. (2009). *Scales of justice: Reimagining political space in a globalizing world*. New
York: Columbia University Press.

Gale, T. (2001). Critical policy sociology: historiography, archaeology and genealogy as methods of policy analysis. *Journal of Education Policy, 16*(5), 379-393. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02680930110071002

Gale, T. (2003). Realising Policy: The who and how of policy production. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education, 24*(1), 51-65. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02680930110071002

Gale, T. (2011a). Expansion and equity in Australian higher education: Three propositions for new relations. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education, 32*(5), 669-685. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01596306.2011.620751

Gale, T. (2011b). Student equity's starring role in Australian higher education: Not yet centre field. *Australian Educational Researcher, 38*, 5-23. doi: 10.1007/s13384-010-0007-3

Gale, T. (2012). Towards a southern theory of higher education. *International Journal of Sociology of Education, 1*(3), 238-262. URL: http://www.hipatiapress.com/hpjournals/index.php/rise/article/view/372

Gale, T., Hattam, R., Parker, S., Comber, B., Bills, D., & Tranter, D. (2010). *Component B: A survey of the nature and extent of outreach activities conducted by Australian higher education [Interventions early in school as a means to improve higher education outcomes for disadvantaged (particularly low SES) students].* Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.

Gale, T., & Parker, S. (2013). Widening participation in Australian higher education. Report to the Higher Education Funding Council of England (HEFCE) and the Office of Fair Access (OFFA) England. Leicester, UK and Edge Hill University, Lancashire, UK.

Gale, T., & Tranter, D. (2011). Social justice in Australian higher education policy: an historical and conceptual account of student participation. *Critical Studies in Education and Society, 52*(1), 29-46. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17508487.2011.536511

Gale, T., Tranter, D., Bills, D., Hattam, R., & Comber, B. (2010). Component A: A review of the Australian and international literature [Interventions early in school as a means to improve higher education outcomes for disadvantaged (particularly low SES)

students]. Canberra: Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Commonwealth of Australia.

Gerrard, J., & Farrell, L. (2013). Peopling' curriculum policy production: Researching educational governance through institutional ethnography and Bourdieuian field analysis. *Journal of Education Policy, 28*(1), 1-20. doi: 10.1080/02680939.2012.664288

Gewirtz, S., Ball, S. J., & Bowe, R. (1995). *Markets, choice and equity in education*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Gherardi, S. (2011). Organizational learning: The sociology of practice. In M. Easterby-Smith & M. A. Lyles (Eds.), *Handbook of organizational learning and knowledge management* (2nd ed., pp. 43-65).

Giddens, A. (1984). *The constitution of society: Outline of the theory of structuration*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Green, A., & Kearney, J. (2011). Participatory Action Learning and Action Research for Self-Sustaining Community Development: Engaging Pacific Islanders in Southeast Queensland. *The Australian Journal of University-Community Engagement, 6*(1), 46-68. URL: http://engagementaustralia.org.au/shared-resources/publications/journals/

Grenfell, M., & James, D. (1998). *Bourdieu and education: Acts of practical theory*. London; Bristol, PA: Falmer Press.

Griffith, A. I. (1992). Educational policy as text and action. *Educational Policy, 6*, 415-428. doi: 10.1177/0895904892006004004

Griffith, A. I., & André-Bechely, L. (2008). Institutional technologies: Coordinating families and schools, bodies and texts. In M. L. DeVault (Ed.), *People at work: Life, power and social inclusion in the new economy.* (pp. 40-56). New York and London: New Your University Press.

Griffith, A. I., & Smith, D. E. (Eds.). (in press). *Reorganizing front-line work: Institutional ethnographies of organization change*: University of Toronto Press.

Griffith and QUT Universities. (2012, 16th October). Issues surrounding New Zealand citizens' access to higher education: Griffith University-QUT submission in response to Productivity Commission's Strengthening trans-Tasman economic relations discussion paper. from http://transtasman-review.pc.gov.au/all-submissions

Griffith University. (2008). Griffith university disability action plan 2007-2011 from http://www.griffith.edu.au/about-griffith/plans-publications

Griffith University. (2009). Strategic Plan 2009-2013. Retrieved March 13, 2014, from www.griffith.edu.au/.../plans-publications/pdf/strategic-plan.pdf

Griffith University. (2013). Student equity outreach & educational partnerships: 2013 strategy. Retrieved March 13, 2014, from http://www.griffith.edu.au/student-equity-services/outreach-activities

Griffith University. (2014). Griffith surges in the QS World University Subject Rankings Retrieved 2014, March 13, from http://app.griffith.edu.au/news/2014/02/26/griffith-surges-in-the-qs-world-university-subject-rankings/

Griffith University. (n.d.-a). Griffith sports college. Retrieved March 13, 2014, from http://www.griffith.edu.au/griffith-sports-college

Griffith University. (n.d.-b). Theatre scope wins OLT citation for outstanding contributions to student learning. Retrieved March 11, 2014, from http://www.griffith.edu.au/education/applied-theatre/theatre-scope/news-and-events

Griffith University. (n.d.-c). Uni-Reach: A high quality equity program that supports students from diverse backgrounds. Retrieved March 11, 2014, from http://www.griffith.edu.au/learning-teaching/awards-grants/recognising-griffiths-excellence/australian-learning-teaching-council-awards-university-teaching/2011-altc-award-winners/uni-reach

Haraway, D. (1988). Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective. *Feminist Studies, 14*(3), 575-599. URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/3178066

Harding, S. (1991). *Whose science? Whose knowledge? Thinking from women's lives*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Harrison, N. (2012). The mismeasure of participation: How choosing the wrong statistic helped seal the fate of Aimhigher. *Higher Education Review, 45*(1), 30-61.

Harvey, D. (2005). *A brief history of neoliberalism*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.

Higher Education Forum. (2011). Memorandum of understanding, widening tertiary participation in Queensland: A coordinated approach. from http://www.qut.edu.au/about/equity/widening-participation#h2-5

Higher Education Statistics. (2013a). Table 2.6: All Domestic Students by State, Higher Education Provider and Broad Level of Course, Full Year 2012. Retrieved March 7, 2014, from http://www.innovation.gov.au/highereducation/HigherEducationStatistics/StatisticsPublications/Documents/2012/12Section2.xls

Higher Education Statistics. (2013b). Table 2.6: All Domestic Undergraduate Students(a) by State, Institution and Equity Group, 2012. Retrieved March 4, 2014, from http://www.innovation.gov.au/highereducation/HigherEducationStatistics/StatisticsPublications/Documents/2012/12Appendix2.xls#'2.6'!A1

Holland, B. A., & Ramaley, J. (2008, 1-4 July). *Creating a supportive environment for community-university engagement: Conceptual frameworks.* Paper presented at the Engaging Communities, Proceedings of the 31st HERDSA Annual Conference, Rotorua.

Honig, M. I. (Ed.). (2006). *New directions in education policy implementation: Confronting complexity*. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press.

Hurst, D., & Tovey, J. (2013, September 25). Christopher Pyne reveals university shake-up, *Sydney Morning Hearld*. Retrieved from http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/christopher-pyne-reveals-university-shakeup-20130924-2ucag.html

Jackson, N. (1995). 'These things just happen': Talk, text and curriculur reform. In M. L. Campbell & A. Manicom (Eds.), *Knowledge, experience, and ruling relations* (pp. 164-180). Toronto; Buffalo; London: University of Toronto Press.

James, R. (2007). *Social equity in a mass, globalised higher education environment: The unresolved issue of widening access to university*. Paper presented at the Faculty of Education Dean's Lecture Series. http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/downloads/Richard%20James,%20Dean's%20Lecture%20Series%20Sept2007.pdf

James, R. (2008). Participation and equity: a review of the participation in higher education of people from low socioeconomic backgrounds and Indigenous people. Melbourne: Universities Australia and the Centre for the Study of Higher Education.

James, R., Baldwin, G., Coates, H., Krause, K., & McInnis, C. (2004). Analysis of equity groups in higher education 1991-2002. Canberra: Department of Education, Science and Training.

Jenkins, R. (2002). *Pierre Bourdieu* (Rev. ed.). London: Routledge.

Kearney, J. (2008). Barriers and bridges to educational success for Pan Pacific Islander students in South East Queensland. Brisbane: Education Queensland, Sunshine Coast Region.

Kearney, J. (2012). Unlucky in a lucky country: A commentary on policies and practices that restrict access to higher education in Australia. *Journal of Social Inclusion, 3*(1), 130-134. URL: http://www104.griffith.edu.au/index.php/inclusion/article/view/216/158

Kearney, J., & Donaghy, M. (2010). *Bridges and barriers to success for Pacific Islanders completing their first year at an Australian university*. Paper presented at the First Year in Higher Education, Adelaide. http://fyhe.com.au/past_papers/papers10/content/pdf/7F.pdf

Kemp, H. D. A., & Norton, A. (2014). Review of the Demand Driven Funding System Report. Canberra.

Kerr, L. (2006). *Between caring and counting: Teachers take on education reform.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Knight, R., Kyle, N., Wright, J., & Shaw, S. (1993). *LINK programs in Australian universities: An evaluation of higher education equity programs promoting school-higher education links.* Canberra: APGS.

Laslett, B., & Thorne, B. (1992). Considering Dorothy Smith's social theory: Introduction. *Sociological Theory, 10*(1), 60-62. doi: 10.2307/202016

Levinson, B., Sutton, M., & Winstead, T. (2009). Education policy as a practice of power: Theoretical tools, ethnographic methods, democratic options. *Educational Policy, 23*(6), 767-795. doi: 10.1177/0895904808320676

Lingard, B. (1993). The changing state of policy production in education: Some Australian reflections on the state of policy sociology. *International Studies in Sociology of Education, 3*(1), 25-47. doi: 10.1080/0962021930030102

Lingard, B., Sellar, S., & Savage, G. (in press). Test-based accountabilities and data infrastructures: Rearticulations of social justice as equity in education policy. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*.

Mac Neil, G. (1999). Positive links between universities and schools (PLUS). University of Queensland, Ipswich Campus: The Community Services and Research Centre and The Graduate School of Education.

Marginson, S. (1997). *Educating Australia: Government, economy and citizen since 1960* Cambridge; Melbourne Cambridge University Press.

Marginson, S. (2007). University mission and identity for a post post - public era. *Higher Education Research & Development, 26*(1), 117-131. doi: 10.1080/07294360601166851

Marginson, S. (2008). Global field and global imagining: Bourdieu and worldwide higher education. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 29*(3), 303-315. doi: 10.1080/01425690801966386

Marginson, S. (2011). Equity, status and freedom: A note on higher education. *Cambridge Journal of Education, 41*(1), 23-36. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2010.549456

Marginson, S., & Considine, M. (2000). *The Enterprise university: Power, governance and reinvention in Australia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Martin, L. M. (1994). Equity and general performance indicators in higher education. Volume 1: Equity Indicators. Canberra: Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs.

McCoy, L. (1998). Producing "what the Deans know": Cost accounting and the restructuring of post-secondary education". *Human Studies, 21*(4), 395-418. doi: 10.1023/A:1005433531551

McCoy, L. (2006). Keeping the institution in view: Working with interview accounts of everyday experience. In D. E. Smith (Ed.), *Institutional Ethnography as Practice* (Vol. Lanham, MA, pp. 109-125): Rowman & Littlefield.

McCoy, T., & Mars, B. (2010). I wanna be a billionaire. On *Lazarus*. New York: Fueled by Ramen.

Michael Franti & Spearhead. (2003). Everyone deserves music. On *Everyone Deserves Music.* San Francisco: Boo Boo Wax.

Mills, C. (2008). Reproduction and transformation of inequalities in schooling: The transformative potential of the theoretical constructs of Bourdieu. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 29*(1), 79-89. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01425690701737481

Miner, K. (2011). GTA Post-secondary access initatives: Pointing the Way to Success. Toronto: Council of Educators.

Moore, R. (2004). *Education and society*. Cambridge: Polity press.

Muirhead, B., & Woolcock, G. (2008). Doing what we know we should: Engaged scholarship and community development. *Gateways: International Journal of Community*

Research and Engagement, 1, 8-30. URL:
http://epress.lib.uts.edu.au/journals/index.php/ijcre/issue/view/53

Muticultural Health. (2013). Pacific Islander and Maori population size and distribution.
Retrieved March 13, 2014, from
http://www.health.qld.gov.au/multicultural/health_workers/pac-island-pop.asp

Naidoo, R. (2007). Fields and institutional strategy: Bourdieu and the relationship between
higher education, inequality and society in South Africa. In S. Marginson (Ed.),
*Prospects of higher education: globalization, market competition, public goods and
the future of the university* (pp. 215-228). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Naylor, R., Baik, C., & James, R. (2013a). *Developing a critical interventions framework for
advancing equity in Australian higher education: Discussion paper prepared for the
Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary
Education*. Centre for the Study of Higher Education.
http://www.innovation.gov.au/HigherEducation/Policy/Pages/NationalEquityinHigher
EducationPolicyForum2013.aspx

Naylor, R., Baik, C., & James, R. (2013b). *Towards a critical interventions framework*. Paper
presented at the National Equity in Higher Education Policy Forum Sydney.
http://www.innovation.gov.au/HigherEducation/Policy/Pages/NationalEquityinHigher
EducationPolicyForum2013.aspx

Nichols, N., & Griffith, A. I. (2009). Talk, texts, and educational action: an institutional
ethnography of policy in practice. *Cambridge Journal of Education, 39*(2), 241-255.
doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03057640902902286

Norton, A. (2013). Keep the caps off! Student access and choice in higher education
Melbourne: Grattan Institute. URL: grattan.edu.au/static/files/assets/205fbc0e/195-
Keep-the-caps-off.pdf

O'shea, C. D. (2006). Deserving Poor In M. Odekon (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of World Poverty*
(pp. 257-258): Sage Publications.

Odendahl, T., & Shaw, A. M. (2002). Interviewing elites. In J. F. Gubrium & J. A. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of interview research: Context and method* (pp. 299–316). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Peacock, D. (2012). Neoliberal social inclusion? The agenda of the Australian Universities Community Engagement Alliance. *Critical Studies in Education, 53*(3), 311-325. doi: 10.1080/17508487.2012.703138

Peacock, D., Sellar, S., & Lingard, B. (2013). The activation, appropriation and practices of student-equity policy in Australian higher education. *Journal of Education Policy*, *29* (3), 1-20. doi: 10.1080/02680939.2013.839829

Pence, E. (2001). Safety for battered women in a textually-mediated legal system. *Studies in Cultures, Organizations and Societies, 7*(2), 199-229. doi: http://www.tandfonline.com/action/showCitFormats?doi=10.1080/10245280108523558

Postone, M., LiPuma, E., & Calhoun, C. (1993). Introduction: Bourdieu and social theory. In C. Calhoun, E. LiPuma & M. Postone (Eds.), *Bourdieu: Critical perspectives* (pp. 1-13). Cambridge: Polity Press.

Power, C., Robertson, F., & Beswick, G. (1985). *Access to higher education: Participation, equity and policy*. Adelaide: Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission (National Institute of Labour Studies).

Prime Minister of Australia Media Office. (2013). Joint Press Conference with Prime Minister John Key, Parliament House, Canberra.   Retrieved March 13, 2014, from http://www.pm.gov.au/media/2013-10-02/joint-press-conference-prime-minister-john-key-parliament-house-canberra-0

Prime Minister of Australia Media Office. (2014). Joint statement by Prime Minister Abbott & Prime Minister Key Retrieved April 3, 2014, from http://www.pm.gov.au/media/2014-02-07/joint-statement-prime-minister-abbott-prime-minister-key

Productivity Commissions of Australia and New Zealand. (2012). Strengthening Trans-tasman economic ties: A joint study, final report. Retrieved 2014, March 13, from http://transtasman-review.pc.gov.au/study/final-report-0

Pusser, B., & Marginson, S. (2013). University rankings in critical perspective. *The Journal of Higher Education, 84*(4), 544-568. doi: 10.1353/jhe.2013.0022

Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre. (2013, July 5, 2013). Educational access scheme. Retrieved March 13, 2014, from http://www.qtac.edu.au/Applying-SAS/EduAccess.html

Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre. (2014). Information for QLD 2013 Year 12 students not eligible for an OP. Retrieved March 3, 2014, from http://www.qtac.edu.au/Applying-CurrentYr12/2012NonOp.html

Queensland Widening Participation Group. (2009). Widening participation – a coordinated Queensland approach. Brisbane: Higher Education Forum. URL: http://cms.qut.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/250933/widening-participation-background.pdf

Ramsay, E. (1999). The national framework for Australian higher education equity: It's origins, evolution and current status. *Higher Education Quarterly, 53*(2), 173-189. doi: 10.1111/1468-2273.00122

Ramsay, E., Tranter, D., Charlton, S., & Sumner, R. (1998). *Higher education access and equity for low ses school leavers: A case study*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.

Rankin, J. (2001). Texts in action: how nurses are doing the fiscal work of health care reform. *Studies in Cultures, Organizations and Societies, 7*(2), 251-267. doi: 10.1080/10245280108523560

Rankin, J., & Campbell, M. L. (2006). *Managing to nurse: Inside Canada's health care reform*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Rawls, J. (1971). *A Theory of Justice*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Rawolle, S., & Lingard, B. (2008). The sociology of Pierre Bourdieu and researching education policy. *Journal of Education Policy, 23*(6), 729-741. doi: 10.1080/02680930802262700

Rawolle, S., & Lingard, B. (2013). Bourdieu and educational research: Thinking tools, relational thinking, beyond epistemological innocence. In M. Murphy (Ed.), *Social theory and education research: Understanding Foucault, Habermas, Bourdieu and Derrida* (pp. 117–137). London: Routledge.

Raymond, I. (2005). The Rock and Water program: Empowering youth workers and clients. *Youth Studies Australia, 24*(4), 34-39.

Redmond, G., Wong, M., Bradbury, B., & Katz, I. (2014). Intergenerational mobility: new evidence from the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth. Adelaide: National Centre for Vocational Education Research. URL: www.ncver.edu.au/publications/2712.html

Ricouer, P. (1981). *Hermeneutics and the human sciences: Essays on language, action, and interpretation* (J. B. Thompson, Trans.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ridzi, F. (2003). *Processing private lives in public: An institutional ethnography of front-line welfare intake staff post welfare reform.* (Doctor of Philosophy), Syracuse University, ProQuest, UMI Dissertations Publishing. Retrieved from http://surface.syr.edu/soc_etd/23 (3081648)

Rizvi, F., & Lingard, B. (2010). *Globalizing education policy*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Rizvi, F., & Lingard, B. (2011). Social equity and the assemblage of values in Australian higher education. *Cambridge Journal of Education, 41*(1), 5-22. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2010.549459

Rose, N. (1999). *Powers of freedom: Reframing political thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rowlingson, K., & Connon, S. (2011). The 'deserving' rich? Inequality, morality and social policy. *Journal of Social Policy, 40*, 437452. doi: 10.1017/S0047279410000668

Savage, G., 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

Sellar, S. (2013). Equity, markets and the politics of aspiration in Australian higher education. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education, 34*(2), 245-258. doi: 10.1080/01596306.2013.770250

Sellar, S., & Gale, T. (2011). Mobility, aspiration, voice: A new structure of feeling for student equity in higher education. *Critical Studies in Education, 52*(2), 115-134. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17508487.2011.572826

Sellar, S., Hattam, R., Bills, D., Comber, B., Tranter, D., & Gale, T. (2010). *Component C: Case studies of selected Australian university outreach activities [Interventions early in school as a means to improve higher education outcomes for disadvantaged (particularly low SES) students]*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.

Sen, A. (2009). *The idea of justice*. London: Allen Lane/Penguin Books.

Smith, D. E. (1990a). *The conceptual practices of power: A feminist sociology of knowledge*. Boston: Northeastern University Press.

Smith, D. E. (1990b). *Texts, facts, and femininity*. London; New York: Routledge.

Smith, D. E. (1992). Sociology from women's experience: A reaffirmation. *Sociological Theory, 10*(1), 88-98. doi: 10.2307/202020

Smith, D. E. (1999). *Writing the social: Critique, theory, and investigations*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Smith, D. E. (2004). Ideology, science and social relations: A reinterpretation of Marx's epistemology. *European Journal of Social Theory, 7*(4). doi: 10.1177/1368431004046702

Smith, D. E. (2005). *Institutional ethnography: A sociology for people*. Lanham, MD. : AltaMira Press.

Smith, D. E. (2006a). Incorporating texts into ethnographic practice. In D. E. Smith (Ed.), *Institutional ethnography as practice* (pp. 65-88). Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

Smith, D. E. (2007). Institutional ethnography: From a sociology of women to a sociology for people. In S. N. Hesse-Biber (Ed.), *Handbook of feminist research: Theory and praxis* (pp. 409-416). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing.

Smith, D. E. (Ed.). (2006b). *Institutional ethnography as practice*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Stewart, A., McLachlan, D., & Dale, J. (2007). *Re-visioning outreach*. Paper presented at the Equal Opportunity Practitioners Australasia Conference, Melbourne.

Sunderland, N., Muirhead, B., Parsons, R., & Holtom, D. (2004). Foundation paper: The Australian consortium on higher education, community engagement and social responsibility. *The Australian Consortium on Higher Education*. http://espace.library.uq.edu.au/eserv/UQ:10362/foundation_paper.pdf

Sutton, M., & Levinson, B. (Eds.). (2001). *Policy as practice: Toward a comparative sociocultural analysis of educational policy*. Westport, CT: Ablex.

Taylor, S., Rizvi, F., Lingard, B., & Henry, M. (1997). *Educational policy and the politics of change.* London: Routlege.

Teese, R. (2007). Structural inequality in Australian education: Vertical and lateral stratification of opportunity. In R. Teese, S. Lamb & M. Duru-Bellat (Eds.), *International Studies in Educational Inequality, Theory and Policy* (Vol. 2, pp. 39-61). Netherlands: Springer.

The Smith Family Foundation. (2014). Who are we? Retrieved March 3, 2014, from http://www.thesmithfamily.com.au/about-us

The University of Queensland. (2010a). Learning at UQ 2010. Retrieved March 3, 2014, from http://www.uq.edu.au/teaching-learning/download/UQ_teaching_and_learning_10.pdf

The University of Queensland. (2010b). Young Achievers. Retrieved May 16, 2013, from http://web.archive.org/web/20100212124253/http://www.uq.edu.au/youngachievers/

The University of Queensland. (2012). Annual report 2011. Retrieved 2014, March 3, from http://www.uq.edu.au/about/year-ended-december-31-2012

The University of Queensland. (2014a). Cut-offs for UQ programs. Retrieved April 8th, 2014, from http://www.uq.edu.au/study/index.html?page=22456

The University of Queensland. (2014b). Young Achievers Program. Retrieved March 3, 2014, from http://www.uq.edu.au/youngachievers/

The University of Queensland. (2014c). Young Achievers selection process. Retrieved March 3, 2014, from http://www.uq.edu.au/youngachievers/selection-process

The University of Queensland. (n.d.-a). UQ-Link Access Program. Retrieved March 13, 2014, from http://scholarships.uq.edu.au/scholarship/uq-link-access-scholarship-program

The University of Queensland. (n.d.-b). Young Achievers terms and conditions. Retrieved March 13, 2014, from http://www.uq.edu.au/youngachievers/index.html?page=118882

Thomas, L. (2000). "Bums on seats" or "listening to voices": Evaluating widening participation initiatives using participatory action research. *Studies in Continuing Education, 22*(1), 95-113. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/713695716

Thomson, P. (2005). Bringing Bourdieu to policy sociology: Codification, misrecognition and exchange value in the UK context. *Journal of Education Policy, 20*(6), 741-758. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02680930500238929

Thomson, P. (2010). Bringing Bourdieu to 'widening participation' policies in higher education: A UK case analysis. In M. W. Apple, S. J. Ball & L. A. Gandin (Eds.), *The Routledge international handbook of the sociology of education* (pp. 318-328). London and New York: Routledge.

Thomson, P. (2013). Romancing the market: narrativising equity in globalising times. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education, 34*(2), 170-184. doi: 10.1080/01596306.2013.770245

Tranter, D. (2003). *Why University? A case of socio-cultural reproduction in disadvantaged secondary schools*. Paper presented at the AARE. http://www.aare.edu.au/publications-database.php/4024/why-university-a-case-of-socio-cultural-reproduction-in-disadvantaged-secondary-schools

Trow, M. (2006). Reflections on the transition from elite to mass to universal Access: Forms and phases of higher education in modern societies since WWII. In P. G. Altbach & J. J. F. Forest (Eds.), *International Handbook of Higher Education* (pp. 243-280). Dordrecht Springer.

Troyna, B. (1994). Critical social research and education policy. *British Journal of Educational Studies, 42*(1), 70-84. doi: 10.2307/3122221

Tuin, I. v. d., & Dolphijn, R. (2012). *New Materialism: Interviews & Cartographies*. Ann Arbor, MI: Open Humanities Press.

Turner, S. M. (2001). Texts and the institutions of municipal government: The power of texts in the public process of land development. *Studies in Cultures, Organizations and Societies, 7*(2), 297-325. doi: 10.1080/10245280108523562

Turner, S. M. (2006). Mapping institutions as work and texts. In D. E. Smith (Ed.), *Institutional ethnography as practice* (pp. 139-161). Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield

University of Queensland. (2011). Young Achievers Program Terms and Conditions. Retrieved March 11, 2014, from http://www.uq.edu.au/youngachievers/docs/UQYAP_%20Terms_and_Conditions%20_2011.pdf

University of Queensland. (2012a). Annual Report.   Retrieved March 11, 2014, from http://www.uq.edu.au/about/docs/annualreport/annual-report11/UQAnnualReport11.pdf

University of Queensland. (2012b). UQ Young Achievers program: Building the aspirations of deserving students.   Retrieved June 4, 2013, from http://www.uq.edu.au/youngachievers/images/2012%20Web%20Update/YAP%20Brochure%202012%20WEB.pdf

University of Queensland. (2013). Strategic Plan 2013-2017.   Retrieved March 11, 2014, from http://www.uq.edu.au/about/planning

UQ News. (2007). Polyvision encourages Pacific youth to aspire to higher education. Retrieved June 4, 2013, from http://www.uq.edu.au/news/index.html?article=12463

UQ Senate. (2012). Vice Chancellor statement.   Retrieved March 13, 2014, from http://www.uq.edu.au/senate/VCstatements/2012/VCsStatement-23-02-12.pdf

van Zanten, A. (2005). Bourdieu as education policy analyst and expert: A rich but ambiguous legacy. *Journal of Education Policy, 20*(6), 671-686. doi: 10.1080/02680930500238887

Vinson, T., Rawsthorne, M., & Cooper, B. (2007). Dropping off the edge: the distribution of disadvantage in Australia. Richmond: Jesuit Social Services.

Wagenaar, H., & Cook, S. D. N. (2003). Understanding policy practices: Action, dialectic and deliberation in policy analysis. In M. A. Hajer & H. Wagenaar (Eds.), *Deliberative policy analysis: Understanding governance in the network society* (pp. 139-171). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wilkinson, S. (2010). *Place, partnerships and practice: Widening participation activities at Griffith University's Logan campus*. Paper presented at the Transcript: First Year in Higher Education Conference Panel, Adelaide. http://fyhe.com.au/past_papers/papers10/content/html/ncsehe.html

Woolcock, G., & Boorman, C. (2003). Doing what we know we should: The final report of the Goodna Service Integration Project. http://www.uq.edu.au/boilerhouse/docs/Woolcock-&-Boorman-SIP-Final-Report.pdf

Ykema, F. (2000a). *The Rock and water course: Teaching boys self control, self respect and self confidence.* University of Newcastle: Men and Boys Program, Family Action Centre, University of Newcastle.

Ykema, F. (2000b). *Rock and Water: Working with Boys, Building Fine Men. An Educational Program Centred around Safety and Integrity*. Newcastle, NSW: Men and Boys Program, Family Action Centre, University of Newcastle.

Ykema, F. (2002). *The Rock and Water perspective: Theorybook*. Perth: Gaduka Institute.

Zipin, L., Sellar, S., Brennan, M., & Gale, T. (2013). Educating for futures in marginalized regions: A sociological framework for rethinking and researching aspirations. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 1-20. doi: 10.1080/00131857.2013.839376

APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW GUIDES

Interview Guide Student Equity outreach Staff and Coordinators of Student Equity Staff

Semi-structured interview questions for Student Equity outreach Staff from UQ, Griffith, and representatives from The Group. The first series of questions were intended to gain descriptive data and indications to linkages to university and government policies. The second series of questions were intended to pursue these linkages in more detail. When interviewing coordinators of student equity staff, or executive level personnel, these questions were asked in relation to student equity related functions.

Day to day job duties

a. What is your job description?

b. Does your job description reflect your actual daily activities?

c. Who do you report to?

d. How is your work evaluated?

e. Describe a typical workday.

Trans-local relations

a. What offices within your unit shape your work?

b. What offices or departments outside of your unit impact your work?

c. Are there policies and goals within the University that inform your daily work?

d. Do you think there are policies or bodies outside of University that inform your work?

Interview Guide for School Principals and Teachers/Staff

a. How did your school come to partner with Griffith and UQ universities for the purpose of raising higher education participation rates?

b. Are there any particular challenges your students face in accessing higher education? (e.g. PI issues of funding)

c. What activities are scheduled for 2012, and who has responsibility for the coordination of each activity?

d. How are your students selected to participate in these higher education awareness and education activities?'

e. Does your school partner with any other universities to promote higher education?

f. What role(s) do you play in coordinating the partnerships and activities (school based and university based) with the university student equity staff?

g. How are these activities planned and evaluated?

h. Are your school's interests represented in your partnership with the university (ies)? How?

Interview Questions Guide for The Group members

a. How did you come to be on The Group?

b. What role(s) do see The Group playing in the process to improve higher education equity?

c. What role(s) do you personally play in The Group?

d. How does the working group report its activities to others? (e.g. the Queensland Higher Education Forum, to federal departments, to your university, the Department of Education and Training and Employment, and Education Queensland)

e. Please describe the process by which the "Widening Participation – A Coordinated Queensland Approach" MOU was developed. Did you have a role(s) did you have in the construction of this text?

f. What role(s) does The Group perform in relation to the federal department responsible for the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program policy?

g. How were individual schools partnered with individual universities for the purposes of equity outreach and engagement?

h. Are your individual university's interests represented in your work on the committee? How?

Additional question for Department of Education, Training and Employment Project Manager: What role (s) do DETE, and the Project Manager specifically, play in the operations of The Group?

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEWS AND COLLECTION OF KEY TEXTS

Interviews listed in chronological order as occurred throughout research from 2012-2013

Interviews/significant conversations	Documents Accessed
UQ	
UQ Planning Office meeting	Mission-based Compact for UQ with social inclusion targets
UQ Finance interviews	HEPPP Activity Reports for 2010 from Medicine, OPSSE, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander unit, Student Services, Boilerhouse
	HEPPP 2010 Progress Reporting Pro Forma - led to HEPPP 2010 Reporting Pro Forma *new template*
	HEPPP 2011 Progress Reporting Pro-Forma
	Request for roll-over of HEPPP funds and updated expenses sheet
UQ Outreach Staff member interview	Email package to schools 'School consent and booking form'
	'University Experience Program' Letter to Principals'
	'University Experience Program' program materials
	Internal low SES strategy documents
OPSSSE Recruitment staff interview	UQ Scholarships Brochure
	UQ School Liaison Internal Strategy Document
	Young Scholars Program Participating Schools
	Young Scholar Program re schools targeting
Education Academic interview	UQ Mission-based Compact and reference to research in UQ Education
OPSSSE Administrator interview	The Group bid documents including UQ's proposals for Projects 1 (schools) and 2 (Indigenous)

Interviews/significant conversations	Documents Accessed
	QUT (Head institution for The Group Bid) letter to UQ Finance re funding procedures
OPSSSE Administrator interview cont.…	Scholarships explanation for low-SES email
	Young Achievers Program Annual Reports
UQ Executive interview	
UQ Young Scholars staff, conversation	School lists and program criteria
Student Services staff interview	Eight documents from Student Equity Strategy Meeting in 2009 (including school selection)
	Equity Retention Strategies 2012
	JumpStart Academic Prep Program Report 2011
	First Year Engagement Budget 2012
	Thrive @ UQ Report 2011
	UQ Link 5 year data 2005-2009
	Low-SES strategic planning 2012
	Transition Support Programs Summary
Equity Policy Officer interview	UQ response to HEPPP Draft Guidelines, Jan 29, 2010
	UQ 'Comments on Other Grant Guidelines'
	2010 email correspondence with Group of Eight equity advisor
	2004 Joint bid for cooperative outreach to Education Queensland
Boilerhouse manager interview	
NVIVO Software Course UQ	All documents and interviews inputted in program
OPSSSE manager interview	Strategic Plan for OPSSSE on PowerPoint slides
	Smith Family MOU with UQ

Interviews/significant conversations	Documents Accessed
Griffith	
Meeting with Student Equity Managers	Griffith response to Higher Education Forum (HEF) Template, 2010
	Griffith response to HEPPP draft guidelines, 2010
	Griffith response to Indicator Framework, 2010
	Griffith Equity Review, 2007
	Outcomes of DET consultation workshop, August 2010
	Agenda for DET consultation workshop, August 2010
	Background school data for DET consultation workshop, August 2010
	Brief to Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) on Pacific Islander access to university, July 20, 2011
	Pacific Islander brief to HEF Dec 2010, with background document attachment
	Email log of discussion with DEEWR on PI students and HEPPP activities
	The Group's Project 1 school cluster for Griffith
	Student Equity Educational Partnerships Strategy 2011
	Email log of HEF discussions for bid process
	Launch into Life at Logan (LILAL) Project Agreement 2011
	Update to LILAL Principals
	Letter to LILAL School Principals
	Evaluation template of LILAL on campus experience
	Letter to LILAL schools re accommodating students' needs and dis/abilities
	Inclusive on campus tours/events costing sheet
HEPPP administrator, conversation	HEPPP 2010 Progress Reporting Pro Forma
	HEPPP 2010 Reporting Pro Forma new template
	HEPPP Report 2011
	HEPPP Funding roll over report 2011
	2011 Mission-based Compact social inclusion targets

Interviews/Significant Conversations	Documents Accessed
Griffith cont.…	
HEPPP administrator interview	HEPPP expenditure 2012 across units
	HEPPP 2013 allocations
	Email log of 2013 allocations to units
	Seven documents for Griffith's Student Retention Strategy and related metrics
	HEPPP 2012 Progress Report
Three Student Equity Program Officers	Focus Group conducted
Pacific Islander Outreach officer, interview	Links to YouTube sites for Pasifika Cultural Graduation evenings
Careers Outreach officer	posters advertising Careers Event on campus
	evaluation sheets for students, parents and mentors
Manager of Student Equity interview	
Educational Partnerships Manager interview	
The Group	
DETE Project Officer interview	The Group minutes of meetings, discussion papers, correspondences, bid submissions, emails, reporting templates and reports to the federal government
	80 documents covering The Group's work from 2009-2013
Chair of The Group interview	
JCU Widening Participation manager	
CQU Widening Participation manager	CQU Video; Notes on CQU video

Interviews/Significant Conversations	Documents Accessed
Schools	
Interview with Principal from UQ cluster State High School (SHS) A	MOU between school and UQ
Interview with Guidance Officer from UQ cluster SHS A	OneSchool Software template used to select students for activities; forms sent to parents for Young Achievers Program, Widening Participation and Young Scholars Program
Interview with Principal from Griffith cluster SHS A	
Interview with Guidance Officer from Griffith cluster SHS A	
Interview with Deputy Principal from UQ cluster SHS B	
Interview with Principal from Griffith cluster SHS B	
Interview with Guidance Officer from Griffith cluster SHS B	
Interview with Principal from Griffith cluster SHS C	paper on Trans-Tasman Travel agreement and NZ citizens lack of access to HECS-HELP
Interview with Guidance Officer from Griffith cluster SHS C	

APPENDIX 3: FIELD OBSERVATIONS

Ethnographic observations of UQ, Griffith and The Group events

Event	Description	Observation
UQ		
UQ 'Experience US' day with SHS in Ipswich/Lockyer region (UQ cluster)	car trip to school with UQ staff; bus ride with students and UQ staff to Gatton and Ipswich campuses, then back to school. Car trip back to UQ	observed presentations from UQ outreach staff and faculty at these campuses and UQ staff-student interactions 8 hours
UQ presence at 'Careers Expo' in SHS located in Griffith cluster area	UQ student ambassadors staffed a table promoting UQ programs and scholarships	observed students interact with high school students and parents 2.5 hours
UQ program 'Rock and Water' at a high school in its cluster in Ipswich/Lockyer region	travelled out to school by UQ car with UQ staff, returned same way; program delivered over three weeks, 1 day per week.	observed Year Eight and Nine boys and girls in separate modules run by outreach staff and UQ student ambassador; interviewed Deputy Vice Principal; 24 hours
UQ Eco Science Precinct tour with school from UQ cluster	met at school, travelled by bus with UQ staff and students and staff from school to tour Eco Science Precinct, then to UQ St. Lucia, then back to school	observed outreach staff and ambassadors interact with school students; students take guided tour of facility and hear presentations from CSIRO staff around Science careers; interviewed Guidance Counsellor; 6 hours
UQ CSIRO (Pullenvale) tour with school from UQ cluster	travelled out to school with UQ staff in UQ car, by bus with students/school staff and UQ staff to CSIRO; to UQ for lunch and activities to get to know UQ; then back to school	observed outreach staff interact with students and CSIRO staff presentations and demonstrations 8 hours

Event	Description	Observation
Griffith		
Griffith Uni-Reach activities at Nathan Campus with senior students from four SHS in its cluster	day focused on challenges and solutions to a successful university education, and familiarizing students with Griffith university and its supports for these students	observed Griffith student equity staff engaging students; observed student equity staff convene meeting with and Guidance Officers from schools participating; 7 hours
Griffith Launch into Life at Logan Careers Days at Logan Campus over two days	personal transport to and from Logan campus; followed a cohort of students through the series of activity stations (health, science, drama, physical education, speeches/presentations)	observed Griffith student equity staff and student ambassadors and other staff engage Year Six students, teachers and parents from 10 local primary schools from Griffith cluster 14 hours
Griffith Uni-Drama activity presented to Years Eight and Nine students at a SHS in Griffith cluster	team of Griffith drama students and student ambassadors performed a play about the challenges of university life	observed drama and student ambassador interactions with school students 2 hours
The Group		
Schools outreach Workshop, Education House, DET	invited to participate by Group Chair conversations with staffs in break-out sessions; established relations and interpreted study	observed staff from all Queensland public universities show case their student equity outreach into low-SES schools; 6 hours
Widening Participation meeting, Education House, DET	sat at same table as student equity staff; gained access to agendas and minutes from meetings as prepared by DET Project officer	observed practitioners negotiating second HEPPP joint submission process and project implementation issues from first bid; 3 hours

Event	Description	Observation
The Group cont….		
Widening Participation Evaluation Seminar at QUT Gardens Point	concerns expressed around expectations of evaluation methods of federal government re widening participation activities; concerns also expressed around what was needed to make the case that program were making an impact on schools and students	observed presentations of evaluation framework development for 'emerging approaches to evaluating outreach and aspiration raising activities' and updating on HEPPP activities evaluations from all universities, including Griffith and UQ; 5.5 hours
Widening Participation meeting, Springfield Campus USQ	The Group Chair and Project Officer prepared and distributed texts to assist the universities articulate their programs to anticipated reporting requirements of federal government	observed program updates on 'development and implementation of Widening Tertiary Participation projects' from each university; draft reporting texts/templates, evaluation templates, and MOU update; 4 hours
Widening Participation meeting and 'Community of Practice Seminar' QUT Gardens Point	regular meeting followed by public meeting with presentations on school outreach, adult social inclusion, Pacific Island community engagement	observed Group meeting and concerns over funding cuts from government and delays in report receipts and outlays; more concerns re evaluations. 6 hours.

APPENDIX 4: OBSERVATION TEMPLATE

Date: **Event?**

Discourses	Space and Time	Intertextuality	Informants
Spoken	Physical Setting		Institutional Action
- speeches - impromptu conversations - music played	- university - school - buses	Which translocal, textually mediated ruling relations…	
Written	Organization and Structure		Pseudonyms
- program texts (digital, paper) - visual texts on screens - university branding and marketing	- Who or what is organizing whom?	connect and coordinate…	
Body	Movement		Generic Work titles
- Whose voice dominates? - Whose voice remains silent	- between settings in one place - travel to and from events	…these engagement practices and discourses?	