Discourse and Power: A Study of Change in the Managerialised University in Australia

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RMIT
Declaration

I certify that except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or part, to qualify for any other academic award; the content of the thesis is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program; and, any editorial work, paid or unpaid carried out by a third party is acknowledged.

Robyn Lines

September 30, 2005
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Discourse and Power: A Study of Change in the Managerialised University in Australia

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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The impetus for the study presented in this thesis was my dissatisfaction with the effectiveness of projects designed to change teaching practices within an Australian university in which I worked as a staff member providing support for such projects. The diverse ways in which organisational members in different roles appeared to make sense of the task and the conflicts that frequently characterised their interactions led to a focus on concepts of work identities and power as theoretical lenses through which to better understand processes of change and to make propositions about potential alternative approaches.

The literature concerning work identities within universities is limited and focussed upon the ways academic staff construct their identities and the impacts these have upon their approaches to change. Similar studies for the range of differentiated roles that characterise the newly managerialised university are not available. The first stage of the research, therefore, was to develop a categorisation of the ways in which senior managers, line managers, support staff and academic staff construct their identities at work. This categorisation was created by bringing together the experiences of change of fifty three staff from five similar Australian universities, reported in interviews, with a review of the discourses widely available within the university sector (Deetz 1992; du Gay 1996a; Knights & Morgan 1991; Marginson 2000; Readings 1996) to produce thirteen different classifications associated with different roles. These categories described as case study one provide an initial framework for making sense of the different viewpoints expressed by staff in interviews and a language for understanding what particular actions might mean to the organisational members making them. As such it provides a starting point or tool for analysis and makes an original contribution to understanding change within universities.

The second stage of this research examined the dynamics of a teaching change project and the interactions between differently constructed work identities it entailed. This was undertaken through an ethnographic study of a change project in process. The ethnography was supplemented by interviews with participants at the conclusion of the project. The analysis of the ethnography combined the first theoretical focus on constructed identity with concepts of power and their forms within organisations (Foucault 1998; Clegg 1989a; Callon 1986) to take account of the hierarchical organisation of the university and the differentiated organisational roles of participants in the change project.
Descriptions of change within universities available within the literature take little account of organisational power relations and the analysis presented as case study two, therefore, makes a further original contribution to understanding change within universities. The insights revealed through the analysis highlight the need to ensure that the organisation of change initiatives does not exclude key participants such that the enrolment of one group to a project necessarily implies the exclusion of another. They also highlight the need for different forms of practice that accept the impossibility of controlling the interpretation of meaning within universities, see difference as a source of organisational vitality and privilege the need to determine the interpretation of strategy for specific tasks in local contexts.

Critical management research (Alvesson 2002; Alvesson & Deetz 2000) was the methodology adopted for this study because it seeks to mesh empirical data from the experience of organisational life with critical or postmodern theories, privileging both the lived experiences of organisational members and the potential for new insights through the application of theory. As a relatively new methodology within an organisational context, this study has explored and commented upon the practice of critical management research and the issues of analysis and representation that arise when the individual and often emotionally charged empirical data from experience and the generalised and distant voice of theory are brought together.

The thesis is structured to reflect the journey taken through the research and its two stages in different case studies. The initial concern was to find a methodology and a range of methods that could be used to bridge the gap between experience and theory. The methodology chapter therefore follows the introduction of the project. The literature review is presented in two separate chapters that precede the case study presentations and analyses to which they apply with a resultant thesis structure where empirical data and theory are woven ever more tightly together throughout the work. The text concludes with a return to its beginning in the dilemmas of practice by providing reflections on possibilities for changed organisational action and reflections on the implications from the study for the role of staff supporting teaching change projects.
The research reported in this thesis concerns practices of change in newly managerialised universities in Australia. I have focused on change within teaching and learning as an instance of change more generally. At the most detailed level I have studied an area of curriculum change, one which requires academic staff teams to transform their existing curricula from a traditional form based on the determination of appropriate content, to one based on the determination and development of the desired capability each graduate should possess as an outcome of study in a program. This is also the focus of my work, supporting academic staff teams to understand and make this curriculum change, which we call Program Renewal, and that is identified as a strategic target in my University’s Teaching and Learning Plan.

I was part way along my research journey, trying to grasp how different people within universities understand and try to effect change when I was appointed manager of the University’s small teaching and learning support group. The staff within the group and I were struggling to understand the complexities inherent in our curriculum change work, our sometimes difficult relationships with the academic colleagues we tried to support; indeed the nature of the work itself. This problematisation of our practice and our growing frustration at what seemed to be less than optimal outcomes from some of our work made us receptive as a team to the idea of self-curation when it was introduced by Nita Cherry. ‘I am suggesting’, Nita wrote, ‘that self-curation is a form of reflexive practice which encourages creative and scholarly engagement with a body of practice or life in ways that illuminate the past and present, and generate significantly new possibilities for the future of that practice or life,’ (Cherry 2003, p. 1). She offered to guide us through the process of reflection on practice that it entailed.

When I embarked upon this activity I saw it almost exclusively in terms of trying to understand the day to day issues I faced in my professional role as a staff member working to support staff to change their curriculum and teaching practices. Whilst my research was clearly related, it was still ‘over there’, a little distant, cognitive and tidy, somehow separate from the emotions, messiness and frustrations I experienced in my daily work.
I will explain a little about the nature and process of self-curation through a description of one of the ‘texts’ I generated through my participation in it, an outcome that helped to clarify the key concerns of this research and reveal my personal and emotional investments in it.

**Self curation**

A key to the practice of self-curation is the creation of ‘texts’ about the area of practice in focus, in media which are different from those an individual or group normally uses. The importance of working in unfamiliar ‘texts’ (for those who normally write, for example, drawing, installations, music) is their capacity to re-present what is familiar, what we assume we know, in ways which reveal previously unrecognised aspects or dimensions. ‘Symbols that are not words can carry complex meanings which have yet to be understood conceptually. They have subtle ways of making meaning manifest or visible – through emotion or momentum to act – while yet remaining unnameable’ (Cherry 2003, p. 16). In a group process, the practice of collectively installing and reviewing these texts has the capacity to reveal as well what is not represented, what is routinely overlooked.

Our self-curation began with representations of our experiences – a collection of drawings, collages, installations and annotated objects. We then tried to dig under these representations to reveal our underlying aspirations and assumptions. Finally we tried to represent and share our ‘practice wisdom’ as a result of these investigations (Cherry 2002).

Perhaps not yet very wise, for this last stage of the self-curation process I produced a game called the ‘Program Renewal Game’. The game was a representation of the curriculum development work the group and I supported. As such, the game was a representation of my experiences of change within the University. In creating it I drew upon specific personal practice experiences. I also became aware that in crafting the elements of the game I was drawing upon the interviews I had already conducted for my research. I had yet to fully analyse these interviews, centred on how a variety of university staff tried to effect changes in teaching and learning, however, their emotional resonances, their overall sense, infused the work. In this way, the self-curation and the Program Renewal Game that resulted provided a vehicle for making visible the central concerns, issues and ideas that not only inform my practice but also my research. Additionally, the process of self-curation required that I re-evaluate the relationship between my practice and my research. I will return to this later but first let me describe the game and the insights it generated.

**The Program Renewal Game**
Program Renewal is a game for up to ten players. The game was packaged in a small red box. Lifting the lid revealed the marketing blurb.

Play the exciting new teaching and learning game
Program Renewal
A game of tact and tactics
Be part of a team that completes a renewal. Program Renewal is like dancing on a tightrope!
You need to maintain equilibrium from one moment to the next by making adjustments to each new move in the game.

Test your collaborative skills
Join the hundreds of other teachers hooked on Program Renewal

In tiny print, the rules of the game were enclosed on a small triple folded leaflet.

How to play Program Renewal
A teaching and learning game of tact and tactics

Contents:
- Card deck of renewal roles and moves. There are role cards, cards offering a reflective moment and the joker, a wild card that may be used for any form of intervention in the game.
- Character name tags. Each player randomly selects a character without looking at the tags and MUST play all action moves in the game entirely in that character
- Playing board. This sets out the essential stages of a Program Renewal.
- Milestone tokens. These are used to map progress through the game

During the self-curation process I explained the rules to my colleagues as I displayed the role cards on the floor in front of me. Each role card has an image of me on its face with appropriate costume and props. I derived these roles by close observation of my interactions with a number of program teams when invited to meetings to explain the nature and purposes of program renewal.

The cards are shown in Figure 1 overleaf. There are the: Celebrator; Co-researcher; Coach; Gift giver; Policeman; Expert explainer; Democrat; Resigned one; Colluder; Salesperson; Interpreter; Actor/role player; Honest friend; Host; Guest; Co-conspirator; Independent reporter; Reassurer; Affirmer; Rule interpreter; Fascinated outsider; Ethnologist; Nomad; Storyteller; Helper/advisor and Judge.
The choice of characters on the name tags represents all the staff roles within the University that have a major part to play in achieving a successful program renewal. They are the: Pro Vice Chancellor (Teaching and Learning), the most senior person in the University with specific responsibility for teaching innovation; Dean; Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning); Head of Department; Program Leader; Senior Lecturer; 3 Lecturers and the Program Renewal Mentor, the name we have been using for our role for want of something better.

The playing board shown in Figure 2 overleaf has six squares: Forming a team; Creating a vision for the program; Defining a capability profile; Designing a program structure; Developing Reference Course Guides and Developing an implementation plan. These relate to the specific rules and documents required for approval of Program Renewals within our University.
Figure 1: Playing Cards from the Program Renewal Game

Carried to its limit this order would be the equivalent of the rules of rictor and rhyme for poets in earlier times: a body of constraints stimulating new discoveries, a set of rules with which improvisation plays.

Into the institution to be served are thus institutionalized styles of social exchange, technical invention and moral resistance, that is, an economy of the “gift” (personnel for which no repros makes a return, an aesthetics of “mixin” (artists operation) and an ethics of paucity (counters ways of refusing to accede), established order the status of a law, a meaning, or a liability.)
Figure 2: Playing Board from the Program Renewal Game
Aim of the game
The aim of the Program Renewal game is to complete a program renewal that results in innovative and sustainable curriculum outcomes. In doing this it is essential to maintain equilibrium between all players. Playing the game has been likened to dancing on a tightrope.

'Dancing on a tightrope requires that one maintain an equilibrium from one moment to the next by recreating it at every step by means of new adjustments; it requires one to maintain a balance that is never permanently acquired; constant readjustment renews the balance by giving the impression of “keeping” it.' (De Certeau 1984, p. 73)

Advanced players should aim for elegance and efficiency.

Rules of the game
Program Renewal is a game for up to 10 players.
There are a limited number of rules to assist the flow of the game. The highest ranking player may, however, change the rules at any time and without notice. How players respond is up to them.

Each player selects a character without looking at the choice. The nametag is worn throughout the game. Whatever range of characters is chosen is right for the game and you MUST play with these characters. All action moves in the game MUST be made in character.

The board is set up in the middle of the players and the cards are distributed so that all hands are more or less equal.
Someone initiates play. The group decides who will commence by, for example:
- Starting with the highest ranked player
- Starting with the most interested player
- Starting with the most courageous player
- Using a lottery
- Coming to a consensus etc

This player moves a milestone token to one area of the renewal board (whatever he or she prefers) and selects a card to play from his or her hand. This card designates a role and the player must then enact this role, in character, in relation to the stage of renewal selected.

For example, a player in the role of PVC (T&L) may elect to play the Policeman card (which we assume is in his or her hand for the purposes of this example) in the stage Team Formation. He or she might enact this by very firmly advising the group of players that completing renewals is a strategic priority, it is in the T&L Strategy and it MUST be undertaken. He or she might affirm that no excuses will be accepted and that the Department needs to make this work.

Once the first player has finished the next player (going around the group in the
conventional card playing manner) must make his or her move. He or she may
elect to stay in the same stage or move to another (remember the aim is to
complete a renewal) and may play any card in his or her hand as before. The
move made by this player should relate in some way to the previous move(s).

This game is reminiscent of the children's game of constructing a story by building on the episode
related by a previous storyteller, or like the collaborative drawing game Exquisite Corpse invented
by the Surrealists where each artist draws a section of a work on a folded paper connecting to the
previous one that is all but hidden. At the end of this game all is unfolded to reveal the outcome.
(Baum 1993)

If a player chooses he or she may play a Reflective Moment card rather than
make a move. In doing so, the player must verbalise for the whole group what he
or she is thinking, what is puzzling them, what sense they are making of the
game so far. Reflective moments are a pause from the action of the game and
are played as oneself.

The joker may be played at any time, for any purpose.

When all cards have been played they are shuffled and redistributed as at the
beginning of the game.

Players can form alliances, network, factionalise, or utilise any other tactics
they wish during the course of play.

The game continues until a program renewal is complete or all players have lost
interest.

Any player except the Program Renewal mentor may leave the game at any time
and rejoin if and when they like. If a player leaves, his or her hand is placed face
down for 3 rounds and then redistributed if he or she has not returned.

If a player returns after his or her hand has been redistributed, a new hand is
constructed to equal the cards in the hands of the continuing players. The
returning player may select cards from the hands of lower ranking players but
will be given cards of their choice by the higher ranking players until the
required number is in the new hand.

**End of play**

The game is over when a program renewal is complete or all players are bored.

A program renewal is complete when:

- All players agree it is complete or
- When the highest ranking player says so.

The highest ranking player may end the game at any time by declaring that he or
she no longer has any interest in program renewal and wants to play something
else.
Playing the game

Despite the ironic marketing blurb when I have tested the game with a few different groups of staff they have enthusiastically taken up the offer to play. In each case the players have fully entered into their characters and played their role cards in ways that reveal their interpretations of the character each has adopted for the game. An array of exaggerated, stereotypical characters has resulted including the distant, controlling senior manager, the senior lecturer set in his ways, the perplexed new lecturer and the middle manager hedging his bets. Some of these interpretations are implied by the rules of the game but the resonances of each for all players seem to reflect a broad agreement about how different roles within the University should be characterised. This implicit agreement has generated games that are marked by a great deal of laughter as familiar moves are recognised and responded to with equally familiar counter moves. A feature of all the games we have played is that the entire focus of play is on the relationships between characters and their role enactment in a confrontational and tense game of power, persuasion and resistance. Within this complex tactical process, the aim of the game, and the game board in the middle of the players are entirely neglected, the focus of no-one’s attention. No progress on completing a program renewal has ever been made. The abiding impression is one of colliding worldviews resulting in a stalemate that no player, including the program renewal mentor (my ‘real’ role), has the power to break.

In reflecting upon the condition of stalemate that resulted from each playing of the Program Renewal game, I wondered about the extent to which the game really might be considered a ludic parallel of the experience of change within the university.

As I continued with my research and commenced analysing the interview data I had already collected, the parallels became clear. While I had interviewed the participants separately, as I sifted through their words their radically different ways of making sense of their experiences of change became clear. Staff with different roles within the university proposed highly divergent interpretations of how change in teaching and learning was being pursued and radically different assessments of its success. I imagined them talking with each other, interacting in a game like setting, perhaps a meeting. In talking about the ways in which strategically directed changes set out in the Teaching and Learning Plan were being effected, their conversation would unfold like this.

* * *

Senior leader: ‘Well, I’m pretty confident that the Teaching and Learning Plan is well related to what is going on across the university.’
Director of the central teaching support group: ‘Well, that’s alright for you to say, but it appears to me that we tend to develop policy at senior level. We kind of write it but then it hits a vacuum at the faculties. There isn’t a coordinated way of making policy happen. Let me tell you, I have staff who are constantly saying to me, “just go easy on this imposition of policy. This goes to the heart of what academics see as core to their role.”’

The senior leader and director continue to argue about the success of a centralised change strategy. A side conversation starts between the Dean and Head of School.

With a conspiratorial wink the Dean remarks: ‘One of the tricks of generating any successful change in my faculty has been to both disregard and give some regard to strategic planning by the university. With an awful lot of disregarding … What we do now is that we write a Teaching and Learning Plan that is highly reflective of the university’s. And then we go ahead and do what we think we should be doing.’

Head of School: ‘I know. At the heart of this is the conflict that occurs between core, centralised strategic plans on outlier faculties and schools who do not perceive themselves as having had adequate input into the framing of those plans and certainly not the operational targets.’

Overhearing this side conversation, a support staff member interrupts: ‘Well, quite frankly I think that all that staff would know is that there is a Faculty Teaching and Learning Plan and that it has something to do with quality and how they (gesturing towards the senior leader and director) want us to deal with technology. And that’s all. I suspect they would know even less about the University Teaching and Learning Plan.’

The only faculty staff member in the group has been sitting quietly but now intervenes explosively: ‘If you’ll stop talking for me for a minute, I’ll tell you what I know. I think it is bloody insensitive of management. It just rolls off the tongue. Just go and do it! Down here we are just beavering away, all hands to the pump and trying to work out what the f*** does all this mean?’

*     *     *

The Program Renewal game, it seems, does mirror experience, but as merely a mirror of experience it cannot answer the question of why this is so. It does, however, suggest questions that deserve investigation. First, what is it that shapes the stark differences in understanding and viewpoints, revealed by different ‘players’ that result in these radically different world views? Second, why do the interactions in the game create collisions that dissipate energy rather than some other result? Finally, as creator of the game, what assumptions have I built into it that reflect my own positioning, my habits of mind that need to be questioned?

1 The words spoken by each of the ‘players’ in this scenario are quotations selected from the interview transcripts within a single university. They have been adapted only by the addition of phrases to make the imagined conversation flow. The use of this form of data presentation is explained later in the thesis.
With regard to the first question, the question of what shapes the radically different views of the experience of change, the game and its rules suggest little except that it is in some way related to the organisational position of the player. The game suggests that a player can ‘know’ how a person occupying a particular organisational position will understand the task and, indeed, actual players experienced little difficulty making such an interpretation. The assumptions that underpin this apparent ‘knowing’ and their relationship with the ways in which the ‘real’ organisational players understand their practices deserve to be investigated.

With regard to the second question, the game suggests that power is the key to understanding the nature of interactions, in particular the hierarchy of positional power within the organisation. The rules of the game embed an oppositional concept of power. Every reference in the rules to ‘the highest ranking player’ suggests the power of those in senior positions to impose their wills in arbitrary, capricious or heavy-handed ways. The rules suggest that these players even have the power to arbitrarily end the game. Such a definition of power within the rules limits the choice of lesser ranked players to unquestioning conformance or persistent resistance which were, in fact, revealed in the games we played. The rules enshrine such resistance in the ability of any player to withdraw from the game – to simply refuse to play. While such rules may generate amusing play, if continued stalemate is to be avoided, alternative ways of understanding power need to be investigated.

If games are amusements that are light hearted fun, then the evidence of frustration and anger played out in the scene of the fictional meeting presented above suggests that in universities, change is anything but a game. Imagine, as the meeting breaks up, the faculty staff member and the support staff member leave together, talking as they do so about a change project with which they have both been involved.2

* * *

Faculty staff member: ‘I just feel a bit sad that the process has gone astray and that people are getting upset even though they have done a good job. Things haven’t been clearly defined, the change hasn’t been clear. Stuff has been going on all around without any clear lines of communication. I can tell, a lot of people have put a lot of themselves into this project and they are feeling it. I can see how distressed people are and all I can think is, “It doesn’t have to be like this!”’

Support staff member: ‘I think that there has been a mix of disappointment, frustration, anger to a degree but also a sense that it’s what we’d expect, or it’s sort of, you know, yeah. It’s the way things happen, you know, and you just roll with it.’

* * *

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2 As before this conversation uses direct quotations from a case study of change practices from a single university presented fully later in the thesis.
Does it have to be like this? Do you just have to roll with it?

The Program Renewal Game was the end point of the initial process of self-curation. In the terms of Cherry’s definition quoted earlier, it does more to encapsulate and perhaps illuminate the assumptions behind current practice than it does to generate new possibilities for the future. As an artefact it embodies the ‘state of creative “not-knowing”’ that takes us to the limits of existing practice … where the habits and mindsets which created our predicament or opportunity are not equal to the task of moving forward, and in which we have only two choices – to regress or grow’ (Cherry 2003, p. 11).

In response to the third question posed earlier, the Program Renewal Game reveals much about my positioning. In addition to the concept of hierarchical, imposed power embedded within the game, and in contrast to it, is the aspiration for ‘equilibrium’ – the achievement of ‘balance’ between all players through a process of constant adjustment within an open ended and ill defined terrain. This is the fundamental tension within the game and within my positioning as both creator and player of the game.

In practice, as a teaching and learning support person I have been trying to implement a centrally determined and directed innovation in curriculum by seeking a way to harmonise the direction set by senior leaders with the values and interests of all the parties to the work. Simultaneously, as the game’s rules show, I have been characterising the environment for that work as a controlled and hierarchical one where the interests of senior leaders dominate those of other parties to the work. The external tensions evident in the colliding worlds of the game are here evident as an internal tension between the seductive certainty of hierarchy and its easy identification of those to blame and the democratic precariousness of a negotiated order – ‘dancing on a tightrope’. It is this internal tension that has provided the wellspring for this work. Put simply, as a teaching and learning support practitioner, it has driven my interest in better understanding the nature of the different worlds of the people with whom I interact and to finding ways that I can work with integrity when those worlds collide.

If the game is a representation of the limits of current practice, reflection on the game suggests the limits of the concepts in use about power, about organisational roles and the forces that shape them. Reflection suggests productive lines of enquiry needed to fuel further critical reflection but also reveals that such research is not ‘over there’; not purely cognitive, not distant as I had hoped when we began the self-curation process.

When I look again at the Program Renewal Game I see my face looking back at me from each of the cards. I do not know why I put my face on every card. It simply felt right as I
worked in an unfamiliar visual ‘text’. What could remain unacknowledged or at least not fully noticed when working in the familiar form of writing literally stares at me from the page. I am invested in this. The research presented in this thesis and brought into focus through the Program Renewal game sits at the intersection between the messy, personal, value laden, quotidian practices of organisational life and the scholarly search for enabling concepts that might suggest new directions for practice.

How these themes and interests have taken shape through the practice of this research is detailed in Chapter 1.
INTRODUCTION: CONTEXT AND OUTLINE FOR THE PROJECT

Impetus for the research
As outlined in the prologue, the impetus for this research was my realisation that I had reached the limits of my existing practice; that the concepts and assumptions I brought to understanding my practice were ‘not equal to the task of moving forward’ (Cherry 2003, p. 11).

The first part of this chapter traces how I pursued these first insights through a research journey that evolved over time as I researched my practice and practiced my research. The concepts that I encountered through this journey that became central to reframing the way I understood my research are briefly described through this account.

Part of my journey involved focussing more sharply on the relationships between the tasks of my work, in attempts to change practices of teaching and learning within the university, and the ways in which universities as workplaces were changing. The way in which this organisational context has been understood in this project is presented in the second part of the chapter.

The third part of the chapter discusses how these investigations helped to delineate the qualities of a methodology that would be needed to pursue the research and the main elements and stages of the project that resulted. In particular, this section describes how ‘voice’ has been used throughout the work. Both the Prologue and this chapter are written using the personal pronoun – I. Clearly the work is ‘personal’, intimately connected with my work, with my self in my work and with the assumptions that inform the ways in which I make sense of my work. The use of the personal – I – here, however, is also in recognition of my agency as researcher. By that I mean that I, as researcher, acknowledge the multiple ways in which I have interacted with the data in the field and as I have interpreted it, in the patterns I have seen (and not seen) and the directions I have pursued (and not pursued).

Finally, an outline of the structure of the thesis is provided describing how the themes introduced in this chapter have been developed and presented through the text.
The research journey

When I first wrote about the focus of my research in an early draft of this chapter, I wrote about my research question. There was no mention of a journey, just a tidy, if unbelievable, statement of purpose. As I indicated in the Prologue, this suggests a view that rigorous academic research is something other than what I was doing. A view, perhaps that ‘real research’ had a kind of clarity and direction that my own processes appeared to lack. In reflecting on the ways in which this research has unfolded, I have come to see it as analogous with the practices of my first profession, that of a designer. Schön (1983) is well known for his contributions to understanding reflective practices and he often had recourse to architectural design as an exemplar. Of design he noted, ‘A designer sees, moves and sees again’ (Schön 1992, p.135). And further,

As a designer draws, and sees what she has drawn, she makes discoveries. She discovers features and relations that cumulatively generate a fuller understanding, or “feel for”, the configuration with which she is working (Ibid, p. 155).

This fuller understanding is not simply based on seeing more clearly what is contained in the information. Rather it is a process which ‘also constructs its meaning – identifies patterns and gives them meanings beyond themselves’ (Ibid, p. 135).

Initial research directions

The first move I made in this research journey was not within the context of research at all. What became this project started out as an investigation for a National Teaching Fellowship I was awarded by the Australian Government’s Committee for University Teaching and Staff Development (CUTSD) in 1999. I set out to find out more about how other universities similar to my own were trying to change teaching and learning. The statement that explained the project to potential participants said,

I have been involved in trying to effect changes in teaching and learning for some time and am aware that it is a complex task being undertaken in a challenging, dynamic context. In undertaking my work I have found it quite difficult to access really detailed and practical advice on approaches to implementation in the university context. There is quite a lot of material that considers the forces driving change and the directions, in which various constituencies think we should be going. There is less, however, on how to effect the desired change.

My first impulse was to look for a repertoire of new tactics, different tools and techniques to add to my collection. My focus was on the dynamics of the context and upon how various people within the organisation were adapting their work practices to deal with it. This project
was completed and the results including ‘vignettes’ of the range of practices I discovered were published (Lines 2000). The impact of this first move, however, was as Schön suggests, that I began to see the whole configuration of circumstances that I was working with in a new way. The interviews I conducted for this initial study and subsequently reanalysed for this research left me little choice. While the initial questions I asked were about techniques and approaches, the answers I received were not. Interviewees talked volubly and with passion about their experiences, the ways in which they interpreted the changes within their universities and the impacts of these on their roles. They also talked about others within their universities and the ways in which they interpreted their roles and behaviours. Sometimes these interpretations were supportive of some others; often they reflected frustration or hostility.

Interviews I conducted at the first of the universities I visited were instructive. Set up by an administrative assistant in a single university, they happened to be organised by days to match the hierarchy within the institution. On day one the interviews were all with senior leaders, day two, middle managers and support staff and day three, academic staff. When I finished the interviews on day one, I was astonished by the level of agreement and consistency between the views expressed by participants. This, I thought prematurely, is a university that seems to have a coherent way of implementing changes in teaching. There is a collective conviction that it is working. Days two and three shattered this illusion by revealing the radically different ways in which people in different roles within the institution interpreted the same situation. This first foray into data gathering focused attention on the extent of these differences and the fact that there appeared, superficially at least, to be some level of coherence between those occupying similar roles within the institution. No kit bag of tools and techniques could bridge the divide between the worlds revealed in these interviews, as the interpretations appeared to have significantly different foundations.

The turn to scholarship in the search for new insights

The next move in the research was to seek a way of making sense of these apparent differences. By identifying the major constructs that different interviewees used, I set out to investigate what might underpin the different positions they adopted. Rather than my initial question about how changes in teaching were effected, I became interested in how the different staff involved in change made sense of their roles and how this making sense could be so profoundly at odds. In order to gain some insight into this question, I had to leave the individual, messy, emotive worlds of the interviews and enter a highly abstract, disembodied world of scholarly discourses on discourse. My attention was drawn to studies in the critical management and postmodern management literature concerning the ways in which work
identities are constructed and the different discursive positions that inform different constructions. Du Gay (1996a, p. 55) expressed it this way.

‘Workers’ and ‘managers’ have been ‘made up’ in different ways – discursively re-imagined and reconceptualized – at different times through their positioning in a variety of discourses of work reform.

The reading I was doing concurrently about the ways in which the university sector in Australia was changing had already highlighted how this period of work reform was affecting the previously taken for granted identities and practices of academics, educational developers and university administrators. Such conditions of rapid change, described in more detail later in this chapter, reveal the *constructed* nature of the previously widely accepted university work identities. The contest over new ways of understanding university purposes and the roles and practices these require transforms established identities. Indeed, in Australian universities the managerial reforms described later have introduced a whole new category of work identity to the university - the manager – with the effect of radically transforming other work identities.

The move in my research journey from the interviews to the literature suggested that a focus on constructed identities might provide a useful analytical tool in understanding change within the university. Consequently the *construction of identity* through the different *discourses of reform within the university* became two key concepts with which I worked as I moved backwards and forwards between the interview transcripts and the scholarly literature.

*Constructed identities at work*

What was particularly appealing about the postmodern understanding of identity revealed above in the quotation from Du Gay, is that it is understood as *contingent*, subject to repeated assembly and reassembly (Bauman 1992). This stands in opposition to the *essentialist* and enduring conception of identity that underpins the modernist or Enlightenment view of the subject. The modernist view of the subject is as a unified, fully conscious, fully rational, autonomous, stable ‘self’. In such a view, changes in the conditions of work provide different conditions of struggle for an essentially unchanging identity. It became clear to me that this was the implicit view of the subject that I had brought to my initial study. It also became clear that it is the modernist subject that, often implicitly, is assumed in organisation studies.

This view has been challenged and decentred in postmodern thought and replaced with a view of identity that positions it as contingent, continuously constituted and reconstituted
relationally in a constant process of becoming (Lather 1991; Ashe 1999). This is not to suggest that the postmodern subject is irrational, rather to acknowledge that a contingent identity cannot be fully constituted by an autonomous individual as it relies upon ‘something “outside” of itself for its very existence’ (Du Gay 1996a, p. 2). In this view, changes in the conditions of work are much more than mere changes in the context of struggle. The changes and the dislocations they cause to established identities also provide the ‘foundations upon which new identities are established’. They provide the possibility for new articulations, for the construction of new identities and different social subjects (du Gay 1996, p. 3). This position has gained support increasingly in critical management studies (Deetz 1992; du Gay 1996b). Alvesson and Willmott (1992, p. 5) argue that:

Companies and management also ‘produce’ people – workers, customers, as well as citizens in other capacities. That is to say, they shape and promote needs, wishes, beliefs and identities.

In these circumstances, what it means to be a manager, an academic or an educational developer will be uncertain, an achievement, dependent upon historical and cultural conditions (du Gay 1996a). This view resonated strongly with the diversity of positions and the sense of focussed rethinking of individual’s roles and those of others I experienced in reading the interviews. In this research I have used the concept of constructed identity to refer to the ways in which various participants in the study understand their positions as organisational members that relate to specific discourses of work reform they privilege. I have used the concept of role to refer to the forms of organisational action this identity construction leads them to propose as appropriate for themselves and that they assign to other members of the organisation.

The postmodern ‘decentring of the subject’ (Crotty 1998, p. 185) makes it possible to recognise and speak of multiple identities and to concern oneself with the ways in which people construct their own identities and those of others at work, without saying anything essential about the individual. The other benefit of such a view of identity for my research derives from its productive focus. It provides some space for optimism that through the ways we approach change activities, different identities and practices can be constituted at the local level through local actions.

**Discourses of work reform within the university**

In trying to understand how the participants in change activities within universities seek to ‘make up’ others and themselves at work it became necessary to consider the various discourses about the reform of work within universities and the ways in which these discourses impact upon the creation of identity.
Definitions of ‘discourse’

The role of language and subsequently of ‘discourse’ in the creation of the subject has been a nodal point in the contest between different theoretical positions within contemporary social and political theory (Ashe 1999). Commencing in what has sometimes been called the ‘linguistic turn’ in sociological thought and at other times, the ‘crisis of representation’, our understanding of the role of language in relation to the ‘real’ world has been radically transformed.

The initial linguistic challenge was to the commonsense understanding of language as representing a world of objectively existing objects. This conception was overturned and replaced with a view of language as constituting, not reflecting the world. Language ‘is considered to shape what things we see and how we see them and it is these things shaped for us by language that constitute reality for us’ (Crotty 1998, p. 88). Linguistic theories do not dismiss the existence of a ‘real world’ of objects and subjects but focus attention on how language shapes our experience of it.

These initial theories of language, which often focussed narrowly upon language itself, were subsequently broadened to utilise the concept of ‘discourse’ to extend the understanding of how language shapes experience. While the word discourse is used in a wide variety of ways and is itself, a highly contested term, Aronowitz (1987/88, p. 103) provides a useful starting point with his definition of discourses as ‘literally narratives about the world that are admittedly partial’.

The concept of partiality is important as specific narratives provide a standpoint from which reality is grasped and interests established. They are therefore partial in both senses of the word. They are, of necessity, incomplete and they embed a preferred standpoint. In Lather’s (1991, p. 25) memorable formulation, ‘Whatever “the real” is, it is discursive’ but ‘the real’ will be constructed in a variety of different and partial ways. The concept of discourse, then, ‘refers both to the way language systematically organizes concepts, knowledge and experience and to the way in which it excludes alternative forms of organization’ (Finlayson 1999, p. 63).

Discourse in relation to institutional practices

This research is not about the discursive constructions of identity of individuals as individuals. The participants are located within an institutional context, and the concept of discourse in this context is used to refer to more than the production of knowledge through
language. It includes the way that ‘knowledge is institutionalised shaping social practices and setting new practices into play’ (du Gay 1996a p. 43). Ball (1990a, p. 2) provides the following description.

Discourses are about what can be said and thought, but also about who can speak, when, and with what authority. Discourses embody meaning and social relationships, they constitute both subjectivity and power relations … Thus the possibilities for meaning and definition, are preempted through the social and institutional position held by those who use them. Meanings thus arise not from language but from institutional practices, from power relations … Discourses constrain the possibilities of thought. They order and combine words in particular ways and exclude or displace other combinations. However, in so far as discourses are constituted by exclusions, by what cannot as well as what can be said, they stand in antagonistic relationship to other discourses, other possibilities of meaning, other claims, rights, and positions.

What is clear from Ball’s definition is that no discourse can completely contain the rules concerning what can and cannot be said about organisations and what identities and practices can exist within them.

This concept of discourse seemed a particularly useful lens to use in understanding the different constructed work identities evident within my interview transcripts. It seemed that a productive way of trying to understand the diversity of positions I had encountered might be to use the concept of discursively constructed work identities to categorise the range of different positions revealed in the interview transcripts. This would involve reviewing the range of competing discourses of work reform available within universities and the interview transcripts, in order to assess how, and the extent to which different discourses have taken hold within the organisation.

*Discourses and power*

Naming the differences, however, was not an end in itself. Within the organisation different discourses do not happily coexist. In effecting change in teaching and learning within the university, it is clear that different staff with substantially different ways of constructing their own identities and those of others must interact. As Ball noted in the quotation cited above, discourses constitute both subjectivity and *power relations* and thus meanings arise within a set of institutional practices.

Perhaps the most striking result of the recent discourses of work reform for universities has been the rise of managerial practices and the establishment of managerial hierarchies based upon the privileging of the discourse of management. Managerial discourses, however, are
not yet established as natural and neutral (Deetz 1992) or beyond contest. Morgan (1992, p. 147) notes that this supposedly 'scientifically, rational and efficient application of neutral knowledge … has always faced the problem that the people who are the subjects of the knowledge can choose to act differently.' Organisational members can and do legitimately claim first hand, valid knowledge of the experiences the discourse of management seeks to constitute and operate from different and competing discursive positions. In a situation of struggle, one vocabulary may achieve dominance by managing to fashion authority for itself as a temporary point of closure (du Gay, 1996a, p. 45) but this point of closure will never be complete or permanent.

Hacking (1986, p. 234) describes the contest between discourses as the interaction between two mutually constitutive vectors. One he terms 'labelling from above', from experts who create a reality for others that some people may adopt as their own. This labelling from above, however, is countered by the actual behaviour of those so labelled, which presses from below.

Attempts at identity definition and resistances to them seemed to lie at the heart of understanding the nature of interactions in teaching change. In order to go beyond the limits of my own experiences of change it became clear that institutional practices associated with teaching change and the relations of power these privileged would need to become a focus of investigation.

While still engaged with my investigation of the construction of identity and the role of discourse, I had commenced, as a participant observer, an ethnographic study of an attempt at curriculum change in teaching and learning within one university. This move took me out of the rarefied world of abstract scholarship and back into the messy and emotional world of practice. In order to develop a deeper understanding of what happens in a change project, of how the differently constructed work identities impact on each other, on events and outcomes it seemed important to study the dynamics of change in action.

I started keeping field notes. I jotted down observations in formal meetings and informal ones. I scribbled as I chatted in corridors or lifts and over coffee or after work drinks. As well as writing down my observations of behaviour and recording what others said, I reflected on the mass of data I was accruing with my first thoughts and ideas. I obsessively retained every piece of paper associated with the project from formal strategy documents through minutes of meetings to the most casual of emails. What resulted was an immense and confusing collection of data. There were many moments of conflict and of anger. But there were also moments of collusion, of optimism and alliance between a variety of participants.
Clearly relations of power were implicated, however, the very richness of the data made making sense of these complex interactions very difficult. It became clear that I needed to find a framework that might provide a way of making sense out of confusion.

**Power relations**

I noted in the prologue that the concepts of power that implicitly underpinned my investigations at the start were oppositional concepts. This ‘them and us’ conception left little room to think beyond a permanent state of role based antagonisms. The more detailed analysis of the interview transcripts that I was now undertaking revealed that this understanding of power was widespread with various constituencies designating various others as the enemy to be resisted or the resistant ‘other’ to be overcome. If the limits of existing practice were to be transcended I needed to unearth a different way of thinking about organisational power relations that might allow me to see these situations in a new and productive way. This investigation led me to *relational* theories of power that stress the multicentred nature of a network of power. The work of Foucault (1977; 1982; 1984; 1988; 1998) on power at the broad historical and societal level provided the point of departure. Its influence in Clegg’s (1989a; 1989b; 1990; 1994) circuits of power analytical model at the organisational level and the detailed analysis of the tactics of power by Callon (1986) and Latour (1986; 1999) with regard to specific projects provide a nested set of relational approaches that I have adopted for this study. Central concepts within these approaches are presented below. These are detailed in Chapter 5.

**The influence of Foucault**

Foucault’s influential studies of power develop the notion of power as a mobile network of relationships in contradistinction to the dominant ‘sovereign’ conception which defines it as the possession of powerful individuals. He described power as a ‘multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization’ (1997, p. 92). Particular configurations of power result from a ceaseless struggle. These configurations are both local and unstable.

Foucault is concerned with what power does, with how it works rather than with what it is. His analysis overturned the traditional conception of power as always repressive. Instead, for Foucault power is productive, producing ‘reality’ and ‘domains of objects and rituals of truth’ (1977, p. 194). The key analytical constructs in understanding the ways in which the new forms of non sovereign power work, were described by Foucault as techniques of *discipline*. These disciplinary procedures work though processes of normalisation to ‘shape the wills, desires, interests and identities of subjects rather than though direct practices of coercion (Knights and Vurdubakis 1994, p. 173).
The particular benefit for this study of Foucault’s reworking of power has been highlighted by Knights and Vurdubakis (1994, p. 193). They note that the relational conception of power allows analysis to go beyond the ‘either/or of conventional dualistic accounts’; to dispense with the traditional categories of power/resistance and agents/victims for an alternative and potentially more productive analytical approach. Alvesson and Willmott (1992, p. 7) note that a simple agent/victim analysis is inadequate to the task of explaining that for managers, managerial discourses ‘paradoxically limit their options as they simultaneously appear to secure for them a position of relative power and influence’. An approach that recognises the multiple sites of power and the ways in which discourses both empower and disempower suggests that effective local action can at least be contemplated, whereas ‘us ‘ and ‘them’ analyses leave little alternative to the wholesale replacement of existing forms of organisation for their resolution.

**Power concepts within an organisational framework**

One of the difficulties of utilising Foucault’s analysis in an institutional setting is its breadth. Clegg (1990) has developed a model that draws upon Foucault and develops this relational understanding of power within an organisational context. He calls this model ‘circuits of power’ as the circuits provide the organisational pathways through which fields of force within the power network are fixed and stabilised.

In brief, he describes three circuits. The first he names *episodic agency power*. This most resembles the traditional, sovereign notion of ‘power over’ others operated through the hierarchical structures of positional power in organisations. Clegg’s second circuit he names the *circuit of system integration*. This recognises that organisations rely on a repertoire of techniques of discipline and production in the Foucauldian sense to authorise approved forms of creativity and limit others. Changes in this system can radically alter power relations within organisations empowering some and disempowering others. The third circuit is that of *social integration*. This circuit is concerned with fixing and refixing the relations of meaning and membership within the organisation. Clegg suggests that a major mechanism in the struggle for meaning takes place around the establishment of organisational rules.

Clegg (1990, p. 159) notes that within organisations, ‘occupational identities, knowledges and practices are resources for striving to secure interpretation fixed on one’s own terms, rather than those of some other parties to the contract’. He refers to the ways different groups within the organisation interpret a situation and determine the actions they should take to secure agency on their terms as their *mode of rationality*. In complex organisations like universities there is no guarantee of unity or coherence of modes of rationality between
different organisational participants. In fact, it is much more likely that there will be a constant struggle between different modes of rationality. Any attempt by one group of discursively constructed occupational identities to impose its interpretation on others will necessarily be resisted. At the minimum this will take the form of ‘frictional’ resistance, ‘an absence of interest in the realization of the goals of power – in contrast to intended or direct resistance’ (Clegg 1989a, p. 208 drawing on the work of Barbalet). Clegg notes (1989a, p. 197):

Organizations do things as a consequence of decisions to act in certain ways by certain other agents. Organizations also do things that are not a consequence of a decision to act, if only because decisions are shaped by struggles around competing substantive objectives – what may be called diverse modes of rationality.

**The tactics of power within organisations**

In considering the precise ways in which different parties with different ‘occupational identities’ try to achieve agency, Clegg draws upon the work of Latour and Callon that they have named ‘the sociology of translation’. In the struggle by one group to impose its definition of a situation on others Callon (1986) suggests four stages. The first he names *problematization*. In this stage the group seeking to secure their agency defines a problem to privilege the particular expertise and resources they control as essential to action. The second stage Callon calls *interessement*. In this stage the group seeking to impose their definition tries to stabilise the identities of the other actors it has defined, by finding ways to place a barrier between them and ‘all other entities who want to define their identities otherwise’ (Ibid, p. 208). In the third stage called *enrolment*, alliances are formed and the identities and roles that have been defined for other actors are accepted by them. Finally *mobilization*, the fourth stage, refers to the actions taken to ensure that enrolment is fixed and that different agencies in the network of power established, do not betray their agreements.

My move into different ways of understanding power seemed to promise a more productive way of thinking about the set of interactions that constitute any attempt to make changes in teaching and learning. As noted earlier, a relational model breaks down the dualistic and oppositional thinking inherent in sovereign models of power and provides a richer framework for analysing power as a network of relationships which may be productive. This approach to power was adopted as the second lens through which the data collected for this study would be analysed.

**Research question**

My research focus has been shaped by the series of moves I have described. Each has enabled me to develop a ‘fuller understanding, or “feel for”, the configuration’ with which I
have been dealing. As I have moved between empirical data and scholarly literature, what has remained constant through the journey is its purpose. I commenced with a desire to overcome the limits of my own practice revealed through the difficulties and painful effects I encountered when trying to support change initiatives. It became clear that my underpinning assumptions and frameworks were not up to the task of taking me towards a more productive understanding. Moving between the empirical data collected through an initial interview study and a subsequent ethnographic case study and the literature, I have sought more useful frameworks to make sense of what is going on when change is attempted within the university.

Through this process the research has become focussed upon testing as lenses, theories about discursively constructed work identities and relational concepts of power for what they can reveal about what is going wrong at the moment, as we try to make changes in the university. The purpose of such an analysis is to see what new insights their use may generate for practice. The various moves in my research journey that I have recounted here led me to the following research questions.

What new insights might be generated about the current practices of change within the university by utilising concepts of discursively constructed work identities and relational concepts of power to a change project?

What directions do the insights generated suggest for different change practices?

My own research journey led me via a series of moves to the central importance of concepts of power in understanding change. Trowler (1998) has noted the absence of power analyses in investigations of higher education and has called for them to be undertaken. Many studies of higher education organisations provide insight into the socioeconomic or regulatory environment that is creating the necessity for change. They tend to focus on its implications for organisational reorientation at a very broad level. Others examine the responses to change either from the perspective of management or from that of academics. These studies do not explicitly address questions of changed relationships in the exercise of power at the level of micro practices in the everyday life of the organisation and its members. It is in this gap that this research is positioned and in which it makes its particular contribution.

*The managerialised university and directed change*

As noted previously, the most conspicuous result of the long period of reform in Australian universities has been the rise of the discourse of management and the institutionalisation of
managerial practices within the sector. Within the *managerialised university*, which is the site for this study, the concept of change takes on a specific character.

There is no doubt that massive changes have been effected in all aspects of Australian university activities since the Dawkins’ White Paper, *Higher Education: A Policy Statement* (1988) inaugurated the restructuring of the higher education sector and the radical reshaping of government and university relations. The Australian reforms coincided with a broad international trend in the developed world to reshape the purposes and functions of tertiary education (Clark 1998; Ibarra-Colado 1996).

This reform agenda coincided with a period of rapid expansion within the Australian university sector. The significant increase in diversity within the student cohort that this growth engendered lent credibility and urgency to the idea that significant change was necessary. Between 1987 and 1994 domestic student numbers increased from 285,090 to 452,205 (Marginson & Considine 2000, pp. 32-33).

Significant levels of commonality have been observed in the approaches Australian universities have taken to the reform agenda. Marginson and Considine (2000) have noted several key characteristics. At the heart of these is the emergence of new kinds of executive power, characterised by a will to manage, along with structural innovations designed to operationalise executive power. The increase in executive power has been matched by a decline in the role of academic disciplines in university governance. New methods of devolution based on centrally devised plans accompanied by targets and performance measures have emerged alongside a range of techniques aimed at achieving greater flexibility with regard to personnel and resources, including increased levels of contract employment. These changes in university governance, in particular the emphasis on comprehensive corporate planning, based on centrally determined goals, define the ‘standard package’ of *managerial* reform and it is in this sense that the concept of *managerialism* is used in this research (ed. Considine & Painter 1997, p. 3).

In such an environment, ideas about how internal *change* in the practices of teaching and learning might be effected, in accordance with the centrally determined plans, have taken particular forms. Early in the reform process in Australia, attempts to foster change were focused on supporting individual academic enthusiasts using competitive government grant schemes offered through the Committee for the Advancement of University Teaching (CAUT) and its successors. The developments in Australia from this starting point have followed similar trends to those described by Hannan and Silver for the UK (2000) characterised by increasing attempts to direct the nature of change.
The first stage they describe as a stage of ‘guided innovation’ at the institutional level when the need for higher levels of innovation, in combination with regulatory demands for greater institutional accountability for quality, produced loose institutional policy frameworks for change or innovation. In Australia the Committee for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (CQAHE) institutional audits in 1993, 1994 and 1995 provided a significant impetus for the development of such frameworks. This period of loose policy guidance has been replaced with what Hannan and Silver call ‘directed innovation’ where only particular forms of change, specified within quite defined institutional policy or strategy statements, are rewarded. Universities have developed a range of mechanisms for directing change. These mechanisms include internal grant schemes, designated project funds for approved strategic change projects and a variety of recognition and reward incentives.

The success of ‘directed change’

While the designation of strategically desired changes within Teaching and Learning Plans has become widespread, making these changes has not proven a simple matter. As Laurillard (1999, p. 4) notes,

Higher education cannot change easily. Traditions, values, infrastructure all create the conditions for a natural inertia. It is being forced to change, and the pressures being brought to bear have nothing to do with tradition and values. Instead, the pressure is for financial input to go down and some measurable output to go up.

Failures to successfully implement changes through the linear process of first developing strategy directions followed by attempts to implement these throughout the organisation have been widely criticised. Martin (1999, p. 49) studied 190 academics in two continents and described the antagonistic relations between managers and academic staff that result.

… universities appear unable to cope with the change and the rate of change they confront. Staff in universities are characterized by their leaders as being reluctant to adapt to the new conditions and the new environment while those in leadership positions are often characterized by staff as being unable to guide or lead.

According to Martin, managerial organisational change has not produced the desired educational change and has resulted in those in leadership positions spending ‘a good deal of time wondering how they can get those in non-leadership positions to buy into handed-down organizational visions.’ (1999, p. 60)
It is this form of directed change that is at the centre of this research. The changes outlined above have affected every aspect of the university. They have transformed all of the activities traditional to its purpose – research, teaching and relationships with the community. The particular case of change in focus in this study, is in the area of teaching and learning. It, however, may be understood as an instance of change practices across the various domains of the university.

**Change in teaching and learning**

During the period of time over which data were gathered for this project, there were distinct and widely adopted directions for change in teaching and learning within Australian universities. The first related to the need to address increases in the diversity and number of students in the system. The second was intended to address increased government requirements for graduates who could make an immediate contribution to the creation of an economy adapted to the demands of increasing globalisation. The first went under the shorthand title of flexible education and came to incorporate modularisation in the design of degrees but even more pervasively the use of information and communication technologies in the delivery of subjects. The second became identified as the embedding of graduate capabilities in teaching and learning programs and experiences reflecting the desire for different kinds of outcomes from a university education.

The interviews that make up the first case study in this research were conducted in five universities with specific strategies to increase flexibility and improve graduate capability outcomes. The second ethnographic case study of a change as it happened was a project to design and develop a flexibly delivered, capability based degree, specifically to address these strategic requirements that were delineated as central goals in the Teaching and Learning Strategy of the university in question.

Despite calls for reform and a drive to direct change in teaching and learning, all efforts have according to some, left traditional approaches to teaching and learning largely untouched. Much of the literature about change comes from studies in industry and commerce and is concerned with the business management context. Of studies concerned with teaching and learning, Coaldrake and Stedman note, ‘at the risk of oversimplification, traditional university teaching methods and structures were largely expanded and stretched, rather than re-invented to meet the new mass market’ (1998, p. 73). Scott (1999, p. xi) speaking about how to facilitate change in teaching concurs, suggesting that there ‘is more failure in change projects, even ones that everyone sees as necessary, than there is success.’ And with even greater dismissiveness, the Enterprise University emerging from the period of managerial reform has ‘a weaker capacity for educational innovation’ (Marginson and Considine 2000, p.
These authors conclude that the managerial university has failed to forge creative forms of organisation that uniquely reflect their purposes or to engender ‘indigenous “learning cultures”’ (p. 5).

This research is focussed on understanding the processes of change within the managerialised university, using a study of directed change in teaching and learning. By using the lenses of work identity and power relations my aim is to contribute to a deeper understanding of the nature of this ‘weaker capacity for educational innovation’ with a view to uncovering directions for future change practices. Alternatives need to be imagined, however, such imagining needs to be soundly based in an understanding of what is going wrong at the moment.

**Outline of the research**

In describing my research journey, I have already said quite a lot about the activities that I undertook. The various moves I made took me between two very different worlds. My starting point in the world of my own practice drew me towards methods that privilege the messy sites of change practice and the perceptions and experiences of the individual involved with change projects. Finding out about these experiences involved me in much talk with participants carried out as a set of interviews. As more and more individuals told me about their experiences of change, however, the diversity of ways of framing the change task and of assessing what is going wrong suggested the need to go outside these data to find potentially more productive ways of understanding change processes. My own theories in use, as I have noted, were inadequate to make sense of the situation and to propose ways out of the dilemmas my data, and my practice experience revealed. This search sent me into the world of scholarship. I have already outlined the theories of discursively constructed work identities and relational concepts of power that this search suggested might be useful in making sense of the data. The search for a methodology that could bring these different worlds together is taken up in Chapter 2. The result was that the study was set up within the framework of critical management research. This integrative methodology allows empirical material, derived from the detailed investigation of everyday practice, to be explored using the analytical insights offered through critical and postmodern management theory.

**Voice**

An integrative methodology brings data with different qualities expressed in different ‘voices’ into relationship. There are three different voices present in this text. One voice is that of the participants in interviews and in the ethnographic case study of change. In parts of the text that follows I have drawn extensively upon the voices of these participants through the use of quotations and as the basis for the presentation of the ethnography. This voice is intimate,
personal to the participants, specific to the context and often emotional. A second voice is the voice of theoretical scholarship. This is a distant and often apparently disembodied and decontextualised voice intent upon generalisation. One or other of these two voices is dominant though various sections of the text. In chapters that review literature, the scholarly voice dominates. In chapters that present the empirical data the participants' voices dominate. The final voice is my own. I have used my own voice to bring these into relationship by reflecting upon and presenting the sense I have made of each excursion into one voice or the other in relation to my research question. In chapters where I have moved between voices, I have used the device, first encountered in the prologue, of separating the voices with the following symbol.

* * *

The benefit of an integrative research methodology is that it offers the possibility of staying close to everyday practice but also of gaining the benefits of theoretical distance in order to examine this anew. The retention of the different voices in the text is designed to make each visible on its own terms and to use the contrasts between them as a basis for fresh insights.

Research design
From the variety of moves in the research journey outlined earlier, the first stage of the research became focused on how the identities of managers, academics and educational developers are being newly ‘made up’ in different ways and on how each, in turn, makes up the identities of others. The data collected and analysed to address this interest I have called case study one.

Data was collected from five similar and highly managerialised universities (by their own description); those of the Australian Technology Network (ATN). A wide range of formal documents was assembled from each of the universities involved and a total of 53 interviews were conducted with staff.

At each university interviews were undertaken with staff at the levels of senior management, line management, within the educational development groups as well as with faculty staff involved in change projects in teaching and learning. The interviews were analysed using concepts of discursively constructed identities. This analysis drew upon a review of the discourses of work reform within the university to produce a description of the different discursively constructed identities simultaneously present within the universities.

The formal documents, being the official description of how the university is designed to work and reflecting, therefore, of the dominant discourse, were analysed using the theories of power outlined earlier to describe in some detail, the systems and practices these
universities have established over the recent period of managerial reform to facilitate desired changes in teaching and learning.

Against this background, the dynamic relations of power between groups and individuals with differently constructed identities were examined through a second case study using participant observation of a particular teaching change project as it unfolded within one university. When examined in these terms, the ordinary practices of university life were shown to be a ‘thickly layered texture of political struggles concerning power and authority, cultural negotiations over identities, and social constructions of the “problems” at hand’ (Forester 1992, p. 47). Field notes were supplemented by interviews with a range of participants in the change project to generate an ethnographic text from this empirical material. This text was analysed using the relational power theories outlined earlier, in particular Clegg’s circuits of power model and Callon’s four stages of translation, to generate a deeper understanding of what is going on when we attempt to change practice and what this might mean for improved practice.

**Outline of the Chapters**

The two case studies described above have been presented in the following way. The literature review concerning discourses of reform and the analysis of the interview transcripts from case study one are presented first, as these have been used to generate one set of analytical categories for the second case study. Following this, the literature that has been used to interrogate the nature of the relations between differently constructed discursive identities, that of relational theories of power, has been presented followed by the analysis of formal documents describing, through this lens, how this is supposed to work, and how it is revealed to work through the second ethnographic case study of a particular change project. The presentation of the implications of this analysis concludes the study.

Before presenting the literature reviews, data and analyses, however, Chapter 2 describes the major issues involved in my choice of research methodology and provides a description of the methods used to complete each of the analyses outlined above. As I have indicated I was seeking a methodology that could integrate the empirical data from interviews and the ethnographic case study with critical and postmodern theories. There is a long running debate between proponents of different methodologies that suggests that this is impossible, that research approaches with fundamentally different underlying paradigms (such as interpretivist and critical research approaches) are always incompatible. This argument has held considerable sway since Burrell & Morgan (1979) described it under the notion of the *incommensurability of paradigms*. In this chapter I outline how in determining my choice of methodology and methods I have taken account of this long running debate.
Some of the interviews conducted for case study one and all aspects of case study two, the ethnographic study of a teaching and learning change project, are examples of insider research. Being an insider has advantages. An insider researcher has knowledge accumulated over time of the organisation’s practices and some insight into the participants’ meaning systems. It has been argued that this intimacy can have benefits leading to more penetrating analyses of data (Trowler 1998). There are many pitfalls, ethical dilemmas and identity issues, however, in insider research that represent the mirror of these perceived advantages. Issues associated with insider research are addressed in this chapter; in particular the ways in which ethical issues associated with data generated within my own university have driven the creation of innovative and useful research texts, which do not infringe the expectations of participants for confidentiality.

Chapter 3 builds on the brief outline provided above of the managerial changes within the university context, by exploring the different discourses of work reform that have been put into play from these debates about university reform. The influential management discourses of corporate strategy and enterprise are outlined alongside the alternative and resistant discourses from academic and organisational theorists. The ways in which each discourse seeks to constitute the identities of managers, academics and educational support staff are the focus. As the site for the study of directed change for this project is in the domain of teaching and learning, attention is paid to the specific discourses of teaching reform and pedagogy.

Chapter 4 presents an analysis of the interviews conducted in case study one. The discourses outlined in Chapter 3 are used as a heuristic device in interrogating the interview transcripts to reveal the ways in which the discourses have or have not taken hold within the university. The chapter describes how the different discursive frameworks have been incorporated and are revealed through the ways particular actors describe how they engage in teaching and learning change, construct their own identities and practices and those of others. The analysis has been conducted by organisational role, using the categorisation of roles or ‘cast of players’ developed by Mintzberg (1983, p. 26), to allow contrasts and convergences between specific work identity constructions associated with specific roles within the university, to be revealed.

As outlined above, when staff with differently constructed work identities and different understandings of their roles interact in a change project within an institutional context, issues of power are always implicated in these interactions. In Chapter 5 the relational theories of power used to analyse the dynamics of change in this context are presented.
Based on the analysis of formal documents from each university, Chapter 6 presents a picture of how the managers of these universities intend that change be implemented at the broad level and describes the different systems of production, discipline and meaning that have been established to embed practices deemed as desirable. This chapter reveals how the managerial discourses have been enacted in relation to the circuits of episodic agency power, and of system and social integration described by Clegg.

In Chapter 7 the texts generated from the ethnographic case study provide the means to bring together the analyses presented so far. Aspects of the change project studied are presented and then analysed using insights concerning organisational power circuits presented in Chapter 6 and the identity constructs identified and categorised in Chapter 4. The interactions between different participants in the change project recorded in field notes and the sense they make of what is going on revealed in interviews, are used to create a series of richly described ‘conversations’ about change in action. In analysing these interactions at the level of the specific project, the finest grained of the relational theories of power reviewed, that of Callon, is drawn upon extensively.

The insights generated by subjecting these conversations to analysis are then considered for their implications for future practice. These implications are presented in the Epilogue. The research is conducted from my position within a central organisational development unit. This is a position somewhere in the middle of the organisation, working as the operational arm for the centrally determined teaching and learning policies and strategies and with academic staff in teams, departments and faculties at the frontline of teaching practice. It is also a position to the side – separate from the line management hierarchy but dependent upon it. It is from this perspective that consideration of alternative practices is made. The research is resolutely pragmatic and utilitarian. It does not attempt to envisage an entirely different form of university organisation or proffer broad brush utopian visions. Instead it seeks to deepen understanding of current practice and to point towards practical strategies for more effective and equitable practice.

**Summary**

In this chapter I have traced the development of this research project and described the rationale for the key theories chosen as lenses through which to look anew at the empirical data. The study has also been situated within the broad context of change within the Australian university sector. The tensions between the theoretical and empirical dimension of the study have been outlined and the next chapter details my search for a methodology that can bring into a productive relationship, the individual, messy, emotional, narratives of
change that I have captured in interviews and field notes with the concepts of discourse and power briefly described here.
Chapter 2

METHODOLOGY, REPRESENTATION, ETHICS AND RIGOUR

As I outlined in Chapter 1, successful implementation of changes to teaching and learning within universities has proven notoriously difficult beyond the level of the individual enthusiast (Coaldrake & Stedman 1998; Laurillard 1999; Marginson & Considine 2000; Martin 1999; Scott 1999). My experience as a member of an academic development group charged with supporting academic staff to make directed changes to teaching and learning has resonated with the assessment made by Scott (1999, p. xi) that ‘there is more failure in change projects … than there is success’ and has brought the realisation that current approaches to effecting change are inadequate to overcoming this failure.

There is, however, a persistent demand for more and more change, reflected in a burgeoning literature advocating as both desirable and necessary the transformation of universities into enterprises (e.g. Burton 1998; Paterson 1997). An equally substantial and diverse range of critiques by academics of this managerial turn complements this (e.g. Readings 1996; Painter 1997). There are clearly significantly different ways of understanding the changing role of universities. How desirable change is defined and how different staff understand their roles and those of others with respect to such change seems critical to understanding the failure of change initiatives.

Beyond broad based prescriptions for university governance or general critiques it seems valuable to interrogate the precise ways that different groups within universities – senior managers, line managers, academic staff and teaching support staff – understand the task of change, how they make sense for themselves within it, define their own roles in relation to it and how this impacts on change initiatives.

As I have outlined, my search for the concepts that might enable such a precise interrogation of differences within the university led me firstly to the concept of discursively constructed work identities as a means of categorising the differences between different staff and then to relational theories of power in organisations, as a way of exploring the dynamics when staff with differently constructed work identities and role definitions interact.
My purpose in undertaking this research is to imagine, with some precision, alternatives to current change practices that are failing to realise desired outcomes in such a way that space for currently marginalised discourses is recovered.

Different aspects of this research focus suggest different research approaches. The need to uncover the ways individuals make sense of change from their positions within the university requires ways of gaining rich and detailed descriptions from staff concerning their thoughts and experiences. In a similar way, describing the dynamics of change in action suggests the need for close observation of and interaction with staff engaged in change initiatives requiring a sustained connection with everyday life within the organisation. This aspect of the research suggests methods that include interviews and ethnography, qualitative methods common in the interpretivist research tradition that result in rich, textured and evocative narratives. The search for new and enabling concepts, on the other hand, suggests engagement with the abstract and generalised world of critical organisational theory; a self referential world contained in books and journals.

As my search for a suitable methodology proceeded, my immersion in these two very different research worlds seemed, at times, to be pulling me in increasingly divergent directions. This chapter describes the tensions in my search for a methodology and methods that could bring the different dimensions of the research into a productive relationship and the approaches I have adopted to address the issues posed by such a hybrid research focus.

The interpretivist and critical research traditions
The nature and difficulty of the task of bringing the interpretivist and the critical traditions together in a research project can be gauged by acknowledging the very different worlds that are created within the qualitative, interpretivist research literature (particularly in its ethnographic form) and that of critical theory.

Characteristics of the interpretivist tradition
The interpretivist tradition takes as its primary field of interest ‘subjective and intersubjective social knowledge and the active construction and cocreation of such knowledge by human agents’ (Lincoln & Guba 2000, p. 177). It is characterised by a deep concern for the ways participants make sense of their everyday lives and for the privileging of their voices in the resulting research texts. There is a focus on the local and particular to create, in the words of Van Maanen, ‘portraits of diversity in an increasingly homogenous world’ (1988, p. xiv). It is sensitive to meanings and values, allows access to the emotional as well as the rational and

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1 Critical is used in this context as proposed by Alvesson and Deetz (2000) to include the range of theorising from Marxist positions, the critical traditions of the Frankfurt School as well as postmodern approaches.
provides space for the interpretation of symbolic articulations, practices and forms of cultural production (Willis 1997, p. 3). Its orientation is towards narrative reasoning and narrative truth (Richardson 1997; Ellis & Bochner 2000). Much recent ethnographic representation is personal, eschewing the impersonal voice of the academy and firmly locating the author within the text (Behar 1996; Richardson 1997). In autoethnographies, the reader is provided with rich, evocative and often enchanting descriptions based on personal experiences (see for example, Ellis & Bochner 1992 - personal experience of abortion; Creef 2002 & Church 2002 – mother/daughter relationships; Travisano 2002 – ethnic identity formation; Dent 2002 – sexual identity transformation; Pelias, 2002 – relationship with son; Kiesinger, 2002 - relationship with absent father).

**Characteristics of the critical tradition**

Critical theories derived from the Frankfurt School, particularly following the influence of Adorno (1997), on the other hand, are interested in philosophical and sociological concepts such as sources of alienation or communicative distortion (Habermas 1970) and demonstrate a commitment to emancipatory social change. The concern is with broad societal processes, with totalities, with logico-scientific reasoning often at a fairly high level of generality. In much critical writing, the ‘I’ of the author is suppressed. While postmodern theories challenge critical theories based on Marxist or Frankfurt School theorising, by abandoning the totalising and essentialist orientations of modernist systems of thought and valorising the contingent, the fragmentary and the paradoxical, they also mostly operate at a high level of generality. Key theorists are associated with philosophical criticism of modernist traditions from the Enlightenment or with broad based analyses of societal changes that establish the conditions of postmodernity (e.g. Lyotard 1984; Baudrillard 1993). There is a relative absence of micro level empirical studies.

**Relationships between the traditions**

No research tradition is completely homogenous and debates within each of those outlined above have highlighted perceived weaknesses which reflect the strengths of the other and open up the possibility that there might be ways of bringing them together in a productive alliance.

Ethnographic researchers, for example, have drawn attention to the idea that the generation of all data is theory laden and have emphasised the necessity for researchers to explicitly identify their theoretical biases and value commitments and to reflexively consider their impacts on all aspects of the research enterprise. Additionally, some researchers from within the interpretivist community have argued that much current ethnography is inadequate because it does not, in practice, go beyond the invitation to comprehend and appreciate the
actions and subjectivities of minority or marginalised groups. As a predominately descriptive and often highly personal approach, it fails to connect with extant theories or dialogues in social research or to increase vocabularies for social action (Gergen & Gergen 2002). In seeking to address this criticism, a variety of strategies that connect the personal with the public have been proposed building on the notion of ethnography as cultural analysis (Geertz 1993). These include such forms of reflexive ethnography as Richardson’s (2000) Creative Analytic Practices or CAP ethnography and Reinharz’ experiential analysis (1979).

From within the community of critical theorists, some researchers have argued for the need to strengthen the linkages between theory and practice. Within the domain of critical management studies, for example, Alvesson and Deetz (2000) have advocated the value of detailed empirical studies of aspects of organisational life, which they call partial ethnographies, as a means of generating and testing theories in practice.

Before considering in more detail the possibilities for a productive alliance opened up by these critiques, it is necessary to consider a further view that argues that any suggestion that different research traditions can be brought together effectively is a false one. This is based on the notion that separate research paradigms are incommensurable, despite the appearance of potentially fruitful connections, because they are based upon irreconcilable ontological and epistemological positions. In establishing what research methodology I could utilise for this research, I needed to explore this supposed incommensurability as, on first sight, it seems to render the whole research enterprise conceptually flawed and impractical.

**Paradigms in research**

In the area of management research, it was Burrell and Morgan (1979) who first proposed the influential argument of the incommensurability of research paradigms. They suggested that different research paradigms result from different ontological attitudes to ‘reality’ and to different understandings of the nature of ‘society’. The paradigm model they generated uses two axes that reflect these concerns.

**Figure 3: Research paradigms from Burrell and Morgan (1979)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Radical change</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Radical Humanism</strong></td>
<td><strong>Radical Structuralism</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjective</td>
<td>Objective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interpretive Sociology</strong></td>
<td><strong>Functionalist Sociology</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The first axis locates research in terms of its attitude to ‘reality’ along a subjective to objective axis. Subjective positions see social reality as the product of individual consciousness whereas objectivist positions understand reality as external to the individual. The second axis defines the paradigms in terms of their relationship to the sociology of regulation or the sociology of radical change. Regulation encompasses an orientation to explanations that emphasise the underlying unity and cohesiveness of society. The change end of the axis seeks explanations for ‘the radical change, deep seated structural conflict’ and ‘modes of domination’ seen as characteristic of modern societies (p. 17). The four paradigms created by these axes they name: Radical Humanism - subjective / radical change; Interpretive sociology - subjective / regulation; Radical Structuralism - objective / radical change and Functionalist Sociology - objective / regulation.

The two approaches of interest for my research are located in different quadrants and, therefore, incommensurable according to this view. Critical theories including postmodern contributions are located in the Radical Humanist or Radical Structuralist quadrants, while empirically based interpretive approaches are located in the Interpretive Sociology quadrant.

In my continuing search for a methodology for this study, I pursued the ‘incommensurability’ debate and discovered a variety of critiques of Burrell and Morgan’s strict separation of the different paradigmatic research traditions. Of particular interest were critiques emanating from the two traditions with which I was concerned.

Commensurability from the interpretivist viewpoint

From the interpretivist research community Lincoln and Guba (2000) have noted that despite the supposed incommensurability of paradigms there has been, in fact, an explosion of work incorporating both interpretive (particularly ethnographic) approaches and postmodern or critical perspectives. They suggest that this work has been accompanied by increased awareness of paradigmatic issues and that,

… to argue that it is paradigms that are in contention is probably less useful than to probe where and how paradigms exhibit confluence and where and how they exhibit differences, controversies, and contradictions (Ibid, p. 164).

They identify five paradigms – positivism, postpositivism, critical theory, constructivism and participatory research. Points of confluence, the key to unlock the doors between paradigms, they locate in the realm of axiology, the branch of philosophy dealing with ethics, aesthetics and religion.
Are paradigms commensurable? Is it possible to blend elements of one paradigm into another, so that one is engaging in research that represents the best of both worldviews? The answer from our perspective, has to be a cautious yes. This is especially so if the models (paradigms) share axiomatic elements that are similar, or that resonate strongly between them. So, for instance, positivism and postpositivism are already commensurable. In the same vein, elements of interpretivist/postmodern critical theory, constructivist and participatory inquiry fit comfortably together. Commensurability is an issue only when researchers want to ‘pick and choose’ among the axioms of positivist and interpretivist models, because the axioms are contradictory and mutually exclusive (Ibid, p. 174).

**Commensurability from the critical viewpoint**

From the critical management research tradition, Alvesson and Deetz (2000) have reviewed Burrell and Morgan’s model, taking into account postmodern work that has emerged since its publication and come, to a considerable extent, to dominate thinking in social discourses. They have proposed an alternative four quadrant model that challenges the notion that different research paradigms are necessarily incommensurable.

The first of the two axes in Alvesson and Deetz’ model concerns the relationship of research to currently dominant social discourses. They name this axis Consensus/Dissensus. The second axis refers to the ways in which concepts and problems in research are generated. This axis is a continuum between Local/emergent approaches to Elite/a priori points of departure. The axes generate an alternative four quadrant model to Burrell and Morgan’s. They name the four quadrants: Dialogic studies – postmodern, deconstruction; Interpretive studies – premodern, traditional; Critical studies – late modern, reformist; Normative studies – modern, progressive.

According to Alvesson and Deetz, this looser, less constraining categorisation no longer generates incommensurable paradigms but rather, ‘particular lines of assumptions and understandings which develop mobile but specifiable relations to each other and position particular types of conflicts and contradictions internal to them’ (Ibid, p. 25).

The critiques described above reopen the possibility, apparently closed down by Burrell and Morgan, that aspects of different research traditions might usefully be combined but require that the positioning of any such research be clearly specified within the now expanded and more fluid range of possibilities. Key concerns for the positioning of my research are the way in which reality is understood on the continuum between subjective and objective positions and the ways in which it might be considered critical, given the broad definition of that tradition I have used so far.
Subjective and objective conceptions of reality

How reality is understood is important for this research because it is concerned with action in the world. My purpose in undertaking this study is to provide a basis for alternative modes of practice within the university. As the data upon which such alternatives will be based will be drawn significantly from talk; from conversation with participants about their experiences and the sense they make of them, the relationship of this data to the ‘real’ world is critical.

The advantages of an objective or realist position for change oriented research is clear. If as is claimed in the positivist research tradition, empirical work provides direct access to objective reality, researchers can be confident that with careful design and correct methods they can uncover accurate understandings, or the truth about the aspect of the world being studied, and confidently make prescriptions for action (Latour 1999).

Challenges to positivist assertions that empirical work provides direct access to objective reality have been mounted for a long time. Early critiques came from interpretivist positions that emphasised the ways in which researcher prestructurings affect every aspect of the research enterprise (Denzin & Lincoln 2002) and from feminists emphasising the pervasive effects of male domination on research design and findings. High levels of consensus concerning what constitutes the ‘truth’ may give the view of ‘knowledge so produced as “objective”, but it is, in fact, intersubjectively generated’ (Astley 1985, p. 5). If we accept this view that language, far from simply mirroring reality, constructs the phenomenon it is taken to represent (Hammersley & Atkinson 1983; Gergen and Gergen 2002) we can have no confidence about the relationship between data expressed in words and any objective reality. At its most extreme, this is a challenge to the notion of objective reality itself as something independent of human consciousness where, it is argued, language can tell us nothing about reality, only about itself. Clearly, the status of any suggestions for changed action in such circumstances is vexed.

The concept of subtle realism developed by Hammersley (1992) provides an alternative to the strict separation between objectivist/realist and subjectivist positions outlined above. Subtle realism takes from naive realism a belief in the existence of phenomena independent of our claims about them without, however, assuming that we can have unmediated contact with them. It takes from subjectivist positions the recognition that all knowledge is a human construction based on embedded assumptions and purposes. It thus avoids the worst relativist excesses of the extreme subjectivist position, that of Solipsism, which denies any form of reality outside individual consciousness. By recognising a relationship between an objective reality and consciousness, however mediated, subtle realism preserves the
possibility of action. This is action based upon relative certainties rather than the absolute certainties sought by realist research, which claims direct correspondence between an objective reality and our knowledge of it (Latour 1999).

Few researchers would dismiss the role of language in the social construction of reality and the issues it raises for empirical research, however, Alvesson (2002) notes that the majority of empirical research is still conducted as if data give unmediated access to objective reality – either external reality or the inner worlds of respondents. In the interpretation of textual data in this research, the challenge is to adequately recognise the role of language and the constructed nature of reality while still allowing that the research says something about the world.

The positioning of this research with regard to the subjective/objective divide
Consistent with the concept of subtle realism outlined earlier, Alvesson (2002) advocates a position that sees the problem of textual representation as relative and contingent rather than absolute. In other words he suggests a pragmatic approach that accepts that all access to objective reality is mediated through language in the text work of social science research, however, he allows for the relative capacity of language to convey insights, experiences and factual information. Judgments by the researcher about the extent to which any statement might be taken to say something about the world, depend upon a careful assessment of the context and the relative complexity of the issue about which the statement is made. This is in keeping with the subtle realist idea of their being a mutual mediation between the discursively constructed subject and the outside world, such that neither one gains the upper hand. According to this view, language cannot say anything definitive about the world but it is not entirely arbitrary either. It is this position that has been adopted for this research.

In what way is this research critical?
In Chapter 1, I briefly described the positioning of this research in relation to the critical management research tradition broadly defined to include both Marxist and postmodern theorising, by outlining my interest in using theories of discourse and power as lenses through which to examine approaches to change within the university. Theoretical interest in issues of contingent identities, the role of discourse in the constitution of such contingent identities and of power in the production of reality are more frequently associated with postmodernism than with traditional modernist emancipatory critical theories from the Frankfurt School. The latter’s neo-Marxist inspired tradition of critical theory and different postmodern positions are based on radically different analyses of society and make different propositions about how change can be effected. In Burrell and Morgan’s terms the differences are those between Radical Structuralism and Radical Humanism. In Alvesson
and Deetz’ terms it concerns the location of this research on the Dissensus/Consensus axis of their model. Once again, in relation to the action-oriented purposes of this research, it is necessary to position it more precisely within the critical management paradigm.

The project of the critical theorists of the Frankfurt School was a continuation of the Marxist concern for emancipation from the contradictions and repressive consequences of capitalism. The project was ‘fuelled by its firm conviction that, operating within and as a part of modernity’, it could be at once ‘subversive and redemptive’ (Crotty 1998, p.193) by enquiring into the anomalies of modernity, calling its received notions into question and seeking emancipation from the tyranny of instrumental reason. Critical modernism, while challenging the most damaging results of modernity nonetheless operated within its primary tenets. Its acceptance of modernism’s claims to universal, objective knowledge, coupled with its desire to free society from repression, resulted in a form of vanguardism inherent in its conviction that change involves a commitment from those who uncover the truth to emancipate others from the false consciousness that prevents their seeing this truth.

Critical theory, as a critique of modernity has many points of continuity with postmodern theories, which also challenge modernity. In Lather’s (1991, p.19) terms, the varied critical discourses can be seen as ‘differing practices and impulses that both weave together and interrupt one another rather than as fixed, contrasting positions’. In particular, she adds (Ibid, p. 89) ‘it is not that the dreams of modernity are unworthy; it is what they render absent and their conflictual and confusing outcomes that underscore the limits of reason and the obsolescence of modernist categories and institutions.’

Postmodern theories, as a response to this challenge and informed by the new economic conditions of postmodernity (Harvey 1990) question modernity’s fundamental underpinnings. As Crotty (1998, p. 185) notes, postmodernism,

… refuses all semblance of the totalising and essentialist orientations of modernist systems of thought. Where modernism purports to base itself on generalised, indubitable truths about the way things really are, postmodernism abandons the entire epistemological basis for any such claims to truth. Instead of espousing clarity, certitude, wholeness and continuity, postmodernism commits itself to ambiguity, relativity, fragmentation, particularity and discontinuity.

Crotty (drawing on Hassan) suggests that despite the continuities between radical modernism and postmodernism, the significant differences lie in the latter’s progressive decentering of the traditional autonomous subject and its refusal of all forms of totalisation as potentially totalitarian – its incredulity to all metanarratives (Lyotard 1984). A result of these
positions is that postmodernism denies the modern vision of the redemption of modern life and, indeed, denies the possibility of utopian visions within postmodern life.

The positioning of this research in relation to critical and postmodern positions

It is the relativism inherent in postmodern positions that poses the challenge for this study. It is informed by the postmodern recognition of the fragmentary nature of reality, the irreducibility of different lifeworlds and the multiplicity of relations of power (Apple 1991). It is, nonetheless, informed by a desire to make a difference, to take a stand in the interest of a more just, more equitable and less damaging organisational world. For some, these positions appear irreconcilable, the former associated with postmodern perspectives and the latter with the redemptive project of modernism. The relativism of the postmodern position that recognises the epistemological validity of many different points of view in a fragmentary world is taken to mean that no stand can be taken. The modern commitment to a more just world must be surrendered, it is suggested, alongside its commitments to universal knowledge and values.

The tension in positioning this research, therefore, is the tension between my desire to take a stand and make a difference, while drawing upon the insights of postmodernism and avoiding analyses based on supposed irreconcilable differences between employment categories, (them and us) or the monological vanguardism of critical approaches which require that as researcher I should uncover the single truth and reveal the false understandings others have to them.

Many researchers (du Gay 1996a; Lather 1991; Usher & Edwards 1994) have sought to address the challenge of how judgements can be made, how we can act in the ambiguous and uncertain world that results from postmodern theorising, how we can overcome the need for modernist certainties about the universality of knowledge and the applicability of universal values but still recognise and act upon injustice.

Usher and Edwards (1994, p. 27) summarise the issues associated with relativism as follows.

… it is possible to acknowledge many and different points of view whilst denying them equal value. This can be done without the need for a clear and unshakeable foundation. We can still act ethically and still fight for some things rather than others but we have to do this within the practices of everyday life and struggle rather than an appeal to a transcendent and invariant set of values. As Shotter (1992) argues, epistemic relativity is not the same as moral relativity. Indeed, a postmodern perspective, given that it questions notions of a single and unequivocal ‘truth’, better allows us to foreground questions of justice.
The key to pursuing justice in this context, to continuing to question and resist forms of power that situate and subjugate despite the relativism of all positions, is to valorise a continuous struggle for local meanings over the desire for a final and universal resolution (Ibid 1994). This will result in a continuous struggle to temporarily fix meaning in particular social interests within particular local contexts. In it, a heuristic of next moves based upon a conversational process of continuous exchange replaces the search for certain knowledge (Bauman 1992). Research can inform just action by focusing on ‘ways of knowing which interrupt relations of dominance and subordination’ (Lather 1991, p. xvii).

It is this that this research seeks to achieve. By making the constructed identities and relations of power at the heart of practices of directed teaching innovation its core, it seeks to make the differing subject positions more widely visible by creating the possibilities for people to speak for themselves. By uncovering the way that power works and highlighting the political nature of existing conditions for the implementation of teaching innovations it may be possible to increase knowledge upon which to act and influence new forms of identity and new institutional practices. This may seem utopian, however, when power analysis moves away from a focus on a simple ‘us’ and ‘them’ struggle, it becomes a possibility. An approach that recognises the multiple sites of power and the ways in which discourses both empower and disempower secures the possibility of effective local action. Such action takes ‘advantage of mobile and transitory points, inherent in the networks of power relations’ (Weedon in Lather 1991, p. 39) to secure more equitable outcomes.

The overall positioning of this research in the light of the above discussion

Following the explorations outlined above, a critical management research methodology has been adopted for this work. Such an approach allows for the combination of the richly textured, and individually voiced data that can be generated through interview and ethnography with the theoretical concepts of, and commitment to just and equitable action, from postmodern theory.

In terms of the paradigm debates, this research is based on the notion of a continuum of research positions rather than the rigid paradigmatic separation of Burrell and Morgan’s initial proposition. In relation to Alvesson and Deetz’ elaboration of this view, it is located at the Dissensus end of their first axis, concerned with:

… the ways dominant discourses (though often disorganized and disjunctive) place limitations on people in general, including managers, and limit successful functioning of organizations in meeting human needs. (Alvesson & Deetz 2000, p. 25)

It is located at the Local/emergent end of their second axis, concerned with,
… the situated nature of the research enterprise. Problem statements, the researcher’s attention, and descriptions are worked out as a play between communities. The theoretical vocabulary carried into the research activity is often considered by the researcher as a ‘first cut’ or guide to getting started, and is constantly open to new meanings, and re-differentiation based on interactions in the research process.” (Ibid p. 30)

The investigations in search of a methodology described so far have been at a conceptual level, concerned with establishing the possibility and legitimacy of this research in ontological and epistemological terms. The above quotation, however, opens up the question of the practical approaches, the methods that can be used to undertake research that brings different research traditions together. How can theoretical positions be used as a ‘first cut’ and not a determinant of the meanings to be found? How can the research remain open to new meanings ‘based on interactions in the research process’?

**Bringing the traditions together in practice – insight, critique and transformational redefinition**

Alvesson and Deetz (2000) suggest a practical approach to critical management research incorporating interpretive methods is to limit the study to a *partial* ethnography focussing on some areas of the everyday action within an organisation, rather than on the organisation as a whole culture. They suggest three stages, which they name insight, critique and transformational redefinition as a means of describing their approach to the critical analysis of the ethnographic text generated. They note that the research stages overlap in practice, however, they provide a useful vehicle for describing the practical linkages between the traditions of interpretive research and critical analysis used in this study.

I have used the three stages to provide a description of what is entailed in each stage, drawing upon insights from both research traditions and then outlined specific issues relating to each stage and the methods used in this study to address them.

**Stage 1 – Insight**

*Insight from a critical management perspective*

Critical management research defines insight as a form of interpretation that penetrates taken for granted, culturally dominant meanings to see the ways in which knowledge and the seemingly objective character of objects and events are created and sustained. Insight addresses something that is not obvious within a specific situation and makes sense of it in a way that is perceived to be enriching.
The practice of interpretation involves reviewing all empirical material, generated from interviews, conversations and the observation of behaviours, from many angles to form a gestalt. There are many possible interpretations, many possible gestalts latent in any set of empirical material. Interpretation, then, always requires a thematic or theoretical focus that enables the identification of one set of patterns within the data. Critical management research emphasises that there is always a particular orientation, a thematic focus, in any research. This must be so in order that a single interpretation be created from the many possible ones.

**Insight from the interpretivist perspective**

This understanding of the nature of insight from the critical management research tradition is consistent with the concerns from the interpretivist tradition noted earlier, that the shape of ethnographic stories, the observations they are based upon, what is included and what excluded and the meaning they impose are all theory-laden choices of the writer (Van Maanen 1988; Denzin & Lincoln 2002, Richardson 2002). These accounts intend to be polyvocal, to faithfully reproduce the many facets of the data collected but at the same time make claims to having found the ‘best truth’ in the data (Boucher 2001a, p.194). As Richardson (1992, p. 131) notes:

> No matter how we stage the text, we – the authors – are doing the staging. As we speak about people we study, we also speak for them. As we inscribe their lives we bestow meaning and promulgate values.

Recognition from within both research traditions that theoretical preferences, whether implicit or explicit, shape what the researcher sees in the data, suggests the need for practices to avoid pre-emptive interpretive closure, that is the forcing of a preferred view onto the situation. Alvesson and Deetz recommend a relatively loose theoretical approach at the outset, drawing on a variety of possible interpretive frames. Geertz (1993, p. 20), in relation to ethnography suggested that ‘analysis is (or should be) guessing at meanings, assessing the guesses, and drawing explanatory conclusions from the better guesses …’ To provide the soundest basis for such guessing, he proposed the need for thick description of the situation being researched.

**Thick description as a form of insight**

Thick description involves protracted, bodied, concrete description that reveals the meaning particular social actions have for those who enact them. It seeks to uncover the conceptual structures that inform participants’ acts.
How the insight that is involved in creating a thick description is actually achieved through rigorous interpretive practices has been a sustained focus of enquiry in hermeneutic traditions. Schleiermacher in the late eighteenth century created the concept of the hermeneutical circle to describe how meaning is revealed through interpretation. The hermeneutical circle describes the paradox of interpretation, that is that the individual parts of a whole cannot be understood except in the context of an understanding of the whole and yet, the whole cannot be understood without understanding the meaning of the parts.

Interpretation, then, is an iterative practice that involves attention to the parts and the whole sequentially. Interpretation is a design like activity, a form of making (Schön 1983) or fashioning (Geertz 1993). It is a recursive process, thinking about thinking (Glanville 2003), where initial tentative gestalts incorporating prestructurings of the field of view based on initial theoretical frameworks must be tested and held open to new insights based on empirical material that is dissonant (Hillier, Musgrove & O'Sullivan 1972). Interpretive understanding is an emergent phenomenon utilising a form of heuristic reasoning that tacks between a priori understandings and the world as seen in those terms (Rowe 1982). To guard against pre-emptive interpretive closure, the focus must be on variations, ambiguities and confusions in ideas, meanings and vocabularies as well as to discourses that are resistant and ones that are separated or compartmentalised from the dominate one.

**The role of metaphor in generating insight**

Reflexive ethnographers have drawn attention to the value of metaphor in this process.

> Metaphors are everywhere ... They organize social scientific work and affect the interpretations of the ‘facts’; indeed, facts are interpretable (‘make sense’) only in terms of their place within a metaphoric structure. The ‘sense making’ is always value constituting – making sense in a particular way, privileging one ordering of the ‘facts’ over others. (Richardson, 2000, p. 927)

Metaphors organise social scientific work and they organise the sense individuals and groups make of their lives. All narratives, irrespective of whether they are theoretical, personal or collective ones contain an implicit, guiding, metaphoric structure. Attention to these implicit metaphoric structures can reveal relationships between individual's stories and those that have been encoded as theory.

The product of the insight stage is what is traditionally the end point of much ethnography – a detailed description of the situation or experience being researched and explanation from the perspective of the participants – the natives’ point of view. In critical research this becomes an artefact for further analysis.
Before considering the subsequent stages of critique and transformative redefinition in critical management research, as detailed by Alvesson and Deetz (2000), I have described below the specific methods of interpretation and approaches to creating the descriptive texts in each of the case studies in this research. In the creation of these texts, particularly that associated with the insider ethnographic study of the dynamics of a change project, ethical issues have been central. How these have been negotiated and how they have shaped the text are also described.

**Methods of interpretation and the creation of ‘insightful’ texts for this research**

Earlier in this chapter, I described broadly the issues that emerge concerning the relationship between language and reality, if language is not taken to provide a clear and unclouded mirror to the world but to be implicated in its construction. Alvesson (2002) has described three different ways in which researchers wishing to make sense of textual empirical material can do so without betraying their commitment to a constructivist view of reality.

At the most extreme end, he suggests, *Grounded fictionalism* uncouples the text from social reality, adopting the complete relativist position that language cannot say anything definite about the world. *Data-constructivist research*, on the other hand, accepts a loose relationship between what goes on in the world and the data produced by the researcher. In this form, empirical material is important but not as important as what is done with it.

Data-constructivism thus emphasizes the two ingredients – empirical material and the messy, often half-conscious and imagination-dependent use of metaphors that give the theory and research question a particular undertone – in different, sometimes hard to define, ways interfering with (helping but also constraining) the research process (Ibid, p. 75-76).

The third approach he names *discursive pragmatism*. Its major interest is discursively produced outcomes, which are seen as providing the vehicle for illuminating issues ‘close’ to the discourse such as espoused values and attitudes. Discursive pragmatism acknowledges the complexities of language use, the quality of language outcomes as accomplishments, but still aims to say something about the relationship between what participants say and broader patterns of social meaning. It is this approach that I have adopted in the creation of the analytical texts for both case studies. In case study one my concern is with discourse and language as used by participants to construct their identities. In case study two, my concern is with both language and action and, as noted previously, language is taken to provide only relative certainty about action in the world.
Case study one – the interview sample, methods and analysis

As outlined in Chapter 1, empirical material was collected through two case studies. The first consisted of unstructured interviews with fifty three staff at a variety of levels and roles within five similar universities and was used to generate a categorisation of how staff within these disparate roles describe their work identity and roles in relation to change in teaching and learning. What discourses do they draw upon in making sense of their work world? What ways do they frame their actions?

The universities selected for this study were the Australian Technology Network (ATN) universities. These universities represent a ‘most like’ sample as they are all recently established universities, having come into existence through amalgamations of Colleges of Advanced Education with a variety of other institutions following the Commonwealth Government (1988) reforms. All are large with a strong orientation to professional education and offer a very similar mix of degree and post graduate courses. This sample was considered appropriate as it minimises the effects of large variations between organisations with significantly different histories and traditions, particularly the differences between professional and disciplinary academic cultures, such that the analytic focus remains on the dynamics within the organisations. The choice of this sample also facilitated access because of the network relationships between the institutions.

Within each university a purposive sample (Glaser & Strauss 1967) of staff was selected for interview. The universities determined the actual staff invited based on a schedule provided to them. This stipulated that staff from each group identified in Mintzberg’s (1983, p. 29) analysis of the ‘cast of players’ in the ‘organisational power game’ be included. ‘Directors’ included Deputy Vice Chancellors and Pro Vice Chancellors whose roles were primarily managerial and in all cases included the most senior staff member with responsibility for teaching and learning (8 participants). ‘Line managers’ included deans and heads of department or school and directors of central support groups (20 participants). ‘Operators’ included lecturers and senior lecturers who do not hold line management positions and who have been actively involved with teaching change projects in at least two different faculties in each university (10 participants). ‘Support staffers’ include staff in central university academic development units as well as specially designated staff within faculties whose sole role is the support of teaching and learning development in accordance with the strategy of the university (15 participants, 9 central and 6 faculty).

All interviews were conducted by me and took the form of informal conversations. In most instances they were of approximately one hour duration. One interview involved a group of staff and one a pair of staff rather than individuals. Each interview commenced with a request
to the participant to describe how he or she was involved in implementing change in teaching and learning and about his or her experience of that practice. Follow up questions followed the flow of the conversation and were confined to prompting further comment (eg, are there other instances or experiences that you could tell me about?) or with seeking clarification (eg, I'm not sure I fully understand. Can you explain that to me another way?). All subjects were asked at the end of the interview to describe what they thought were the major impediments to successful change. All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed.

Staff who agreed to participate in the interviews were extremely generous and frank in their discussions. Throughout the interview transcripts there are a number of requests not to quote particular statements or refer to particular opinions or incidents. In all cases these requests have been observed. To protect the identities of the participants, quotations from the transcripts have been attributed to groups of staff in accordance with Mintzberg’s divisions described above, however, I have changed some terminology, ‘directors’ to senior managers and ‘operatives’ to faculty staff to be more consistent with university nomenclature.

Interviews were understood as accomplishments at the local level that provide access to how participants attempt to inscribe order under the pretence to represent (Alvesson, 2002) and to the repertoire of narratives that are used in producing these accounts (Silverman 2001). With reference to the earlier discussion of the relationship between text and reality, one level of the analysis of these transcripts was concerned directly with language, with the ways in which the participants discursively constructed their work identities as seen in relation to textual descriptions of available discourses.

At the level of practices, consistent with Alvesson’s (2002) view that language can be taken to tell us something about the world with relative certainty, the interviews were taken to shed some light on actual practices. Commonality in descriptions of behaviour across a range of interviews, reflection on the consistency of what was said with available documents and consistency with my own understandings from insider experience were used as supports when making such judgements. Any reading, however, will be partial and contingent and no greater claim is made for this research.

The interview transcripts were sorted into groups by the role designations previously described, as preliminary investigation and my practice experiences suggested that role variation would be significant. The process of analysis, however, was designed to prevent pre-emptive closure, that is, only seeing patterns in the data that reinforced my preconceptions. The reflections on my own positioning within the Prologue and Chapter 3 were designed to make my biases explicit and to provide a further insurance against this.
The analysis of the interview transcripts made use of the review of available discourses of work identity within the university presented in the next chapter. Key words and concepts from each of the different discourses were distilled and used as a heuristic when reviewing each transcript. Over a number of readings all passages within each transcript that connected with a specific discourse of work reform and its associated forms of identity construction were highlighted. For example, references to strategies and the implementation of plans were taken as a signal that the discourse of corporate strategic management was of relevance. The context of such statements was then reviewed to determine how the participant was relating this discourse to the conditions of his or her work and how it was informing the construction of work identity. Similarly, words relating to the market or marketisation of education were taken as a signal that the enterprise discourse might be relevant. Once again, the context was used to reveal whether such references were to a conception of education as the selling of products or whether it simply provided an explanatory background for justifying a corporate strategic management or other approach.

In making judgements about the major discourses in play the participant’s attitude to organisational culture was critical. In each transcript, evidence was sought concerning whether the participant endorsed the necessity for and desirability of a single organisational culture and described their role in terms of bringing others to an understanding of this necessity or whether he or she saw the desirability of sustaining multiple cultures and described a role designed to preserve this variety.

After the review of each transcript in a role grouping was complete, the highlighted passages from each transcript were combined and recorded under the heading of the specific discourse to which they referred. First, direct references to a discourse were assembled when a participant described or explained his or her actions or views in terms that directly referred to a particular discourse. Second, indirect references were added when the comments made or actions described by a participant could be clearly inferred as supporting a particular discursive position. Third, comments about the identities or roles of others within the organisation were differentiated in the same way. Finally, specific views on pedagogy were sought and categorised in relation to each discourse revealed.

Following the assembly of all relevant passages, the discourses drawn upon by each set of role grouped participants could be identified and a schema was then developed to describe the relationships between the observed discourses. In developing the schema, questions of whether one discourse was dominant for this grouping; whether different discourses were
distributed throughout and in what fashion; whether discourses were intertwined etc; were tested.

Once an initial schema was developed, based on the overall sense I had developed through the process of assembling all the relevant comments, this was tested by ensuring that each of the comments could, in fact, be accounted for in the categorisation flowing from the schema. If, through this process, some passages remained unaccounted for, they were again reviewed in the context of the specific interview to ensure they had been clearly understood and then the schema was redeveloped until all passages were included. This required several iterations for each of the role groupings and the generation of categories which straddled the neat discourse divisions described in the following chapter. Once a satisfactory categorisation of discursively constructed work identities was developed for each role group, this was documented using quotations from the transcripts to illustrate differences and commonalities. The final step was a review of the classifications developed within each role grouping with those within each of the others, to describe the ways in which different discursively developed identities connected or did not connect between role groups.

Case study two – the partial ethnography, methods and analysis

The second case study involved participant observation of a group of staff involved in a teaching and learning change project so that the relations of power at play in the innovation process might be studied and the effects of different identity constructions and practices explored. This was a partial ethnography in that it considered a part of the organisation and focused on an innovation event rather than the whole institution.

The innovation was directed by the strategy of the university and was to design and develop a new undergraduate degree program using a capability based approach to curriculum in such a way that it might be flexibly delivered to remote students. This case was a part of my normal work and so my participation was in my role as an employee in the institution where the project was located, charged with supporting teaching innovation as well as in the capacity of researcher. All participants in this project were invited to engage in an unstructured interview at the completion of the curriculum development project. The interview commenced with the invitation to reflect upon the experience of the project and to highlight any particular events or circumstances that, in their view, were critical to what happened. The interviews were designed to capture, in the voice of each participant, the sense he or she had made of the experience and the ways in which they understood their role and that of others. All staff in the core group i.e. lecturers and senior lecturers actually involved in developing and teaching the new degree program accepted this invitation as did all support staff. Three of the staff in line management positions in the faculty actively involved with the
innovation declined the offer. The unwillingness of some of the managers involved to contribute their views was a disappointment as the interviews provided the most direct insight into how different actors in the change project understood their own actions and those of others. As an analysis based on relational concepts of power is concerned with effects rather than intentions, however, the absence of these interviews is not completely disabling, as the positions adopted by these managers can be inferred from their actions recorded in field notes and documents and reflected by others.

The process of teaching change that provided the focus of this partial ethnography took place over one year. During this time I kept three kinds of field notes – observation notes, theoretical notes and personal notes (Richardson 2000). Observational notes were used to record as accurately as possible the sequence of events, the ‘plot’ of the development. Records include all documents produced during the course of the work that were given approval through the University’s ethics clearance process. These were emails, minutes of meetings and the output from workshops. Theoretical notes were kept to record thinking about the meaning of the events in relation to readings that were being undertaken in parallel with the observations. Finally, personal notes were kept which record my reflections and feelings during the course of the project. These were sometimes used to test my feelings against those of others. Altogether these amounted to many hundreds of typed pages when assembled.

Data reduction for the ethnography
In developing any ethnography, vast amounts of data need to be condensed. In traditional ethnographies this is often achieved around conventional categories concerning structure and cultural practices. In this research the focus is not on a description of the structure and organisation of the whole institution but rather on the dynamics of actions over time in relation to different roles within the organisation. The approaches developed to distil the mass of data for these purposes are described below.

The first stage in the process was to combine and review all the field notes and documents and create a chronological summary of the events of the change project. The resulting summary was 123 pages in length and referred to the more extensive original documents in three lever arch folders which amounted to over 1200 pages of text.

In the next stage, this still lengthy text was developed as a visual chart, similar to a flow chart, mapping the events in the chronology according to the circuits identified by Clegg, that is, whether the event seemed to fall predominantly within the circuit of episodic agency power, the circuit of system integration or the circuit of social integration as outlined in
Chapter 1 and described further in Chapter 5. For example, if the event were a meeting between the Dean and the Project Leader where the outcome was an agreement to do something based upon the Dean’s positional power, the event would be classified as belonging to the circuit of episodic agency power. If the event were a discussion amongst the design team concerning the tasks at hand and how they might be understood, the event would be classified as belonging predominantly to the circuit of social integration because of its attention to matters of meaning and membership. A first attempt at establishing linkages between events was also made in this translation of the data. The chart was 15 A2 pages in length and so still an unwieldy representation of the experience of change.

The next translation of the data involved annotating the chart with the particular tactics of power evident by drawing on the vocabulary of possibilities from the review of the literature on relational theories of power. The tactics identified by Callon (1986) and Latour (1986) were of particular benefit at this micro level of analysis.

In order to establish what the most significant events and activities were within the detailed record in the visual chronology, I used the 10 interviews with staff involved in the change project. These included a Head of School, the Project Leader, two educational support staff and six academic team members. The events recounted as significant by each participant were highlighted on the chronology. A high level of commonality was discovered between assessments of the most critical events by different participants.

Each interview transcript was summarised to include the descriptions and explanations of key events and key expressions or metaphors used by each participant. This analysis also resulted in the establishment of what discursively constructed work identity informed the way each participant approached his or her role in the change project using the categories developed through the first case study and this was recorded and added to the visual chart.

The next stage of data translation involved developing a more condensed summary of events and activities highlighting all and only those identified as key by the participants. This condensed summary was more richly annotated with detailed analyses of the tactics used and the variety of ways these were interpreted by the participants influenced by their differently constructed work identities and roles. From this condensation of the data a pattern of stages could be identified. These stages became the sub-headings as I returned from the charts to writing a full text version of the change project.
Ethical representation in ethnography

The first ethnographic text generated was a story based on the key events identified and the differing interpretations of these rendered in a dramatic style, drawing on quotations from the interviews and from field notes to create dialogue in an effort to capture the authentic voices of the participants in action. My reflections as participant observer were incorporated as dialogue in the story or through the connecting narration about events, activities and my experience of them as a means of making my position clear and making the tale a reflexive one. In order to protect the participants’ identities, I changed names, concealed the location of the study within the university, altered the gender of some participants as they became characters in the story and attempted to disguise the particulars of location. The result, however, was a still recognisable tale with the potential to identify the participants at least for those within the organisation in which it took place. An alternative means of presenting the data needed to be developed which stayed as close as possible to the record but which provided more complete confidentiality and greater protection for all the participants.

In addition to this ethical concern for participant protection from possible harm was my understanding that for this study, the text created would provide a starting point for further critique and that, therefore, the form of the artefact created had its own requirements. Alvesson and Deetz (2000) suggest that the possibilities of useful critical analysis are enhanced by an expansive and evocative recall of fieldwork detail in the ethnographic text. In his review of types of ethnography, Van Maanen (1988 p.102) suggests that impressionist tales meet this requirement by providing, ‘a representational means of cracking open the culture and the fieldworker’s way of knowing it so that both can be jointly examined.’ My first story was just such an impressionistic tale, but could not ethically be presented in this form. My search was for a form of textual representation that would convey the richness of the experiences of change from the multiple perspectives of the participants which could provide a basis for analysis and critique, while still protecting the identities of the participants and limiting the chances that they would be harmed by participating in the research. To find a suitable form I explored alternative modes of representation that have developed recently and have come to be called blurred genres.

The development of these new genres has been inspired by a range of intentions in addition to the ethical concerns that impelled my search for new forms of representation. New genres attempt to avoid the traditional form of impersonal academic writing as reflective of a particular and inappropriate view of knowledge (Richardson 2000) and, instead, aim to reflect the messy, emotional and poly vocal nature of the data as a means of being faithful to the situation studied.
Alternate, experimental forms of ethnographic representation have included autoethnography, where the researcher provides a closely observed story from his or her personal experiences (e.g., Behar 1996; Ellis 1995; Geertz, 1988) and performance ethnography, where a dramatic text is created from the data, designed for performance that often invites participation from the audience (e.g., McCall & Becker 1990). Other researchers have presented ethnographic studies as poetry, where the data is stripped to its essence (e.g., Richardson 1992; Brearley 2001; Boucher; 2001b) or as conversations which reconstruct or imaginatively create conversations which may have taken place by utilising data from a variety of sources (e.g., Ellis & Bochner 1996). Still others have mixed these genres and combined them with images or objects (e.g. Church, 1999, Burrows, 2001, Jones, 2001).

To address the ethical concerns outlined above while staying true to the impressionist narrative described previously, I have presented the ethnography as a series of conversations between participants. Each of the conversations has been developed to illustrate a particular insight from one stage of the story. The dialogue used in these scenes is quoted directly from the interviews or from dialogue recorded as field notes and adapted only to the extent necessary to make the dialogue flow in the chosen setting. The two stories provided in the Prologue provide examples of this approach.

Stage 2 - Critique

The description above outlines how insight in the terms of critical management studies was developed in relation to the case studies for this research and the nature of the texts generated through the process.

Insight already contains an element of critique in that it is based upon the notion that already existing, commonsense understandings are insufficient. The nature of critique within the insight stage of interpretation differs, however, from the stage Alvesson and Deetz (2000) name critique because the latter is explicitly focused on asymmetrical power relations, the domination of some discourses and the marginalisation of others.

Critique from the interpretivist position

In the language of ethnography, the critique stage most closely resembles Geertz (1993) notion of specification. This is the complement of thick description described earlier. In the creation of the insightful text, the ‘ethnographer “inscribes” social discourse; he writes it down. In doing so, he turns it from a passing event, which exists only in its own moment of occurrence, into an account, which exists in its inscription and can be reconsulted’ (Ibid, p. 19). This inscription can be regarded as providing an ‘experience of the experience’ under
study (Ellis and Bochner 1992, p.98) and is available for further experiencing and critique in a recursive practice by the author or by others.

Thick description or inscription, therefore, provides a bridge to the stage of critique where observed action is specifically analysed in relation to the theoretical constructs of interest by providing ‘the sort of sensible actuality that makes it possible to think not only realistically and concretely about them (the mega-concepts of social science) but, what is more important, creatively and imaginatively with them’ (Ibid, p. 23).

**Critique from a critical management position**
The stage of critique in critical management research builds upon the interpretations of the insight stage but does not accept that the appearance of particular configurations of social relations are naturally occurring. Its focus is on the ways in which particular social orders are selected, controlled and sustained. It is necessarily concerned with the strategies, the relations of power and knowledge that are used to shape specific conditions.

**The creation of the critical text**
In the presentation of the ethnographic case study, the fictional conversations described above have been connected by narrative text that simply describes, but does not evoke or richly narrate, the events of the change project utilising concepts of relational power. The narrative sections of the text are interleaved with passages of analysis that seek to make the connections between the activities evoked and the analytical concepts drawn from theories of discourse and power reviewed in Chapters 3 and 5 respectively. This interleaving is indebted to textual developments by Ronai (1992, 2002) in the form of a layered text. In her ethnographic work, she inserts interpretive reflections that draw upon postmodern theoretical concerns with identity into her emotively charged autoethnographical work. The layering in my text is signalled by the separation of differing texts in different voices through the use of the formatting device of three asterisks described previously.

**Stage 3 - Transformative redefinition**
Transformative redefinition is concerned with the possibility of change and the contribution research can make to the creation of conditions that foster productive and more participative forms of social practice. The concern is not with the provision of recipe like answers but for contributions that provoke fresh thinking and stimulate dialogue within the organisational site. There are two related dimensions in this stage. The first is concerned with where ideas for desirable change might be found and how these insights might inform change within the research site. The second is with the relationship between the researcher and research participants throughout the research and the impact of this relationship on change possibilities.
The production of potentially transformative ideas is necessarily a work of imagination, which nevertheless needs to remain closely bound to the everyday world it addresses. Alvesson and Deetz (2000) suggest that ideas for alternative organisational strategies may be found in the empirical material to the extent that it reveals alternative and currently marginalised views. Additionally, ideas might be adapted from other similar or dissimilar organisational sites. Finally, the theoretical framework itself might suggest directions for change that can be developed in relation to the specifics of the local case. In the case of this study, ideas for change that might improve the effectiveness, inclusiveness and equitability of change practices have been sought by moving iteratively between theory and practice, seeing each in the terms of the other and using the theoretical insights to stimulate alternative versions of practice.

The insights generated through this process might be used to inform change within the researched organisation by using the research text, or a specially prepared version of it, to initiate dialogue within the community that has been studied. It is my intention to use this research to invite others within the organisation to engage in such a dialogue. From within the ethnographic tradition, the power of stories has long been recognised. Some stories, in fact, become so powerful that the subjects and places they depict can no longer be seen or imagined except through the eyes of those texts (Geertz 1988). All stories do more than just communicate about a subject, they bring into existence a network of relationships between readers and those who might use the findings (Gergen & Gergen 2002). The potential of texts in this regard relates to the role of the text as a ‘collective story’ (Richardson 1997, p. 32). A collective story connects individual experience to its larger historical and social context and thereby positions people as historical actors.

The sociological protagonist is a collective. I think of similarly situated individuals who may or may not be aware of their life affinities as coparticipants in a collective story. My intent is to help construct a consciousness of kind in the minds of the protagonists, a concrete recognition of sociological bondedness with others, because such consciousness can break down isolation between people, empower them, and lead them to collective action on their behalf (Ibid, p. 14).

Where research does not deal with a single collective but diverse constituencies within a common situation, as in this research, a focus on the self understanding of each group revealed through their social behaviours and their views of the other might promote new insights with the potential for action with rather than against each other.
With regard to the second of the dimensions of this stage noted above, both critical management research and ethnographic enquiry have become interested in promoting participation between researcher and researched, in part as a means of increasing the likelihood for effective social transformation. In this model, ethnographic knowledge becomes a practice of coproduction, a ‘self-other conversation or dialogue’ (Tedlock 2000, p. 461).

Whilst there is an emphasis on participation in the literature, extensive coproduction is still rare with most participation occurring through interviews and discussions during fieldwork, as is the case in this study, and participant review of draft reports and the discussion of findings. The proposed invitation to discuss the findings with participants represents the first stage of utilising this research to effect some change in practice.

**Researching from the inside – familiarity and ethical tensions**

The research presented in this thesis is a case of insider research in two ways. As researcher, I commenced the study having been immersed, as an organisational participant over an extended period of time, in the dominant forms of knowing about universities as organisations, a situation that can make it difficult to see the organisation in the new and productive ways that the insight stage of critical management research requires. Secondly, a very significant part of the study was conducted in the organisation in which I am employed, a circumstance that raises a range of practical and ethical concerns.

These two features of insider research are not trivial concerns. Coghlan & Casey (2001) note, for example, that conducting insider research is a political activity that may sometimes be considered subversive. Potential conflicts arise from perceived dissonances between normal work roles and the role as researcher. Others (Holian & Brooks 2002) have advised that this can be perilous for the insider researcher leading to ‘backlash’ and even organisational ‘suicide’.

Despite these acknowledged difficulties for insider researchers there is relatively little advice in the literature. Forms of ethnography where issues of insider status are critical, such as cultural level autoethnography described by Hayano, where the researcher is focussed on aspects of his or her own culture at a personal level or ‘native’ ethnography where ethnic minority researchers examine the culture they grew up in, have received little attention (Roddiguez 2002).

Insider research turns many of the traditional concepts and concerns of ethnography on their heads. When sociological studies and ethnography in particular ‘come home’, into the cultural milieux of the researcher, issues concerning the nature of the field and of participant observation are clearly highlighted. Traditional ethnography had its roots in anthropology where the field of study was an alien culture into which the anthropologist ventured for an
extended period of time in order to gain understanding. Means of gaining access and acceptance, so that participation and observation might proceed, were key concerns. Even when ethnography was adopted by sociology the field remained relatively exotic in relation to the experiences of the researcher (see for example Swingewood’s 2000 account of the Chicago School studies in the first part of the twentieth century). The paradox of the field in traditional ethnography is that the researcher must try to get the native point of view without ‘going native’ or taking up full membership (Behar 1996). In insider research, the boundary between the field and the life of the researcher collapses and the ethnographer is left with the ambiguous role of being both participant and observer, member and non-member. In recognition of this collapse of boundaries, some researchers have suggested that insider ethnography is a ‘way of being’ (Rawlins 1998, p. 360) where the distinction between reflective work practices and ethnography disappears (Ellis & Bochner 2000, p. 760).

In insider research the idea of ‘going into the field’ is no longer useful — the field is home. The researcher is not an ‘outsider wearing insider’s clothes’ (Tedlock 2000, p. 455) but an insider wearing researcher’s clothes. The idea of participant observation therefore changes. It is no longer a problem of gaining entry and acceptance but a question of simultaneously occupying multiple roles within the field/home.

The difficulties in ‘maintaining a researcher self in the face of other role demands’ (Ronai, 1992, 2002) is not just a cognitive concern but one that involves significant emotional investment as the roles of work colleague, researcher and friend come into conflict (Ceglowski 2002; Jenks 2002). There is no easy solution to the problem of role ambiguity. It requires an ever present alertness to the nature of one’s different roles, reflexivity about oneself in those roles and the necessity to make fast judgements in multiple concrete situations based on considerations of ethics and care.

In conducting this research I have not always achieved an appropriate balance. In one instance, a request to a team of staff to use formal data collected in the course of a university strategic project, upon which we had worked together with an accompanying invitation that they might participate in interviews to complement this formal data, was rejected despite the fact that the project had proceeded in a productive and cooperative manner with a positive result. While from my perspective at the time, this was simply a case of realising after completing the project that it would provide useful insights for this study and asking the team if we might extend our collaboration in this way, I had completely underestimated the impact of the change in my role from supportive colleague to researcher. Some of the staff felt deceived and considerable effort was required to repair this perceived breach of trust,
including the destruction of the formal data despite the fact that it would have been routinely retained as part of the University’s quality assurance system.

This distressing event led me to consider more explicitly issues of ethics in insider research and to identify the source of the tensions I had encountered. My investigation revealed that many ethnographers had encountered similar dilemmas. Ethical concerns have been latent in all forms of ethnographic research but now that informants have come to live ‘next door and read our books’ (Fine & Weis 2002, p. 294) there is increased pressure to address outstanding issues.

The insider, ethnographic researcher belongs to two communities; the community in which they are a participant observer with its specific forms of social practice and accompanying community determination of what constitutes ethical behaviour and the professional community concerned with the ethical regulation of research practices. Christians (2000) has analysed these two different situations and traced the history of the different views of ethics they generate to disclose their fundamentally opposed underpinnings as the basis for the tensions these engender for the researcher.

According to Christians, codes of professional ethics can be traced to John Stuart Mill’s Utilitarianism and the demand for neutrality in the determination of what is good. Utilitarian ethics are concerned with the calculation of the greatest happiness, or in the case of professional codes of ethics with the calculation of minimum harm. Autonomous individuals must choose for themselves as neither state nor science can make this decision. Professional codes typically incorporate four key concepts; informed consent based on full disclosure, an avoidance of deception in research, the maintenance of privacy and confidentiality and demands for accuracy pursued through rigorous method.

This form of exteriorised ethics can be contrasted with forms of social ethics or communitarian models. Communitarian ethics recognise that values, moral commitments and meanings are negotiated dialogically. In this context, moral agents can only assess what is valuable or good in relation to their social commitments and community ties.

It is not possible to permanently resolve differences between ethical codes that are founded on different ontological, epistemological and axiological positions. They must be lived with, however, in seeking a practical position from which to do insider, ethnographic research I have adopted the following approaches.
**Ethical positions adopted for this research**

In undertaking this research, the normal protocols of professional ethics have been applied for all interviews and with the participants immediately involved in the partial ethnography. Each of the staff who agreed to be interviewed for either of the case studies was provided with a plain English outline of the research and given information about the protection of privacy and confidentiality they could expect as a participant and the extent of their control over data provided. In case study two, the partial ethnography, the team of academic staff participating in the change project were advised of my dual roles of worker and researcher at the commencement of the project and of the forms of data that would be collected during its progress. In presenting the data for case study one, the confidentiality of individual participants could quite easily be preserved as the results were presented by category and there were enough interviews in each category to prevent identification of individuals. I have already outlined the novel form of ethnographic text developed for case study 2 to meet ethical requirements.

With regard to practices of research for the interviews, the day to day interactions associated with doing the ethnographic study and for opportunistic data collection through interactions with colleagues more broadly in the organisation, a notion of community ethics has been deployed. Since the distressing incident related earlier I attempted to remain alert to the understanding that doing interactive data collection and especially ethnography are human enterprises with human consequences. The approach I developed draws on the notion of *witnessing* developed by Ropers-Huilman (cited in Sparkes 2002). The salient difference between witnessing and participant observation lies in the notion of *obligation*. Obligation as both researcher and part of the researched community means that interactions are filtered by awareness that the self is formed and given meaning in its relationships with others. A ‘caring relation’ (Ceglowski 2002) becomes the basis for judgements concerning data use and fairness to colleagues who are inadvertent participants.

By using the concepts of care and obligation, I have attempted to address the tensions generated by role ambiguity. Despite this, different interpretations of what is acceptable under the notion of an ethics of care and the unpredictable range of staff who may contribute even peripherally to the development of insight about the project being researched mean that vigilance and a willingness to openly address differences remain essential. The opportunity to discuss the progress of the project or its research dimension were available to all participants throughout the project.

With regard to the second concern of insider research, the problem of over familiarisation, Alvesson and Deetz (2000) suggest a range of approaches to making the everyday and
taken for granted appear strange so that new insights might develop. Defamiliarisation strategies, they suggest, include invoking alternate frameworks for understanding such as those from different cultural settings, consistently seeking ‘counter images’ and metaphors to those habitually used and the use of theoretical frameworks from outside the traditional domains of management.

In conducting this study I have drawn upon frameworks from outside the dominant management domain as a provocation to my sedimented ways of making sense of the organisational world. During the course of the research I have also endeavoured to create spaces with the participants where I could dispense with or at least minimise my employment role as an advocate of a specific change direction and approach and listen to their ways of making sense of the project. In a formal way this was achieved through interviews where I listened but did not advocate a view. In less formal ways throughout the project I tried to achieve the same opportunities to be challenged by others views over extended coffee or lunch conversations, during after work drinks where I listened, sought out and noted metaphors or approaches that challenged my own.

Despite the difficulties of over familiarisation, there are counterbalancing benefits from insider status in ethnographic organisational research. These derive from a depth of knowledge about the organisation under study and the preunderstanding of participants’ meaning systems built up through shared experiences that can be drawn on to generate a rich and full interpretation of the data (Hull 1985; Coghlan & Casey 2001). An additional benefit is that as an insider researcher I was in the field all the time. This allowed access to accidental and opportunistic data collection although it should be noted that because of my role in the university I had uneven access to the organisation. In developing the texts for this research I have tried to both draw upon the privileged knowledge of an insider while simultaneously challenging taken for granted meanings.

Questions of validity
Validity concerns how to do good social science research and how to make judgments about whether research can be deemed good. The demise of the idea that objective reality can be unproblematically accessed by researchers utilising proper method has led to a backlash against ‘criteriology’ (Schwandt 1996) and foundationalist criteria for judging qualitative research (Bochner 2002) and a move towards more context specific assessments. This move has been described by Angen (2000, p. 379) as ‘releasing research from the stranglehold of validity as truth.’ As research can no longer be required to establish its objective truth, concepts of validity circulate around claims to plausibility and credibility (Hammersley 1992).
Debates about validity address both outcome concerns; how to make judgements about quality, and process considerations; how to do research such that sound methods mean there is a likelihood of high validity. In both cases a broadening of considerations has been suggested, to include for the former, a consideration of aesthetics and for the latter a concern for a dialogical epistemology and ethical relationships between researcher and researched (Denzin & Lincoln 2002; Lincoln 2002).

With respect to the outcomes of research, there is a high level of consensus that judgements about validity need to be made in relation to the claims that are made for specific pieces of research (Crotty 1998; Silverman 2001; Ezzy 2002). Criteria, within such a framework, suggest the ends towards which the research aspires and for which claims are made; evidence provides the means by which judgements of quality can be made.

Hammersley (1992) suggests that there are four basic types of claim made by research. These are for definition, description, explanation or the creation of theory and types of evidence must match the type of claim made. Judgements concerning the adequacy of this evidence should be informed by scepticism about simple, common sense explanations and a tolerance for complexity (Gubrium & Holstein 1997). The credibility of any research in this conception will be revealed through the craft of inquiry rather than through the application of techniques. Researchers need to show how they have done justice to the complexity of the research topic through a process that ‘includes a consideration of one’s own understandings of the topic, understandings derived from other sources, and an accounting of this process in the written record of the study (Angen 2000, p. 390). The chain of interpretations that the researcher has made must be documented so others can judge the thrustworthiness of the conclusions drawn (Angen 2000; van Maanen 1995).

Other researchers have added a further claim to these in the form of catalytic or pragmatic validity, which relates to the usefulness of the research in fostering action (Lincoln 2002; Kvale 2002). Gergen (1992, p. 218) defines a similar generative criterion for research which he describes as ‘… its challenge to the taken-for-granted and its simultaneous capacity to open up new departures for action.’ One of the difficulties with such criteria is that judgements about pragmatic or generative validity are difficult to make at the time most research is judged and Hammersley (1992) has noted that there is, in any case, no necessary correlation between sound research and effective action.

With respect to the processes of research, some researches emphasise the use of a variety of research sources to minimise bias and maximise the recognition of variety and dissonance
(Silverman 2001). Others stress the importance of practices that privilege multiplicity, difference, juxtaposition and proliferation rather than the imposition of totalising frames (St Pierre 2002). Still others emphasise the importance of partnerships between researcher and researched and a commitment to democracy, community empowerment, fairness and the representation of a balance of views. This school of thought, advocating new paradigm research (Lincoln & Guba 2000), has proposed that validity can be established via the return of initial research reports to the participants so that they may verify the accuracy and value of researcher accounts. The suggestion that the researched community should be the arbiter of quality overlooks the fact that communities are not homogenous but contain structures of power which influence the constitution of local standards (Richardson 1997). Hammersley (1992) adds that community members may not themselves be aware of key features of the environment that influence their lives and that no one has privileged access to the truth – neither researcher nor informant. Participants are a useful source of data, and returning initial research reports to them for comment provides an additional source of data, but they cannot be the final arbiters of quality.

The questions of validity outlined above relate to all forms of qualitative research. In addition, Alvesson (2002) suggests that critical management research should demonstrate an awareness of the role theoretical predispositions and assumptions play in the construction of empirical material and as has been discussed previously, take an explicit position with regard to the problems of language and representation.

This research project makes claims to description and to explanation that might be subsequently used as a basis for action. The accuracy of the description has relied upon the use of a variety of data sources, interviews, participant observation and document review, and the seeking out and inclusion of the views of the diversity of stakeholders within the organisation wherever the invitation to contribute has been accepted.

The claims made for explanation are for insight within a single case with the intention that the establishment of credible relationships between events, via the use of theoretical concepts concerning relationships of power, will resonate for readers in other, similarly situated locations. Appropriate evidence for explanatory claims lies in the creation of a framework of relationships that vividly renders the social and its connectedness to the personal and the cultural through the use of theory.

Critical research is concerned with action. This research has not been participatory in the sense advocated by new paradigm researchers, who stress partnerships between researcher and researched through all stages of the work including analysis, so that the participating community might be empowered. The research connection to the possibilities of
social change lies in the plausibility of its analysis to the community and the stimulating effect that its propositions for further action might have.

**Summary**

This chapter has situated this research project by locating it within the broad debates concerning ontological and epistemological issues for critical management research and for empirical, interpretive research more broadly. Critical management research brings two different research traditions into relationship and the implications of the resulting hybridity of this methodological choice have been elaborated at the level of the three stages of critical research practice. The points of continuity and tensions between the two different research traditions have been explored and the ways in which this project has built on synergies and addressed tensions have been described, including matters of validity.

The specific nature of this project as insider research has been explored in relation to issues of role ambiguity, ethical concerns and textual representation. The combination of these features has led to the creation of a novel form of ethnographic representation. This provides a rich ethnography for later critical analysis while providing for the protection of participants. Methods for interviews and for the conduct of the ethnography have been described.

The focus of critical analysis, itself flowing from an initial analysis of the empirical material, is the changed relationships of power within the managerised university. The specific interests are on how the dominance of managerial discourses and practices impact upon successful implementation of teaching and learning innovations and on what might be learned from this analysis to inform more participative and successful approaches.

The next chapter addresses in more detail than the outline in Chapter 1, the environment that has shaped recent changes in the university through the government’s program of reforms and changes to the socioeconomic environment more broadly and the different discourses of university work reform that have emerged in response to these changes. These discourses provide the theoretical raw material for the analysis of the interviews in case study 1 and the categorisation of different work identity constructions within the university.
In the Prologue I created the story of an imaginary meeting between staff from different positions within a university in which each reveals his or her irreconcilably different views and experiences of strategic change processes. I intended the story to illustrate the way in which this confronting diversity in ways of making sense initiated my interest in understanding how the differences could be understood and what underpins them. Something is missing from this story. As its creator I am situated outside the scene looking in at the action. My voice is not explicitly present; my positioning not fully revealed.

The impetus for this work in the heart of my own practices of change, however, shows very clearly that there can be no neutral position from which I might observe the ways in which others make sense of their work. In recent debates about the nature of forms of interpretive research, a considerable amount of attention has focussed on the role of the researcher and the importance of revealing, within the research text, the position the researcher has taken. Tedlock (2000, p. 465) summed up the argument succinctly with the suggestion that we have gone from ‘participant observation to the observation of participation.’

I provided a brief sketch of my initial positioning in the Prologue by reflecting upon the assumptions I embedded in the Program Renewal game I created. Through the various moves I have made in this research journey, I have needed to rethink my own positioning in parallel with my search to uncover more about the ways in which others make sense of theirs.

In this chapter, I explore the discourses that have surrounded debates about change in Australian universities. My intention is to lay out the range of different discourses that are available within the university. I noted in Chapter 1 that the perspective I have adopted proposes that discourses do not reflect the world but seek to constitute its objects and practices. Each discourse draws upon different knowledge sources for its legitimation. Each discourse constructs work identities differently and suggests different roles for university staff.
By taking this position I am not suggesting that staff within the university are passive victims of discourses. Calas and Smircich (1997, p. xx) have said, ‘… we are traversed by the multiple discourses of our times (i.e., what is intelligible in the times we live)’. The discourses that are intelligible within the university in these times are multiple and contradictory. All discourses necessarily exclude and the exclusions form parts of other, competing discourses which may become a focus for resistance. We must seek our own forms of coherence within this network of discourses.

While we are not the authors of the ways we understand our lives, while we are subjected to regimes of meaning, we are involved in discursive self-production where we attempt to produce some coherence and continuity (Lather, p. 118).

The presentation of the available discourses here provides a way into understanding the different ways in which the individuals in the interview transcripts understand their own work identities and roles and how they construct those of others within their universities. It also provides a way to deepen my self awareness of my own discursive positioning as worker and researcher.

* * *

The first part of this chapter briefly outlines the set of environmental conditions and the specific government interventions that have shaped the formation of the current Australian university. The two principal organisational level discourses that have informed government reforms; corporate strategic management and the market logic of the enterprise organisation, are then reviewed. These are followed by a review of the principal organisational level critique from the perspective of labour process analysts which asserts the proletarianisation of work within the university.

These discourses relate to a wider range of organisational settings than just the university. The second part of the chapter concentrates on specific discourses from the academic world that respond differently to the ways in which these organisational discourses have sought to define the academic role. These have been presented as those that seek to preserve or restore some vision of the university and those that accept the changes and seek ways of sustaining valuable work within the reformed institution.

The third part of the chapter focuses more closely on the discourses of teaching and learning that have accompanied the broader organisational changes. The two principal foci for teaching and learning, increased flexibility of educational provision and the capability or competence framework for curriculum, are reviewed from a range of competing and overlapping discursive positions.
In each case, the ways in which the discourse seeks to constitute the roles and practices of different constituencies within the university and the power effects which flow from this, provide the focus for the review. It is important to review these developments from the perspective of this research, as the environment that shaped and continues to shape university change has been by no means unidirectional or clear cut. The diversity of positions concerning the purposes and effects of reform still exert considerable influence on practice and the possibilities of alternative practices in teaching and learning. The plurality of discourses around and within the university provide the sources for the 'discursive babel' (Clegg 1989a) from which, through struggle, the university must construct its overall practices.

**University change – jostling discursive logics**

In tracing the history of the modern Western intellectual from *les republique des lettres* to the present day, Bauman (1987; 1992) uses the terms 'legislators' and 'interpreters' to denote the changing character of the role of the intellectual. From initial centrality as legitimating agent for the emerging nation state, he documents the loss of relevance for intellectuals in this role as the state developed the capacity to reproduce itself without the need for recourse to a commitment to ruling values. According to Bauman, this capacity for reproduction was built upon the development of disciplinary techniques based in repression, techniques of panoptical power documented by Foucault, and emerging techniques of seduction associated with consumer society. Intellectuals displaced by the fading of their direct legislative role gained the benefits of reduced relevance to the state in the opportunity to pursue intellectual concerns as a self sufficient form of life. This pursuit was followed most prominently within universities where the domain of culture, in particular, became the province for a continuing but much attenuated legislating role.

Intellectuals, however, were not to monopolise the domain of culture for long as the rise of consumer society and the emerging dominance of the market further displaced them. Bauman argues that the domain of national culture had itself become of little relevance to the state and the new push was towards the education of ‘skilful and eager consumers, rather than obedient and willing subjects of the state’ (1992, p. 17). Readings (1996), on the other hand argues that the role of the nation state itself has declined in the face of globalisation. Whatever the precise circumstances, in the new environment of consumer society, traditional university disciplines oriented towards the legislation of national culture were in danger of increasing irrelevance. There was, however, sustained growth in the university function of providing the range of experts and new professionals needed to develop and administer the techniques of control and needs creation for the consolidating consumer society.
The changes documented by Bauman and the uncertainties they presaged for the nature of future intellectual life were already having significant, but differentiated impacts on universities before the major government interventions during the 1980s. These impacts were apparent in the large expansion of professional studies taken into or developed in the university, especially in the domain of entertainment and hospitality and the rise of new domains in the humanities with specific cultural foci, such as women's studies, media studies and popular culture. Despite these changes and increasing uncertainty about the role of rapidly expanding universities, the traditional forms of organisation and governance within the university, developed during the era of relatively unfettered intellectual inquiry, remained largely intact.

**Australian education reforms of the 1980s and 1990s**

Prior to the educational reforms of the 1980s, universities were separate, sovereign institutions oriented towards a common public purpose and with an underlying, coherent and accepted set of core values (Hannan & Silver 2000). Internally they were characterised by the absence of a strong, unified chain of command and by the dominance of local authorities. Within collegial, discipline or profession based organisational units, faculties, schools or departments, individual academics were united by a common commitment to individualism and academic freedom and a shared tradition of intellectual inquiry and responsibility for the discipline or profession (Marginson & Considine 2000). Wilson’s typology of public organisational types (cited in Gregory 1997) locates education as a *craft* organisation characterised by the production of observable outcomes through relatively unobservable work. Production in this sense is really co-production where outcomes result from the efforts of at least two people. Craft organisations are similar to those identified by Mintzberg as professional bureaucracies in which a collection of relatively autonomous units contain experts who consider the organisation as a convenient structure where they ‘practice their professions as individuals, with common administrative support’ (1983, p. 393). Weick’s (1976; 1985) concept of ‘loosely coupled systems’ captures the dominant characteristics well – loose definition of policy, loose control over implementation activity. The intention of this brief sketch is not to idealise the pre 1980s university but rather to highlight the key features of its governance that were to be so radically altered by the coming reforms.

The reforms initiated by John Dawkins (Commonwealth of Australia 1988), the Minister for Education and Training in the Australian Commonwealth Government under the Prime Minister Bob Hawke were by no means the first significant attempts by government to influence the nature and practices of Australia’s universities. Previous interventions had effected a significant expansion from the elite system at the end of the Second World War to increased and more equitable participation by the end of the 1970s so that over 285,000
students were enrolled by 1987. During these earlier reforms, the focus of government was more on finance, however, and not strongly oriented towards outcomes. They had relatively little impact on the internal structures or administrative practices of the sector. The Dawkins reforms (Commonwealth of Australia 1987; 1988), however, represented a highly interventionist turning point in that they focused on internal governance rather than just broad policy such that they radically reshaped the sector and continue to provide a foundation for continuing reform (Marginson & Considine 2000).

The logic of the initial reforms circulated around the notion of accountability. University governance was deemed to be inefficient and insufficiently accountable to the taxpayers. Models of collegial management, in particular, were discredited as leading to sluggish decision making through an overly elaborated committee system (Clark 1998). Instead, a model of corporate management was favoured based on comprehensive corporate, strategic planning and performance measurement. In a time of increasing economic restrictions, the government was concerned that universities learn to do more with less.

Universities came fairly late to the program of public sector reform. By the time the Dawkin’s reforms took root in universities large sections of the administrative public service had already been subject to this first wave of corporate managerial change. They were moving into the second wave based on the logic of the market and an investment in entrepreneurial management (Considine & Painter 1997).

The second wave of market based reforms arrived in Australian universities following the West Report (Commonwealth of Australia 1998). Key words in the debates surrounding this reform were efficiency and effectiveness. At the heart of the discourse was the privileging of the sovereign consumer, the elevation of choice as the primary moral good and the insistence on competition between sellers as the means to provide that choice (Hough 1999). Despite claims that the introduction of markets, or at least pseudo markets, was essential to tackle the perceived inefficiencies of centralised, bureaucratic planning, by 1993 the Department of Education, Employment and Training was still demanding that universities provide long term strategic plans against which their performance could be measured (Meek & O’Neill 1996).

Both waves of reform positioned higher education within a business discourse that privileges managers and their knowledge as the key to successful transformation. They did so, however, in different ways and with different effects for the construction of the roles and identities of both managers and workers. McNay (1995) denotes the first wave as having given rise to the corporate university and the second to the enterprise university. His
research demonstrates that both of these types and the earlier forms of organisation, that he names the collegium and the bureaucracy, are simultaneously present within each university although the balance varies and one form dominates within specific institutions. The persistence of both types of business logic alongside the traditional university forms within the current university contributes to the plurality of discursive frameworks and modes of practice both within management and between it and academic staff. These differences will have implications for how teaching and learning is understood and how necessary and desirable innovations are identified and pursued.

Organisational logics

Corporate strategic management – the orthodox view

The orthodox view of corporate strategy, which came to dominate management thinking during the 1960s and 1970s, is that it provides a set of politically neutral, rational techniques for managing complex businesses to achieve a range of specific goals in increasingly turbulent times. Strategy is understood as ‘a management tool for rendering organizational activity more calculable’, for making strategies and the plans to achieve them recordable and organisational members accountable within a system of ‘corporate government rationality’ (Knights 1992, p. 178, p. 180). The purpose of strategy is to achieve competitive advantage in increasingly complex external markets.

... there is a pressing need for clear strategies. Because unless companies have a clear vision about how they are going to be distinctly different and unique, offering something different than their rivals to some different group of customers, they are going to get eaten alive by the intensity of competition (Porter 1998, p. 49).

This orthodoxy locates the role of strategy formation at the top of the organisation where goals are set by senior management who are taken to be the rationalising force within the organisation. The view that it is strategy and strategy alone that can provide an organisation with direction came to constitute taken for granted management knowledge and the corporation became the paradigmatic form of systemic modernism (Cooper & Burrell 1988, Considine 1997) – a model characterised by practices of hierarchical control.

The orthodox view that strategy precedes and directs practices in a linear and rational strategy-planning-implementation sequence has been questioned by a range of theorists. They have focused attention, for example, on the contribution of emergent as opposed to deliberate strategies (Mintzberg 1988) and the highly politicised practice of strategy generation (Peattie 1993). Whilst the rationality of strategic design has been challenged, there remains, however, a strong focus on the role of strategy, however it might be found, as a tool for problem solving in organisations and on the supposedly separate rational planning
processes that follow. According to the tenets of strategic planning these should generate an integrated set of cascading plans to which subordinates within the organisation are required to adhere by enacting the behaviours specified and reporting against the designated measures (Mintzberg 1994).

Corporate management, then, can be viewed as a major project of modernisation and rationalisation that is founded upon the key modernist commitment to reason and its capacity, with the use of proper method, to lead towards generalised, universal truths. It embraces the modern, Enlightenment view that nothing, in principle is unknowable and that knowledge makes possible the progressive control and manipulation of both nature and human actions in the interests of a reason-led improvement of the human, or in this case, organisational condition. The philosophy of modernity leads inevitably to a stratification of the world into those who posses true knowledge and those who are its objects; those who have the right to design the social order and those who are required to implement the design. Speaking at the level of society, Bauman (1992, p. 11) notes that for the designers,

The authority involved the right to command the rules the social world was to obey; and it was legitimized in terms of better judgment, a superior knowledge guaranteed by the proper method of its production. With both society and its members found wanting (i.e. shapeable yet heretofore shaped in the wrong way), the new legislative authority of men of knowledge established its own necessity and entitlements.

Within the mini world of the corporation this stratification gives design authority to the senior managers and casts the rest of the organisation as followers. It stratifies the organisation into thinkers and doers (Bourgeois & Brodwin 1984) or leaders and followers (Ramsden, 1998).

Corporate strategic management models operate on the underlying assumption that ‘the behavior of organizational members can be ignored as it is expected to conform to the “rational” imperatives for controlling uncertainty implicit in the theory of competitive advantage’ (Knights, p. 182). In practice, however, organisational members have not proven so obliging and this generates the primary issue for corporate strategy, the problem of successful implementation.

In the corporate strategy discourse, achieving obedience to the goals, aspirations and behaviours required by the strategy is seen as a matter of administrative technique. This generates an organisation dominated by a form of instrumental rationality that focuses attention on techniques of control, motivation incentives and structural matters rather than on more substantive policy concerns (Considine, 1997). Deviations from the management agenda can result in the ‘outplacing’ of employees resulting in their removal from positions of
power (Sinclair 1997). A further consequence of the hierarchical forms of corporate strategy is the potential for deskilling of professional employees, where the ability to interpret a task is circumscribed by the requirements of professional managers (Yeatman 1997a).

**Modified forms of corporate strategic management**

Problems associated with the outcomes of corporate strategic management and changes in conceptions of competition in a global context have contributed to a modification of some key aspects of this discourse. Hamel (1998), for example, argues that the traditional starting point for strategy, that is questions concerning the nature of the company’s industry and its segmentation, make little sense in an economy characterised by increased blurring between traditional industry sectors. Establishing competitive advantage in such an environment is transformed from a practice of analysing copious amounts of data to predict the future and position the company strategically, to one of constructing ‘imaginative, compelling new opportunities out of that understanding’ (Hamel 1998, p. 82). The process of imagining and creating plausible futures requires that the organisation tap into the creative insight and energy of a much wider range of employees than the leader and senior managers in a ‘democratization of strategy’ (Ibid, p. 89). The most widely known formulation of this more inclusive form of the corporate strategic discourse is that of the learning organisation developed by Senge (1990). While such approaches seek a wider contribution to the creation of strategy, the principal concerns with a singular strategic direction and its cascading implementation through the organisation remain intact, with the added bonus that participation in strategy formation may generate a more broadly shared vision.

A process where strategy-making responsibility is distributed, but where, ultimately, you come to a singular point of view that can encompass the entire enterprise. That’s how you create strategy in a deeply and broadly involving way, and how you end up with something that is common and shared. (Ibid, p. 89)

Such modifications sit within the orthodoxy of corporate strategy as an ostensibly neutral set of rational techniques for the control of organisational action. In opposition to this view, Knights and Morgan (1991, p. 252) have studied it as a set of discourses and practices. These authors are concerned with how the discourse of strategy becomes part of the identity of managers and workers. They suggest that these discourses and practices ‘transform managers and employees alike into subjects who secure their sense of purpose and reality by formulating, evaluating and conducting strategy’ and produce power effects within the organisation. Contrary to the orthodox view that strategy, based on full and accurate information, objectively identifies problems in the environment that an organisation must face, they contend that strategy is a process of defining what the real problems are and the
parameters of their solutions. Those who have the power to make these definitions will do so in ways consistent with the kind of knowledge and expertise they possess.

**The power effects of corporate strategic management**

For the designing managers, corporate strategy provides a rationalisation of success and failure, a sense of personal and organisational security, demonstrates managerial rationality, i.e. that the organisation is in rational control of its destiny, to colleagues, the government and other stakeholders and legitimises the exercise of power. Knights and Morgan argue, that for employees who accept the logic of the corporate strategy discourses and their constructed social identity as 'strategic actors', their role is expanded through participation in its reproduction – often via commitment to meaningful projects. This expanded participation, nonetheless, is based on obedience to the strategy. They also acknowledge that within the lower ranks of organisations there is often indifference or cynicism to the discourse of the managers and that identities can be constructed in opposition to the discourse. Even the constitution of resistant subjectivities, however, has the discourse of corporate strategy at its heart.

Resistance to strategy may occur because it violates a particular organizational culture (e.g., paternalism) or treats its own historical self-formation and development as natural and inevitable thus the exercise of strategic power is not a monolith, and the relations in which it is exercised are not necessarily coordinated and coherent, one with another. (Knights 1992, p. 186)

The power effects of the corporate strategy discourse derive fundamentally from its legitimimation of management as the credentialed experts drawing on the ostensibly scientific corpus of management knowledge who can and should define organisational problems and solutions and the entailed stratification of inequalities throughout the organisation. It operates through the negation and devaluation of all alternative discourses such that an organisation without a corporate strategy becomes unthinkable. It objectifies staff in categories such as 'resisters', 'disciples' and 'gurus' (Trowler 1998) and disables and discredits oppositional views of actors outside the strategy generating group while empowering those who can claim a central role in strategy generation – those who provide critical information to the strategy process for example.

In Bauman's terms, it demonstrates the key characteristics of *legislative reason* that sees plurality as a temporary and regrettable state of affairs impeding its ability to get the job done. It adopts a monological stance foreclosing dialogue and discredits lay knowledge while appropriating true knowledge to itself.
**Enterprise**

The marketisation of higher education is based on a different organisational logic to the first wave of corporate managerial reform of the public sector (Considine 1997). Environmental pressures seen to be driving this move towards changed organisational practices include increased competition from foreign providers, more discerning, quality conscious and demanding consumers, rapid change in the technologies of production and increasing fragmentation and differentiation of demand (du Gay & Salaman 1992). The new discourses of work reform that underpin the second wave are known by a number of different names. Variously called entrepreneurial, enterprise, excellence, innovation approaches and new wave management, they emphasise the importance of individuals having proactive and entrepreneurial dispositions. In this model of work, conformity to the ‘top down’ demands of a strategic plan are anathema (Knights & Morgan 1991).

> These developments centre around an emphasis on relations with customers – the ‘sovereign consumer’ – as a paradigm for effective forms of organizational relations …” (du Gay & Salaman 1992, p.195).

The model of customer – supplier relations is used to restructure internal relations such that hierarchical management control is replaced with simulated market control. Divisions of companies become semi-autonomous quasi firms and the transactions between these business units or profit centres are recreated as customer – supplier relations. Each business unit is driven by the need to make a specified contribution to ‘head office’ and this pressure is seen as central to the clarification of sub unit goals.

All members of the enterprise organisation need to display enterprising qualities such as initiative, self reliance, risk taking and the ability to accept responsibility for oneself and one’s actions (du Gay 1996b). The need to encourage organisational participants to enterprising modes of work leads to

> … techniques for reducing dependency by reorganizing management structures (‘de-layering’); for cutting across internal organizational boundaries (the creating of ‘special project teams’, for example); for encouraging internal competitiveness through small group working; and for eliciting individual accountability and responsibility through peer-review and appraisal schemes … (du Gay & Salaman 1992, p. 204)

A further important technique is the use of the customer, through extensive data collection of customer satisfaction, to exert control over the work practices of employees as the satisfaction of the customer is central to achieving high levels of customer retention.


**Worker identity in the enterprise discourse**

The enterprise organisation, as put forward by its major proponents, is a radical departure from orthodox corporate culture and its bureaucratic guarantees. It is to be achieved by marrying entrepreneurial principles with corporate discipline. Every individual within the organisation is both a member of the corporation but, through identification with its goals and objectives and by management practices that support autonomy and creativity, feels like they are in business for themselves (Peters & Waterman, 1982; Kanter 1990).

The achievement of the necessary identification between individual workers and the corporation’s goals and objectives involves a reformulation of the role of work in the life of individual employees and of the nature of individual subjectivity. Du Gay (1996a, p. 63) notes:

> Within the discourse of excellence, work is characterized not as a painful obligation imposed upon individuals, nor as an activity only undertaken by people for the fulfilment of instrumental needs and satisfactions. Work is itself a means for self-fulfilment, and the road to company profit is also the path to individual self-development and growth.

The individual is reimagined as ‘an individual in search of meaning in work, and wanting to achieve fulfilment through work’ (Ibid, p. 60) through a continuous process of self development and improvement that du Gay (1996b, p. 25) has characterised as ‘being an entrepreneur of oneself’. Gee (2000) has described this as the emergence of ‘portfolio people’, no longer defined by fixed, essential qualities but seen, and required to see themselves, as an assemblage of ever changing skills. These skills are acquired in their progress through work projects and are refined as part of a project of self perfection. Marshall (1996) describes the emergence of the ‘autonomous choosers’, where life becomes the continuous restructuring or reassembly of the identity of the individual as a life project. These concepts of individual subjectivity make it possible, at least theoretically, for the enterprise, through the generation of a strong culture and practices that generate identification with it, to reconcile the demands of the corporation with those of the individual to produce a win/win outcome.

**The idea of culture in the enterprise organisation**

The idea of culture as a means of understanding organisations gained support in the late 1970s and experienced an explosion of interest in the 1980s. The corporate culture field is only one of the directions this study has taken, but one in which culture is understood as an organisational variable that can be ‘managed, controlled and intentionally changed’ (Alvesson & Berg 1992, p. 29). Organisations are assumed to have a single culture and the
creation and manipulation of a strong, unified corporate culture is taken to be necessary to effectively utilise human resources.

The main argument here seems to be that while previous forms of corporate control systems are limited in scope (based on inspection, certification or various motivational devices), cultural control systems operate on many levels and in many dimensions, spanning from the cognitive (belief structures) and ethical aspects (norms, values and ideologies) to aesthetical (taste) and emotional ones (pride, loyalty and commitment). While earlier forms of control focused on “objective” reality and on behaviour, culture exerts influence through people’s minds’ (Ibid, p. 139).

In the discourse of enterprise, corporate management, bureaucratic models for the organisation of work are criticised on the grounds that they are too slow and cumbersome for the required pace of change. More critically they are condemned on the basis that they provide a flawed method for the creation of the moral person because they deny the possibility for full personal involvement in work. This is resolved in the enterprise organisation where work becomes an instrument for full self realisation. Enterprise organisations seek to re-enchant work with the vision of individuals as, self-regulating, self-fulfilling actors against what bureaucracy has suppressed – emotion, personal responsibility and pleasure (du Gay 1996b).

These new discourses of work reform clearly do not refer to the modernist, autonomous subject of liberal, humanist discourse but to the de-centred conceptions of the individual at the heart of postmodern discourses. These discourses have punctured the modern myth of the progressive control of nature and the possibilities of mastery within organisations on the basis of rational planning and technical control (Yeatman 1997b). In particular, the massive uncertainty created through the impacts of increasing globalisation has stimulated debates about the need for organisations to develop the capacity for constant creativity if they are to survive.

While there are continuing scholarly arguments about whether or not the name postmodernity is appropriate for the changes that have taken place in the socioeconomic environment, there is agreement that the features of society differ adequately from those of the past to require a new model (Harvey 1990). This new model is predicated on the notion that the central place once occupied by production has been replaced by the practice of consumer freedom. Consumer choice is now seen as the ‘point in which systemic reproduction, social integration and individual life-world are co-ordinated and harmonized’ (Bauman 1992, p. 52) and organisational creativity is driven by the superior value of
consumer choice. Old style industrial capitalism is dying, it is argued and the task is to please the customer through the provision of individualised products.

This requires the creation of a new, flexible regime of work (Gee 1994; Hough 2001a). Thus, the sovereign consumer lies at the heart of the enterprise organisation (du Gay 1996b, Hough 2001a) just as consumer activity, it is argued, improves both society and the economy (Marshall 1996). In the public sphere this requires the reconceptualisation of organisational purpose from notions of coproduction of outcomes, to the provision of products, to an increasingly differentiated and discerning customer base. Customers take many forms and in the case of education the effect is not only to open the organisation to the preferences of individual consumers but to the business sector more broadly, who are a key consumer of graduates. The implications of this opening up for discourses of teaching and learning are discussed later in this chapter.

The enterprise organisation is simultaneously loose and tight. The culture of the organisation is the means by which the apparently contradictory ideas of increased executive control and the extension of individual enterprise and accountability can be reconciled. The creation of strong corporate cultures through the manipulation of symbols, meanings and beliefs provides the key. In the enterprise organisation, the long lines of hierarchical line management and highly role differentiated organisation of work can, therefore, be replaced through a process of delayering to produce flatter structures. These it is argued reduce worker dependency on middle management.

In addition, new worker roles are created in small, specialised project teams that transcend the previous boundaries of strict role definition. Networks, networking and distributed systems become the themes (Gee 2000). Where modern management is predicated on processes of differentiation - task differentiation and the allocation of types of people into types of jobs - postmodern management is based on de-differentiation in the productive sphere (Clegg 1990). Internal competitiveness between small work units and individual workers is encouraged alongside quasi markets for services within the corporation. There is extensive use of contracts and contracting in employment and as a form of relationship within the organisation itself. Self management is required but control is sustained through measures of performance at all levels of the organisation and by the extension of peer review and appraisal practices more deeply into the organisation.

**The identity of the manager in the enterprise discourse**

The manager in the enterprise organisation is ‘charged with reconstructing the conduct and self-image of employees’ by being a charismatic facilitator who can encourage the necessary
enterprising qualities in employees and secure their identification with the organisation (du Gay 1996a, p. 27). Supervisors are transformed into team leaders. The virtuous worker, on the other hand, is actively engaged in practices of self realisation and self perfection that are aligned to the goals and objectives of the organisation resulting in the creation of individual life meaning.

The power effects of enterprise organisation derive from the blurring of the issue of who sets the ultimate goals and visions in talk of the win/win organisational solution where individual and organisational objectives are simultaneously achieved. Sennett (1998) argues that three specific elements are involved in sustaining this vision. First, the discontinuous reinvention of institutions based upon complete ruptures with the past that become possible because of the very fragmentation and incoherence of the networked organisation. Second, power is maintained by the willingness to reconfigure the internal structure of the organisation in response to shifts in external consumer demand leading to further disruptive change. Thirdly there is a concentration of power without apparent centralisation. Harvey (1997) emphasises that this is achieved through the use of decentralising tactics to maintain centralised control. This apparent paradox results in power that is both strong and shapeless.

Despite concern for the mutual achievement of goals, the discourse remains monological in that the goals are set by managers who maintain power within the organisation and devolution of means results in more direct power over workers. While the discourse has parallels with some postmodern analyses, particularly in relation to concepts of individual subjectivity, it utilises these insights for the promotion of a unitary view of organisational culture. The celebration of plurality, the equivalence of different ways of understanding and life worlds and the commitment to dialogical modes of relationship that find their place in much postmodern theorising, have no role in the discourse of the enterprise organisation. Techniques of power shift from a predominant reliance on mechanisms of control to include techniques of seduction, forms of autosurveillance and self monitoring to which individuals willingly submit (Bauman 1992) in their quest for self realisation. The constitution of employees as individual meaning seekers creates a highly manipulable workforce who trade community for independence with the consequence that each becomes a replaceable part.

Managerial identities
Both of the major managerial discourses outlined above pay scant attention to questions of diversity within the management group itself. Managers are taken to be a single minded and cohesive group who are in control of the changes that are affecting the world of work. LaNuez and Jermier (1994) argue, however, that major corporate restructurings, increased
measurement and technological advances have led to increased vulnerability and diminished control for some managers and technocrats.

LaNuez and Jermier utilise the work of Peschanski who identified five basic forms of management identity to suggest two forms of managerial resistance. The first of Peschanski’s management orientations he named corporate. In this group managers identified closely with capital elites and were highly committed to the firm and to profitability. The second he named public good, an orientation characterised by a broader view of social responsibilities, which could lead to conflicts between higher ideals and loyalty to the corporation. The third orientation, collegial/professional he described as characterised by partial loyalty to the corporation with a closer identification with professional or occupational colleagues. This group may exhibit independence in pursuit of its own agenda. The fourth orientation individual or self centred he argued referred to managers or technocrats who view their job in instrumental terms, merely as a means to other ends. The final category in his schema, worker orientation, encompassed managers who identify closely with workers. This orientation was found most frequently in lower level supervisors.

Drawing upon these categories, LaNuez and Jermier (1994) uncovered two different forms of management resistance to changes in the corporate environment. These were associated with managerial identities that involved divided or diminished loyalty to the company. The first they described as ‘sabotage by circumvention’ which included such actions as non cooperation, falsification of data and verbal denigration of the corporation. The second, riskier and less common form they named ‘sabotage by direct action’, which involved physical damage to property, data or product. In understanding the dynamics of action within the corporation, this study cautions against assuming a strict division between management and worker, an ‘us and them’ approach, and supports the recognition of diversity within as well as between discursive categories.

The impact of managerial discourses for the discourses of educational development

Academic groups or units charged with the improvement or development of teaching and learning have been rethought in the light of these discourses. Whether reconceptualised under the notion of corporate strategy or enterprise, they have been required to take up a role as the implementation arm of central management, although how this task is defined will vary. Both approaches are based upon the separation of policy conception from implementation (Yeatman 1997). Whether cast as policing compliance within corporate strategy or supporting line managers to reconstruct the self image and conduct of staff in alignment with enterprise goals, the contrast with previously established approaches is significant.
Over twenty years ago, Boud and McDonald (1981) described three models of staff development. The professional service role is one in which the consultant is a provider of specialised services such as audio visual aids or multimedia. In the counselling model the consultant is charged with creating the opportunity for staff to explore the nature of teaching problems they have identified and providing them with support to do so. Finally, the collegial model operates through collaboration on joint research projects designed to explore practice.

Warren Piper (1994, cited in Webb 1996), a little more than a decade later described significant changes in staff development approaches. The move he identified was from what he termed Model A units concerned almost exclusively with teaching and learning improvement of the individual academic, to Model B units focused on the need to support organisational change. The movement from Model A to Model B organisational units has seen concepts of staff development or staff support replaced with concepts of large scale or mass change management.

While aspects of Boud and McDonald’s typology may be retained in the practices of current educational development units, the dominant concern might better be described by the addition of the concept of the managerial role. Chang et al (2004, p. 5) have described the role of staff developers in this managerial discourse as that of ‘change agents’ who work to ‘influence change on behalf of the change agency, the university.’ They suggest a significant part of central staff developers’ work concerns convincing staff that the changes the university has determined and that they are advocating, should be adopted and will be beneficial.

… academic developers are faced with the challenge of demonstrating to staff that by committing time and resources to developmental strategies they will not only see benefits in the short term, but this will also lead to improvements … although these may take years for fruition (Ibid, p. 3).

The power effects of this reformation include the distancing of educational developers from their academic constituency and may be seen by at least some of them as either complicit in the imposition of unsupported strategies in the corporate mode or as consultants, facilitators and sales people in the enterprise mode. Given the significant changes in university context described earlier, traditional approaches to teaching and learning are most often characterised by management as inadequate to meet the demand of an expanding and under resourced sector. Academic practitioners of teaching can then be defined and positioned by managers and educational developers as lacking in capability. A key aspect of
the work of newly shaped academic development groups becomes the professionalisation and credentialling of higher education teachers.

Practices under either the rubric of corporate planning or enterprise, are likely to include participation in outcomes oriented projects with an expectation that they produce measurable results in terms of return on investment or increased efficiency or effectiveness in some form. Central educational support staff will then be associated with the quantitative measurement of outcomes using performance indicators developed in the centre.

**The focus for educational change**

The work of these groups will be oriented to centrally determined strategies. Over the last decade these have focused in two key directions. The first focus is on increased flexibility in the provision of education that has been associated, in particular, with the use of information and communication technologies. The second is a change in the basis of curriculum development from an exclusive focus on disciplinary content to a focus on the development of capabilities or competencies for work performance.

Demands for flexibility respond directly to the enterprise positioning of the student as sovereign consumer and the need to maximise consumer choice of product, time and place of delivery. This strategy incorporates a variety of moves towards more modular degree structures, the provision of more elective subjects, the elimination of a proliferation of distinctive subject components and the requirement that students choose the subjects they wish to make up their course of study. Modularisation is central to the commodification of education via the ‘packaging’ of subjects as information commodities (Winter 1995). An extensive array of options is essential because of the increased differentiation of the customer base.

The second theme, capability based curriculum, reflects both the opening up of the university to external stakeholders that resulted from its corporatisation and the enterprise notion of business as a principal consumer of graduates. The capability or competency based curriculum privileges a concept of useful knowledge that is oriented towards performativity. The capability discourse, however, positions the academic differently from the flexibility discourse as it retains an explicit connection to the humanist view of the purpose of university education for citizenship and it maintains a significant role for the producer in the creation of educational programs. According to this discourse, capable students are not just employable but are ‘citizens who can operate as agents of social good in the community’ (Bowden et al 2000, p. 4). Educational programs to enable the development of such citizens need to be
integrated so that a holistic capability may be developed and it is academics who determine appropriately meaningful relations.

The course team must therefore make a commitment to reviewing the learning objectives, learning experiences, assessment and feedback strategies to ensure that they are linked in an explicit, coherent and meaningful way (Bowden et al 2000, p. 11).

Somewhat different managerial arguments are put forward for each of these foci and each refers back to the changed nature of the external environment and call in support upon the traditional language and concepts of liberal humanist education for the autonomous student subject.

Flexibility, it is argued is required to support an increasingly diverse student body who need to continuously upgrade their skills and education in the fluid and uncertain world of contemporary work. Because many students are already in work, flexibility in provision is essential. Arguments for access and equity are used to support the case as are arguments concerning ‘student centredness’ construed as the meeting of individual student needs.

With regard to capability it is the uncertainty of the globalising knowledge society and the rapid pace of change that are at the centre. Disciplinary knowledge will be quickly outdated, therefore, attention needs to be placed on the development of professional performance and generic, transferable skills and abilities. These will enable students to easily take their place in the world of work and to demonstrate necessary skills as the adaptable, multiskilled team players that the enterprise organisation needs (Bowden et al 2000; B-HERT 2003). More broadly the capability agenda is projected as ‘progressive’ in that it too attends to individual student needs, provides equal access, increases opportunity by recognising work based learning and fosters independent, autonomous, responsible workers and citizens.

Critiques of managerialism
A number of critiques of managerialism have positioned academic staff as passive victims of organisational changes leading to loss of control of their work processes. Ball (1990b, p. 153) argues that, within universities, the term ‘management’ now holds a ‘particular and reverential place’ that establishes it as an unchallengeable position rendering discussion of alternatives mute. He adds that in educational organisations there has been acceptance of this conception of management by the managed, leading to the abdication of any questioning of or resistance to many aspects of their domination by management.

Ball’s Foucauldian critique emphasises the ways in which the managerialised university has displaced issues of moral and cultural identity with unquestioned imperatives to
administrative efficiency. In this view, initiatives like the demand for increased flexibility in teaching practices are a tool for driving down costs and increasing surveillance. Utilising Foucault’s notion of the panopticon, he canvasses the techniques of disciplinary power at play in the corporate university, primarily via a hierarchy of continuous and functional surveillance, where ‘the limits and possibilities of action and meaning are precisely determined by position and expertise in the management structure’ (p. 157). In this critique, Ball leaves little or no space for oppositional discourses.

An alternative, but related critique from the labour process perspective sees the impact of managerial changes on academic life as a form of proletarianisation involving deskilling and degradation of academic work in similar ways to those documented by Braverman (1974) in working class organisations. From this perspective, the reframing of students as customers and the ensuing modularisation of work has meant that academics’ control of their work has been significantly eroded. They are now positioned as workers in managerially organised tasks that break through the boundaries of occupational specialisms. Work in this context is hollowed out and narrowed as professionals work within the practice designs of others (Hough 2001a). One key example of this process cited in the literature is the downgrading of the academic in modular and packaged education based on multimedia materials with very limited tutorial contact. The academic is displaced from a position as ‘a producer of distinctive knowledge who engages in informed debate with colleagues to a mere “worker” who delivers a package’ (Trowler 1998, p. 46). This approach, therefore, has the effect of diminishing the disciplinary power of diverse academic ‘tribes’ (Becher 1989; Clark 1996). Such practices also provide for the casualisation of the academic workforce. Market control is stimulated and academic control reduced.

According to this critique, in parallel with this de-skilling, degradation of academic work is achieved through the intensification of work, the proliferation of administrative practices associated with regimes of control and accountability and the loss of academic control over how time is spent. Usher and Edwards (1994, p. 178) argue that:

… the forms of accountability linked to the performance of the system are resulting in limits being set on the educational process which narrow the range of opportunities available even while, at the same time, “quantities of information” become more widely available.

Support for the degradation of academic work is provided by Martin’s (1999) survey of 160 academics in the UK and Australia. Of the 118 in non leadership positions, 75% commented on the lack of management consultation on relevant and important issues, 80% claimed that accountability measures were excessive, 65% felt that university leaders showed inadequate or inappropriate vision and 88% did not feel valued.
Academic identity from the labour process perspective

These discourses position academics as consumers within the organisation, condemned to passively accept the directions of an alien and dominating management group. Despair for the future and nostalgia for a more congenial past seem the only options. There is some evidence that this is not the whole story. Different forms of deskilling and deprofessionalisation need to be identified to clarify the nature of changes to academic work. LaNuez & Jermier (1994) identify two modes. The first they name ideological proletarianisation which refers to the decline of professional control over the use of work. The second they name technical proletarianisation which refers to loss of professional control over how to do the work.

Trowler’s (1998) ethnographic and interview study in a UK university does provide evidence that supports the ideological proletarianisation of work which is accompanied by intensification and degradation of work caused by increases in inefficient and unnecessary administrative structures and processes, power shifts away from academics and increases in surveillance. His study found no real evidence of deskilling or technical proletarianisation in LaNuez and Jermier’s terms. Further, his investigation does not support the dominant positioning of academics in these discourses of managerial imposition as passive and ‘inactive; caught in the bright light of policy change from the top’ (Trowler 1998, p. 101).

A variety of modes of academic response to change were identified in his study, some of them active. The first response he called ‘sinking’, the predicted academic response of mutely accepting change which was found in a small group of respondents. The second he called ‘swimming’ a response in a group of academic staff who found the new environment amenable and were able to capitalise on the changes to their benefit. The third response he called ‘coping’, designating a form of working to rule to manage the increased stress from work degradation. Trowler’s final category, however, represents a much more active and resistant response and was the largest overall. This he called ‘policy reconstruction’. This group were involved in actively reinterpreting and reconstructing policy on the ground, ‘sometimes resisting change, sometimes altering its direction’ (Ibid, p. 126). These academics used the latitude they had to reinterpret central directions so that they allowed traditional work patterns to continue or where new practices were required, they reframed directives to suit their preferred work approaches. The dominant discourse is used as a cover for the continuation of traditional activities or the invention of new ones on the academics’ terms.

The final form of activity Trowler describes, policy reconstruction, is reminiscent of de Certeau’s (1984, p. xi-xii) description of the modes of action of those dominated in society.
He suggests that ‘everyday life invents itself by poaching in countless ways on the property of others.’

De Certeau argues that the dominant form of rationality in Western culture has concealed these forms of poaching action, which he calls tactics. This form of resistance is dispersed and devious and insinuates itself through its ways of using the products of the dominant discourse. It exists, he claims, in the heart of the contemporary economy. The principal diversionary practice de Certeau names ‘la perruque’, where the workers own work is disguised as work for the employer. Such practices might be penalised by managers or they may turn a blind eye in order not to know about them. Whatever the case, de Certeau argues that la perruque is widespread in government and commercial offices as well as factories and that it, therefore, insinuates a different culture into the rationalised world of production, a culture of ‘social exchange, technical invention and moral resistance’ (p. 26).

This discourse if applied within the university setting positions the academic as a subversive, engaged in a continuous tactical game designed to turn the products of the dominant managerial discourse to his or her own ends. Academics in this view are part of a network of social relations that exist permanently out of view of the rationalised order. Its possibilities exist because of the imperfect nature of the hierarchy of functional surveillance which is ‘not always adequate to the task of preventing the pursuit of many activities that management see as undesirable’ (Sewell & Wilkinson 1992, p. 156). It relies on the inability of the panoptical forms of surveillance central to the operation of the modern corporation to make the work of academics fully visible to and controllable by managers. Its power effects will not, therefore, be seen in the expected forms of consolidated resistance or rebellion but will be present nonetheless.

As Trowler’s study and de Certeau’s research show, corporate strategic management and enterprise as discourses cannot completely contain the rules concerning what can and cannot be said about organisations and what practices are acceptable. These are, in Bauman’s (1992) terms, handicapped discourses, open to challenge by those who share the organisational experience. The following is a review of discourses that have come from different groups of academics rather than from organisational theorists. These critiques respond to the ways in which the managerial discourses have sought to constitute both the purposes of universities and the roles of academics within them.
The academic response

The conservatives

One critique of the reforms in universities completely rejects the language of management which it argues represents a degradation of the conception of the university. This conservative critique has come from a small group of academics and while its appeal to a nineteenth century conception of the university as primarily concerned with the search for Truth may seem archaic, it has nonetheless been quite influential. The critique calls significantly upon Newman’s (1960) famous delineation of the idea of a university to sustain a call for the continuing value of a commitment to the scholarly life and the pursuit of truth. It is characterised by pessimism about the potential for the ‘deepest values of the university’ to survive the pervasive ‘managerial Newspeak’ (Gaita 2000, p.29). Managerialism is characterised as the discourse of ‘myopics’ who see ‘universities…as no more than corporate operations aimed at generating products’ (Coady 2000, p. 10). The conservative critique is couched in terms of ‘loss’, ‘decline’, ‘collapse’ and ‘ruin’ (Watts 2002). This is an essentially monological discourse that seeks to defend the idea of the university. This idea is not rooted in the concerns of the society of the day but secured at a ‘distance from the contingent circumstances of time and place, making it possible for thinkers to judge, rightly or wrongly, that their desires, and even the spirit of the times, are faithful or false to “the idea of a university”’ (Ibid, p. 27-28).

One of the most significant problems with the conservative defence of the idea of the university is its failure to connect its utopian vision with the every day practicalities of university life. As far as it goes, it constructs the identity of the academic as a scholar whose principal obligation is reflection on the life of the mind. This is best achieved as part of a truth seeking community unconcerned with questions of the utility of knowledge and, in fact, separated from the practical task of educating or ‘training’ professional practitioners. The role of administrators, it must be supposed, is to secure the conditions for the continued existence of the community of truth seeking scholars by protecting the integrity of their role from disaggregation and deskillling and providing security of tenure and autonomy. This discourse seeks to protect the supposed past power of the academic to fully determine the value of academic activity and to disempower managers and reduce them to the role of helpers.

Readings and the ruined university

Another widely read critique that is couched in terms of ‘ruin’ is Readings (1996) The University in Ruins. This, however, is not another conservative position determined to preserve the idea of the university against change. The ruin of which Readings speaks is the loss of the centrality of the university to the creation of a common life through the loss of its
key modern role in the formation of national cultures and the citizen subjects of nation states. The demise of this idea of the university and its replacement with the centrality of bureaucratic administration results from the impacts of increasing globalisation (or Americanisation in Readings’ analysis) and the consequent demise of the nation state. The consequence for the university has been the rise of ‘dereferentialized’ discourses, in particular the discourse of excellence which places managerial accounting practices at the heart of a search for excellence in a university cut loose from its modern cultural role.

Readings does not see the university losing its need to make transcendental claims for its function as a cause for despair or cynicism. This loss creates the possibility for the university to contain a large variety of thinking without the need for this to be unified. He suggests that the role of the academic within what he names the posthistoric university is to find ways to continue to foster thinking in an institution that is making it harder and harder to do so. Readings uses the capitalised word ‘Thought’ to denote this process of keeping critical thinking alive in the university. He argues that this involves rethinking the categories that have governed intellectual life for over two hundred years.

The system as a whole will probably remain inimical to Thought, but … the process of dereferentialization is one that opens up new spaces and breaks down existing structures of defense against Thought, even as it seeks to submit Thought to the exclusive rule of exchange-value … (Ibid, p. 178)

Unlike the conservatives, Readings does address the issue of what is to be done and provides a counsel to academics living in the ruins of the modern university. This involves exploiting the opportunities, the new spaces that are opened up, not as part of a metanarrative of institutional redemption, but as part of a local, contingent and continuous struggle of creative resistance. Living in the ruins involves neither a full and pragmatic accommodation to the marketisation of the university nor, contrary to the position of the conservatives, an attempt to preserve the rituals of the past.

Readings, speaking from his position within the humanities, suggests that one opportunity involves the loosening of disciplinary boundaries within the university through the creation of short term collaborative projects that would interrupt the routines of currently constituted disciplines. Such projects would disrupt their thinking and cause them to question what they include and exclude and the terms of their production and reproduction.

Readings’ project does not suggest the reform of the administration of universities or the remaking of managers. Rather he focuses on the role of the academic as the preserver of thinking within the reconstituted institution. He is still concerned with the idea of a community
of thinkers, but bases his argument on a different conception of community than the one that has animated the modern university. He argues for a community of dissensus, one not based on the modern belief in the clarity, transparency and stability of communication in the ideal speech situation. Within a community of this type, Readings argues that any agreement on action is a temporary stabilisation in a field of permanent, radical heterogeneity where a common horizon of truth is impossible. The task of the academic within this community is thinking from an acknowledged position of ungroundedness, thinking about how thoughts stand beside other thoughts and seeking limited and provisional forms of agreement and action between both different academics and academics and managers.

**Bauman and the rise of the interpreters**

Bauman’s (1987; 1992) consideration of the history of the intellectual has already been briefly outlined, particularly his metaphor of the role of the modern intellectual as legislator. The usefulness of his notion of legislative reason for the role of the modern corporate manager has been suggested. The alternate conception of the intellectual – the interpreter – the metaphor Bauman suggests for the conditions of postmodernity needs to be briefly considered as well, as this provides a potential for the discursive reconstruction of the academic in the reformed university.

One of the features of postmodernism is the rise of pluralism which recognises the variety of forms of life, that these forms of life are all self legitimating and cannot be reconciled. Bauman suggests that this fragmentation of the sites of authority calls for specialists in translation. This role is one to which academics are well suited. They can abandon any claims to legislation and become interpreters of one discourse to another in a way that does not differentiate between one community culture and another. This metaphor positions academics as neutral, empathetic go betweens. This interpretive strategy conceals, or at least does not address, the politics of domination between cultures.

As an intellectual strategy for operation at the broad societal level this has appeal. Its respect for the validity of all voices, its commitment to a hermeneutic approach to understanding, its willingness to come to terms with the existence of postmodern consumer society and the fragmentation that it entails, all support the possibility of creative action within postmodernity. The difficulty of the metaphor for the organisational role of academics within the managerialised organisation, however, also derives from this privileged focus on the conditions of consumption. Bauman focuses almost exclusively on the rise and effects of consumer society and consequently under emphasises the role of production. Of the nature of organisation for production in the consumer economy, he says:
Managerial interests in the streamlining of their own enclaves of order and the self-monitoring interests of the individuals (that is, outside the subordinate roles the latter may play part-time in one or another of the mini-orders) are not in competition and are not bent on extinguishing or even constraining each other. On the contrary they are tied together in a relationship of mutual dependency and reinforcement.

This may be so, but the world Bauman consigns to parentheses is one in which the self-constructing and self-monitoring interests of individuals do come into conflict with those of the management of the organisation which must, of necessity, engage in practices that interfere with the individual’s self construction. The implications of the interpreter stance is more problematic in this context. Extending Bauman’s metaphor to the interorganisational context suggests two different ways in which the academic might be constituted. The first, more passive option, would position the academic as providing a commentary on the cultures of the university. This is an option concerned with the understanding of the diversity of life worlds it contains. The second, more active option might position the academic as one who seeks to create the spaces where organisational members from different cultural sub groups can come to an understanding of their differing but equally legitimate perspectives. Given that the task of organisation for production goes beyond understanding to action, it seems that a concept of temporary consensus on action based on a communication across differences (Ellsworth 1989) is the likely end point of such a view. How such spaces for the sharing of understandings within the politicised world of the managerial university might be created remains open.

**Pedagogical discourses**

The specific focus of this study is the ways the discursive constitution of managers, academics and support staff impacts on the implementation of a directed innovation in teaching and learning. Alternative discourses concerning pedagogy, therefore, will be critical to understanding how the players position themselves and others and the relations of power between them during the course of an innovation project. The major pedagogies that inform educational development in the new university are briefly reviewed below.

It is a paradox that the reconstitution of the university as an organisation to be managed has displaced teaching and learning from its central role (Usher & Edwards 1994) while simultaneously making it more visible in missions, strategies, evaluation practices and league tables of good teaching. The variety of pedagogical discourses in existence within the university are all forced to respond, in one way or another, to the forms of teaching and learning required by the managerial centre in the form of demands for flexibility and capability as described above.
There is a wide and confusing variety of ways in which these educational agendas are interpreted in terms of the interests they serve and how they seek to reconstitute the role of the academic teacher.

It is possible to group the variety of pedagogic discourses into two clusters. One set is located within the traditional modernist conception of education and responds to the progressive, humanist language of student autonomy and responsibility in which the discourses of flexibility and capability are couched. The possibilities for pedagogy are seen in reduced student dependence through opening up of the excessively closed and controlling world of academia to the diversity of student voices while simultaneously recognising the need for efficiency that constrained funding requires. Possibilities are to be found within the dominant educational and organisational forms.

The alternative, but by no means cohesive position is based upon a rejection of the liberal, humanist educational project and proposes alternative critical and postmodern pedagogies. In the following discussion, the first are referred to as traditional pedagogies and the second as disruptive.

**The discourse of traditional pedagogy**

Usher and Edwards (1994, p. 2) locate traditional pedagogy directly in the discourse of modernity.

> Historically, education can be seen as a vehicle by which modernity's 'grand narratives', the Enlightenment ideals of critical reason, individual freedom, progress and benevolent change, are substantiated and realised. The very rationale of the educational process and the role of the educator is founded on modernity’s self-motivated, self-directing, rational subject, capable of exercising individual agency.

The task of education, then, is to help to realise this potential and in so doing to shape the subjectivity and identity of students into a particular kind of subject – the good citizen.

The traditional educational discourse constitutes the teacher as a privileged possessor of validated knowledge and the task of pedagogy as the creation of conditions for the students’ successful acquisition of this knowledge so they might become rational, autonomous, educated individuals, a copies of, but now independent from, the teacher.

In this conception, knowledge is taken to be neutral and objective created and passed on in conditions that are outside of politics and power. The traditional pedagogic relation is essentially monological such that the monologue of the teacher may eventually become the
monologue of the student. It has been called the transmission model or ‘banking model’ of education (Freire 1970). Not all traditionalists accept this formulation and, in line with the humanist foundations of the discourse, seek alternative and less authoritarian pedagogical practices. In recent times this has been evidenced in the pervasive homily that the change being sought is from the pedagogue as ‘the sage on the stage’ to one who is ‘the guide on the side.’

The focus in traditional pedagogy, however, is not the displacement of the teacher as expert but on making the transfer of knowledge more effective. Whilst there is increased interest in students and the understandings they bring to the educational situation, this interest is for the purpose of more effectively transforming them so they acquire the correct understanding. The kinds of organisational projects likely to be undertaken include the clarification of learning objectives, their specification in advance and the alignment of these with appropriate learning experiences and assessment tasks (Ramsden 1992; Marton, Hounsell & Entwistle 1997; Biggs 1999).

Traditional pedagogies constitute academics as experts and legislators within their own teaching and learning worlds. The pedagogical focus is on technique and the educator as designer of effective and efficient learning. At a conceptual level this is strongly aligned with the underlying modernist framework of the corporate management discourse. While conceptually aligned in that each privileges the legislative role, they are destined to come into conflict as each attributes the role of legislator to itself. The loss of autonomy for the legislating educator in the managerialised university provides the point of rupture and brings relations of power into play.

This rupture is most likely to be associated with perceived conflicts between disciplinary traditions and norms and the pedagogical demands instituted by management. In studies of higher education it has become paradigmatic to understand academic autonomy and, therefore, academic responses to curriculum change as rooted in the knowledge structures of different academic disciplines (Becher 1994). Trowler (1998) refers to this formulation as epistemological essentialism, which his ethnographic study of academic responses to university change did not support. He argues that there has been a failure to demonstrate how knowledge structures become translated into attitudes and that a more complex model that takes account of factors beyond knowledge structures is needed to account for academic responses to change.

Whilst a more complex model may well be necessary there seems little doubt that as Gouldner (cited in Clegg 1990) noted different types of organisational members are likely to
hold quite different conceptions as a result of different credentials and specialisations. Gouldner identified a basic difference between ‘cosmopolitans’ and ‘locals’. Cosmopolitans are professionals whose orientation to their wider professional culture cuts across their allegiance to any specific organisation. Locals are those for whom progression is situated within a specific organisation resulting in greater allegiance to it. Clark (1996, p.19) identified the creation of ‘finely distinguished sub cultures in academia’ as a natural process and endorsed the notion that academics’ primary professional identity is based on the discipline speciality. This has been reinforced by Sinclair (1997, p.138) who argues that management can be seen by professionals as a new and threatening subculture. She notes, ‘… professionals tend to have a low tolerance for organisation or management imposed constraints, which they perceive jeopardise their own values.’

In seeking to clarify these differences within the contemporary university, Hough (2001b, p. 3) identified four ‘ideal types’ or ‘logics-of-action’ that relate to specific discursive positions within the organisation. All Hough’s categories accept a modernist pedagogical framework but identify within this framework the key features assigned to academic teaching roles based on four specific discursive positions which he names managerial, professional, market and community.

The managerial perspective situates the teacher as a manager of learning experiences with primary accountability for better management through clearer planning and specification of these experiences. The professional logic-of-action positions the academic as teacher, researcher and scholar with primary accountability to their professional bodies and codes of practice. The market position casts the academic as a broker of educational opportunities with primary accountability for customer choice and supply and demand within the market. Finally the community paradigm makes the academic an enabler or facilitator as well as a scholar. Primary accountability for this position is to the socialisation of the student and the creation of collective identity (Hough 2001b).

**Disruptive pedagogies**

Disruptive pedagogies, as defined for this review, are those that draw upon neo-marxist, feminist and postmodern discourses. These are sometimes seen as alternative, opposing positions, however they can more usefully be framed as interlinked oppositional discourses that continue to challenge and inform each other. Recently, for example, proponents like Lather (1991) have sought to craft a pedagogy that builds on the strengths of each. For the purposes of this review, they will be separated into those that, on balance, favour critical positions and those that favour postmodern ones.
Critical pedagogues argue that traditional pedagogies are rooted in the ‘dominant positivist, behaviorist and instrumentally oriented educational ideology’ (Shapiro 1995, p. 188). The driving force of critical education, on the other hand, is the creation of critical consciousness in an environment where both the process and outcome of education are ‘a generation of interveners in the social and political life of this planet’ (Freire 1998, p. 17). Underpinning the critical position is a commitment to a society that is just, humane and free. In this, critical pedagogy is still tied to the modernist, Enlightenment project that situates education as being primarily concerned with the creation of the autonomous, rational individual. In this case, however, not the docile subject who will take up his or her designated place in the system but a historical subject - one who is a ‘maker of history and not simply a passive, disconnected object’ (Ibid, p. 55).

The creation of the ‘maker of history’ requires the development of critical self consciousness – *consciensization* in Freire’s terms. This requires a passage from ‘ingenuous curiosity’ through the practice of reflection to the critical stage of ‘epistemological curiosity’ (Ibid, p. 44-45). The teacher’s role is one that requires that he or she take a stand and it is this ethical posture that makes a difference. Knowledge in this pedagogical discourse is not neutral. Early forms of critical pedagogy were tied to their Marxist roots and the pedagogical relationship was conceptualised as one of assisting the students to shed their ‘false consciousness’ under the influence of the transformative intellectual. Poststructuralist and postmodern thinking have challenged this position and under their influence the more blatant forms of vanguardism have been moderated. More dialogical or reciprocal forms have taken their place while commitment to the modern, universal project of democracy has been retained (see for example border pedagogy, Giroux 1995; postcolonial pedagogy, McLaren 1995).

Despite these changes, sustained criticism of critical pedagogy has continued from the postmodern perspective, targeted at the concept of human emancipation grounded in modernist concepts of universal reason. These beliefs position critical teachers as
possessors of true emancipatory understanding and authorises them to speak on behalf of others. Lather (1991, p. 47) argues that critical pedagogues must:

… abandon crusading rhetoric and begin to think outside of a framework that sees the ‘Other’ as the problem for which they are the solution … (and) shift the role of critical intellectuals from universalizing spokespersons to cultural workers who do what they can to lift the barriers which prevent people from speaking for themselves.

**Postmodern pedagogies**

Postmodern pedagogies reject the modernist objective of the creation of the autonomous subject freed from dependence and develop a concept of the situated subject, formed in the significations of history, culture and discursive practices. They reconfigure the idea of emancipation so that it is neither grounded in the social ontology of humanism nor the historical teleology of critical pedagogies (Usher & Edwards 1994). This reconfiguration problematises the role of the educator in relation to ideas of emancipatory change and requires that a new role be developed that acknowledges the loss of modernist certainties in the authoritative foundations of knowledge (Cherryholmes, 1988). ‘The courage to think and to act within an uncertain framework, then, emerges as the hallmark of liberatory praxis …’ (Lather 1991, p. 13).

In the pedagogical relation, this necessity to live with ambiguity and difference requires that educators reflexively and continually question the ground upon which they stand and their own implication in discourses of mastery (Usher & Edwards 1994; Readings 1996). Postmodern pedagogy, then, recognises its own limits, that knowledge is always contingent on particular times and places and is always unrealisable and incomplete. Truth, reality and values are always dialogically negotiated within historical and cultural moments (Doll 1989,1995). Bakhtin’s (1981, p.276) concept of dialogism has informed postmodern pedagogical thinking. He notes that all words enter a ‘dialogically agitated and tension filled environment of alien words, value judgments and accents … ’.Readings (1996, p. 165) has drawn out the pedagogical implications of dialogism in the postmodern moment with his concept that a pedagogy that can resist commodification is one centred on *listening to Thought*.

… *listening to Thought* is not the spending of time in the production of an autonomous subject (even an oppositional one) or of an autonomous body of knowledge. Rather, to listen to Thought, to think beside each other and beside ourselves, is to explore the open network of obligations that keeps the question of meaning open as a locus of debate.
The pedagogical practices needed to keep ‘the question of meaning open’ have been explored from a range of positions although the practical import of postmodern perspectives is still being worked out.

Usher and Edwards (1994) have emphasised the potential of experiential learning as a practice that offers space for conflicting assumptions, values and strategies. Their emphasis is on reflexivity and the constant struggle to deconstruct, construct and reconstruct meaning that shows that there is no single definition, providing a nexus for continued questioning.

Ellsworth (1989, p. 317) in her well known critique of the repressive myths of critical pedagogy has analysed her own pedagogical practices in a particular course. She rejects the idea of dialogue based on rational analysis that assumes agreement on the purposes of the dialogue or a ‘harmony of interests’ amongst those who are party to it. She argues that there can be no harmony of interests in a situation where power is unequal. Rather than the unification of differences through dialogue, she proposes a notion of communication across differences. In learning of this kind, different groups of students that she calls ‘affinity groups’ work to build a coalition for a specific purpose within a specific context.

Lessons from her experiments in teaching using the idea of communication across differences include the need for classroom practices to explicitly confront the power dynamics that make democratic dialogue impossible. She argues that more than a spoken commitment to open discussion is needed to make the classroom space safe enough for students to speak openly about their experiences. Forms of communication other than dialogue might be needed to create the possibility for the inequalities in power relations to be named. Such forms of communication might be developed within affinity groups which can provide a safer space than the whole classroom for students to develop a language to speak about their experiences and to shape strategies they may wish to put forward to the larger class group. Decision making about the strategies to be accepted within the class group should be based on a determination of the extent to which any specific strategy alleviates the particular inequity that is the focus of attention without undercutting the efforts of other social groups to win self-definition.

At the moment, feminist educators provide the best examples of experiments that adopt a postmodern theme (see ed. Mayberry & Cronan 1999 for example). What is already clear is that the complex positioning of the pedagogue in this discourse relies on a recognition of the value of difference and commitment to it as a source of enrichment within an ambiguous context in which only local agreements can be reached. Lorde (1984. p. 112 quoted in Ellsworth 1989, p. 321) states the commitment thus.
Difference must be not merely tolerated, but seen as a fund of necessary polarities between which our creativity can spark like a dialectic. Only then does the necessity for interdependency become unthreatening.

These commitments sit at odds with the discourses of traditional pedagogy and the managerial organisational frameworks and practices that are dominant within the university.

Disruptive pedagogies constitute the academic as subversive. Their self declared tasks cuts across their roles as ‘paid functionaries of the state … (who) are expected to engage in a form of moral, social, political, and economic reproduction designed to shape students in the image of the dominant society (Macedo 2000, p. 3). The project of bringing oppositional discourses into the university requires considerable tactical skill. Rinehart (1999, p. 65) argues that it must be seen as ‘infiltration and subversion (rather) than overt attack’. She suggests that feminist pedagogues, by locating themselves within universities, must utilise a range of reformist practices that endeavour to integrate critical or disruptive purposes with organisational aims. While those adopting a disruptive pedagogy will always occupy a subversive role within the university, the more distributed and autonomous forms associated with the enterprise discourse provide greater potential for appropriation to their pluralistic purposes than strongly hierarchical, corporate approaches.

Reflection
In reviewing the range of discourses that are available within the university, in presenting them side by side, I have been reminded of the scope of different discourses of work reform and the passion with which their proponents hold them. These are not simply parallel discourses but are interconnected, as the various definitions of identity they produce are created often in opposition to those proposed or taken for granted by others. In any debate about meaning or struggle over what constitutes appropriate action within the university we will all enter the arena with a range of political and ethical investments already in place. What this highlights is the impossibility of any position outside of discourse, any position from which to mediate or arbitrate between definitions and interpretations.

I undertook this review of discourses to provide a basis for making some sense of the bewildering diversity of positions put forward by the fifty three staff I interviewed for the first case study. Before using this review for that purpose, I have tried to use it to understand and articulate more clearly than the intimations I provided within the Prologue, my own positioning at the beginning of this study as a staff member supporting teaching and learning change processes.
Intellectually I am drawn to postmodern discourses founded on concepts of communication across differences and concepts of agreement that are not predicated on notions of permanent consensus. These discourses resonate with my ethical commitment to a belief that no voices should be marginalised. The orientation of these discourses to the constant renegotiation of agreements for specific, contextualised activities also relates to the nature of my tasks within the university and my political commitments to local action. I prefer to understand my practice as open to dialogue, my disposition as being willing to listen to differences and work across them and my practice as speaking across the different languages of academia and management from my position on the side.

In using the review of postmodern discourses to analyse my own preferred perception of my positioning, I realise that the concept of dialogue that I have situated as central to my work identity needs to be interrogated more fully. In reflecting on my practices I can identify two major ways in which I have developed my role.

As a support staff member, I have sought to create the conditions for dialogue between members of teams of academics who are focussed on a project, willingly or not, that is designed to address a strategically directed agenda. I have seen my role as one of creating the conditions where, through open and rational dialogue, I can assist the team to find a way to interpret the strategic direction and then act on their interpretation in a way that is reasonably consonant with their own aspirations.

My role in this formulation is as a bridge, without apparent or declared investments of my own, between the corporately determined strategic discourse (taken to be single minded) and that of the academic team (taken to be unified). As the review of discourse reveals, such a positioning is based upon a belief in the possibility of open dialogue in a context of equal power relations. In this positioning, I have not problematised my role, but acted as though the role of disinterested mediator were a possibility. Despite my acceptance of the changes to the role of academic developers outlined in the review, such that we are seen to be agents of management in implementing strategically directed change, I have ignored what this might mean in terms of my ability to facilitate dialogue. I have not adequately inquired into what this new positioning of academic development might mean, what my presence as an agent of university management might suppress. A further insight from the review of discourses is that the conception of dialogue supported through this practice excludes the management discourses. These management discourses exist in this practice approach only as the starting point for interpretation. Management is not party to the dialogue. The directed strategies are seen as impositions and management as incapable of entering into dialogue.
The second practice position I have observed in my own work is one in which my positioning is more overtly oppositional and political. In the bridging role described above, there is some expectation on my part that the teams of academics with whom I am working will make changes to their practices that move in the general direction of the directed strategy. These changes might not be those that I imagine are intended but will represent a reshaping of traditional work practices. In the second approach this is reframed as simply a project of translation, where the work the academic teams were going to do anyway is made to look like it conforms to the strategy.

This role utilises the recognition that management discourses and practices of discipline and accountability are imperfectly instituted and that the deception will not be noticed. If it is noticed, it accepts that the systems of cascading, hierarchical accountability and reporting mean that it is in the interests of line managers to use whatever activities they can to demonstrate achievements against targets.

This positioning reveals my political alignments with the interests of academics against managers. There is a rejection of the assertions of strategy and the unproblematised position of management. This position inevitably reverts to the dualistic ‘us and them’, positioning of oppositional understandings of power. My role can easily revert to a self conception as emancipator or victim contrary to my preferred role constructions.

The question remains of how practice might be reformed to enable the potential of a process of continuous development that is creative and productive to be realised. To restate Lorde’s (1984, p. 112) words, can we develop ways of working where difference is 'seen as a fund of necessary polarities between which our creativity can spark'?

**Summary and conclusion**

The outline of discourses presented in the chapter illustrates the diversity of explanatory frameworks available with the university and reveals the ways in which they privilege different roles and expertise as central to successful organisational change. Within this diversity there is a small number of primary discursive positions each containing a multitude of possible permutations. One category of discursive positions favours managers, in distinctly different ways, as central to successful change. A second, primarily developed in relation to service functions, seeks an accommodation with the currently dominant managerial approaches. A third positions academics and academic work at the heart of change and necessarily is constructed as resistant to the managerial discourses.
Two opportunities emerge from this review. First, the discourses can be applied to the texts of the interview transcripts to reveal the preferred positioning of various staff. The range of different discourses presented in this chapter can be used to identify those that have taken hold with different staff as they construct their work identities and roles and those of other staff. This analysis is presented in the next chapter.

Secondly, in order to examine alternatives to practice approaches that either leave power out of the analysis of the interactions of differently constructed work identities in a change project or ones that ultimately resort to oppositional ‘them and us’ approaches, new ways of thinking about power need to be investigated. I take up this investigation in Chapter 5.
Chapter 4

CASE STUDY 1: ROLES AND DISCOURSES

In this chapter I present the categorisation of descriptions of work identity and role in relation to the range of available discourses of work reform within universities. The analysis of 53 interview transcripts revealed significantly different discursive constructions of work identity and role both within and between the different classifications of staff used in the analysis - that of senior managers (SM), line managers (LM), support staff (SS) and academic staff (AS).

As outlined in Chapter 2, the analysis used key concepts from each of the discourses reviewed in Chapter 3 as heuristic devices to interrogate the descriptions provided by each interview participant and to classify the range of different ways of making sense of organisational identity and role, as it concerns changes to teaching and learning revealed within them.

The range of categories discovered is first presented for each different staff grouping. This is followed by a description of the relationships between these categories across the different staff groups. In each case the category is illustrated with quotations from relevant interview transcripts, which are numbered to denote the specific participant within the category as follows. Senior managers are numbered SM1 through 8, line managers LM 1 through 20, academic staff AS 1 through 10 and support staff SS 1 through 15.

There are some differences in the names given to organisational units, positions and artefacts between the five universities. For consistency and to help protect the identities of interview participants, a common set of names has been substituted for the variations where quotations are included. Divisions and schools (rather than portfolios, faculties and departments) have been used to refer to the major organisational units. The title Teaching and Learning Plan (rather than strategy) has been used to name the major planning document. Associate Deans (Teaching and Learning) replaces the various specific titles used for staff with key responsibilities for teaching and learning change within Divisions and central teaching support group has been substituted for the specific names of units in each university.
The analysis presented in this chapter is a first step towards understanding the dysfunctions within current teaching change practices by developing a potentially useful descriptive language for the diversity of positions adopted by staff who must interact in a change project.

The discourses of senior managers
Within each of the transcripts of senior managers, their work identities and roles are described in the language of both corporate strategic management and the enterprise discourse. The interviews reveal that these positions exist side by side as each senior manager expresses them alternately albeit with differing levels of emphasis. It appears senior managers’ work identity construction, moves between these discourses.

Depending upon which of the major discursive positions is in focus at any particular time, the work identity and roles of line managers, faculty staff and support staff are constructed differently.

When the corporate strategic planning framework is dominating, there is a clear positioning of senior managers as the most critical element in achieving change in a conservative sector by taking ‘a more driving role’ and ‘running the agenda’ (SM 4). This may require ‘a strong willed bastard who is pushy’ (SM 1) or ‘barking orders’ and delivering ‘catch cries or slogans or theme words’ to ‘the troops’ (SM 7). It may also involve ‘more sweetly reasonable ways’ to ‘try to convince people of what needs to be done’ (SM 7). This self-positioning transforms them into subjects who exercise power through the hierarchical divisions of the strategic planning discourse where management is central to success.

If you don’t actually get … somebody within the senior management structure of the university that has key responsibility for it, you’re in trouble. (SM 8)

The institution is putting a huge amount of horsepower into teaching and learning. In a sense, if we manage this well, we will be so well placed not only in the local market but elsewhere. (SM 1)

When I’m not there … driving the strategy along, it does lose some momentum and the wheels fall off … I just think people need to see and touch the leaders a bit. (SM 4)

When the enterprise discourse dominates, the work identity constructed by senior managers is quite different. Consistent with the key tenets of this discourse, the manager’s role becomes facilitative. One participant explicitly referenced the work of Heifetz (1994) to explain.
Opposed to having leadership from out front, you have leadership from within a group to actually do the work of addressing the future … The job of the leader is actually to moderate the level of distress and anxiety, but getting the group to do the work and address future causes. (SM 3)

All senior managers explain their own actions through both the corporate strategic management and enterprise discourses, however, there is a single suggestion within the transcripts that, while inevitable, these are an uneasy fit for managers who have come from the ranks of academics.

We run businesses. We do risk assessments. We write contracts. We are business managers and all things that were totally alien to the concept of what a university was, certainly the ones we grew up in either as students or as commencing academics … And if I could sit down and talk to the person I was in the mid seventies, I don’t think I could. That person would walk off on the conversation because they’d think I’d sold my soul … I mean it’s not the way I’d like it to be. (SM 8)

The following sections provide detail of the ways in which each of the discourses is revealed in the senior managers’ interview transcripts.

**Corporate strategic planning**
Corporate strategic management is a pervasive and taken for granted discourse, justified as rational and necessary, indeed the only conceivable response to a systematic analysis of external conditions. A university without a corporate plan has become unthinkable.

To try to get the performance up, we’ve obviously got a comprehensive planning framework in this university … The kind of linear thing that I’m suggesting, I think it’s inescapable and I think we have to do it nonetheless. (SM 8)

I mean, if you’re going to get people to change their practice, there’s got to be a plan. Well, there is a plan … It’s a reasonable plan. You can’t really think of a different one. (SM 4)

Descriptions reveal key concepts of the corporate strategic planning discourse in the drilling down of plans into line managers’ practices through performance management and of the need to institute comprehensive and aligned practices to ensure compliance. These descriptions objectify the practices of the university into a set of activities and documents.

I’m creating the framework that makes the university’s corporate plan more realisable. So it’s a matter of pulling apart the corporate plan and drilling down into the institution and making sure that its framework, its plans, talk to that corporate plan in a discernible way. (SM 8)
The primary issue for the corporate strategy approach described in Chapter 3, that of the gap between strategy and implementation, is highlighted as each senior manager’s interview focuses considerable attention on the problem of achieving academic staff adherence to the central plan.

I’m saying it but no-one’s doing it. (SM 5)

And I do think that there was a really strong view that the University Teaching and Learning Plan had nothing to do with what was going on … People say that it is very logical but I don’t see much evidence of people on the ground being willing to push it. (SM 1)

One approach described by a senior manager to securing support for the centrally set strategic objectives has been to situate the planning process in traditional peer forums such as the Academic Board rather than from ‘the management stream’ (SM 3) so that ‘the ownership couldn’t be disputed’, as the strategy is seen to emerge from a ‘public place’ that is collegial. (SL 3)

What I’m suggesting is that if, in fact, it had been driven out of this office, as the original drafts were all the way through, those arguments would be even stronger and more strident and the resistance even greater than we’re experiencing now … When people choose to ignore the change or resist the change they are ignoring or resisting their peers, as opposed to their managers. (SM 3)

Other approaches to securing support for the strategic plan have resulted in some modification of the straightforward hierarchical or ‘linear’ planning process described by the orthodox corporate strategic management discourse. Within the interviews, there are significant attempts to recognise the specific nature of the university context and to modify the monological and hierarchical character of the discourse through the creation of openings designed to foster ‘bottom up’, ‘partnership’ or ‘adult learning’ approaches. These positions do not depart radically from the corporate strategic management discourse but rather, attempt to make it more palatable and effective.

Another key assumption has been that we’ll implement the change through a combination of top down and bottom up, which is easy to say but hard to achieve. (SM 5)

You never try to bloody beat people around the head. You’ve got to say, ‘Look, here’s a reasonably thought through menu of what we think we’re doing now…what would you say?’ (SM 6)
The emphasis on participation is, however, restricted to the *implementation* of strategies devised at the top so that the division of staff into managers who lead and academics who implement is not disturbed.

Fairly collegially, the VCs committee establishes the strategic themes ... We expect all the divisions and schools to look at ways within their own context and culture they can add to that theme. (SM 5)

The one key thing is to set the priorities ... Rather than allow people at every bloody different level to sort of talk about, ‘let’s go bloody port’, ‘let’s go starboard’, ‘let’s go stern’, you know? (SM 6)

Whilst acknowledging the need for looser approaches to the neat, management driven cascade of plans characteristic of the corporate strategic management discourse, there is also recognition of the dangers of uneven development, slow progress and poor external image inherent in relinquishing direct managerial control.

I’m very much aware that if you do have bottom up you have some disadvantages. ... You get some things you don’t think much of – but they’re the prices you pay for actually getting some changes to occur. (SM 5)

One (disadvantage) is when people are looking at the university from outside, they can see the slower process, and they can see that other institutions where it’s driven out of the management line are able to give a more cohesive and coherent statement of what it is they are seeking to achieve. (SM 3)

The transcripts reveal a variety of approaches to limiting the extent of variation in implementation when some bottom up latitude is allowed.

We’re very keen to have diversity across the university, but to limit it in terms of what central support we’ll provide. (SM 5)

But essentially the way we work is to enlist the enthusiastic participation of the schools by giving them a lot of discretion in shaping exactly what they do within general guidelines and frameworks and plans that we devise ... My office can lean on them and say, ‘Well, very little chance of getting money if you do that, but we like this bit of your idea and why don’t we work that out?’ (SM 7)
The discourse of enterprise

The discourse of enterprise is evident in all senior managers’ interviews through the prevalence of concepts of education as a business involved in producing and marketing a flexible range of educational products and services to customers or clients.

It was very clear that the nature of the teaching business externally was changing very quickly … Alternative supply arrangements coming into the market … have cut away our markets. (SM 3)

In this discourse it is the need to provide consumer choice that drives change in teaching and learning.

So the sorts of changes that we’re seeking to make to our course architecture which allow choice by students … together with trying to introduce people to a different range of teaching strategies. (SM 3)

The changes in markets are seen by senior managers to require radical changes in work practices within the university. There are, however, two distinct conceptions contained in the transcripts of the nature of the radical changes required. The first is couched in terms of industrial production. Within this discourse, the problem is seen as the need to break the connection between individual academics and subjects so that educational production may be reconceptualised as ‘repackaging’ (SM 2).

The culture of teaching is cottage industry culture … where you have an individual who designs and delivers everything with the door shut … [We are engaged in] a quite major rethinking about the nature of academic work and the nature of subjects, really, which increasingly are being framed in terms of, I suppose, components that can be more readily assembled and disassembled and repurposed and reorganised. (SM 4)

We need to design in a modular way so that the design solution is to a learning problem without harnessing any academic to the sequence. (SM 2)

The second conceptualisation, advocated simultaneously and by the same senior leaders invokes the team based enterprise culture within a delayered, non supervisory organisation.

In an interesting way, the transformation of teaching and learning is like the transformation of the work practices that are going on in other industries, and moving from ‘do what I tell you’, and going through the transitional delayering to the whole performance organisation. (SM 4)
From this position and consistent with the enterprise discourse the certainties of the external environment that made strategic planning effective are no longer present.

We are in a world in which that is impossible to do, because there are no known solutions for dealing with the extent of change in our external environment we’re facing at the moment. All we can do is best guess … to actually put our heads together to actually come up with what we think is the best, collectively, way of dealing with our uncertainty. (SM 5)

The achievement of such change is seen to require a ‘pretty rich change culture’ which is ‘deliberate’ (SM 5). Managers are positioned as those who enable the culture change through the establishment of ‘non negotiable parameters’ (SM 6) within which teams work ‘with appropriate support that doesn’t get in the way.’ (SM 6) In accordance with the enterprise discourse, the desired academic subject in this conception is not the compliant follower of plans but the self actualising team performer of the enterprise organisation. Central to this is the ‘fostering of independence or creative energy’ (SM 4).

So we’re trying to move from that – the full supervisory type – to that self-actualising high performance team … So that does require the creation of teams that are going to be working in ways that challenge the orthodoxy and that draw on the strengths of the whole group. (SM 4)

Within this discourse, performance appraisal systems are no longer seen as a means to achieve compliance with the corporate strategic direction. They are located within the enterprise discourse of self improvement and of the alignment of the individual with the organisation.

We do have a performance appraisal system … with performance enhancements … It’s to influence how people see themselves within the plans of the Division. (SM 5)

Each staff member will have done a diagnosis … in terms of where they think they should put their efforts in the coming year to improve themselves. (SM 6)

To the extent that the pedagogical relation is described in any detail in the senior managers’ interviews it remains within the modernist conception described as traditional pedagogy in Chapter 3. In Hough’s (2001b) terms senior managers draw upon both the managerial concern for better management of student learning experiences and the market concern for brokering educational choices for students as customers.
We want to make teaching quality more consistent across the institution. And that means we’ve got to focus much more on who the students are, what they need since they have extraordinarily diverse backgrounds. (SM 7)

Student centredness is the name given to the ‘complex and subtle kind of change’ (SM 4) to teaching and learning to prepare students for the high performance team culture of the globalised workplace. Academics are seen, however, as still understanding teaching as ‘sitting at the feet of the great’ (SM 4) and information transfer.

What we’ve got is people imparting knowledge, pushing blocks of stuff, rather than helping students engage in transforming ways. (SM 4)

The teacher should be ‘a learning coordinator’ to provide more individualised education (SM 6).

It’s like adult learning theory tells us. There are multiple learning tools and resources, not one, and it's all to do with read and match. (SM 6)

The above overview demonstrates how the corporate strategic management discourse including its modified versions and the enterprise discourses are simultaneously present within the language of senior managers. The language of enterprise is uneasily juxtaposed with the commitment to the desire for highly controlled corporate strategic practices. Both the dedifferentiation seen to be characteristic of the move to enterprise, team based models of production and the differentiation of previously holistic teaching practices into specialised assembly systems characteristic of industrial management are invoked. These different positions have different implications for the ways in which line managers, faculty staff and support staff roles are constructed by senior managers. The next section outlines the conflicting role constructions that result.

**Senior managers’ construction of the work identities and practices of others**

The interviews with senior managers contain few specific references to line managers. Within the corporate strategy discourse they are positioned as the first layer to which organisational strategy is drilled down for implementation. The lack of comment concerning them suggests a construction as conduits of already determined strategic directions. The few remarks concerning them relate to their perceived lack of engagement with substantive issues and allegiance to their organisational units rather than the whole organisation focus of the senior leaders.
I find the level of debate amongst the deans pathetic … You know how I would have got a debate on the document? … If I had a section on structure they would have been all over me because then it’s a feifdomship. (SM 1)

Central support staff are unambiguously constructed by senior managers as their operational arm with their practice seen as a form of consultancy.

The central teaching and learning group … it’s really the operational arm of my office in the most direct sense … it’s the area that works particularly with schools and divisions. (SM 7)

The tensions this creates for support staff located between the senior leadership and academic staff is acknowledged.

Certainly the role is – it’s a difficult role … that’s not absolutely one thing or another … There’s a lot of role ambiguity … because you’re responsive to the imperatives of the strategy … so to some extent implementing in quite resistant set ups I assume. (SM 4)

Within the senior managers transcripts the majority of comments about staff attitudes or practices is reserved for academic staff and none of the many references to them is positive. Academic staff are variously cast as resistant, incapable or indifferent depending upon the dominating discourse. When the corporate strategic discourse is in focus it is the resistant academic that comes to the fore, an individual who is unwilling to change and accept direction.

There is a fairly broad unhappiness across the university campuses throughout Australia, and the general passive resistance, largely, but sometimes not so passive … to the imposition of corporatist models across the sector. (SM 3)

Some people don’t like to have anyone looking over their shoulder or guiding the university in a particular direction. (SM 1)

There’s not a great willingness to do it. (SM 4)

One approach used by senior manager to address resistance through the use of more participative approaches has been outlined. Despite this, frustration with resistance sometimes surfaces a desire for a more directly controlling role.

I mean, I just wish I suppose, that a lot of people would accept the view that there’s going to have to be this continuing revolution in practice and there’s no good pretending there’s not going to be … I mean, I do think we’ve got to just say, ‘there’s no way round this. This is the
way it’s going to have to be’ ... Where people are saying they don’t feel like this, I do think they should get out. (SM 4)

Where the enterprise discourse dominates, the academic is more frequently posited as uncomprehending or unprepared for the challenge.

And one of the things about a change as large as the one we are talking about … is that people do need to understand little bits that fit together. At the moment in this institution they do not. And that causes the levels of anxiety and distress to rise, which then get in the way of the implementation of the change process. (SM 3)

To see it as a whole job focus requires - obviously a willingness to do it – but also a capacity to put the bits together. And this capacity is remarkably thin on the ground. You’d think most people would see it. Most people do not see it. (SM 4)

Senior managers’ construction of academics also draws upon the notion of ‘epistemological essentialism’ (Trowler 1998), that is, that academic disciplines determine academic responses to change with the indifferent academic as the result. In this case, the defining characteristic of academics is their lack of allegiance to the management discourses and, therefore, to a whole of organisation focus.

And I think while a lot of academics do like that kind of thinking (big picture), they prefer it in their own discipline. So that’s where they put their big head stuff. (SM 4)

I’m suggesting that there is a tendency based on discipline. If you go to perceptions of what knowledge is and levels of certainty around that … Can it be known? Does it exist out there? You’ve got a bunch of people who are trained in believing that nothing exists outside their heads, who presumably are dealing with high levels of uncertainty on a practical basis every day. And there are the empiricists … who are trained in exactly the opposite tradition … (SM 3)

The discourses of line managers

Amongst the 20 participants in this category there were five managers of central support groups, four deans of divisions and eleven heads of school. In contrast to the senior leaders who alternately moved between the two major business discourses, each of the line managers operated consistently within a single discourse. I have classified one group of participants following Knights and Morgan (1991) as ‘strategic actors’, those who accept the logic of the corporate strategy discourse and actively participate in its reproduction. The second group identified also operates within the logic of the corporate strategic discourse but is critical of its enactment and presses for a greater share of power in direction setting and
decision making. I have named these participants ‘corporate localists’. The third classification is that of the ‘entrepreneur’, located firmly within the market discourse. Only one participant fell within this category evidencing the dominance of the corporate strategic discourse within this employment category. Participants within the final category are also positioned within the corporate strategy discourse but as resisters. They introduce a different discursive framework based on models of empowerment and collaborative learning. They have been called ‘outsiders’ to reflect their own assessment of their positioning.

**Category one - Strategic actors**

Seven of the line managers interviewed demonstrated the strong organisational allegiance of strategic actors. For these line managers, the university is ‘we’. Four of the five managers of central units, two of the five deans and a single head of school described their work identities in this way. Strategic actors consistently reproduce the language of their senior managers concerning the role of strategic planning and clearly identify their place in promulgating the strategic planning decisions.

> Our activities are determined by the university’s planning process and unlike most institutions, I think, we actually take the planning process, as a tool for action, very seriously. And so we have a corporate plan … Each unit then develops its own strategic plan. (LM1)

> At this university we are highly centralised, a very bureaucratic university. We have a very strong corporate identity. That, I think, in some ways should help us as it at least declares something. It is more likely that people are going to listen and hear it than they might if we were a traditional university that really had delegated authority to the divisions. (LM 4)

The work identity of strategic actors is tied to acceptance of their role in the corporate strategy hierarchy. The activities of strategic actors include, ‘communicating policy’ (LM 1), ‘winning’ or ‘capturing the hearts and minds’ of staff (LM 1, LM 3), ‘trying to get people thinking in a similar way’ (LM 4) and for the head of school in this group, trying to manage staff workloads ‘to have creative time’ to work on strategic initiatives (LM 6). The communication activities involve orienting staff to the corporate objectives and the documents generated through the planning process, which are themselves cast as actors.

> It starts with the Teaching and Learning Plan and getting staff to engage with that at a serious intellectual level. … To be effective they’ve got to understand the corporate objectives of the university, what the business is about, they’ve got to understand what the Teaching and Learning Plan is about and what it’s trying to do. (LM3)

Strategic actors are focused on issues of compliance with corporate objectives and responses vary from the insistence on a ‘hierarchy of professional accountability’ (LM 1) and...
punitive actions for non compliance to a more facilitative approach aligned with the modified corporate approach displayed by some senior leaders.

What do you do with people who for all the planning and for all the commitment and specific plans for specific courses of action, don’t sign on to that? And the answer is that we are becoming increasingly businesslike about the assessment of compliance … And if they’re not, then … your funding is at jeopardy. (LM 1)

Divisions have quite a lot of latitude in the way in which they operationalise, provided they can do it on a number of outcomes … You want people to buy on. I mean the more you mandate, the more people have a reason for arguing, or nit-picking their way around it. (LM 3)

Some strategic actors identify the dilemma of flawed implementation of change within the corporate strategic planning framework.

I think that we are reasonably good at planning and we put a lot of effort into evaluation, like measuring outcomes, having performance targets, whatever. But there is this implementation in the middle that is like this huge, black hole. (LM 4)

In seeking ways to address this dilemma they remain within the discourse simply seeking improved communication, ‘a common language to speak’ (LM 4) or improved control, ‘we’re trying to regain control over some of the systems’ (LM 5) or a more rigorous pursuit of outcomes through ‘a project management model’ (LM 4).

In distinction to the senior managers, the almost complete absence of references to the market and to notions of consumer choice mean that conceptions of pedagogy for strategic actors remain firmly located in humanist concepts of the subject and education for civil society.

I’m prepared to advocate for and defend and fight for the maintenance of publicly funded education because it makes a contribution to the maintenance of civil society. (LM 3)

One participant mentions a brief flirtation with the product conception of the teaching and learning relationship that was reversed through a ‘road to Damascus experience’ (LM 3) that revealed that the essential focus for pedagogy is the student learning experience. Students for these strategic actors remain students rather than customers or consumers. The pedagogic relation remains a mimetic one where students are helped to ‘be disciplined about their learning’ (LM 3). In bringing the student to a correct understanding, the emphasis is upon a facilitative approach rather than a didactic one.
I think we were sucked in to the prevailing hype of the time, that it is, in some way possible to obviate the need for human intervention in the learning experience, and that it’s possible to package the experience … It wasn’t a vision so much as an hallucination. … It’s the enhancing the learning experience by connecting the learners together and facilitating their conversations about what it is that they’re learning, rather than the delivery of content. (LM 3)

Whilst a traditional pedagogy is advocated, there is nonetheless a need to achieve efficiencies in its provision.

We do not have the resources tolavishly bring everybody up to speed on a whole range of new technologies and things like that. But what we’ve developed is a coherent, consistent, common, universal approach … across the university using a series of templates. (LM 1)

These views reflect the managerial concern for better management of learning experiences through clearer planning and specification identified by Hough (2001b).

**Strategic actor’s construction of the work identities and practices of others**

Line managers who are strategic actors describe **senior managers** as visionary and their right to determine directions is unquestioned.

It’s been visionary from the boss who has a very clear vision of where we’re going. (LM 5)

I actually, personally believe we need a senior leader for teaching and learning. And that person needs to very strongly drive the integration between all of the bits. (LM 12)

The importance of corporate direction setting at the top is attested to by the significant uneasiness displayed by one line manager when there is an intimation of less that perfect vision from the top.

At least when you work in the divisions you can naively believe that someone out there has a clear view of it all and obviously the message is getting muddled by the time its gets down to you. But when you get closer and realise that the message is muddled right from the start, that is a bit unsettling. I don’t know if all staff would like to hear that, I think they might be more comfortable with the view that someone up there has a clear vision. It’s just one they don’t like. (LM 4)

Consistent with the views of their senior managers, strategic actors in line management construct **support staff** as the operational agents of corporate decision making. Associate Deans (Teaching and Learning) in particular, are given the role of ‘balancing the corporate
and the individual’ (LM 10) by acting ‘as a conduit between staff and the corporate plan’.

(LM1)

The role of professional development staff … can no longer be predicated on a counselling or therapeutic model but has to be linked to the university’s mission and the systematic bringing about of change in teaching programs. (LM 1)

The central teaching support group is the operational arm of the University Teaching and Learning Committee. (LM 5)

The views of strategic actors in relation to academic staff echo the views of senior managers when drawing upon the corporate strategic management discourse by focussing on staff resistance. Staff are ‘expending a lot of energy just trying to stop you’ (LM 4). There is frustration that academic staff will not put in the effort to understand the workings of the corporate university or take up their designated positions as strategic actors when seen through this discourse.

Most academic staff have a really impoverished understanding of how the organisation operates both structurally and politically and I think that is problematic. It’s not as if it’s secret information. (LM 4)

And it seems to me that a lot of our people don’t want to leave the comfort zone of being able to blame management for problems that occur with the operation of our courses, and so they’re resisting the idea of taking control and being professionally responsible for what goes on. (LM 3)

Two of the strategic actors in line management suggest a linkage between the professional domain of academics and the likelihood of compliance with corporate strategy. Where the profession has developed corporate practices, they suggest, academic staff are more likely to understand and support the corporatisation of education. One line manager of such a professional school noted ‘I don’t think the recent push (for quality assurance in teaching) has come as such a shock to us’ (LM 12).

I do think it does go a bit to the heart of the fact that we are educating people for a profession … and we’re used to having a process to follow and reasons for things being done and following them, I think that’s part of it. (LM 6)

**Category two - Corporate localists**

The group of line managers within this category included one dean and seven of the eleven heads of school. They evidence a level of alignment with corporate strategic practices, which
ranges from reasonably strong identification with the approach to acceptance that the discourse has achieved ascendancy and must be accommodated. Even the most critical, however, offer no alternatives that go beyond either a desire for a more participative or sensitive approach to its enactment, or greater power at the local level for determining what initiatives should be taken forward. The quintessential techniques of the corporate strategic planning approach are not questioned, in fact, they are reproduced at the local level. This is corporate strategic management with a twist; ‘I’m as corporate as anyone in this university in my own way …’ (LM 9)

The identity of corporate localists requires a delicate balancing between support for the corporate strategic management approach and their positioning as critics of senior leaders’ enactment of the approach. This is a balance between obedience to one’s designated place in the corporate system and commitment to a particular domain of professional practice within their division or school and the imperatives that come from that domain. Some of the actions of corporate localists can be seen as a form of ‘sabotage by circumvention’ through non cooperation and verbal denigration (LaNuez and Jermier, 1994). For this group senior managers are consistently referred to as ‘they’.

There is a top down process the university has – I forget the current buzzword – but they have sort of five or six strategic initiatives or whatever, that they see as core things that they’re working for. (LM 7)

These line managers criticise the corporate strategic planning approach as ineffective because it is seen to disregard local knowledge of context through over specification of detailed operational initiatives and targets at university level. This perceived deauthorisation of local staff makes the implementation of strategy increasingly difficult.

The university Teaching and Learning Plan is given to us once it’s agreed upon. You then go and write your Teaching and Learning Plan. Now it would be a silly division that didn’t just copy it because it’s an operational plan. It gives targets, specific things you have to do. It doesn’t say, ‘These are the things that the university is on about, go away divisions and work on it.’ That is something we would love to do. (LM 9)

It’s an old story in terms of teaching and learning issues that eventually become centralised. The centralising denies the resident expertise of those who have worked within an experiential or operational frame. (LM 15)

The way it is being centrally driven … it starts to break down in terms of being able to get people to do things at the grass roots level … because people haven’t been incorporated into that process. (LM 14)
The response of corporate localists to strong central direction is to mirror the features of the university plan in division or school based planning documents, whilst simultaneously only paying attention to aspects of the plan that mesh with local concerns.

One of the tricks ... has been to both disregard and give some regard to strategic planning by the university. With an awful lot of disregarding ... What we do now is that we write a Teaching and Learning Plan that is highly reflective of the university's. And then we go ahead and do what we think we should be doing. (LM 9)

And I personally ... take some of it with a grain of salt. We only want, we're only interested in the bits that we think we ought to be interested in. So some we pick up and some we don't. (LM 7)

The preference of corporate localists is for broad specification of direction from senior leaders developed through a process of negotiation with local units and much greater latitude for local determination of specific initiatives within these mutually developed directions.

If they would produce a plan with just one column with objectives, then I would see it as a strategic plan. (LM 9)

(In the past) you had central guiding measures or central policy propositions, and working out your local life within the context of those ... We didn’t always achieve what we wanted, but at least we had input. (LM 16)

However a plan might be generated, corporate localists provided no indication that the sequence of planning followed by implementation was problematic nor that they would operationalise the plan in novel ways. In discussing their approaches to achieving the local strategic initiatives they had generated, they adopted approaches consistent with the corporate strategic management discourse.

One thing is, I sit down at a certain time of the year and I write an enormous number of memos to practically everyone who moves in the division. I tell them what their role is in terms of the strategic plan for that year, what their accountability is, when they are going to be asked to report. (LM 9)

Like strategic actors, corporate localists adopt a traditional pedagogy. There is evidence of a focus on student learning and the need for a variety of approaches to facilitate this, however, it is clearly a pedagogy based upon students’ achievement of the knowledge held by the
teacher. They show concern for the better management of learning experiences typical of the managerial position identified by Hough (2001b).

The learning environment has three broad components, direct instruction, hard copy designed to support the learning process and the catchwords, the buzzwords, the words that the university uses is self managed learning … It's still structured … (LM 7)

**Corporate localists’ construction of the work identities and practices of others**

Corporate localists describe senior managers as understanding corporateness to mean ‘everyone doing the same bloody thing’ (LM 9) and as being disengaged from the reality and diversity of academic practice. This disengagement means that the strategic directions are uninformed, reflecting the enthusiasms of the senior leaders rather than matters of concern for academic practitioners. They also question the commitment of senior leaders to corporate strategic planning approaches and suggest it is merely ‘about looking good’ (LM 9).

Corporateness starts to worry me when the people who are setting up the corporate view start to think that they know everything. That’s when it becomes a worry. (LM 9)

The VC and the university bureaucracy think this is terrific … for the school it’s still of marginal interest, a very marginal aspect of the activity. (LM 7)

Similarly to strategic actors corporate localists see support staff as the operational arm of management, however, their self construction as local experts and their sense that the central practices of the university do not recognise their expertise and authority mean they do not accept the necessity for this role. They describe the central group interventions as ‘becoming intrusive’ (LM 9) and the quality of central teaching and learning support is questioned as the staff ‘are not experts in teaching and learning’ (LM 9).

In the past I don’t think we drew on the central teaching and learning unit much. I think we thought we knew as much as they did. I think that is still the case … Please don’t bugger up our processes. (LM 14)

Like strategic actors, corporate localists see academic staff as resistant and disinterested, however, there is greater understanding of this positioning as it is seen to derive from their exclusion from the strategy setting process and to be influenced by the nature of academia.

And the vast majority of academics aren’t interested. For the majority of academics this initiative is the butt of jokes. (LM 7)
I think the biggest impediment by a long way is the individual academics, who find change very, very difficult and quite understandably in many cases. I am a great believer that academics, more than any other occupation, become wedded to their ways of doing things. (LM 9)

**Category three – the entrepreneur**

Only one participant amongst the line managers, a dean, clearly identified with the market discourse and described the role of the line manager as that of an entrepreneur.

> I’ve spent half my life in industry and half in the institution so I’ve probably got a bit more entrepreneurial push and shove. (LM 11)

This participant clearly identified the pressures of market competition, increasingly discerning consumers and technical change as providing the impetus for change and the basis for the entrepreneurial approach.

> Everywhere I look I see the corporate sector coming out with some beautiful modes of delivery … Boy, I’ve gone and had a look at some of the stuff and it’s snappy and it’s really powerful stuff and if we can’t lift our game to the level of the really good stuff we’re going to get left in the dust. (LM 11)

> And so to keep doing what we were doing then is an insult to the client group, that customer base – although we used to call them students and treat them like dirt. (LM 11)

This participant explicitly identified the corporate strategic management approach as dominant within the university and as a significant impediment to achieving the kind of environment needed to rise to the competitive challenge.

> Universities including this one, and I may be wrong, have, in the last few years embraced the idea of planning and strategic planning with a vengeance. And, unfortunately we’re spending, in my view, too much time on the planning and not enough time on the doing. What’s a strategic plan worth if no-one’s using it for anything? … So I would like to see a lot more of what I call business planning being done, not what Mintzberg and others would call strategic planning because, frankly, I don’t think most institutions can spell it let alone do it, and they don’t understand the limitations of these processes. (LM 11)

Consistent with the enterprise discourse, the kind of changes this entrepreneur sees as essential to positioning the university successfully in a competitive market involve changing the culture and reconstructing academics’ practices and self image accordingly. In this position, there is only one culture and the entrepreneurial leader is its embodiment. This
participant’s identity is constructed as the leader who creates the material conditions for change to happen, shapes the new environment and creates the mechanisms that encourage staff into enterprising modes of work. These mechanisms involve the structuring of the organisational unit to encourage internal competitiveness, performance appraisal and the use of customer feedback to control staff behaviour.

My primary role is to make sure I generate sufficient revenue to allow me to push the change process … If you haven’t figured out how to generate the cash, you can’t change diddly. (LM 11)

The first test you’ve got is getting people to understand a new language … I believe a lot of culture is based on language and the kind of metaphors you use and so I continually try and shift the metaphor at base and you do that purposely and actively by keeping that new language in front of people constantly. (LM 11)

We’ve put in place a salary supplementation scheme which is totally performance based and it’s all about assessments above and beyond the call of duty. We’ve got an idea here of what a person is doing to deserve to be paid the award rate. If you go the extra mile, then there’s more in it. (LM 11)

Consistent with the market designation of academic roles as identified by Hough (2001b) the relation between teacher and student is consistently reframed as a relationship between product broker and consumer. Education is concerned with brokering access to information. The traditional model of delivery is found wanting only because the distributed nature of information generation now means that no one group can control all aspects of it. Within this framework, the particular pedagogical approach is of little interest to the entrepreneur as long as it can be made available to the consumer in a competitive market.

(We need to move) to a model where we are acting as brokers, because we cannot possibly embrace and be fully conversant with all the different knowledge sets that they have to come to grips with. (LM 1)

There may be different educational religions, if you want and how you approach the game. So long as you’ve … worked through the arguments, as long as you’ve engaged the process, who is to say what’s better? (LM 11)

**The entrepreneur’s construction of the identities and practices of others**

**Senior leaders** and line managers generally are described as trapped in an out of date understanding of the educational environment and out of their depth in terms of the management approaches needed to respond. Both the traditions of the university and the
ascendancy of corporate strategic planning are preventing many in leadership from taking the necessary market initiatives.

Most of the institutional machinery is geared around conventions of three or four hundred years ago … They’re so steeped in their own traditions they believe their own publicity and as soon as you get that, you’re dead. (LM 11)

(They are) bound up with the idea that there’s some sort of vision, you know – if we just all get the vision right and we just all share it that we’ll just, you know, walk down the road and life will be beautiful. It isn’t going to be like that. (LM 11)

The approaches generated by the leaders in pursuit of the corporate vision are described as pathetically inadequate.

It was a grab bag of applications based, winky-dink little projects that had nothing to do with strategic, that were barely tactical, let alone operational. I mean just really pathetic. (LM 11)

There is no mention of the central university support group or support staff roles in the interview transcript. They quite simply do not feature in the thinking of this participant about teaching change. Where the need for help is identified, this participant suggests it is sourced to suit the particular projects and product orientation that informs the work.

The focus on education as a product necessarily changes the ways in which academic roles and identities are imagined. The approach described casts academics as having a limited contribution to the creation of educational products. Control of academic work passes to others and the academic is reframed as a participant in management initiated and controlled activities.

I’m more or less going to individuals and I’m saying ’I’m going to commission an outside body completely to do the multimedia work and the curriculum design work but I want you as a content consultant on this project’. (LM 11)

Academics are expected to respond to such propositions and to the incentive and appraisal approaches by becoming enterprising in the achievement of designated goals. There is little tolerance for alternative views or approaches.

You know, you get very quickly a defensive and sometimes aggressive response to some of these things … What they’re really saying is ’I like to do it more this way and I don’t like to do it that way’. (LM 11)
**Category four – outsiders**

This category comprised one line manager from a central teaching and learning support group and three of the 11 heads of school. The group recognise the dominance of the business discourses within their university contexts but seek to ‘overcome’ the ‘managerial push’ or the ‘leadership initiative’ (LM 2) by processes that are collaborative and participative within the domains they can influence. The primary allegiances of these participants are to their staff and to their value commitments concerning appropriate behaviour. These are expressed differently depending upon their positions within the institution and their disciplines.

I, as you can probably gather from my talk, try and live by the principles of collaborative teamwork … that involves all of us. As far as humanly possible to encourage that as a culture. (LM 8)

When there is a conflict, I defend the bottom, not the top … (LM 8)

Outsiders position their identities and practices as resistant, based upon a critique of the dominant business discourses that identifies both their ineffectiveness and damaging outcomes for staff and student learning.

It’s very easy for someone to put pressure on me as a manager. The whole process breaks down when you get to the mob at the bottom. We are not asking for that power. We are wanting to be able to empower those at the bottom to take charge of their own lives, (LM 20)

So there’s all the edicts from on high, the top down stuff, but, I mean, if I took that too seriously, I’d kill all the … thousand flowers blossoming and I’d go around whoofing them. (LM 8)

Their critique also suggests that senior leaders have lost touch with the actual conditions of academic work and that the corporate strategic management approach, in particular, has eroded the professional status of academic work.

We have impossible conditions imposed upon us. You know? Do you know the fairy tale about the peasant girl required to spin straw into gold? Repeatedly. She gets to marry the handsome prince in the end, but we just keep spinning straw into gold. So that is a pretty good metaphor for pretty impossible conditions, and a lot of commitment and support within the school and from other people in the university, turning it into something pretty good. (LM 8)
The danger for me is that people start to lose sight of the profession as a profession and the corporate model starts to take over. In the past we had this trust … You end up in a situation where the only way you are going to get things done is to use the big stick. (LM 18)

In response to these conditions and the erosion of trust, outsiders seek to sustain collegial conditions in the domains over which they have influence and within the new conditions sustain the professional conception of the academic that was dominant prior to the managerial reforms. This positions them as mediators between the ‘top’ and the ‘bottom’ and involves selecting which of the series of edicts from above they will address. The nature of this selective attention is different from that of the corporate localists, however, in that the approaches they use in their responses are participative and collegial. Approaches include recognising the creativity of academic staff, ‘a thousand flowers blossoming’ despite the trying conditions and nurturing this creativity in a ‘safe environment’ that provides support and feedback on ideas. Networking like minded staff is a key tactic. These processes are all designed to turn a ‘negative into a positive’ by appropriating the initiative and connecting top down edicts with the perceived real needs of the local culture (LM 8).

I make a separate assessment as to what we’re going to do and obviously I don’t ignore faculty policy, but within faculty policy I make a decision about what is doable and reasonable and whether we have a commitment to it … It’s doing that for real, for ourselves … not imposed from above. (LM 8)

That’s very much, if you want to call it, a guerilla type activity rather than a top down management style type … Oh, we slowly undermine – it’s not the right word – but we slowly shift the culture to one that makes sense educationally by, over time, talking to people. (LM 2)

Consistent with the collaborative and collegial approaches to working with staff for teaching change, the pedagogical positions of outsiders emphasise conversations, dialogue and questioning. The focus is on exploration and inquiry rather than on the students’ acquisition of validated bodies of knowledge. The interview transcripts suggest that participants in this category adopt a disruptive pedagogy, more consistent with a postmodern than critical approach. There is a rejection of a training approach that is seen to have come to dominate much education in the delivery model and a focus on the need for students, as situated subjects, to develop analytical and critical abilities. There is some indication of an acceptance of the contingency of knowledge in the focus on asking questions, promoting inquiry and refusing to provide definitive answers.
I mean the thing that seems to be eroding constantly out of all the teaching innovations is the loss of space, opportunity for students to critically reflect and to analyse and to think the debate. More and more of it is becoming textbook, cookbook stuff. (LM 8)

The majority of the program is negotiated … they get up a program of development that suits their needs, rather than one that’s kind of imposed on them from outside. (LM 2)

I don’t ever lecture at all. Basically I give them a set of readings … so they can be as creative as they like … and I throw questions at them all the time. I never answer the questions. (LM 8)

**Outsiders’ construction of the identities and practices of others**

*Senior managers* and *line managers* other than themselves are described as being out of touch, ‘on high’ and remote, ‘powers-that-be’. They are seen to be locked in to their corporate forms of hierarchical behaviour, defensive in the face of critique and to use selective reporting of only ‘good news stories’ (LM 8) to bolster the positions they have taken. The initiatives of the outsiders can bring them into conflict with senior leaders. According to outsiders, challenges ‘up the line’ are met with denial, denigration and marginalisation. Occupying the outsider position can be perilous and exhausting.

And so I raised a question … It was like a deadly silence, and then a hush. It was like the Emperor’s clothes story … and they actually tried to put me down … and I can’t remember the words they used but it made me seem quite ridiculous, as if I didn’t know what I was talking about. (LM 8)

It can be characterised at worst, probably, as being marginalised. (LM 2)

And we have done it again and again and again. And it gets a bit exhausting and I’m burnt out. (LM 8)

Further, the outsiders argue, senior leaders are not concerned with student learning or staff participation.

When you’re swimming with sharks, don’t bleed. And their interests are not in quality of learning or professional development of staff or the excitement or the challenge of the participatory learning organisation. (LM 8)

They’ve taken a very managerial approach to this … In the process of doing that some of the educational ideas have been lost or just not incorporated. (LM 2)

This separation from the substance of academic work means that senior leaders and line managers further up the hierarchy can block initiatives through lack of understanding.
I’m not sure if the Division really understands what we’re trying to do or is going to encourage it. They might even block it. (LM 8)

One of the participants in this category is the line manager of a central support group. This participant defines the role of the support staff as colleagues in a shared practice of development.

They’re all colleagues with me. I spend research time, lunchtime, drinks time, those sorts of things occasionally and can get in through that network. (LM 2)

The emphasis is on the recognition of difference and the negotiation of practice rather than imposition.

So, that’s the sort of thing that I’m in favour of. That’s an idea that’s come along, that’s not generic, that might work for some and not others. It’s crazy to impose on people. (LM 2)

For other participants in this category, the central support group staff seem to have little significance, as they do not figure explicitly in their texts. The networks of support that are sought are of like minded individuals rather than by role assignation within the organisation.

In opposition to all senior leaders and other line managers, outsiders describe academics in positive terms. They identify them as creative and willing to engage in change efforts. Outsiders see the constraints upon academic achievement as a result of the confining edicts of the managerial systems and not a function of academic character or resistance.

I think we have achieved enormously. I think the staff … they’re just wonderful. And the things that they’ve done and we’ve done together. But I don’t feel like that’s been acknowledged or recognised and I don’t mean pats on the head. I mean really believing that what this is, is important as opposed to generating money. (LM 8)

The amount of new things that are coming on, the fact that many staff that do want to engage in change are finding that they have changed, taking on board the idea and that by the time they start to settle something new, some other push, some other demands upon them have come along. (LM 2)

The discourses of support staff
The group of fifteen support staff interviewed for this study consisted of nine located within central teaching and learning support units and six who occupied positions as Associate Deans (Teaching and Learning) in a particular division. In a similar way to that discovered with line managers, each of the staff in these roles operated from a single and dominant
discursive position. Once again, the discourse of strategic corporate management was the most prevalent with twelve of the participants revealing a taken for granted acceptance of the approach and positioning themselves within its parameters. Similar to the line managers, the first grouping are fully aligned with the corporate system of direction setting and planning and echo the words and practices of their more senior managers. I have named these 'strategic actors' to represent the continuity of this approach across roles. The second group demonstrates a much greater awareness of the differences between the emergent corporate approach and the traditional experience of academic life. The members' response is to work in more empathetic and collegial ways to bring these different positions together. These have been named the 'harmonisers'. The third group strongly reflects the market discourse of innovation and entrepreneurship and has been named 'enterprise supporters'. The final single participant reveals a unique view which recognises the disparate cultures within the organisation but rather than seeking harmonisation seeks to support the continued existence of each by acting as translator and interpreter across the boundaries between cultures. This participant has been called the 'interpreter'.

**Category one – strategic actors**

Five central support staff and two divisional staff were allocated to this category. All strategic actors understand their role as the operational arm of senior management. Of these seven, some articulate the corporate positions explicitly whilst others simply work within them as a taken for granted framework for practice and concentrate their efforts on devising successful implementation approaches taking the corporate Teaching and Learning Plan as their organising framework.

The university has declared a series of key performance indicators … so the divisions and the service groups need to be able to relate what they have as priorities and activities to ways in which they believe they will maintain or improve the university’s performance against key performance indicators. (SS 13)

We’re very much integrated into the university system, the planning I mean. You know, I mean, it’s just taken for granted now. (SS 15)

So far as our approach … the overall support we’re trying to provide for staff to meet the university Teaching and Learning Plan objectives … we try to flog it as much as we can and use it as our organising concept, if you like, for anything we run. We try to link it back. (SS 10)

The specific approach taken by strategic actors seems to reflect the nature of positional roles with more of the central staff having a strong orientation to policy than those working within divisions. For many central staff, policy is the starting point and a systematic approach to
ensuring a comprehensive system of policies, plans and positions is the objective. The objectifying language of the corporate strategic management discourse is evident as policies, communication channels and roles replace people in the language of action.

I mean, what we’ve been looking at is the links between policy formation and interpretation down to resource management, policy implementation and we, we had gaps at the level of policy formation … We had gaps at the management level … [We] need to set systems up and then have an audit structure which actually does check that the system's doing things. (SS 13)

We need a process to ensure consistency and quality assurance … we need a cohesive set of tools that fit the whole picture. Systems have to allow for that. (SS 8)

The first way we try to initiate change is through policy development … so trying to pinpoint where at the policy levels there are gaps. (SS 10)

Participants in this category suggest the need for collegial approaches in order to get academics to engage at all. They also stress, however, the necessity for a single linear project management approach with ‘proof of concept’ being ‘clear about budget and timeframe’, completing a ‘definition and analysis stage’ as critical to project success.

They have to want to do it … And they have to know this team is, you know, a collegial one. (SS 4)

All accept as necessary, desirable and natural the idea that there should be a single organisational discourse and culture. Their work is focussed on getting academic staff to accept this vision and structure their activities towards its achievement. They recognise the challenge in convincing academic staff that ‘the rhetoric is translated into reality’ (SS 10) and have reservations that ‘the language of change is not being translated very well into people’s vocabularies’ (SS 8). Despite this, strategic actors can be quite optimistic in their assessment of the degree of movement towards this unitary culture.

People in divisions were actually structuring themselves according to the plan … It's almost as if the plans are legitimised, that they are embedded in the fabric of the university so that people respond to them where they used to put them on the back burner. (SS 9)

As far as how well they’ve penetrated the system, I would say in the first couple of years not well at all, but now, with much greater recognition at every level, I think of the need for accountability, the need to have a teaching and learning plan, both at the university level as well as the school / divisional level, I think there’s a much greater recognition. (SS 10)
The dominant understanding of pedagogy for this group of strategic actors is a conceptual change approach to learning where the student is brought to a more sophisticated or authorised view of a particular phenomenon. Within this conception, strategic actors are concerned that the objectives of learning and its experiences and assessment are aligned and that students have a supported choice in the ways they might achieve them, typical of the managerial approach to teaching roles (Hough 2001b). This view is clearly located within a traditional modern pedagogy with a focus on facilitation rather than information transfer.

… a learner focussed, a more flexible, a more innovative and more risk taking way of teaching… And simply telling them to do things doesn’t change. (SS 10)

(We agreed on) three key thing: make it tight, make it clear, make sure you’ve written clearly what you’re expecting; to link it up to what was happening in the following week; and three, to link it to the assessment of the classes. (SS 4)

… More flexible assessment modes, too, so students have more choice in kind of achieving learning objectives, rather than, ‘you must do this’. (SS 6)

**Strategic actors’ construction of the work identities and practices of others**

For strategic actors within the support areas there is a desire for certainty within a difficult and uncertain environment

And I think it comes back to the idea that someone is going to have to say what the new university is going to look like and what role it’s going to have and where the academics sit within it … But someone needs to define it and say, this is the new role and people have to deal with that. (SS 9)

**Senior leaders** are expected to provide strong and clear leadership.

The VC talked about, you know, the vision for the university, what … was important. The VC was very firm about, ‘If you want to be a member of this university, then these are the sorts of things that I want you to take on board.’ (SS 15)

Senior leaders are, however, not always seen to be successful in providing the desired certainty.

I think sometimes that strategic directions of the university feel like they’re flavour of the month … so it’s kind of judging which ones are going to be maintained. (SS 6)
**Line managers** are characterised by strategic actors as needing to take their place with more conviction in the hierarchy of implementation. Some line managers are seen as the most difficult to get to take up their responsibilities to ‘drive’ change (LM 6).

That meeting is meant to explain the more corporate side of it and to get the heads of school on side. (SS 4)

Strategic actors in support roles are more positive about **academics** than their counterparts amongst line managers. They display sensitivity to the impacts of change upon academics, the challenge the new directions pose to traditional academic values and the consequent loss of morale and increase in workloads.

Academics usually take up their role out of a great set of ideals. They want to contribute to society and social justice issues and developing the next generation as well as researching their discipline. Lots of really terrific ideals, which they probably feel really lousy about, because in most cases they can’t possibly do it all. (SS 9)

For academics … moving from very individual goals in working life to team based goals … This is a huge change in culture. (SS 8)

The university has undergone an enormous amount of restructuring and staff loss over the last couple of years, as well and so morale has been just extremely low. (SS 15)

Despite this sensitivity, academics are still identified as resistant to accepting senior management frameworks, trapped in their discipline isolation and willing to use their discipline differences as a means of avoiding necessary and desirable change.

And there’s been some huge resistance in the university and there still is. (SS 15)

People get isolated in academia. And when you’re not in academia you get so motivated by the corporate thing that it’s hard to understand the differences – the synergies. (SS 8)

I think the biggest issues are overcoming the staff morale problems and the ‘this is not my problem’ – not identifying and owning the problem. ‘It’s the senior management’s fault’ … They don’t want to take on the senior managers’ framework. They want to be left alone to do their own thing … They’re a bit change resistant. (SS 4)

**Category two – harmonisers**

Of the participants within this category, three are central support staff and two are in positions as Associate Deans (Teaching and Learning) within divisions. Harmonisers work within the corporate strategic management discourse, however, they do not see the
successful implementation of policy as a one way process from senior leaders to academic staff via line managers. Rather they see and have greater respect for the differences between the expectations of senior leaders and different academic cultures than strategic actors. They expect to be able to influence the expectations and behaviours of senior leaders rather than simply being their dutiful servants.

One of the major things, I think, is to work both upwards and downwards. One of the key points is a contrast between a managerialist approach that says, ‘this is a policy … a policy decision that is imposed on the university’ and the extent to which that is ‘sold’, to use the market terminology, successfully to staff. One of the things I’ve been trying to do is talk upwards to management and say, ‘just go easy on this imposition of policy. This goes to the heart of what academics see as core to their role.’ (SS 7)

All these things are really starting to stir up the Division Teaching and Learning Committee … So you start to get this debate and this movement through the Division and back up to the Teaching and Learning Committee … we’re going to start to engage with policy issues so we can participate in the shaping of those.

By pushing the no choice line – we have to deliver using IT or we will be left behind and have no competitive edge – you curtail discussion about the choices. (SS 11)

Harmonisers do not question the desirability or necessity of creating a single organisational culture that is primarily directed by senior leaders. Rather, they place greater emphasis on the form this might take within the specific context of higher education and believe that this culture should be arrived at in more participative ways, with a certain level of willing adaptation on the part of senior leaders to the cultures of academia.

The strategy is to create second order change at the school level where we actually get people talking about teaching and learning, focussing on issues, identifying strategies in groups. (SS 11)

It comes back all the time to being a buffer or a conduit for the questions that are bubbling up and the policy that is bubbling down. I see that as the role … in orienting staff, in listening to what is up there and in feeding up the problems that are coming out of this … there needs to be a process and a willingness to adapt in response. (SS 7)

Within this conception, the strategic vision is understood to evolve and the strategic plan is treated more as a guide than a blueprint.
What we find is that the vision evolves … I have an idea of what I think we might see. I’m not sure that the vision that I have is the same vision that a dean or a head of school might have. (SS 11)

The plan is the guide. It’s the navigator. I wouldn’t be saying – I wouldn’t be talking about implementing the plan. The balance between, you know, this kind of organisational stuff and the actual, you know, work of teaching and learning … I feel very strongly though that I have to get the balance right because it’s about credibility. Otherwise I just become another bureaucrat in the organisation. (SS 3)

Rather than the focus on systems and university wide templates favoured by strategic actors, the methods of harmonisers emphasise conversation, collaboration and peer forums as necessary for effective implementation in a tertiary environment. At the heart of these conversations is the possibility of consensus about how the academics’ views and practices might be reconciled with the corporate directions.

So that whole theme of collaboration runs very strongly through what we do. (SS 3)

I have a plan to have an interview with every academic staff member … to find out their views and see if there is anything I can do for them. Just hear about what they are doing. At those interviews I take the University Teaching and Learning Plan which is the critical top down document. (SS 2)

For harmonisers there are indications of an acceptance of traditional pedagogical approaches and a managerial focus on clear planning and specification of the learning experiences through the necessity of alignment of all aspects of the learning environment.

It’s the learning design that’s critical’ (SS 12)

For this group, however, there is also an indication of more dialogical approaches and sensitivity to issues of power in the pedagogic relation.

Contemporary teaching and learning is looking at breaking down those traditional power relationships between student and teacher. (SS 3)

**Harmonisers construction of the work identities and practices of others**

Whilst harmonisers work top down and bottom up, they are not uncritical of the corporate strategic management framework or the performance of senior managers within it. Excessively tight determination from the top is criticised alongside a perceived remoteness of
senior leaders from the reality of academic practice that can result in a lack of adequate attention to implementation or a process of change overload.

My question is ‘that’s fine and I agree with all of it, but what about staff in this?’ … We can sit around a table at Teaching and Learning Committee and in a sense even pontificate. I’d like if we had a realism factor to it. (SS 2)

The problem with most managerial decision making is that there is no implementation plan … Unless you have an implementation outline it just gets dissipated. It is perceived to be this imposed, heavy handed management and people don’t know where to start. (SS 7)

Like the strategic actors, harmonisers identify line managers as the most problematic group. Heads of school need to be told that they are to be the champions of projects, they suggest as they can be very protective of their organisational terrain.

We have taken the strategy that the champion of the project is the head of school. If it doesn’t go it is the head of school’s problem. (SS 11)

We have heads of school who are very protective of their schools, of their disciplines and their personal control of all that. And they do feel a bit twitchy about an Associate Dean who moves in and out, talks to their staff. (SS 2)

Like strategic actors, harmonisers are critically aware of the demands on academics’ time and the ways in which this impacts upon their ability to engage with change. They are, however, much more likely to emphasise the positive efforts of staff than their resistance. Academic staff will be reasonable if processes are relevant, locally driven and practical. Working in ways that are respectful of difference and emerge at the local level is seen to limit resistance.

That was one of the good things to come from such a divisional based proposal. This mitigates against resistance to university wide, top down policies which require certain behaviours. It arises from a perceived need. (SS 11)

Staff of his experience have extensive personal, practical experience which is invaluable. (SS 2)

**Category three – enterprise supporters**

Only two support staff were designated as enterprise supporters, one from a central support group and one an Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning). What characterised these participants was a strong focus on the dynamic nature of the external environment and its
market characteristics and an orientation to individual innovation and enterprise in the production of educational products.

It’s a very rapidly changing area too, I think. If we set anything in concrete for too long, it’d very rapidly be out of date. (SS 14)

The main reason I believe people are looking at totally online is the market issue, which is developing new markets, keeping their current markets. (SS 14)

The relationship between the enterprise supporter and academic staff was characterised as that of a charismatic catalyst or salesman. Academics can be understood as customers of a service. Personalities prevail over systems in creating the enterprise climate.

My role is one of a catalyst, of a communicator, of a bridge builder, as an innovator, as an encourager … Personalities, personalities are important. I can go and swap jokes and drink beer … my personal attributes with my job make it effective. (SS 5)

And it’s basically sales really. And I try and recruit customers in a sense. (SS 14)

Whilst acknowledging the existence of strategic plans, these participants saw them as largely irrelevant in a dynamic environment or no more than broad markers. Strategy operates ‘at a war cry type of level’ (SS 14).

Your strategic plan or your goals could be – ‘be prepared to make a strategic response to the opportunities which the external environment may present you in the next twelve months.’ None of which can be foreseen. OK? How’s that? That’s probably the best strategic plan you can write! (SS 5)

Some of it (strategy) is putting a flag in the sand sort of thing – to say, ‘look, this is an area we’re willing to push along a bit’ … And it’s there. They choose however they want to do that. (SS 14)

Within this very broad strategic environment their task is the creation of a climate and culture of innovation. This requires a move away from bureaucratic hierarchical structures to ‘more matrix forms of organisation’ (SS 5).

So rather than put your finger on any particular thing, we need to talk about organisational climate and culture that fosters and supports innovation … willingness to take risks, the willingness to think outside traditional structures. (SS 5)
So rather than get a bureaucratic structure … there’s really all sorts of linkages. So it’s more like a wheel, with perhaps the dean at the centre. But it’s a Catherine-wheel because there’s bits flying off the dean doesn’t know about. I think … that’s the secret of it. (SS 5)

Where systems were discussed, these were not understood as part of a comprehensive system of planning and accountability, but rather as a means to make individual innovation easy by removing impediments. This involves working from the bottom up, making simple systems available to ‘every academic in every subject’ (SS 14) thus freeing the enterprising spirit.

This is great. Now I can do this. I’ve always wanted to do it but it’s been too hard in the past. (SS 14)

Consistent with the enterprise discourse the customer, that is students, is seen as a principal means of driving changes in employee behaviour.

I think a crucial one is actually getting students to drive it. [When] they realise what’s possible and then start to drive what they would like, [they] set up a demand. (SS 14)

The enterprise supporter privileges instinct over careful planning in a high energy environment where individual achievement is inspired, made possible and rewarded.

The reality is, it’s instinct. It’s the right thing of being in place at the right time. And sometimes not through careful planning. (SS 5)

We’re working toward achieving strategic goals but it’s not like soldiers lined up. It’s about relationships. It’s about inspiration. It’s about thinking. It’s about critical reflection. It’s about energy … In this division, any person who is really committed to an idea and wants to carry out a curriculum innovation and wants to push it will get funded, will be supported. Which is rather wonderful. (SS 5)

The pedagogy of the enterprise supporter is located within a product focus where education can be packaged in a variety of ways.

Some of the things that are going on are modularising our base undergraduate degree which makes it very easy to mix and match and prepare courses with other divisions. (SS 5)

Within this construct a traditional modernist pedagogy is advocated that privileges the ability ‘to present information … of the material we want them to develop and to understand’. (SS 5)
Students are seen to need to be led through the learning experience ‘taking things step by step.’ (SS 14)

(We want) … logical curriculum development like writing objectives for programs and linking assessment to objectives and all these sorts of things. (SS 5)

There is, however, also an emphasis on facilitating learning rather than simple transmission and recognising the social nature of learning. This is a form of enterprise inspiration in the classroom.

They neglect and fail to understand the social nature of learning. And the important thing is that there’s affective factors and intangible factors in learning, the importance of inspiration, communication, eye contact, one to one explanations when you can’t really get it … (SS 5)

**Enterprise supporters’ construction of the work identity and practices of others**

*Senior leaders* are seen as stuck with old approaches and struggling with the out of date systems and practices in universities. There is a perceived lack of clarity and direction as well.

In a way we feel that some of the limiting factors on us are the university’s regulations and practices which … don’t meet the needs of curriculum initiatives. So in some ways the university is scrambling to develop procedures and practices to catch up with innovative processes. So it’s almost a brake on curriculum innovation and development. (SS 5)

There is a lot of unclarity, a lot of mixed messages coming from the top of the university. (SS 5)

As demonstrated in quotations above, **line managers** are expected to be charismatic leaders at the centre of a network of interlinked people and activities. One participant clearly finds this provided by the line manager within the division. There is no indication in the interviews of whether such line managers are to be found elsewhere within the organisation.

**Academics** are posited as enterprising individuals who are able, if willing to achieve innovations in teaching and learning. Whilst there is acknowledged variation in the extent to which this is being achieved, there is a firm commitment to providing systems, inspiration and freedom for these enterprising academics to respond.

Some people are doing some really good things and some people are doing some really worrying things … so that’s the freedom people have to do whatever they like … I don’t want to take away that freedom. (SS 14)
The shaping of the enterprising academic is, however, not being left entirely to chance. Systems of incentive and appraisal are necessary too.

So being able to put all this curriculum innovation in is good for your salary supplementation … And I sit on the salary supplementation committee … And it’s also good not to carry on and play up. (SS 5)

**Category four – the interpreter**

This Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning) adopts a very different position to all others. According to this view, organisation is socially constructed through language as a mosaic of differing languages and cultures.

I think organisation is constructed in language and interaction and that is where change happens. (SS 1)

What we have always known about culture is that it is a term to describe the sorts of norms and beliefs and the mosaic of organisational reality that create reality. (SS 1)

Language for this participant does not represent reality but constructs it. Different languages, therefore, contain different understandings of the world. These different understandings should not be reduced to an organisational monoculture.

Once you start using a particular language … the sort of language has embedded in it a particular view of what you are doing … I can’t then say to these people, ‘I want you to use these frameworks or this language’. They will, in practice, understand things in different ways and I think that is healthy. (SS 1)

Part of the role of the Associate Dean for this participant is to intervene when necessary to prevent the ill conceived destruction of the cultural richness of the organisation.

Some people said, ‘can’t we have one language?’ … I actually don’t think monocultural understandings are either desirable or possible. It’s fine for them to make sense of it from where they’ve started. (SS 1)

Working within a multi-cultural organisation requires that languages be translated and languages and actions be interpreted between cultures. The position adopted by this participant is most consistent with the role of the intellectual as interpreter proposed by Bauman and outlined in Chapter 3.
I think that the language we use is absolutely crucial and I run between languages. (SS 1)

The plans are in a particular language and sometimes you have to translate them but you are never simply implementing plans. You are never simply installing … you’re always negotiating something into existence. (SS 1)

Working this way in an organisation that sets corporate directions at the top requires that members of the differing cultural groups be encouraged to find ways to appropriate university directed initiatives so that they are meaningful in their terms. This requires dialogue and a practice of thinking together about the possibilities for understanding and action.

I just think we should be talking and thinking about this. And we should all be listening to each other talking aloud about this stuff. (SS 1)

It’s absolutely crucial to spend time … with individuals. And spending some time talking to them, understanding stuff and having conversations with them … You are actually trying to acknowledge, you are players in this. We are all players. We have to find ways that we can live with. (SS 1)

It also requires that data concerning diverse initiatives be controlled at the local level so that it can be translated back or reinterpreted into a language that is understandable by management.

In the database, they’ll just go on doing what they’re doing. We will run through at the end and cull it all into something we can present to the outside world. We can rename things. I don’t think it is desirable to have everyone using the same name for the phenomenon. (SS 1)

The interpreter does not specifically outline a pedagogical position with respect to student learning. The importance of teaching for this participant is affirmed.

In terms of teaching I’ve always seen that being dead serious about your teaching practice was part of what is important. (SS 1)

The approaches described for organisational work, if adopted for teaching students would generate a disruptive pedagogy based on dialogue between multiple positions and communication across difference.

*The interpreter’s construction of the work identities and practices of others*

The interpreter does not distinguish between layers of management. All managers are described as being caught up in a misguided understanding of organisations, trapped within
one or other of the major business discourses. The key problem is one of attempted over
determination of initiatives in language and the reduction of organisational life to a
monoculture. This participant dismisses both corporate strategic management and the
culture based enterprise discourse equally.

The whole assumption on which the university assumes it operates is that you have
comprehensive, imperative, upfront planning. That’s what goes on all the time. If you seriously
look at what actually happens, none of that ever happens, ever, in the way that it was intended
… ‘We know everything. We can handle all the variables. We’ll decide what will happen. We’ll
implement it’. That never happens in complex organisations dealing with social problems,
complex social phenomena. (SS 1)

The concept of culture within organisations was brought in to challenge the idea of scientific
management and outcomes focussed things. Now the inability of the corporate managers to
understand that meant that as soon as they said culture, oh organisations have a culture, OK
we’ll decide what they are. Now that’s stupid. That’s fundamentally stupid … Anyone who
says, now how do we bring about culture change, how do we get these people to own the
change, how do we get them to do what we want them to do? Well as soon as you start
talking like that you never will. (SS 1)

Unlike managers who ‘always assume that practitioners are not taking their work seriously or
are not as creative as they could be’ (SS 1), the interpreter has great respect for the
creativity and seriousness of academic staff.

If I don’t have any control over the content and meaning of my practice I get alienated and
despondent. That’s true for everyone. (SS 1)

This respect is located in recognition of different academic cultures, their different languages
and the necessarily different ways in which they will understand and seek to enact university
wide initiatives. There is strong thread of epistemological essentialism running through this
argument. The interpreter, however, also identifies a broader academic culture within which
all academics operate and identifies some of its essential characteristics as antithetical to the
thrust of corporate reform. It is the corporate failure to recognise this and its insistence on
talking ‘pure instrumental bottom line stuff’ that will ‘kill people’s spirit’ (SS 1) and lead to
deviance or frictional resistance.

Universities have a long tradition of a sort of very individualistic, very subtle sorts of cultures
which are intrinsically opposed to things like teamwork or to collective outcomes … the more
you use that language, the more people will become deviant in their response. If they can’t
oppose you openly they will just not implement and you will never get near them. (SS 1)
The discourses of academic staff

The autonomous professional

The interviews with faculty staff are distinctly different from those already presented. The dominant discourses of the majority of senior leaders, line managers and support staff are the two business discourses of corporate strategic management or enterprise whether the identity construction of individuals is aligned with one or other of these discourses or constructed as resistant to them. By contrast with all but one of the faculty staff interviewed the participant’s discursive world is framed by a taken for granted acceptance of themselves as autonomous professionals. They are cosmopolitans in Gouldner’s terms with their principal allegiance to their professions / disciplines; both the one for which they prepare students and their conception of professional academic practice. They display the typical professional values of support for scholarship and accountability to their respective professional bodies (Hough 2001b).

I’ve been involved with the professional association and used their material on how important it is for graduates to have these attributes (AS 9)

I started out with a scan of the environment, I’ve looked at the literature (on education for this profession) … I’ve surveyed students … I’ve looked at learning theory … I’ve taken a stand on the responsibility of academics in integrating it into the curriculum. I’ve presented the work to internal colleagues and next week will present it to practitioners and students together. (AS 10)

The world constructed by these participants radiates from the local context outwards, from a primary focus on the courses they teach and the students who study them to the school to which they belong. The participants relate with differing degrees of activity and interest to the division and on the furthest horizon an entity called ‘the university’ is located. In practice each of the participants must develop some relationship with this entity, but it is clear that there are no strategic actors of corporate management at this level, no participant whose ‘subjective identity … is expanded through participation in its reproduction’ (Knights & Morgan 1991, p. 262).

The corporate strategic management and the enterprise discourses appear to have had little impact upon the traditional conceptions of academic identities and roles which remain consistent with Mintzberg’s (1983) definition of the professional bureaucracy. One characteristic displayed by faculty staff that accords with this position is their individualism.
It wasn’t particularly a team approach … putting the submission together and structuring this was largely my process. (AS 3)

I applied for a grant. I had the idea that students weren’t given choices, I guess, and to me that is still the fundamental of what I do here. (AS 2)

In this construction the central university is most often portrayed as an administrative organisational unit that should concentrate on the provision of infrastructure and money for developments and devolve decision making to the local level.

The strategic priority of the university was in providing a considerable amount of money. (AS 8 grant recipient)

I would give all the money to the schools and I’d let them buy the things they need back from the university – like the library. In other words, the decisions about the deployment of funds get made at the more grass roots level. (AS 10)

None of these participants accepts the central tenet of corporate management discourse, that is, management control of the definition of what constitutes real problems and management determination of what constitutes real solutions to those problems. Whatever the relationship constructed with management the starting point for these staff is their professional practice, both their experiences in the classroom and of the professions for which they educate. Rather than ‘grandiose visions’ (AS 1), they are motivated by the need to address problems resulting from what they describe as a major degradation of working conditions.

I think there has been a degradation of the core values in terms of worsening staff student ratios, increases in contact hours and the rationalisation of the curriculum into standard credit points. (AS 10)

More and more things being put on us. Less and less time. There have been increases in student staff ratios, bigger classes, less staff. (AS 9)

Such motivating problems include coping with the results of worsening student / staff ratios requiring the coordination and administration of very large classes and the large cohorts of casual tutors that work in them (AS 2, AS 4, AS 5). They include developing resources for independent student work and assessment to cope with staff losses (AS 2, AS 7, AS 8) and attending to high rates of student attrition and exclusion (AS 9). Finally they include developing simulations of professional work practice for students for whom the real thing is
unattainable (AS 3) and managing the administrative and educational aspects of work placements (AS 10).

**The professionals’ construction of the work identities and practices of others**

References to the head of school are infrequent within these interviews and there are few references to deans or ‘the division’. For these staff **line managers**, like academics are individuals with some being supportive and others less so. Line managers are generally defined in ways consistent with the professional orientation. They are seen as being responsible for providing a base of support, particularly technical support, while refraining from interfering in the individual projects of academic staff.

> We have at least two people to help support those academics that want to put things online … It comes out of the school budget. (AS 5)

> But now there is support, but that support has, I think, more come from the faculty and it’s flowed through the school. (AS 4)

The dominant power within the school belongs to ‘the professors’ and the prestige and influence that accrues to senior academics. The head of school, however, is not defined as powerless and has some ability to temper the climate within the school.

> What helps it (teaching change) happen is who are actually the professors and what they want … I’m sure if a research oriented professor was head of school it’d be very hard. (AS 4)

For professional academic staff, any attempts by heads of school or their executives to impose policy need to be resisted and their decision making power limited by staff involved with teaching change projects.

> The Teaching and Learning Group is leading the way in terms of pushing the importance of getting together as a group and not just having the directors of the school making the decisions. (AS 6)

Professionals display a great reluctance to relinquish any control over their teaching practice and the education of students for their professions. This commitment to independence means that the professionals’ views of the central **support staff** and central group are generally lukewarm.

> I don’t have a great relationship with it. I know it’s there. (AS 5)

> The general liaison has been quite good. (AS 7)
They concede to the central provision of some technical staff development but prefer to control everything else. Paradoxically one of the uses to which centrally allocated grant money is used is to secure independence from central support groups.

We’re working pretty independently … we don’t need them … we know what we want to teach, so we know what the content is and we know what we want to do with the content and we’ve got a couple of our staff who actually do the technology of putting it together, here in the division. (AS 3)

I also absolutely don’t want to be dealing with a middle person, that’s an unnecessary middle person to me … and I think it’s probably easier to do things yourself as I do. (AS 2)

The grant is funding a research assistant for the team … The grant funds will be used to pay directly for technical support of a variety of kinds. (AS 8)

Support provided at the local level is most often informal and individual.

The most successful way of doing it is on a one-to-one personal basis, sort of going and spending time talking to my colleagues, explaining what I’m doing or asking what they’re doing or the problems they’re having and saying well, you know, these are some possible solutions. (AS 7)

Other academics are understood to be like them, autonomous professionals with strongly defined individual approaches to their work. Their underlying professional values make them resistant to taking direction.

I think academics in particular are very individual in their approach to their duties, tasks and activities. The idea of a strategy, which encourages people to work together or to question what they are doing … is quite challenging to many staff. (AS 6)

Academics are not that good at taking directives, particularly from a central being. (AS 6)

Depending upon the particular positions adopted by staff in relation to their academic role as teacher, they will be more or less responsive to issues to do with teaching practice however they are presented. The barriers to teaching change and improvement are not seen to reside in an inadequate allegiance to the university or its corporate plan. Rather it is suggested that they are located in unprofessional values when it comes to academic self-conceptions as teachers or adherence to a pedagogical view that ‘we are trying to produce clones’ (AS 9). Some are ‘terrific’ (AS 2). Others are not.
And I think it’s the ones who don’t really give a stuff about students, who don’t really give a stuff about teaching, who are not interested in making it as good as it can be, I think it’s a continuum. (AS 2)

If they see their role as a participant in the students’ learning, then they would support these sorts of initiatives, whereas if they see their role as the expert delivering the information to the students, they might be less likely to. (AS 7)

The emphasis for these participants is on the preparation of autonomous practitioners for their various professions. In this, a traditional pedagogy is adopted but one where considerable emphasis is given to experiential learning and the role of modelling the required professional attitudes and behaviours.

I do think that teaching is a human activity. If it was as simple as getting the information we would all have got it out of a book. It also denies what I think is a fact, that so much of professional education is about modelling, about mentoring and about engendering passion. (AS 10)

So we’re modelling the process and giving them examples of the processes as we go through. (AS 3)

For most staff a didactic approach is eschewed in favour of a more facilitative and interactive style, they nonetheless remain committed to the role of the teacher as expert in guiding the novice student towards autonomous practice.

But the collaboration, or the interaction, is what is rich about it, I think. (AS 2)

I don’t have a problem with being teacher centred some of the time … I think it is what students miss when you take the teacher out. I think they expect to have good role models standing in front of them. You are not born with the ability to discriminate. A critical mind has to be developed. A lot of the student centred stuff assumes that a student knows how to discriminate. (AS 10)

Whilst the aspects of positioning outlined above that derive from a taken for granted professional framework are common to nine of the ten faculty staff participants, the ways in which professional academics construct their relationship with ‘the university’ vary significantly.
Three different groups were identified within those practicing from a professional perspective. The first I have named ‘intermediaries’. These are similar to the harmonisers within the support staff but differently balanced in an academic role. While these participants seek ways to connect the top down plans with local practice within their schools there is a clear determination not to passively accept what comes from above but to actively engage with it, even to reject it. The second group I have called the ‘swimmers’ following Trowler’s (1998) terminology as they resemble the staff he designated with this term in finding a congenial relationship with the corporate discourse that matches their individually determined needs such that these needs can be promoted within it. The third group has also been named using Trowler’s terminology as ‘policy reconstructionists’. These are staff who identify corporate management as a threatening and intrusive sub culture and who work to reconstruct the strategies and policies that come from above in ways that support their preferred approaches and practices. The essential differences between these groups are outlined below.

The final participant amongst the faculty staff interviewed does not fit within this classification. This person does not subscribe to the organisation of universities as traditional professional bureaucracies along discipline or ‘tribal’ lines and proposes a reorganisation based on an explicitly articulated enterprise orientation.

**Category one – the intermediaries**

The three staff in this group have either been appointed to a position within their schools related to improving teaching quality, or they have adopted this role voluntarily.

> Last year the school agreed that we should have some focus on teaching and learning … I took the banner up. (AS 7)

The role of intermediaries amongst academic staff is to find ways to reconcile the requirements of the corporate plan with the concerns of staff. While similar to support staff harmonisers they find a different balance between different discourses to their central colleagues. This results in the privileging of local practice that recognises cultural variants.

> I think a lot of change has to come from two directions – from the top down but also from the bottom up. And there has got to be a meeting somewhere in between. From my point of view it’s got to come from the bottom and it’s slow but it will get there. (AS 9)

> But I’d have to say that although there are dribs and drabs above me, it’s actually a groundswell rather than a top down thing. (AS 7)
They are aware of the Teaching and Learning Plan and are generally supportive of the initiatives being taken at the divisional level to implement it. They are also aware that attempts to impose the corporate plan will be resisted by their colleagues in an environment where disciplinary systems allow them to succeed in avoidance strategies.

And the big stick approach or the approach that says at the end of a particular period you will have done this and this is just ignored by staff. They can easily sweep it under the carpet. And because we don’t have a great deal of punitive actions … people can get away with it. (AS 6)

I am very conscious of not putting the Teaching and Learning Plan in people’s faces. (AS 6)

Their location within the professional discourse means that they completely accept the right of the school and their colleagues to reject the corporate plan whenever it does not mesh with local concerns. In this sense the corporate plan is a point of reference, a departure point for thinking. The most important thing is that the local staff are professional and scholarly in their response.

[We were advised of] the teaching and learning priorities that the division has put forward as a result of the priorities from the university … so I saw that as a great opportunity to test if we could respond in a reflective and informed way … I wrote a discussion paper that said, ‘let’s think about the priorities and even if we reject them it will be an informed rejection in favour of something else’. (AS 6)

With university and division initiatives such as flexible delivery, the school executive will consider that. They may not want to do anything or they may think we are doing it already but if they do want to do something they will take it on and the head of school will make it happen. (AS 9)

Their practices are participatory and utilise professional forms of learning from practice. Intermediaries work to draw in their local managers as supporters of their conception of academic professional practice as including a requirement for a reflective and scholarly concern with improving teaching.

I really wanted staff to be aware that school management are on board with the Teaching and Learning Plan … I felt a group that included various … staff from various levels from assistant lecturer right through to head of school was perhaps the appropriate mechanism to discuss issues. (AS 6)
Intermediaries accept the construction of senior managers’ role within the corporate strategic management discourse. They are generally positive about senior leaders’ support for teaching and learning and see this as linked with their own professional concern for improved student learning.

There is a lot of support within the university and the faculty. There has been a big push for quite some time to improve teaching performance and leadership … The PVC here is very supportive of teaching. (AS 9)

They are disposed to react positively to initiatives from senior leaders, however, acknowledge that these have very differential effects.

(This initiative) reinforces the university’s recognition of the value of teaching. It has a good effect on those already interested in teaching. It has less effect on others. (AS 9)

They are also critical of the perceived inconsistency of support for teaching they see from these managers and the gaps in or ad hoc quality of policy around teaching and learning. These are criticised as inconsistencies within the senior leaders’ self-declared corporate position.

Policy development is quite ad hoc everywhere in the university. Staff would perceive policy development happens in one or two people’s offices and that is the way it is happening now. (AS 6)

Category two – the swimmers

The three swimmers identified are aware of the university-promulgated teaching and learning frameworks. They do not, however, interpret these as a prescriptive constraint upon their practice but consistent with Weick’s concept of loosely coupled systems, they see them as a loose policy framework within which they might locate their practice. The most commonly supported priority at the time of interview was the graduate capability agenda which is consistent with a professional discourse of work related abilities.

I think the graduate capability structure is a really nice one … And it sharpens up the focus on what you’re trying to achieve in your individual subjects. (AS 3)

I am fairly convinced that … if you develop a subject with the qualities that this university has identified in mind, it will really enhance your subject because you’re focussing on what you want your outcomes to be and then you’re thinking of a progression to get there. (AS 2)
They are not immersed in all aspects of the corporate plan for teaching and learning and do not have a full or detailed understanding of such artefacts as the Teaching and Learning Plan. Rather, they have latched on to particular aspects of the corporately supported priorities for teaching and learning and framed their own work in these terms.

I wouldn’t know. It might be a university initiative. I don’t know. (AS 4)

Only if such priorities resonate with their professional interests and seem ‘sensible’ will they be taken up.

The university said to the deans, ‘we need to get some national teaching grants because we’re not getting anything.’ The dean said to the academic staff, ‘we need to get some national teaching grants because the university told us we do,’ And I thought, ‘that sounds like a sensible idea.’ (AS 3)

Swimmers draw upon both major business discourses and utilise aspects of them that are useful.

So certainly the whole division, the whole university to a degree, has to think strategically about delivering our subjects in the most cost effective yet pedagogically sound ways. (AS 2)

I mean it seems to be absolutely critical that we be marketing ourselves and thinking outside the small local pool … I mean we’re going to die if we keep thinking that way. (AS 2)

Whilst the motivation for what they do comes from their professional commitments, from local conditions and their own interests, finding a relationship with the corporate strategy allows them to access support through funding initiatives and to enjoy institutional rewards. They will happily participate in elements of the corporate cascade of committees, however, in doing so will utilise these as forums for the solving of local problems.

Yeah, I mean, I did get one of the university teaching awards … So that was nice. (AS 2)

I love being part of the (division) Teaching and Learning Committee … The committee uses input about problems and experiences … of working with big groups … but then we talk, we resolve the problems with different perspectives. That’s to me, almost the core of it. (A 2)

These participants make no particular references to the senior leadership of the university. The bulk of the interview transcripts for this group are devoted to detailed explanations of the specific subject and teaching developments they are undertaking. By keeping their focus at this level, they are finding the broader university environment quite congenial.
My general sense is that the university at the moment is more teaching and learning focussed than research focused. Yeah, that’s the priority. (AS 2)

**Category three – policy reconstructionists**

Policy reconstructionists occupy a political world where management represents an alien and intrusive sub culture that necessitates the playing of a continuous tactical game.

Someone writing these guidelines obviously has some political barrow to push. (AS 10)

All the VCs and DVCs get together and it’s ‘mine’s bigger than your’s crap.’ All the boys posturing. (AS 10)

The expertise of these participants is used to turn the policies, systems and initiatives of the university to their own purposes. In ways resonant with de Certeau’s concept of ‘la perruque’ they are willing to subvert the intentions of central initiatives to give the university the appearance of conformance while actually doing their own work.

This morning … we spent quite a lot of time talking about how to get around the grant scheme criteria … We don’t want to do that (what the scheme requires) but we could write our application so it sounded as if it was about that. (AS 10)

At the local level, however, policy reconstructionists are willing to call upon the authority of the university and its plans to overcome resistance to their aims as just another useful tactic.

It (the T&L Plan) has been very useful in a kind of backhanded way. I’ve been able to argue a number of very important points on the basis of ‘they said we had to’. While I have not always agreed with their processes … the fact that they are endorsed by management makes them useful. (AS 10)

Policy reconstructionists roundly condemn the corporate strategic management approach as both ineffective and disrespectful to academic staff.

Yes, we have mission statements and there is a strategic plan for teaching and learning … Each school within the university has its own mission statement … Teaching and learning is very much to the fore. They are worth two bob and a dead rat. (AS 8)

I don’t think any directive from the top pushing down succeeds. (AS 5)
Management seems to think we don’t understand. If only we could see the value it would be all hands to the pump. I’m not so sure about that. All hands are already on the pump and pumping really hard. It’s the insensitivity of the dictums. Stop pontificating about it. (AS 10)

They are critically aware of the diversity of academic cultures and the need to account for this in attempts to change teaching.

If you don’t operate at the level of cultural groups you get one size fits all solutions which don’t recognise diversity and universal blunt instruments for measuring change. (AS 10)

**Policy reconstructionists’ construction of the work identities and practices of others**

Senior leaders are cast as being trapped within the discourse of corporate strategic management and out of touch with the experiences of those at the coalface. They hold untenable beliefs about the nature and purposes of technology for example and are not open to the views of those who have utilised it.

What management believes in is the well oiled machine; the well run corporation … They would like recruits, just following along. It seems to have a life of its own. (AS 10)

The push was in the belief that the technology would reduce teaching … they just don’t know what it does. They don’t know what it is … they haven’t realised the impact that it has on staff using the technology. It actually does create more work for them. (AS 5)

I think the senior administrators at a number of our institutions around this nation need to get back to grass roots … I think that’s the biggest challenge … to become aware of the problems facing the people at the coalface. (AS 5)

**Category 4 - The enterprising academic**

The remaining faculty staff member interviewed for this study identifies himself as an advocate of the enterprise approach to organisations and as an entrepreneurial individual.

It’s all enterprise development … I’m being very entrepreneurial. (AS 1)

This academic works with other enterprising academics who form part of a ‘relationship community’, who are sensitive to the ‘needs of the market’ and ‘are very sensitive to competitive advantage’. (AS 1) In their joint work, the enterprising team’s practices and production approaches force academics to bring aspects of their teaching to self awareness and to respond to students ‘in a way that is educationally enriching’. (AS 1)
The enterprising academic identifies himself as the ‘conductor’ in a supported ‘team based environment’. This team based environment is completely separate from central university initiatives and from its support groups. The staff proudly adopt the nickname ‘the ferals’.

The enterprising academic’s conception of pedagogy requires that education be able to be packaged as a product that may be distributed through a ‘franchise model where the university’s role is in terms of curriculum development and staff development.’ (AS 1) The interest, then, is in building products that are amenable to this distribution mode ‘because we can instantly audit’ them. (AS1) The relationship between teacher and student is conceptualised within the traditional paradigm where the student experience is ‘about joining a discipline’ taking on its stories and coming to a correct understanding of the key questions it addresses.

**The enterprising academic’s construction of the identities and practices of others**

As might be expected, this participant is scathing about the capacities of the current senior managers to reinvent the organisation in enterprising ways while they remain trapped in the discourse of corporate strategic management. They are, it is proposed, trapped in the out of date rhetoric of corporate strategic planning and are bent on turning the university ‘into a cheap imitation of a seventies corporation’ while the corporate world has moved towards the creation of ‘the learning organisation’. As an example, despite extensive university restructuring the organisation is still based upon schools as organisational units incorporating ‘discipline specific domains’ and the academic ‘tribes’ who band together within them.

If I was to characterise the university’s strategic planning I would say they have spent the last year playing boxology and who can draw the neatest little sections of boxes to put everyone in … And they spend all this time doing those sorts of things because they’re intellectually bereft. They’ve actually run out of ideas … and the paradigm is shifting so rapidly that they don’t actually have the skill or history and the understanding to actually deal with the new environment … It’s the cult of managerialism. (AS 1)

This participant is delighted to be ‘free’ of the central teaching and learning support staff who are described as out of touch, talking about teaching which they have not practised for ‘a bloody long time’. They are trapped in an out of date ‘Fordist’ understanding of organisation.

Oh it’s completely flawed. It’s business models for the last century. And, you know, Frederick Taylor would have loved the central teaching support group. It’s this factory production model … So my view is that that model for this sort of work is fundamentally flawed – it doesn’t work that way. (AS 1)
This participant sees diversity in the academic response to change but laments that most have a very limited understanding of teaching.

Academics love reminding themselves of what they know. That's what they think teaching is. (AS 1)

Summary
The relationships between the categories of work identity described above and the roles of participating staff are presented below. Given the concept of identity in use in this study, that is identity as contingent, the dynamic result of a continuous process of assembly which draws upon the variety of available discourses, both the categories described and their relationships cannot be taken to be definitive or permanent. Rather, this presentation should be seen as a description at a point in time. As such it provides a framework, a starting point for understanding the array of different positions and actions evident amongst the staff involved in any change project.

Figure 4 The distribution of work identity categories by role and discourse

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<td>The interpreter (1)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Corporate Strategic Management (CSM) discourse</td>
<td>Attempt to reconcile CSM and professional discourses</td>
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<td>Strategic Actors (7)</td>
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<td>Strategic Actors (7)</td>
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<td>Corporate localists (8) – resistant as attempt to shape CSM in line with professional discourse</td>
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Figure 4 shows horizontally the range of different categories of identity construction within each role group and vertically the relationships between similar conceptions between role groups. It is clear from this that there is a very wide variety of possible combinations and permutations of identity construction for staff required to work together on a change project. Despite the certainty expressed by many interview participants about the identity and practices of others and the stereotypical characterisations revealed through the Program Renewal game described in the Prologue, the variety of categories suggests that no-one can
know with any certainty how individual staff will respond to change initiatives simply by knowing their role. This also suggests that generalised approaches to and techniques for change are unlikely to be successful.

In considering specific change activities, the relationships between role groups suggest some critical points, some fault lines where, misinterpretation or incomprehension concerning the positions or actions of others might be anticipated and where resistance might be expected.

Senior managers’ fluid movement between the two business discourses, even though the discourses have conflicting underpinning assumptions about the nature of change in organisations and required staff roles, provides the potential for both interpretive confusion and for choice of response by staff in subordinate roles. Hough (1999 p. 48) noted that the simultaneous existence of these different discourses has resulted in ‘the worst of all possible organisational worlds’ as,

One has a deep tradition of hierarchy and central control while the other is close to anarchistic. One specifies the rules that must be followed; the other exhorts you to be entrepreneurial and ‘discover’ them.

Among staff interviewed for this study there was little penetration of the enterprise discourse beyond senior management. The four staff who operated within this discursive framework, did so however, with considerable zeal and there is considerable potential for frustration and conflict when these staff confront the perceived bureaucratic methods of corporate strategic management.

Corporate strategic management, as the dominant business discourse, does not penetrate the ranks of academic staff in any significant way as the vast majority of academics in the study develop their work identities drawing upon a professional discourse. Academic staff who appear closest to the category of strategic actor, that is swimmers, do not, in fact, develop their identities within the corporate strategic management discourse but simply find an opportunity for their professionally conceptualised concerns within it. In a symmetrical manner, the professional discourse does not have any hold within the ranks of senior managers. In this situation where resistances to academic identities and practices are expressed by senior managers and vice versa, different forms of identity construction that seek an accommodation between these contrasting discursive positions develop in the ‘middle’ roles of line managers and support staff.

These hybrid identity constructions internalise the contradictions between the contrasting discursive positions of corporate strategic management and the professional discourse in
different ways. For the corporate localist the key tenets and techniques of corporate strategic management are retained but turned towards purposes defined from within the local professional or disciplinary domain. For the harmoniser, participative and collaborative implementation techniques are emphasised and avenues for academics to influence strategic decision making sought. These hybrid constructions contain the possibility of multiple interpretations where different staff will emphasise the aspects that mesh most closely with their own identity constructions.

* * *

Reflection

I undertook the categorisation presented here in order to find a framework for making some sense of the different viewpoints expressed by staff in both the interviews and through the apparently ‘colliding worlds’ of the Program Renewal game I described in the Prologue.

The categorisation provides this and supplies a range of languages for understanding what particular actions might mean to the organisational members making them. Despite being a static picture it provides some insight into the organisational ‘discursive babel’ noted by Clegg (1989a). Given the contingent nature of identity, it can only provide a starting point for analysis in any change project.

In considering its value for improving current change practices, the identity constructions and practices that seek to work productively with differences, provide the most useful points of reference. The category I have named harmonisers closely resembles the position of ‘bridge’ I identified in my own practices at the end of the last chapter. It contains the same limitations I outlined there in that it is predicated on finding a way to work within or moderate a singular management strategic vision rather than on the basis of a dialogue between different positions. Compromises are sought by harmonisers between the demands of the strategic vision and the preferences of staff working from within a professional discourse. Additionally the perceived allegiance of the harmoniser to valuing the views of academics can conceal their own implications in the power dynamics of strategic change.

Another significant alternative identity construction, which focuses on working with differences, is that of the interpreter. This conception is clearly informed by postmodern discourses concerning the desirability of multiple cultures and identities and the futility of meta narratives or singular visions. The practice of the interpreter within an organisational context dominated by corporate strategic management is to move between cultures occupying the powerful position of translator one to the other. Through this practice, difference is maintained but under the radar of senior management.
A third discursive position that favours difference is that of the policy reconstructionists. Like the interpreter, difference is sustained out of sight of the dominant discourse by presenting preferred local initiatives in the language of corporate management – poaching on the dominant discourse in the words of de Certeau (1984, p. xi-xii).

In none of these practices are the different identity positions across the ‘fracture lines’ I described above, brought together to engage in their own negotiations and in Lorde’s (1984, p. 112) terms, difference as a ‘fund of necessary polarities between which … creativity can spark’ is not realised.

In any interaction which brings differences together, power will be central. Before exploring the dynamics of a change project and the interactions between staff with different discursively constructed identities and practices, alternative concepts of power need to be explored. This is undertaken in the next chapter.
Chapter 5

POWER RELATIONS IN ORGANISATIONS

My focus in the last chapter was on the range of discourses that are intelligible and available within the university and how academics, support staff and managers have drawn upon these discourses in different ways to construct their work identities and develop different interpretations of their roles. My interest, however, is not simply in the range of discourses or the ways they may be incorporated by individuals but on the impacts this has on how change is effected.

The diversity of work identities and roles presented in the last chapter clearly demonstrate how each excludes all or some aspects of alternative definitions. These exclusions will necessarily result in antagonisms between positions and resistance to the roles, or aspects of the roles designated by one group for another. Organisational relationships will always be relations of power.

The dominant position in the theorising of power is designated as the **sovereign** view in that power is seen to emanate from a single central place, originally the person of the sovereign and later the sovereign state. Sovereign power is primarily prohibitory, coercive and zero sum, that is, power is the negation of the power of others. It is this conception of power that creates the dualisms of us and them, agents and victims, power and resistance. One of the dangers of these dualisms is the tendency to see power and resistance as ‘phenomena that, prescripted, belong to the bad guys and the good guys respectively’ (Clegg 1994, p. 309). Analyses based on such dualisms can never go beyond the already known, the already determined binary opposition of a legislative power on one side and an obedient or resistant subject on the other.

Within this conception of power, only the powerful have agency. Agency refers to the ability of an agent A to get a person B to do something he or she would not have done otherwise or for the agent A to get B not to do something he or she would otherwise have done. This is a view of power as something possessed by powerful people and imposed upon others.

In this chapter I describe the alternate **relational** view, as a different and potentially more productive lens for understanding the relations of power within organisations. In particular I
describe the work of three theorists that provide a means of examining how power works at a variety of levels of detail. I have used these as tools for the analysis of power within the university and the different theories have been used to inform analysis at different levels of detail.

My first level of interest is in how power is designed to work across the whole organisation to achieve the kinds of organisational change set out in the strategies and plans of the five universities studied. This system level analysis is needed to understand how change activities are supposed to work in the managerialised university and to help to point to areas of focus for the more detailed level of analysis of a specific change project. The system level analysis I have conducted is presented in Chapter 6 and is based upon formal documents collected from each university in the study and upon written statements or explanations of their functioning by leaders within them. In making this analysis, I have used the understanding of disciplinary power developed by Foucault (1977) and operationalised for organisations in Clegg’s (1989) circuits of power model as these provide a means of understanding how power is organised and intended to flow within the managerialised university.

My second level of interest is with a specific change project, where the actual intersections between systems and individuals with differently constructed work identities and role definitions can be described and analysed. For this project analysis I have used a model of the micro practices of change developed by Callon (1986) situated within the organisation previously described. I have used the four moments Callon identifies within the change process to pin point the tactics that need to be rethought if more productive and creative forms of interaction are to result as change is attempted. This analysis is presented in Chapter 7 and suggestions for transformation in the Epilogue.

The three theoretical models described are explicitly connected. At an overarching level the models of Clegg and Callon are both indebted to the influential work of Foucault (1977; 1980; 1982; 1984; 1988; 1998) in turning the sovereign conception of power on its head. Clegg explicitly identifies the work of Foucault as a key framework for his analytical system model and also draws upon and incorporates the work of Callon in developing his understanding of the tactics of power and resistance. This chapter commences with an outline of Foucault’s contribution as it has been utilised for this study.

*     *     *

Relational models of power – the influence of Foucault
In his classification of different theories or approaches to power, Mingers (1992), identified what is central to the relational conception of power. In relational models, he argues, power
is not a possession of individuals or central agencies (the subjective focus), nor is it a feature of structure that constrains action or oppresses social groups (the objective focus). Power is a mobile network of relations.

It was Foucault’s (1998, p. 90) ‘analytics of power’ that provided perhaps the most influential relational approach to the rethinking of sovereign concepts of power so that, in his words, we could ‘cut off the head of the king’ (p. 89).

For Foucault, ‘power must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization’ (Ibid, p. 92). This network of force relations creates a ceaseless struggle from which particular crystallisations of power emerge in the form of state apparatuses, the law and various social hegemonies. When applied to universities, this way of thinking about power suggests that the current relations of power, most often formalised in hierarchies of line management, need to be understood as temporary crystallisations from the network of forces and the variety of possible relations of power. The traditional starting point for analysis, the sovereign exercise of power is, in fact, an outcome, a stabilisation in the relations of force that will certainly be resisted.

In Foucault’s analysis (1998, p. 93), power is omnipresent, it is everywhere ‘not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere’. There is no position outside of power. As Hoy (1986, p.137) puts it:

"Foucault holds the quite plausible view that to live socially is to be involved in power relations, and that the notion of society without power relations is only an abstraction."

The focus, therefore, in any analysis of power should be on the ‘moving substrate of force relations which, by virtue of their inequality, constantly engender states of power, but the latter are always local and unstable’ (Foucault 1998, p. 93).

One result of this change from the sovereign conception of power as power over others to understanding power as a network of force relations is the rejection of exclusively repressive concepts of power, that is, power as a negative, prohibition to action. In a relational model this must be replaced with an understanding of the productive capacities of power. Foucault noted (1977, p. 194):

"We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it ‘excludes’, it ‘represses’, it ‘censors’. In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces
domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production.

Foucault’s concern was with what power does, the ways it works at the local level rather than with generalised definitions of what power is. In focussing on the ways power works to produce reality, Foucault (1980, p. 125) described a variety of techniques developed since the 17th and 18th centuries designed to obtain ‘productive service from individuals in their concrete lives.’ He named this form of power bio-power, and argued that it was oriented towards ‘the increasing ordering in all realms under the guise of improving the welfare of the individual and the population’ (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1982, p. xxii). Practices within bio-power (which Foucault has also termed pastoral power) were designed to create healthy, secure and productive individuals (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1986), ‘docile bodies’ using methods that were efficient and capable of extension over space and in a wide variety of domains of action (Foucault 1977). Bio-power progressively infiltrated or penetrated practices of sovereign power such that mechanisms that attempted to ‘shape the wills, desires, interests and identities of subjects’ (Knights & Vurdubakis 1994, p. 173) became more salient and more prevalent than forms of coercion.

**The strategies of power**

Foucault identified specific techniques of bio-power, which he referred to as disciplinary practices,

… whose operation is not ensured by right but by technique, not by law but by normalization, not by punishment but by control, methods that are employed on all levels and in forms that go beyond the state and its apparatuses. (Foucault 1998, p. 89)

The four main disciplinary practices or strategies he identified may be used to categorise techniques of discipline within organisations. The first strategy he described as the division and distribution of bodies in space and the creation of enclosed functional sites. The second he identified as, the division of time and activity into periods permitting the control of activities and the manner in which they are carried out. These strategies are referred to collectively as dividing practices. The third strategy he called, the creation of a total program involving the progressive development of aptitudes and capacities. The final type he described as the creation of tactical networks for the efficient deployment of bodies and activities such that an efficient machine is created (Jones 1990; Marshall 1996). Foucault suggested that the spread and infiltration of these practices have created a disciplinary society where the ‘disciplines are techniques for assuring the ordering of human multiplicities’ (Foucault 1977, p. 218). In examining the techniques through which disciplinary strategies are enacted, Foucault (1984) identified three basic forms.
Techniques of disciplinary power

In utilising Foucault’s analysis of power to understand how the universities in case study two are organised to support change, the specific techniques of discipline described below have provided the major categories for analysis. These have been applied in conjunction with Clegg’s (1989) circuits of power model to describe how the new, managerial organisational practices designed to support change have incorporated these techniques.

The first technique is hierarchical observation, a system of surveillance that allows disciplinary power to become an integrated system. A fully developed system of surveillance is designed to be multiple, automatic and anonymous such that a network is created where supervisors are themselves perpetually supervised. Foucault (1977) used the famous prison design by Bentham, the Panopticon as emblematic of the disciplinary gaze. In this design, the prisoners can potentially be observed at all times from a central watch tower. The cells are arranged in a circle around the tower, lit through the exterior so that the inmate is always illuminated. The central idea is that the prisoner does not know whether or not he is being watched at any particular time, so the gaze of the supervisor is internalised and the prisoner becomes self policing, behaving as if under perpetual supervision. In the fully developed disciplinary system the supervisors are, however, themselves under observation.

In using this concept for analysis, university systems and policies from the five universities studied have been analysed for the ways in which they attempt to make the work practices of staff and managers within the organisation more visible.

The second form of disciplinary power described by Foucault he named normalising judgement. In this modality the constitution of what is considered normal is established as a basis for judgement and those deemed as non-conforming are liable for punishment or treatment. Homogenising, normalising judgement requires individualising strategies so that each individual may be measured against the norm and compared against a minimum threshold as their ‘nature’ is quantified.

In the analysis of documents, this concept has been used to identify practices which codify in some way what has been determined as normal for academic, support staff and managers in the performance of their duties. Policies or practices that specify what outcomes an academic might be expected to generate embed a particular concept of what a ‘normal’ academic is.
The third technique, combining the other two, is the examination. The examination constitutes the individual as a describable, analysable object and relies on a comparative system that makes measurement possible. It makes each individual into a ‘case’ by documenting observations, turning real lives into writing.

Systems and practices which examine workers within the university have been identified using this concept. The pervasive use of forms of performance appraisal for staff at all levels is a principal example.

The techniques of disciplinary power work by imposing on the individual a compulsory and constant visibility. According to Foucault (1977, p. 170), ‘Discipline “makes” individuals: it is the specific technique of a power that regards individuals both as objects and instruments of its exercise’.

**Power, knowledge and discourse**

For Foucault (1998) discourse is the place where knowledge and power come together. Different discourses seek to create what Foucault calls ‘regimes of truth’ which establish what is taken to be true and who may be taken to speak with authority. Different discourses and the knowledge they draw upon for their legitimation, therefore always constitute specific relations of power. Foucault (1977, p. 27) argues:

> … power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations.

The program of university reforms outlined in Chapter 2 has positioned managerial discourses in the dominant position within the sector. As described, these discourses draw upon bodies of management knowledge, particularly that of corporate strategic management and of the enterprise organisation, to establish particular relations of force within the university. It is this central element of Foucault’s work that has been taken up by management studies in order to understand how power/knowledge works to construct the organisational world, differentiate its elements and constitute and discipline its participants (Morgan 1992; see for example Ball 1990b; Steffy & Grimes 1992; Austrin 1994).

Discourse, like power relations, however, needs to be understood as a dynamic and mobile concept. Foucault cautions against imagining a world divided between a dominant discourse and a dominated one. He argues that discourse should be understood as ‘a multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play in various strategies’ (1998, p.100), that
strategies may contain contradictory discourses and that discourses as tactical elements can circulate unchanged from one strategy to another opposing one.

We must make allowances for the complex and unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it (1998, p. 101).

Within organisations, it is individuals who act, not abstract discourses. Foucault does not argue that individuals are passively determined by discourses. Rather, within the field of constantly circulating, contradictory discourses described above, the individual subject must participate in a continuous process of self construction to produce coherence and continuity out of the fragmentation and discord that competing discourses make evident (Lather 1991; Jermier, Knights & Nord 1994; Knights & Vurdubakis 1994). The constitution of subjectivity thus makes possible the docile subject but equally, the resistant subject. Foucault (1980, p. 142) has stated:

… there are no relations of power without resistances; the latter all the more real and effective because they are formed right at the point where relations of power are exercised; resistance to power does not have to come from somewhere else to be real, nor is it inexorably frustrated through being the compatriot of power. It exists all the more by being at the same place as power; hence like power resistances are multiple and can be integrated into global strategies.

Power and resistance may best be understood as the analytical conditions and limit of each other’s possibility (Foucault 1982). Power is not a totalising phenomenon but a dynamic network of multiple relations; not ‘Power – with a capital P – dominating and imposing its rationality on the totality of the social body’ (Foucault 1988, p. 8). In this network of power relations different constituencies seek to create stability using strategies and tactics that accord with their aims. Any such attempts are resisted such that any crystallisation is a temporary and local resolution.

Foucault developed a further key concept that has relevance for understanding organisational actions concerning change. He argued as described above that the actions of individuals are intentional at the level of individual tactics. Each agent seeks to create stable conditions in accordance with his or her aims. The result, however, over a period of time is the creation of a comprehensive system that cannot be understood as the specific intention of any single actor or group of actors (Deetz 1992). As Foucault (1977, p.156) notes:
In this form of management, power is not totally entrusted to someone who would exercise it alone, over others in an absolute fashion; rather, this machine is one in which everyone is caught, those who exercise power as well as those who are subjected to it.

In describing the managerial systems that are embedded within the five universities in this study, this concept highlights that the system must not be understood as entirely the result of the intentional actions of managers. Rather it must be understood as a complex result of a range of intentional actions from a variety of participants that may be limiting to managers as well as to others.

**Critiques of Foucault**

**The continuing relevance of sovereign power**

The work of Foucault has generated a significant secondary literature that addresses in detail the many dimensions of his work. The outline above touches on only a small part of his contribution. One critique of Foucault’s work of relevance to this study is the suggestion by Walzer (1986) that Foucault has underestimated the importance of legislative forms of power deriving from the continuing power of the sovereign state through his overemphasis on the pervasiveness of disciplinary power. While Walzer is concerned with power at the level of the state, his critique is relevant to organisational contexts where sovereign like power continues through the establishment of line management hierarchies and legislative power through the enforcement of systems of rules (Deetz 1992).

Walzer acknowledges that Foucault is at least partly correct in recognising that no one is free from the new forms of disciplinary control based on power/knowledge. He argues, however, that the normalising truths of the disciplines that are implicated with power also ‘regulate the exercise of power. They set limits on what can be rightly done’ (Ibid, p. 65). According to Walzer it is the state that sets the framework for all other disciplinary institutions and its operation through the rule of law means that it is only the state that can stop attempts by dominant agents within institutions from continuously extending their power. He argues, therefore, that ‘every act of local resistance is an appeal for political or legal intervention from the centre’ (Ibid, p. 66).

It is important to note that Foucault did not deny the continuation of the sovereign or juridico-discursive power of the state. Rather he argued that there are two limits that define the arena in which power operates – the right of sovereignty and the mechanism of discipline – and that these cannot be reduced to each other (Foucault 1980). The state, therefore, cannot be seen as the single or primary source of power. In discussing hierarchical forms of power that relate equally to a consideration of the state and to the workings of power in organisations, he said (Foucault 1980, p. 159):
It is obvious that in an apparatus like an army or a factory, or some other such type of institution, the system of power takes a pyramidal form. Hence there is an apex. But even so, even in such a simple case, this summit doesn’t form the ‘source’ or ‘principle’ from which all power derives as though from a luminous focus … The summit and the lower elements of the hierarchy stand in a relationship of mutual support and conditioning, a mutual ‘hold’ (power as a mutual and indefinite ‘blackmail’).

Following Walzer’s critique, however, it is important to consider the interaction between relations of power, codified as rules in the law, with the workings of disciplinary power as they play out in specific contexts. This is especially so when utilising the insights of Foucault in organisational analysis. Much management analysis focuses on the formal hierarchies of power and the explicit statements about organisation in the codification of procedures and rules. A strict focus on these aspects can, however, be misleading as it ‘often conceals the actual procedures of power and the operant sites of its deployment’ (Ibid, p. 37). In the spirit of Foucault, it is the relations between the codification of discourse in these policies and procedures (as outcomes of power struggles) and the ways in which they are tactically brought to bear in the continuing struggle for power that provides the most productive focus within organisations. It is an exploration of the ‘endless relation of reciprocal conditioning between global and micro-contexts’ (Taylor 1986, p. 85).

The role of values in understanding power

The second area of critique of interest for this study relates to the role of values in understanding power. According to Foucault we are all, always part of networks of power and as such we act to condition the behaviour of others in order to secure conditions conducive to our aims. Foucault’s focus on the necessity of studying power at the local level and his refusal to endorse any universal values raise the question of what basis may be used for justifying any action. Without the endorsement of a universal set of values there can be no a priori determination of what is good or bad. Such decisions must be taken on a case by case basis at the local level.

In responding to this concern, Knights and Vurdubakis (1994) argue that it is possible to make normative judgments without the designation of universal values by basing them upon shared cultural practices. These judgments must be acknowledged as both local and ungrounded. The continuous negotiation of relations of power, therefore, requires a constant vigilance and scepticism concerning the rights we endorse at the same time as we endorse them. Rather than the legislation of ‘empty universal norms’, therefore, we should encourage continuous ‘conflicts of interpretation’ (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1986, p. 120). Within an organisational context, how such constant vigilance might be sustained is a key concern for
this study. Such vigilance needs to embrace consideration of not only the actions we take but the rights we take for granted that underpin them.

**Foucault's methodological precautions**

Foucault's contributions concerning power were mostly worked out at the level of societal developments. He also declined to provide a detailed methodology for the study of power, but rather limited himself to the provision of broad ‘methodological precautions’ (1980, p. 98). He suggested that when studying power, the analyst should first, locate its extreme points where it is less legal in character. Second, its effects should be in focus, rather than a concern with the level of conscious intention. Third, he suggested that power should be studied as something that circulates in a net-like organisation and as something that is productive and not simply repressive. Fourth, the analysis should be conducted in an ascending order, starting with the smallest mechanisms and seeing how these are utilised to become more general. Fifthly, power should be studied as the production and evolution of effective instruments in the formulation and accumulation of knowledge rather than restricting investigations to the ideologies that have accompanied major developments (Foucault 1980; Davidson 1986).

**Clegg and the circuits of power model**

In order to utilise Foucault's methodological precautions for the study of power within an organisational context, an analytical approach that relates Foucault's concepts to the organisational locale is needed. Consistent with Foucault, Clegg's (1989a) ‘circuits of power’ model uses a relational concept of power, avoiding attributing a determining function to structure, which is seen as an effect of organisation, or to agency which is seen as an achievement of organisation. In it, Clegg has incorporated key insights from Foucault's work to provide a more precise analytical framework useful for the micro contexts of organisational life.

**Clegg's three circuits**

In the circuits of power model, Clegg identifies three circuits through which the networks of power operate within organisations. These he names the circuit of *episodic agency power*, the circuit of *system integration* and the circuit of *social integration*. The description of these circuits separates, for the purposes of analysis, the intricately interwoven and interrelated relations of power within any organisation. The circuits, in this sense, do not refer to functional subsystems. Clegg emphasises that in the circuits framework, power is multifarious. It involves a diversity of agencies operating in a highly complex environment of standing conditions. Different agents have strategic interests in their relationships with others and have varying control over knowledge and other resources.
Clegg develops a number of key concepts to describe the ways in which various agents interact, as they attempt to fix conditions in their own interests and to discipline other agents who are, in their turn, resisting and seeking to fix conditions amenable to their interests. Key concepts are described later in this section and include the notion of strategic agency, of the different modes of rationality of different agents based upon their determination of their interests and the role of rules in the play of power relations. The following outline is drawn from Clegg's (1989a) Frameworks of Power.

**The circuit of episodic agency power**

The first and most visible circuit described by Clegg is that of episodic agency power. This refers to the day to day episodes of power within the organisation. It accounts for the understanding, already noted by Deetz, that there are forms of power within organisations enacted through a hierarchical structure of offices that are sovereign like in operation. These are specific configurations of authority that institutionalise ‘power over’ subordinates through a system of role descriptions and line management accountabilities.

In this circuit Clegg recognises but repositions and reforms the traditional, causal, mechanistic notion of ‘power over’ others in key ways. The concept is not overextended in this usage to suggest that such power leads to total control over others’ actions or over their determination of their own interests. Clegg notes that the extent to which any position and the person who occupies it are deemed to ‘possess’ power within an organisational hierarchy, is an outcome of previous power contests. While the existing situation within an organisation may appear permanent and even natural, it is a temporary fixing within the fields of force and may be challenged. Drawing on the translation model of power developed by Latour (1986), he also argues that what appears as a form of power possessed by an individual in command is, in fact, no such thing. The appearance of power is determined by the ways in which individuals within the organisation shape and interpret any command according to their own projects, their own perceptions of interests. A person only possesses power to the extent that others within the organisation are able to and do find ways of incorporating the commanded direction or activity within their own preferred patterns of behaviour. As such ‘power is a consequence and not a cause of collective action’ (Ibid, p. 269)

To the extent that power is retained within this circuit, that is, the directives issued by those in positions of authority are accepted by those they ‘command’; it automatically reproduces the existing configuration of domination. Under conditions of stability it is the most economical
circuit of power. It follows that any explicit and unilateral display of power by management denotes a breakdown in episodic agency power.

**The circuit of system integration**

The second circuit described by Clegg, the circuit of *system integration* refers to the techniques of discipline and production based upon Foucault’s conception of disciplinary power. It recognises that organisations utilise a storehouse of disciplinary techniques that both ‘constitute organizationally approved forms of creativity and productivity’ and ‘the acquisition of organizationally proper conduct by a member’ (p. 92). As outlined in Chapter 3, traditional techniques of production in teaching and learning within universities have favoured a regime of face to face interactions between academics and students where the expertise of the academic is transferred to the students using formats such as lectures and tutorials. This form of production provides for a significant level of control by individual academics. Any attempt to change this form of production is likely to alter the relations of power by empowering some new agents and disempowering others. The recent attempts in Australian universities to change the nature of teaching and learning production to incorporate information and communication technologies has had this effect, as staff with expertise in computer technologies and online production alter the traditional and exclusive relationship between academics and students.

Clegg argues that it is in such ways that the circuit of system integration becomes the major means for change in organisations. While an example of changes to production is given here, radical changes in the relations of power within organisations may similarly be achieved through changes in practices of discipline. New forms of measurement or evaluation will alter relations of power in a similar way. Innovation in production or the techniques of discipline create the potential for transformations in the extant structures of power.

**The circuit of social integration**

The third circuit of *social integration* is concerned with attempts to fix or refix relations of meaning and membership within the organisation so that a specific and stable ‘organisational field’ is created. Key mechanisms widely used within universities in Australia are the development of vision and mission statements and in relation to teaching and learning, a strategy or plan that sets the directions for its development and defines what should be taken by all members of the university as appropriate or ‘good’ forms of teaching. The definitions within such documents will privilege certain meanings informed by the dominant discursive position, which in turn will be aligned with specific categories of organisational membership. Flowing from such strategy definitions are a sequence of policies and processes that
articulate the organisational rules designed to embed the desired meanings in the routine practices of organisational life. Rules include those explicitly incorporated in formal documents, but also those that are implicit and contextual to the reasoning of members or contained within institutional ceremonies and rituals (Clegg 1994). Change within this circuit, therefore, will involve explicit struggles over meaning and membership focused around the formulations of meaning in strategy and policy documents and the rules of practice that flow from these.

The circuits of social and system integration should be understood as pathways through which power relations are fixed and stabilised. These two integrative circuits are necessarily connected as changes to production or discipline will have impacts on conditions of meaning and membership within an organisation. While the circuit of system integration provides the major impetus for change in the organisation, according to Clegg, it is the circuit of social integration’s relations of meaning and membership he identifies as ‘the nub of power’ (1989, p. 237) as all attempts at change must necessarily involve struggles within this circuit.

**The concept of ‘strategic agency’**

Organisations can be described by using the model of these three circuits. The current positional hierarchy, specific techniques of production and discipline and ways of fixing meaning within the five universities in this study are described in Chapter 6. Clegg notes, however, that the word organisation itself is synonymous with control and that organisations as a whole seek to use these techniques to create a form of organisational agency that will enable goals to be achieved. Clegg uses the concept of strategic agency to denote the ability to ‘enrol’ the diversity of different agents within the organisation with differently constituted work identities and aims to the desired organisational view. He argues that the achievement of strategic agency will involve the formation of coalitions and alliances within the organisation that are centrally stabilised in a network of power. Further, these relations need to be fixed such that the agencies involved are reflexively aware of their constitution as a field.

According to Clegg, organisations should be understood as sites of decision and action where differently constituted agencies struggle to stabilise the network of relations of power so that they might achieve strategic agency.

Where organization achieves agency it is an accomplishment, just as it is for the individual but more so, because it involves the stabilization of power relations across an organizational field of action, and thus between many subjectivities … (p. 188).
The creation of strategic agency will be made more difficult in organisations such as universities where there is a plurality of relations of meaning and membership within the organisation. In organisations like this there will be many competing bases of legitimation for actions that will draw upon different discourses and resource based capacities and this will make the securing of desired outcomes highly uncertain.

The concept of ‘mode of rationality’
An organisation that has achieved strategic agency in relation to a particular goal will have a coherent way of interpreting the situations it faces and of determining the actions it should take ‘under conditions of some uncertainty as to how they should handle whatever it is they might be handling’ (p. 238). Clegg refers to this as a particular mode of rationality for the organisation as a whole.

Clegg uses the concept of modes of rationality at two levels. At the intra-organisational level he uses the concept to denote different forms of calculation concerning organisational action that different agents within the organisation make.

For strategic agency based on an organisation wide mode of rationality to be achieved, control must be exercised over both relations of production and relations of meaning and membership. The fixing of both, however, will be resisted. Organisational members’ bodily engagement in production and the meanings individuals privilege both provide ‘capacities for resisting the encroachment of organization control on individuals’ discursive play and their ability to work’ (p. 194). To achieve organisational agency, therefore, both body and meaning will require disciplining.

The concept of ‘interests’
The modes of rationality of different groups within an organisation reflect what these groups identify as their interests. The concept of interests has a long and contested history in theories of power. In traditional, causal theories, interest has been taken to quite simply denote individual preferences. This view has been challenged by critical or radical theorists with the notion that the ‘real interests’ of individuals are obscured, even to the individuals themselves, by the hegemony of the dominant ideology, which creates a false consciousness within subjugated groups.

Clegg uses the concept of interest in a different way to both these conceptions. He describes interests as the reasons for action that are given by agents in particular situations. Interests are, therefore, in no way essential to the individual or determined by particular dominant categories such as class.
Persons, as agents engaged in struggle, will strain over that which is constituted as arguable according to the conditions of particular discursive processes, and will formulate their interests accordingly. It cannot be maintained that these interests are formulated outside the conditions of particular discursive practices and struggles … (p. 181)

He argues that in any particular struggle there will be a variety of discursively available reasons for action other than those that any particular agent articulates in a discourse. Any discussion of interest, then, will need to focus on the ‘structurally legitimate and socially available discursive frameworks in particular situations’ (p. 181). He emphasises that the discursively available frameworks are themselves the result of past struggles. Should a particular group achieve strategic agency, its articulation of interests would achieve a position of temporary dominance. Clegg notes, however, that ‘organizational locales will more likely be loci of multivalent powers than monadic sites of total control: contested terrains rather than total institutions’ (p. 200).

The concepts of modes of rationality and of interests as the reasons given for action developed by Clegg can be interpreted in a manner consistent with the Foucauldian concept of a contingent subjectivity continuously in process. Particular modes of rationality and articulations of interest need to be understood as both an effect of power/knowledge and as part of its constitution. In the struggle for strategic agency, different agents with interests articulated through differing discourses seek to constitute themselves and the others of which they speak in ways that privilege their view. While dominant discourses attempt, through disciplinary practices, to limit the possibilities for discursive self construction by others, this can never be total. The availability of multiple, if more or less marginalised discourses provides the means to make sense of, initiate and account for organisational actions in a diversity of ways.

The achievement of strategic agency is central to Clegg’s framework. Its achievement results in the ability to organise other agents into an advantageous stabilisation of power relations. For Clegg the achievement of strategic agency requires the control of ‘obligatory passage points’ (or necessary nodal points) within the organisation for any specific struggle, concepts developed by Callon (1986) which he incorporates in his framework.

… agencies interested in maximising their strategicality must attempt to transform their point of connection with some other agency or agencies into a ‘necessary nodal point’: this would be a channel through which traffic between them occurs on terms which privilege the putative strategic agency (p. 199).
The control of obligatory passage points relies on the fixing of meaning and membership and ‘the securing of particular interpretations of what the rules are’ (p. 225). In fixing meaning various forms of ‘discursive closure’ (Deetz 1992) will be used to dispense with alternative ways of constituting meaning. Deetz argues that favoured terms such as order, efficiency and effectiveness are used by managers to naturalise management discourse and marginalise alternative discourses. This naturalisation is embedded in organisational routines and rules such that organisational politics are rendered invisible.

The concept of ‘rules’
The concept of *rules* is critical in Clegg’s framework. Rules within organisations are the means by which particular formulations of meaning and membership and particular forms of production and discipline are embedded and enacted. Organisational rules enable actions consistent with the currently dominant organisational view and constrain actions deemed to be resistant. The ability to fix rules is always skewed to the dominant organising power. Within the managerialised university in Australia this means that the ability to fix rules is skewed to management (Deetz 1992), however, this power is not absolute. The dilemma of rules for management is that they are ambiguous. Clegg uses the concept of *indexicality* to describe this feature of rules.

To say that an expression is indexical is to say that it is relative to such contextual matters as who said it, to whom it was said, and in what kind of context where context indexes such features as the occasion, the social relationships between the speaker(s) and hearer(s), the place it occupies in the sequence of conversation and so on (1975, p. 7).

Rules, then, are not capable of carrying their own interpretation and so provide a useful site for resistance, through challenges to interpretation or the construction of interpretations at odds with the original intention. The ‘paradox of power’ according to Clegg (1989a) is that in order to secure and stabilise particular configurations of power, authority must be delegated. The ambiguity of rules means, however, that delegation always contains the possibility of empowering delegates and transforming the relations of power. Dominant powers must always attempt to discipline the discretion of those to whom they delegate. In organisations such as universities, where the form of production requires high levels of discretion, the disciplining of this discretion will be difficult. Successful disciplining is likely to utilise the productive, rather than the prohibitionary capacities of power to ‘enable creativity which is imbued with positivity yet still constrained by discipline’ (p. 199)

Forms of resistance
Whatever methods are used to attempt to limit the discretion others have over their actions, they will be resisted. This will take one of two forms according to Clegg. The first and rare
form he terms ‘outflanking’ in which resistance consolidates to create a new configuration of power relations. Such outflanking might result in significant changes to structures and hierarchies supporting a radically different regime of meaning, expressed through different goals, missions, strategies and rules within the organisation. The second form of resistance he describes as resistance to the exercise of power, which nonetheless leaves the current configuration basically intact. He has described this as ‘frictional’ resistance, where behaviours, which either ignore or subvert the intended goals, strategies and rules within the organisation are taken, but the forms remain unaltered. The dominant configuration of power will seek to outflank resistance and will utilise a range of practices to do so.

In doing so, forms of physical and intellectual isolation that result from the dividing practices described by Foucault are useful in keeping agents ignorant of organisational processes and of other agents with whom they might otherwise form alliances. Disciplinary practices of normalisation and examination, particularly through performance appraisal, have the effect of individualising members and creating conditions of competition between them. These practices can be used to categorise worker resistance as a symptom of personal problems or unfulfilled needs and be used as a justification for coercive or therapeutic initiatives rather than responsive action (Ball 1990b). External conditions for alternate employment will also impact on the likelihood of resistance as will assessments of the perceived possibility of successful resistance.

**Critiques of Clegg’s focus on outflanking of resistance**

Clegg’s concentration on mechanisms for the organisational outflanking of resistance has been criticised as under recognising the impacts of the second form of ‘frictional’ resistance (Collinson 1994). Collinson identified two basic forms of frictional resistance. The first he named ‘resistance through distance’ where workers try to escape from the demands of authority by restricting information to management and by refusing to be involved in key processes. The second he named ‘resistance by persistence’, a form which involves the demand for more information from management concerning decisions and practices and greater involvement in practices, so that management might be rendered more accountable. The effectiveness of frictional resistance will be enhanced in conditions where resisting employees control knowledge that is critical to the operation of the system. Davidson (1994) has noted that resistance is not necessarily a response to the direct exercise of managerial power that seeks to increase control, but will also result when managerial actions challenge the conceptions of the purposes of work held by employees.

Davidson’s observation reinforces Clegg’s view, that the impetus for change that comes from within the organisation in any stabilised network of relations of power can come through
innovations in techniques of production and discipline, or as explicit struggles over meanings and membership focused on the rules of practice. External, environmental drivers for change can come from agencies such as the government and will be particularly compelling when the organisation is dependent on the agency, for example for funding. The result of both internal and external challenges is always uncertain.

Whether sources of system disintegration or contradiction actually lead to transformation and a new practice of rules will depend upon the network of power and passage points that are achieved through episodic power's configuration of the organizational field at the level of social organization (p. 239).

Clegg’s characterisation of organisations as sites through which power flows, where various agencies struggle to secure strategic agency through the control of obligatory passage points has been used in the analysis of both the formal documents collected from each university in this study and the specific change process examined. In particular these concepts have been used to describe how various agencies seek to fix meanings in ways that privilege their own discursively constructed and articulated interests. Similarly Clegg’s understanding of the importance of and role of rules has been used to focus on the ways in which rules are encoded within the universities and then interpreted or changed by different agents to suit their purposes.

Callon and the sociology of translation
Michel Callon (1986) has described the precise ways in which various agents go about securing their control of obligatory passage points in what he has termed the sociology of translation. Callon (1986, p. 203) describes four moments in this process which constitute ‘the different phases of a general process called translation, during which the identity of actors, the possibility of interactions and the margins of manoeuvre are negotiated and delimited’. The notion of translation is used to emphasise the displacements and transformations that have to occur if different arrangements of forces are to result. Displacement occurs in every stage as various agents are ‘invited to change the focus of their preoccupations and their projects’ (Ibid, p. 223) or to find agreement through mutual concessions. In reality, the four moments described by Callon may overlap but their description enables the establishment and evolution of power relations in specific contexts to be preserved for analysis.

The first moment Callon names problematization. He notes that the purpose of problematization is for specific agencies to become indispensable by defining the situation of interest in terms that make the resources and knowledge they control central to its solution. Problematization will involve agents in defining their own identities and those of the other
actors necessary to achieving their aims in ways that establish themselves as obligatory passage points in the network of relationships. Agents seeking to establish a favourable problematization need to show that the interests of other actors are congruent with their own and to therefore construct them as allies within a network of power relations.

The second stage Callon calls interessement or ‘how the allies are locked into place’ (Ibid, p. 206). Following problematization, it is necessary to impose and stabilise the identities that have been given to other actors in the network. At any one time a number of agents will be seeking to secure problematization on their terms and will, therefore, be seeking to define the other agents in the network in ways that are undesirable from the point of view of other agents. Callon argues that ‘to interest other actors is to build devices which can be placed between them and all other entities who want to define their identities otherwise’ (Ibid, p. 208). Interessement refers to this practice of placing barriers between the actors one is trying to secure as allies and others who might draw them away.

Callon calls the third stage enrolment or the stage where the roles of various actors in the network are defined and coordinated. Enrolment results if the devices developed during interessement are successful in interesting the various agents needed for the activity or situation in focus to the identities that have been assigned to them. Alliances are formed when the other actors in the network accept these identities and the roles that flow from them.

Finally mobilization, the fourth stage, refers to the actions taken to ensure that enrolment is fixed and that different agencies in the network of power established do not betray their agreements. Mobilization is uncertain because, in practice, negotiations during interessement and enrolment take place with a small group of individuals who are taken to represent various groups of people. Within a university, for example, various representatives of academic staff, unions, management etc speak for others in negotiations around modes of discipline and production, the fixing of meaning or the rules of practice. Whether the others for whom they speak can, in fact, be mobilised will depend on whether the spokesmen are indeed representative.

No mobilization is ever secure. At any stage of the process agents may question some of the agreements secured in previous stages. Callon calls this process of challenge, where actors may repudiate the roles they have previously accepted, as dissidence.

In this study, the four moments described by Callon have been used in the analysis of the case study of a change initiative in progress to describe the evolution of power relations as
various agents to the change process seek to establish control of obligatory passage points and secure agency in their terms.

* * *

Reflection

Prior to undertaking this excursion into alternative ways of understanding power I only had the dominant sovereign discourses on power available to me as I tried to make sense of the change activities in which I was involved. While I did not draw upon these discourses explicitly, their very dominance meant that they were at my disposal as I constructed my work identity and ways of working with others.

My experience of the practice of change in the everyday life of an organisation is a fragmented one. Embedded in one part of the organisation, it is impossible to get a bird’s eye view of the action. Many views are expressed. Many actions are taken, some within my view and some not. Rumours and gossip circulate alongside official memos and minutes. Changes which challenge existing practices are passionately advocated and equally passionately resisted. Working at close quarters, in real time, in this messy and emotional context I have found it very difficult to avoid reactive behaviours and easy to slip into broad brush categorisations of others with different views based upon their supposed motivations. Them and us again.

This is particularly so if the discourses of power that are available are sovereign ones. In these the individual exercise of power over others based on subjectively determined interests is to be expected. Or alternatively, those who are seen to exercise power through the hierarchy of the organisation can be cast as imposing their role based wills, roles that are seen to represent fundamental divisions. Resistance to the imposition of power by managers leaves only roles as victims or emancipators again.

In what ways have I found the relational view of power an alternative?

The metaphor of an organisation I find conjured by the theories of power advocated by Foucault, Clegg and Callon is not one based on a simple division into good guys and bad guys where the bad guys always have power and the good guys always resist. The image is rather one of a dynamic field where local contests erupt. Each specific contest brings together different participants with differently (and dynamically) constructed identities and articulated interests. In each case the possibilities for negotiation and compromise are different and specific but in each case the outcomes will fold back into the field and reshape it. The effects of individual power struggles may be to reshape the field in ways that were not necessarily intended by the participants who saw their interest prevail in any particular
struggle. The reshaping may come to limit them in unintended ways. Every participant in the field has agency. In saying this I do not suggest that the contest is equal, but it is not a simple case of overarching power and inevitable obedience. Nothing is permanent. What may seem permanent at any time is a temporary outcome of the continuous renegotiation of power. Every element of the network is constantly in process.

I find this evocation of organisation provides different and useful points of reference for the analysis of power within the university that may enable the limitations of the sovereign view to be overcome.

Foucault’s (1980) methodological injunction to focus on the effects of power rather than the intentions of individual agents, provides a means and a reminder of the importance of achieving some distancing from the everyday interfaces of struggle, where the intentions or assumed intentions of participants are so strongly felt. A focus on effects may help me to overcome the intensity of my own investments in identity and specific organisational actions I see as desirable and avoid the ever so easy option of finding a permanent enemy elsewhere.

The understanding that the outcomes of power may be comprehensive systems that escape the intentions of those who hold the dominant position of power within the organisation is important too. While these systems might not be the result of anyone’s grand plan, we do all explain them to ourselves by creating narratives about them in our own terms. This understanding is a reminder that if, in making them intelligible to ourselves we insist on seeing every element as part of an intentional design of the dominant power, we are limiting the possibilities for negotiation or dialogue.

The focus on the local as a site of power in a fluid network is a reminder that a productive focus should be on the discovery of what matters locally, of the values that underpin the variety of specific, concrete positions and the space for negotiation between them. The possibility of spaces where values might be made visible and open to review is at least opened up.

The theories all provide a vocabulary to speak differently about power. The concepts that I have outlined in this review provide a means to home in on the critical sites within any change story. How are various agents seeking to secure strategic agency on their terms? Where are the obligatory passage points? How are various agents seeking to change the rules of practice to further their interests? What displacements are they endeavouring to secure as they problematize the situation, interest and enrol others to their view? What are
the effects of their tactics? When all participants judge the process of change a failure, where are the moments of critical failure?

Finally, these theories of power with their evocation of the all encompassing network of power relations remind me that there is no position outside of power, no place to sit and observe. We are all agents amongst other agents struggling to achieve outcomes that favour our own discursively constructed and articulated interests.

While these concepts provide a different and helpful language for speaking of the processes of change, it is still a very abstract language. The next chapter provides a concrete description, from the perspective of managers, of the systems and processes that have been developed within the ATN Universities through the period of managerial reform and that are intended to facilitate change practices that require the coordinated activities of the diverse staff the universities contain.
Chapter 6

CASE STUDY 2: POWER CIRCUITS IN THE MANAGERIALISED UNIVERSITY IN AUSTRALIA

In this chapter I provide my interpretation of the organisational context for change initiatives using the relational power concepts reviewed in the last chapter. In Clegg’s (1989a) terms it is an interpretation of the currently stabilised relations of power; how power is organised and intended to flow within the managerialised university. The description is based upon formal documents and some explanatory papers by senior managers that describe the visions, strategies, systems and processes in place. This focus on explicit statements is not proposed as a definitive description of the relations of power within these universities, as such formal statements can conceal the actual procedures of power. It is provided to give a framework for interpretation of the actual procedures as revealed in the ethnographic case study presented in the following chapter.

The interpretation uses Clegg’s (1989a) circuits of power model as an organising device. The key features of each of the circuits of episodic agency power, system integration and social integration are presented. Some overlap in the descriptions is inevitable as the circuits provide an analytical framework for the intermeshed activities of an organisation. As noted in the previous chapter, this framework incorporates the insights of Foucault regarding disciplinary techniques and of Callon concerning the micro tactics of power within a relational concept of power.

The formal documents were collected from each of the five universities during the first data collection phase in 1999 and 2000 and through access to each university’s website during 1999 or 2000. Documents provided by each university vary but include such formal artefacts as strategic plans, teaching and learning strategies or plans, performance reports, appraisal schemes, guidelines for grant applications for teaching innovations and service contract proformas.

Whilst the universities are not identical in terms of their practices of production, discipline and meaning making or in their structures, analysis of the documents reveals high levels of congruence. Marginson and Considine (2000) identified significant institutional isomorphism in their study of university governance and suggested the emergence of a new institutional type – the enterprise university. They note that isomorphism is not just a product of individual
institutional decisions but a response to the larger setting. In Australia, the governmental reforms outlined briefly in Chapter 3 and the forms of management response to them, they suggest, have left little scope for ‘idiosyncratic readings and diverse purposes’ (Ibid, p. 117). The universities in this study are, as has been noted, a sample with a high level of commonality with regard to their histories and their scope of educational provision. In recognition of this commonality they have formed themselves as a group, the Australian Technology Network (ATN) and work collaboratively in some domains of practice. High levels of isomorphism are to be expected. During interviews the senior managers in four of the five universities described the institutions they managed as corporate with the fifth university wishing to emphasise the participative practices it fosters within essentially corporate forms.

In the description the universities are referred to by shortened titles, usually their commonly used acronyms as follows: Curtin University of Technology as Curtin, Queensland University of Technology as QUT, RMIT University as RMIT, University of South Australia as UniSA and University of Technology Sydney as UTS.

Circuit of episodic agency power

Structures for the exercise of episodic agency power
Organisational structures and charts formally represent established structures for the authoritative exercise of episodic agency power, the institutionalisation of ‘power over’ subordinates within the universities. The descriptions or graphic representations for each university in this study take hierarchical, pyramidal forms with a Vice Chancellor at the operational summit. The Vice Chancellor is supported by an executive team, made up variously of Deputy Vice Chancellors, Pro Vice Chancellors and Directors, with specific responsibilities for research, international enterprises, teaching and learning, administration and finance in a variety of different configurations. Within this hierarchy, each of the five universities has established a position at the executive level with explicit responsibility and accountability for policy and implementation of teaching and learning in accordance with their corporate plan.

At the time the university websites were first accessed in 2000, at the next level of the hierarchy, three of the Universities were organised into traditional faculties containing a related grouping of disciplines or professions in departments and schools, headed by an academic dean with a background in one of the disciplines contained within them. The other two universities had restructured into a smaller number of organisational units called divisions containing a reorganised and amalgamated collection of departments and schools sometimes with little or no discipline or practice connection. A manager, named an Executive Dean in one university and Pro Vice Chancellor in the other, heads these Divisions. This leader’s discipline background can no longer be related to all of the wide range of disciplines
contained within each Division. Where such positions have been created, this loosening of discipline bonds and the inclusion of the role as part of the university executive team has strengthened the relationship between the management of academic disciplines and the Chancellery.

Access to the websites in 2004 revealed considerable restructuring and adjustment to the designation of executive functions in each University and one significant organisational restructure to the divisional model (called Portfolios in this case). These changes to line management arrangements in a period of just over three years suggest a level of instability in the relations currently found in these universities. The spread of the divisional model suggests a move towards delayering that reflects the enterprise discourse’s commitment to fewer levels of management and the alignment of all levels of senior management to the organisational vision through incorporation as part of the executive team.

**The role of the strategic plan**

The principal framework for the exercise of episodic agency power by staff occupying these line management positions is represented as flowing from the university Strategic Plan. Each university in this study has a strategic plan complete with vision, mission and a statement of various objectives. Strategic agency for the organisation as a whole is seen to reside in the achievement of this plan. Some system of performance measurement is also provided using predominantly quantitative performance indicators that are largely consistent across the institutions considered.

It is the responsibility of the executive team of senior leaders to generate this plan with the support of experts in variously named Planning Groups and advice from the governing Council (Gibson et al 1998) that approves the plan. The role of the Strategic Plan is clearly described as, ‘… the top level of a hierarchical planning framework’ (RMIT Strategic Plan 1999a) which is supported by three year plans for all key university functions which are themselves supported by operational plans and budgets. The importance of a unity of purpose within the organisation is made explicit in the plan as ‘… success depends on the commitment of all staff to the University’s mission, goal and values as enunciated in this Strategic Plan’ (Ibid, p. 5)

The division of responsibility for planning and implementation between senior leaders and staff in the universities is made clear in the available documents. In a letter to staff accompanying the strategic plan in one university, the Vice Chancellor comments,
The Strategic plan is the key plan of the University. It establishes the University's overall direction and shapes resource allocation. It outlines my vision for the University, and describes objectives and targets we will seek to achieve over the next five years. (Emphasis added)

As the responsibility for setting strategic directions and generating the plan rests with senior management, organisational strategic agency is aligned with the interests of managers in the sense described by Clegg (1989a). The responsibility for the different aspects of policy implementation rests with the line management and specific accountabilities are written into annual work plans.

**The implementation of the Teaching and Learning Strategy**

One key functional area for each university is teaching and learning. In the university from which the extracts taken above were taken, the section of the RMIT Teaching and Learning website (1999b) devoted to the implementation of teaching change depicts the cascade of nested plans typical of corporate strategic management. The Strategic Plan gives rise to the Education and Training Strategy, which gives rise to the Teaching and Learning Strategy for the University. This provides the framework for the Division’s Teaching and Learning Strategies and implementation plans for this level. This document, in turn, is intended to shape the formation of Course Team Teaching and Learning Implementation Plans and processes and Cycles of Improvement to achieve them. A process, committee or other mechanism for monitoring and review accompanies each level of planning. In a document from a different university titled *Teaching Improvement: Policy, Resource Management and Implementation* (UniSA 1999a) a similar cascade of plans is described. This document, however, adds information concerning the kind of responsibility at each level. ‘Policy formation and interpretation’ are the responsibility of the ‘Divisional Pro Vice Chancellor’. ‘Resource management and policy implementation’ belong to the Head of School and ‘implementation’ to ‘Course Coordinators’ and presumably the staff they manage who provide the teaching and learning in question. Ensuring congruence between plans is essential and is an explicit part of the planning requirements as the following makes clear.

Strategy 1: Ensure congruence between faculty and University teaching and learning plans.
Target 1.1: By the end of 1999, all faculties will have developed and operationalised faculty plans whose teaching and learning components are congruent with the objectives of the University’s Teaching and Learning Plan (QUT, 1998).

The emphasis in the formal documents on the cascade of aligned plans might be expected from the dominance of corporate strategic management in the analysis of senior managers interview transcripts presented in Chapter 4. There is also evidence of the permeation of the secondary market discourse presented there. In a similar way to the interviews, this
language is interwoven through the documents alongside the descriptions of corporate planning. A QUT monograph notes, ‘...the need to change the culture of the organisation to one which recognises and responds to the notion of the student as a valued customer or client’ and to ‘“shopping” activities relating to University courses and timetables’ (Gibson et al 1998, p. 26, 28). RMIT affirms its ‘absolute commitment to customer service’ and the ‘rapid growth of courseware’ that can be ‘delivered’ to these customers (RMIT Strategic Plan 1999a, p. 3). Curtin recognises the tensions the market focus introduces with a caution concerning the need to find ‘the balance between market and academic values in teaching and learning’ (Curtin Teaching and Learning Plan 1997, p. 4).

As noted in the previous chapter, Latour (1986) has argued that the appearance of power within formal hierarchies is determined by the extent to which commands are accepted and incorporated into the work projects of subordinates. This insight and the diversity of ways non-management staff construct their work identities presented in Chapter 4 suggest that the dynamics of the circuit of episodic agency power in practice are unlikely to follow the neat flows reflected in formal documents.

**Circuit of system integration**

**Systems of discipline**

The characteristics of production and discipline within universities prior to the managerialisation of the sector that resulted from the Commonwealth Government reforms of the 1980s were briefly outlined in Chapter 3. These traditional modes of organisation and governance supported forms of production that privileged individualism and allowed for high levels of academic autonomy in a largely private process of teaching production. Discipline, in the Foucauldian sense, was the responsibility of a team of discipline colleagues with their own interests and with no requirement to participate in university wide systems of measurement or review. The formal documents reviewed for this analysis reveal significant changes to both techniques of production and discipline that are primarily incorporated in quality assurance and improvement systems, processes for recognition and reward and through resource allocation to support teaching in ways that achieve ‘organisationally approved forms of creativity and productivity’ (Clegg 1989a, p. 92).

Explanations provided concerning the need for these changes to teaching production attribute them to reduced government funding and changed government expectations for ‘enhanced service together with greater efficiencies’, growing student diversity, ‘increased emphasis on the need for universities to connect with the community, the workplace and the professions’ and
growth in the potential for converged information and communication technologies to impact on diverse aspects of university activity; in particular on the teaching and learning environment and nature of academic work (Gibson et al 1998, p. 1).

**Quality assurance systems**

Each of the ATN universities has a comprehensive quality system that requires measurement and documentation of teaching and curriculum activities at the levels of degree program, subjects and individual staff. A process of reporting up the line management hierarchy from the local level through faculty/division to university level, creates a system of documented achievement against agreed strategically aligned projects and proposed actions to attend to perceived deficiencies revealed by the data designed to create a continuous cycle of planning, evaluation and review.

At the heart of each of these systems are centrally compiled statistics for every accredited program offered by the institution. Commonly used measures relate to demand for places, student retention, graduate outcomes in terms of employment or further study and the performance of the program on the nationally administered graduate evaluation survey, the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ). While the required frequency of evaluations varies, each system has requirements for student (and increasingly industry) evaluation of the individual subjects that make up each educational program and in some cases of the quality of teaching as well.

Data at the program level are frequently compiled as a comprehensive report and provided by the central office to the local academic manager for action. Evaluation data concerning individual teaching and subjects (or units) is, in some systems confidential to the teacher concerned and provided as an aid for improvement activities only. There has, however, been a steady move towards increasing the visibility of teaching evaluations by making these data available to managers to ensure improvement actions through systematic practices of planning and performance review. One University has made this an explicit goal. 'By 2000 a common core of SET and SEU results will be available to academic managers' (QUT Teaching and Learning Plan 2000, where SET stands for Student Evaluation of Teaching and SEU for Student Evaluation of Unit).

**Performance appraisal**

Such quality assurance systems are designed to increase the visibility of curriculum design and teaching at the school, department and program levels by ensuring that actions with regard to performance are, in fact, being taken and are in accordance with the strategic directions set by the university management. These program level systems are linked with individual performance appraisal and form part of what is intended to be, in Foucauldian
terms, a comprehensive disciplinary network that seeks to align individual performance with university goals through practices of normalisation and examination. One university notes,

Overall, QUT regards the implementation of sound performance management processes as a critical development in the establishment of a comprehensive strategic planning process in the organisation … The process reinforces the relevance of organisational goals to individual effort through linkages to academic outcomes such as probation, incremental advancement and personal promotion. (Gibson et al 1998, p. 19).

Whilst integrated performance management approaches are most often described, as in the above quotation, as the disciplinary complement of corporate strategic planning and, therefore, a critical link between planning and implementation, there is a shift towards the language of enterprise in some schemes.

The Performance Enhancement for Academic Staff (PEAS) scheme at the UTS, for example, matches each member of academic staff with a reviewer drawn from a designated panel of senior staff in the relevant faculty. The process of planning and review for individual improvement, against data concerning past efforts including student evaluation of teaching requires that the junior staff member take responsibility for his or her continuous improvement in ways that are linked with the university’s directions. The senior staff member is constructed as a mentor or coach rather than supervisor whose role is ‘helping the academic staff member set and achieve worthwhile and attainable priorities for enhancement’. The framing and language of the scheme resonate with the language of individual self actualisation and self perfection that are central to the enterprise discourse. In the words of one participant, documented in a report of a pilot study to promote full implementation of the scheme,

Occasionally, we need to stand back and take a look at the bigger picture: What have I accomplished and where am I going? Am I too focused in one area at the expense of another? How does my work fit with the University’s directions, and how can I enhance my work satisfaction and chances of promotion? (UTS Quality Unit Brochure 1997, p. 2)

While the scheme is described in the language of support, help, enhancement and personal achievement, it is none the less compulsory and generates individual staff files that record each plan and the results achieved against the plan. These files are monitored by the Dean and are accessible to managers from Head of School level upwards when making recommendations concerning promotion or study leave.
University wide systems of performance appraisal are a relatively recent extension of the use of performance management contracts at the executive levels. Executive schemes are frequently tied to salary bonuses, documented in performance plans with detailed measures that are systematically ‘drilled down’ into the work plans and performance contracts of more junior managers.

**Recognition and reward**
All ATN Universities have attempted to match their performance appraisal schemes with strengthened programs for recognition and reward as part of a portfolio of implementation approaches. The most common forms described in the documents were teaching and learning awards and increased recognition of teaching for academic promotion, where evidence of teaching quality in accordance with desired strategic directions and in institutionally acceptable forms can be provided.

Each university has some form of award. At UTS it is offered at the university level and is called the Excellence in Teaching Award, At RMIT, Quality Awards are offered annually that emphasise quality improvement aligned to strategic goals and the university was, at the time of data collection, establishing Distinguished Teaching Awards to complement them. Curtin offers a Vice Chancellors Excellence Award for excellence of any type including teaching. Some Divisions offer their own teaching excellence awards. QUT offers up to eight Outstanding Academic Contribution Awards in four categories of Teaching and Learning, Research, Academic Leadership and Professional Leadership as well as Distinguished Teaching Awards. In all cases, the criteria for awards require evidence of achievement against specified strategic directions for teaching and learning.

All the ATN universities have also made significant changes to promotion criteria to require evidence of high quality teaching, usually in the form of a teaching portfolio. Once again, the criteria for evidence stress continuous quality improvement, the use of student and industry evaluation data and the alignment of effort with university goals. Changes to promotion provide both recognition of achievement while also being a mechanism to direct effort towards institutionally preferred forms of teaching production.

**Systems of production**
According to Clegg (1989a) the circuit of system integration is the major conduit for organisational variation as changes can destabilise the sedimented relations of power by empowering new agencies and disempowering others. The strengthening of the disciplinary apparatus, through extensively documented quality systems and performance monitoring via
individual appraisal, has been matched by attempts to change traditional practices of teaching production.

Strategies to increase the flexibility of educational provision, through the use of information and communication technologies in particular and greater central direction concerning the abilities that graduates should exhibit to meet the increased expectations for workplace connectedness, are the two major directions cited in the documents for teaching change. The central determination of each of these directions limits the previously unfettered autonomy of program teams to determine their curriculum, program and subject content and modes of teaching and learning.

The strategic push for greater flexibility through the use of information and communication technologies has entailed the commitment of significant resources to the development of the necessary infrastructure for electronic delivery. Each ATN university has developed a system for delivery, generally a combination of locally developed software and proprietary software with the required hardware, regularly reviewed, upgraded and expanded to meet demand and changes in industry standards. The development of such systems has been accompanied by demands that academics use the authorised university wide system and pressure to justify the significant investments in the infrastructure by continuous growth in utilisation by staff and by increasing numbers of students.

The two principal mechanisms in use aimed at achieving the desired changes in teaching production are the central control of financial resources for teaching developments and the provision of support via central educational units that is tied to the achievement of changes aligned with strategic university purposes.

**Achieving changes in production through resource control**

The first of these mechanisms, the control of resources, takes two principal forms, strategic investment funds which distribute funding to all faculties or divisions on the basis of centrally approved project plans, or competitive grant schemes which operate similarly to research grant schemes. Once again the winning of funds requires the development of projects that will advance the university’s strategic objectives, the difference being that funding may be unequally distributed across educational units.

Each of the five universities has developed one or other of these mechanisms. The Learning Effectiveness Alliance Program (LEAP) (Curtin 1999) is a three year scheme introduced in 1999 which exemplifies the tying of funding to the achievement of agreed outcomes. A negotiated project development process between the DVC’s office, the central support group
and participating academic groups leads to the specification of detailed targets and specific measures for each project. These become the contractual basis for stringent monitoring. The majority of the money allocated to a project in this scheme is provided at the outset but there is a system of significant allocations in subsequent years and bonus allocations based on the achievement or exceeding of agreed targets. Formal reports against contracted milestones are required every two months and funding can be cut off at any time.

Central funding schemes account for significant resources. In 1999, the QUT Large Grant scheme allocated $700,000 and the Curtin LEAP program budgeted $1.8 million over three years. Of greater importance than the precise amounts, however, is the fact that these funds represent the only significant internal resources for teaching development. Any academic wishing to secure funding for this purpose must work through these systems and align their aims with those being strategically supported. In Clegg’s (1989a, p. 199) terms, these funding schemes are an ‘obligatory passage point’ in the circuit of system integration.

All funding schemes require extensive documentation and reporting and considerable efforts have been made in most universities to improve the quality of applications such that they meet the central strategic objectives in a way that will contribute to broad based cultural change. Documentation of results is expected to demonstrate that the funded innovation is embedded in the organisational unit and to show how it will be disseminated and spread more widely throughout the university.

Support through central teaching and learning groups

The second part of the disciplinary mechanisms designed to reshape teaching and learning production is the support provided from central academic development units. Each of the ATN universities has such a unit although many are in a state of transition. In all cases, the direction of this transition is towards Model B style units in Warren Piper’s (1994) terms, where the group’s purposes are defined in terms of change management designed to assist ‘the University in the achievement of its mission’ (UTS Centre for Learning and Teaching Brochure 1998). Conceptualisation of this work as change management introduces the need to invent and embed methods that will affect the practices of most, if not all staff. The dual responses to this need are the use of standardising approaches embedded in centrally developed guidelines and templates, which limit the autonomy of academic staff and the use of contracts for the distribution of services, which direct effort in strategically desired directions.

The UniSAnet provides an example of the template approach to change in production of teaching and learning designed to embed the use of information and communications
technologies in all subjects of the university. The system is database driven and uses a set of
templates that can be customised. The technical skill needed to develop the templates rests
with developers in the central group and academics are redefined as users of expert
products. The centrally developed templates provide a standardised and universal approach
to online teaching across the university and encourage staff ‘to pattern your teaching and
learning arrangements’ as a ‘repeated framework’ (UniSA Teaching Improvement Policy
1998a, p. 1). To encourage staff to use the system, the central group established a website
for each of the 6000 subjects in the University from centrally published data. Each staff
member was then expected to develop the site through the use of dialogue boxes and small
wizards using no more than basic word processing skills. The technology also allows the
development of any particular subject site to be centrally monitored.

The use of guidelines and templates for educational development is complemented by strict
adherence to a project management approach in situations in which central support has
been allocated. An area of teaching and learning support concerning the use of information
and communication technology at QUT emphasises its commitment to efficiency and quality
systems in the ‘products’ it develops.

The high quality products developed at SMILE are based on:

- The desire to use technology in appropriate areas for teaching and learning in an
efficient and cost effective manner, and
- The support and implementation of a quality system to ensure that clients’ quality
requirements are met. (QUT Software Multimedia and Internet Learning
Environments Brochure 1999)

In this system of production academic staff become internal customers or clients of experts
who produce courseware. These changes in production loosen academics’ autonomy over
the design, development and teaching of subjects and have the potential to reframe the
academic role as delivery of standardised courseware products.

The distribution of such services is generally organised on a contracting model with services
above the agreed level sometimes incurring charges. The UniSA has a particularly well-
developed approach which involves negotiating a Service Contract for support from the
central academic development group with each of the academic divisions. Only prespecified
areas of available service that match university strategic goals for teaching and learning are
available. In 1998, these focused upon, ‘using information technology in teaching and
learning’, ‘using templates to produce distance materials’, ‘implementing and evaluating
graduate capabilities’ and using computer based administrative systems (UniSA Flexible
Learning Centre Contract 1998b, p. 2).
The last of these areas makes reference to the extensive use of information and communication technologies for educational administrative purposes as well as directly in teaching production. The use of technology for both purposes has increased the visibility of all aspects of the teaching enterprise. All the ATN universities have established (or were in the process of establishing at the time of data collection) standardised subject guides to be provided to students containing a consistent set of information concerning the aims, objectives, processes and assessment for each subject taught. These subject guides are available via university intranets or the Internet, making the detailed content, pedagogical approach and assessment of each subject available to management at any level of the organisation. In one university, academic supervisors must review and authorise the release of the subject guide each semester and in so doing affirm that the subject has been improved by the relevant academic by acting upon student evaluations.

Similarly, with little effort administrators and supervisors can view course materials and communications in any information technology assisted subject. In at least one of the universities in this study, audits of electronically available courses for management review have been instituted. Reviews of subject guides and enrolment numbers have generated lists of subjects with what appears to be high levels of duplication or non viable numbers of students and have generated demands for reductions in subject numbers through standardisation using a product conception of courseware and learning objects.

These technologies have opened teaching to the possibility of unprecedented scrutiny and in combination with the systems of quality assurance and appraisal described earlier intend to create a comprehensive system of reports and files at each level of the organisation. The documentation of formal systems emphasises comprehensiveness and system wide application for these new techniques of production and discipline. In practice such systems rely on individual line managers and academics for their implementation. The problem of controlling interpretation associated with delegation of authority and in the enactment of the rules of practice described by Clegg (1989a) alongside the multiple ways of making such interpretations revealed in the interviews with academic staff presented in Chapter 4 suggest that these systems will be subject to a variety of forms of resistance that will make them less than comprehensive.

**Circuit of social integration**

*Management as a membership category*

This circuit refers to the ways in which membership and meaning are fixed within the organisation. The documents collected for this study demonstrate that by 2000 the recently
estabished category of university membership, that of managers, was a taken for granted part of the presentation of the university both to itself and to external audiences. A listing of the categories of university staff in the RMIT Strategic Plan, for example, identifies, ‘teaching, research, technical, management and administrative staff’ (1999a, p. 3) clearly signalling the establishment of management as a separate category of membership from administration.

On the occasions when a rationale for the new membership category of managers is provided, these posit the need for a ‘modern university’; a ‘university of the 21st century’ (Ibid, p. 8). One Deputy Vice Chancellor suggested in an address to senior leaders, that the university should not be restricted by ‘the rigidities of older university practices and policies’ (Coaldrake 1998, p. 3). Changes in the nature of the external environment and the threats these pose are cited by managers as the conditions that make management roles a necessity in the modern university. They suggest that a transformation from traditional models of universities is needed to secure the survival of the university itself as they face challenges from government deregulation, increased competition, reduced funding and changed community demands. The new university needs to be ‘more relevant, accountable, responsive, reputable, efficient and client focused’ (RMIT Strategic Plan 1999a, p. 8). Senior managers suggest that the required, new performance culture is not, contrary to academic criticisms, antithetical to the pursuit of traditional academic goals (Coaldrake 1998). In such an environment, a university that sticks with the tradition of the higher education sector by, ‘defining its direction as the sum of the patterns formed by the more or less random walks of individual academics’ (Ibid, p. 10) is likely to fail. Increased management is proposed as the inevitable outcome of such a change in circumstances and need and one that is widely acknowledged.

We have come a long way from the days when university non-academic work was simply central administration, and when, in the words of a senior academic from the University of Melbourne, central administration used to be “… a secondary function properly carried out by the Vice-Chancellor, the Registrar, some interested Professors on a part-time basis and some submissive clerks of various grades.” We should not pretend that there is no distinction between academic and non-academic work (Ibid, p. 6)

The role of senior managers in setting the strategic vision and plans described under the circuit of episodic agency power places them in a position where in their own terms they sometimes represent themselves as being identical to ‘the university’ with academic staff posited as its ‘other’. The following statement to senior management staff from the Deputy Vice Chancellor concerning the move to flexible delivery attests to this division between management and staff and the identification of senior management as ‘the university’.
It is apparent that some staff feel pressured to move into flexible delivery without understanding, or perhaps really believing, the university’s rationale for this shift. I accept that we need to communicate more clearly why we wish to promote flexible delivery (Ibid, p. 5).

**The redefinition of academic membership**

The predominant focus in strategic documents concerning academic staff membership of the organisation is on the need for clearly defined responsibilities and accountabilities’ (RMIT 1999a, p. 3) within a system of workforce planning and performance management. Some movement away from the previous autonomous role of academics in teaching is signalled in the documents by references that academic staff should look to ‘external reference points about their teaching’ and through the push for ‘course standards to be assured through externally audited quality processes’ (Ibid, p. 8). Changes to the category of academic membership include increased administration, the use of ‘resource based teaching’, the ‘use of the data warehouse and posting of course and unit outlines and other material’ as a ‘normal’ part of academic teaching work (Coaldrake 1998, p. 6). The expectations on academic staff are,

… that they will teach, research, serve on committees, become involved in academic administration (through course, subject or unit coordination) assess student work, set examinations, evaluate and assess their own work, become involved in community service and professional leadership, and find time to develop innovative approaches to their teaching and learning (Coaldrake, 1998, p. 5)

There is some recognition that this range of tasks may be stretching the capacity of academics and this concern has contributed to some speculation concerning the possible development of more specialised academic roles. The documents suggest that while the nature of academic work has changed and is acknowledged to have done so, further change is foreshadowed. Especially strong disciplinary cultures are seen to be problematic for securing further changes where they cut across institution wide strategies.

Academic life has been likened to that of tribes, with linguistic barriers, insularity and border skirmishes. To some extent it is inevitable and probably desirable that academics identify strongly with their disciplines, and seek to defend and extend them. However, we should not lose sight of the fact that the real world is multidisciplinary. And we have a common interest in the strength and viability of all areas of the university (Ibid, p. 7).

**Meaning in teaching and learning**

The key documents in understanding attempts to fix meaning with regard to teaching and learning are the specific university level strategies and plans that address teaching. Each of the five universities in the ATN has a teaching and learning strategy or plan. These have
emerged relatively recently with the earliest versions produced in 1995. The displacement of academics from the central role in setting directions for the content and mode of delivery of teaching is made clear in these documents.

The Teaching and Learning Strategy is the document which drives the nature of the educational experiences RMIT seeks to embed in its programs. It is fundamental to the way RMIT goes about its business (RMIT 1998, unnumbered).

Each of these strategies or plans uses the language of objectives, strategies, operational priorities, targets and performance indicators to set out comprehensive definitions of desirable teaching practices and programs of development. The RMIT strategy for 1998-2000 for example, contains 7 objectives, 17 operational priorities, 41 sub-strategies and 51 performance indicators.

Directions for teaching and learning specified in the strategies converge on two major themes; the development of graduate abilities and more flexible delivery of education using information and communication technologies appropriately and cost effectively. Other objectives address the alignment of learning aims, learning experiences and assessment and the pursuit of quality expressed in terms of ‘student centredness’, cyclic quality improvement practices and scholarship. The second of the two major objectives addresses the mode of delivery of teaching, the first addresses the purposes of teaching by specifying at university and faculty levels the appropriate outcomes for all graduates. The QUT Teaching and Learning Plan (2000, unnumbered) provides a clear example.

QUT has defined generic and discipline-specific attributes of its graduates … A key challenge for the future will be to integrate these into curricula, to design flexible and effective learning experiences, and to ensure appropriate assessment of attributes.

The attempt to specify graduate capabilities at an overarching level necessarily means that these specifications are broad. Two examples from the UniSA listing of graduate qualities illustrate this point (UniSA Teaching and Learning Framework, 1999c).

A graduate of the University of South Australia;
- Is an effective problem solver; capable of applying logical, critical, and creative thinking to a range of problems;
- Communicates effectively in professional practice as a member of the community (Single page).
This example illustrates one dilemma encountered in the use of strategies in this form; the difficulty of controlling interpretation at the local level. As a Deputy Vice Chancellor noted, one mechanism to improve the communication of meaning,

… might be the revision of the University’s Teaching and Learning Plan, but it is hard to communicate a rationale via a list of objectives, strategies and targets; it is equally hard to explain detail in a university-level plan without becoming overly involved in operational matters (Coaldrake 1998, p. 5).

A variety of attempts has been made to clarify intended meanings. In one iteration of its Teaching and Learning Plan, QUT (1998) produced a version with explanatory notes, although these gave more emphasis to explaining the responsibilities of the faculties than the concepts utilised in the plan. Another attempt was the production of a diagram at UniSA (1999c), known colloquially as ‘the football’, designed to communicate the key messages of the teaching and learning strategy to all staff.

The problem of creating an agreed understanding of meaning in relation to teaching and learning has given rise to a novel staffing approach within the ATN universities. This is the creation of specific roles defined very broadly as supporting innovation and improvement by working with staff in teaching and learning at the faculty or divisional level. They go by a variety of names, Assistant or Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning) at QUT, Director of Teaching Quality at RMIT, Dean (Teaching and Learning) at UniSA and Associate Dean at UTS. At the time of data collection, Curtin had not officially instituted the position, however, an appointment had, nonetheless, been made in one of the divisions. These positions are intended to provide bridges between the central corporate strategy, the faculty or divisional strategy and its implementation. One position description (RMIT Position Description 1998a, unnumbered) sets out the tasks as follows.

i. promoting the development of the University Teaching and Learning Strategy;
ii. the ongoing development of the Faculty Teaching and Learning Strategy;
iii. the effective implementation of the Faculty Teaching and Learning Strategy;
iv. maintaining an involvement in teaching and other academic activities within the Faculty.

Staff occupying these roles provide a critical interpretive link between the official, and necessarily broadly worded strategy document and academic staff. While the incumbents in these positions have no line management authority and work through persuasion to achieve changes that conform to the university teaching and learning strategy, their responsibility for the development and implementation of strategy establishes them as a potential alternate circuit to line management where teaching change is concerned. Staff in these roles are
supervised by the Deans or Pro Vice Chancellors within their faculties or divisions but their ability to interpret the university level plans in line with senior management intent is supported by extensive involvement in university level activities. These include facilitating university wide project teams, chairing working parties and sub committees, helping to organise dissemination events, presenting faculty or division implementation plans and reporting on achievements. All this is done under the guidance of the central PVC (Teaching and Learning) or equivalent. Staff in these roles represent their organisational unit on the university level Teaching and Learning Committee which is a key mechanism for fixing meanings in the five ATN universities.

The university level teaching committees are established as a sub committee of the Academic Board and are chaired by the senior manager with responsibility for teaching and learning. Additional committees are established at the Faculty / Division level and, in many instances, at the School level as well to match the cascade of plans at these levels. Teaching and Learning Strategy Committee roles include the construction and transmission of authorised interpretations of the meaning of the strategy, monitoring of implementation and reporting to the Academic Board. During the time of data collection they were addressing major university wide teaching and learning issues such as service teaching, duplication of subjects, credit point and elective policies, assessment and plagiarism guidelines etc. Through this work the committees have a role in the development of policies and establishment of the formal and informal ‘rules’ for teaching within each university.

In addition to these committees, each university has another set of committees or processes that recommend the approval or not of new degree programs and the amendment or discontinuance of existing ones, in accordance with codified rules. These rules provide a further means to stabilise specific interpretations of meaning. In RMIT, for example, the templates provided to academic staff for the development of new programs provide explanatory notes on the meaning of concepts and the required evidence for demonstrating conformity with these concepts. While the Teaching and Learning Committees provide the dominant venue for the interpretation, fixing and transmission of meanings, the committees or processes that recommend approval of programs act as obligatory passage points for changes to the portfolio of programs available in each university. They do so by interpreting and applying the rules so that the particular features deemed desirable for new or revised programs are incorporated.

One approach widely deployed in all the universities for the establishment of meaning for teaching is forums and workshops of various kinds. These include compulsory or non compulsory induction for new staff, instructional workshops on aspects of teaching practice
and showcase events where staff present teaching case studies from practice. All these forums are used to promote and recognise practices that are aligned with the university’s strategic directions. Staff who have received grants are usually required to present their work as part of attempts to spread desirable practices.

* * *

**Summary and reflection**

From the formal documents reviewed, the overall impression is of organisations made orderly through adherence to the practices of corporate strategic management. The dominant image is of the neat cascade of detailed plans flowing from the strategic plan, supported by committees and practices for monitoring and performance review. The language of the documents also reveals the pervasive influence of the enterprise discourse when the purposes and production of universities are described in terms of markets, products, courseware, customers and clients. This simultaneous presence of both business discourses is consistent with the fluid movement between them observed in senior managers interviews presented in Chapter 4. The systems of discipline and production described above are, therefore, simultaneously constructed as part of the management of performance in conformance with the strategic plan and as team based practices for self improvement, based on a philosophy of responsiveness to the increasingly differentiated customer. In the formally described organisation, the hierarchy of line management is required to create and demonstrate compliance with the strategic plan but there is the parallel creation of internal markets and the redefinition of relations as those of internal supplier and client, for example, the distribution of central staff support.

Within this environment, for senior managers to achieve organisational strategic agency on their terms, obligatory passage points have been established through senior management control of the distribution of funds for forms of teaching development approved by them, determination of how and where expert development support might be used and the determination of acceptable degree and subject designs through the application of rules for approval.

While the dominant image is of an orderly world with strategic directions flowing from the top, the review of power in Chapter 5 and the presentation of the variety of discursively constructed work identities presented in Chapter 4 suggest that under this apparent order other constituencies will be seeking to interpret meaning and establish agency on their own terms.

While the formal description of an orderly world contained by comprehensive systems of production and discipline clearly cannot be taken as the only description of the organisation,
it cannot be completely discounted either. The ability of senior management to control key obligatory passage points and establish rules of practice mean that struggles for agency must be conducted in these terms.

The circuits of power described here form a network though which power flows. As Clegg (1989a) suggests, in any particular site, at a particular time, the balance between sources of integration and disintegration can only be understood through a detailed analysis of the everyday workings of power relations.

In the next chapter I present such an analysis of the everyday workings of power for a particular teaching change project as various discursively constituted agencies struggle to secure agency on their own terms and resist the achievement of strategic agency by others.
This chapter presents the ethnographic case study of a directed change project in one of the ATN Universities. This case study was undertaken to reveal the dynamics of change practices against the static background of my interpretation of the intended functioning of the organisation presented in the previous chapter and the categories of discursive work identity presented in Chapter 4. My focus is on the forms of interaction, the power relations, that develop during the project, the ways in which the different discursive worlds of the participants collide and the positive or negative outcomes that result from such collisions.

The activity at the heart of this ethnography is the design of a new degree program that is required to address the two key themes of the Teaching and Learning Plan of the university in which it is located. In this representation the university is named UTech and the degree program being developed is referred to as the Bachelor of Professional Studies (BPS).

In Chapter 2, I described the ethical issues that led to my development of the particular type of ethnographic representation presented here. The text that follows is a form of fictional narrative in six sections concluded with a summary of the overall development. The first section details the nature of the specific change project with reference to the formal documents of UTech and describes the way in which the project was organised in relation to the three circuits of power. The remaining five sections relate the stages of the change project, with each stage presented in three parts. The first part relates the key events of that stage as identified by the participants. This is followed by a fictional conversation between the participants concerning that stage where the text of the conversation is constructed using interview excerpts and dialogue recorded verbatim in field notes. The stage is completed with an analysis of its tactics and effects using concepts of discourse and power. This section is indented to clearly demarcate it from the presentation of data in the fictional conversations.

The premise for the fictional conversations is a gathering for lunch at the completion of the project involving all of the participating staff who agreed to and were, in fact, interviewed individually. Staff who declined to be interviewed do not participate in these conversations.
but their contributions are recalled by others as they review the events of the project and explain to each other the sense they have made of their experiences.

The presentation of the ethnography is followed by my interpretation of the story in terms of discourses of work identity and power and the implications of this interpretation for practice.

**Section 1 - The project context and organisation**

The directed teaching change studied was one considered to be of strategic significance by UTech. The parameters for the project were established in two key documents, the UTech Teaching and Learning Strategy and a report on the development of generic graduate capability based curricula prepared by an ATN educational team (Bowden et al 2000) for the Australian Commonwealth Government.

The Teaching and Learning Strategy set two key directions for teaching innovation. All new or renewed degree programs were to use a capability based approach to curriculum and utilise online technologies so that they might be ‘accessible by students whether on or off campus’ both within Australia and offshore (UTech Teaching and Learning Strategy, p. 14). UTech documents contained no further detail concerning what might constitute acceptable forms of flexible delivery, however, a model being developed in a range of offshore locations combined online resources with face to face learning support provided by local teaching staff.

The ATN report on generic graduate capabilities established a particular framework for understanding this concept and for curriculum development processes. These capabilities (or attributes) were described in the report as follows.

Graduate attributes are the qualities, skills and understandings a university community agrees its students should develop during their time with the institution. These attributes include, but go beyond, the disciplinary expertise or technical knowledge that has traditionally formed the core of most university courses. They are qualities that also prepare graduates as agents for social good in an unknown future. In this report those attributes that go beyond the disciplinary expertise or technical knowledge are called *generic capabilities*. (Bowden et al, p. iii)

Key to the concept of capability being promoted was the idea that the team of staff who developed any degree would reach agreement, through debate, concerning the profile of capability that all graduates should possess. The degree would then be designed to achieve these agreed capabilities through an integrated curriculum where ‘objectives, learning experiences and assessment and feedback strategies … are linked in an explicit, coherent and meaningful way’ (Ibid, p. 10).
The implementation approach for these strategies required that each Division within the University select a particular degree program, which had the potential to open new educational markets for the University, to be renewed or developed as a ‘Flagship’ program. It was to be offered both within Australia and in a variety of offshore locations.

In the Division of Professional Studies, senior managers decided that improvements in the market position of Professional Studies education would best be achieved by developing a new ‘generic’ degree as a basis for subsequent specialisation. This degree required contributions from five Schools within the Division who would need to work collaboratively in the design and delivery of the degree; a very different practice from the School based control of specialist Professional Studies programs. The development was established as a special strategic initiative with some funding available to support the project, with expenditure approved by the Dean of the Division.

The approval of new degree programs at UTech involves two separate submissions to a University committee after recommendations from the internal Division committee and the Division Board. The first stage documentation is required to describe the business and educational logic underpinning the initiative and outline the proposed design in general terms. The second stage is required to expand on the initial advice and give details of all aspects of the development including the curriculum, subject designs and delivery approach. This proposal must additionally be approved by a Program Advisory Committee consisting of a majority of external representatives drawn from relevant industries and academic institutions before proceeding through UTech’s committees. The responsibilities of members of this committee are to review the documentation, attend a single meeting to provide feedback, and when satisfied, recommend the degree for approval.

Some of the funding for the project was used to engage a young academic from one of the participating Schools as Project Leader for the development. He had a discipline background in education in addition to his Professional Studies expertise and experience with educational development projects. For this project he reported directly to the Dean. The remainder of the design team consisted of a representative from each of the five Schools involved, a senior expert in capability based curriculum design from the UTech central Teaching and Learning Support Group who had strong links to the senior management of UTech through his role and me in my capacity as the Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning) for the Division.

In this representation of the initiative, the participants are named as follows.

**Design Team members**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project Leader</td>
<td>David</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Central T & Learning Support Group
representative Frank
Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning) Robyn
School 1 representative Ian
School 2 representative Gary
School 3 representative Helen
School 4 representative Howard
School 5 representative Andy

Replacement Design Team members
School 2 representative Hillary
School 5 representative Nola

Division Line Management
Dean Brian
Head of School 1 Elaine
Head of School 2 Ben
Head of School 3 Phillip
Head of School 4 Gordon
Head of School 5 Kevin

*     *     *

Stage 1 - Initial problematizations

Overview of activities
June 23 to August 28

This stage was initiated by a Division wide event to launch the project, which signified the importance of the initiative. The event was well attended with all Heads of School and the majority of the Program Leaders for the Division’s specialist degrees, the central educational specialist and me in attendance. The Dean introduced the project and emphasised both its strategic importance as a key implementation plank for the Teaching and Learning Strategy and its financial importance in expanding markets for the Division’s degree programs, particularly offshore. The senior central teaching and learning expert explained the key features of a capability based curriculum approach and the significance of the University’s commitment to it in terms of preparing graduates to practice effectively in an unpredictable future.

During a five week period following the launch, each of the five Schools involved with the project nominated a representative for the design team and a Project Leader was appointed. The first two workshops of the design team were held, commencing a series of three hour, fortnightly workshops that were held throughout the project.
At the first of these workshops, the Project leader attempted to establish an approach to the design problem at the heart of the project, which he described as a ‘wicked problem’ with multiple and ambiguous desired outcomes. He proposed an approach that would involve building a stakeholder network of all the organisations and individuals who would provide inputs to the degree both from within and external to UTech. These would be those who controlled resources of any type necessary to design or deliver the new degree and those who had an interest in the graduates as outputs from the degree. He stressed the desirability of an interactive, participative, broad based process of enquiry, which he described as an action research approach, to develop something new rather than what he termed a reactive and top down approach where the team would passively accept direction and stick with familiar forms of program design.

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Stage 1 – conversation revealing problematizations

Robyn, Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning): ‘It’s lovely to have you all here for lunch. I know it’s a while since we last met to put the final touches to the Bachelor of Professional Studies approval document but I have received a memo from the Chair of the UTech approval committee that I thought you might like to hear. The memo says, “The committee members were unanimously enthusiastic in their praise for the program. It is one of the best documents we’ve seen and should be used as an exemplar”. It goes on to say that the document “provides a fertile guide for UTech and the design team should be complimented on what they have achieved with this inspiring work.” So there you are. I hope you feel complimented. I thought it was time that we celebrated or commiserated after close to a year of hard work on the project.’

Nola, design team member School 5: ‘Well that’s great but let me ask you this. Is the design actually being realised on the ground? I’m totally confident it is not.’

Kevin, Head of School 5: ‘It’s more than that Nola. I think the whole thing has left a really bitter taste. I think for everybody. So I regard it as probably a failure in many ways. Even if the final product was well received, the amount of energy and heartburn that was created, the process wasn’t right. And I think those of us looking back at it have a lot of difficulty thinking positive thoughts about the experience.’

Helen, design team member School 3: ‘I’ve heard everybody’s broken hearts, you know, and I go, “It just didn’t have to be like this.”’

Robyn, Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning): ‘So what happened? It seemed to me that it started out with so much promise. I thought initially that there was a lot of interest in getting
Frank, central T&L support: ‘I agree Robyn. I know that the people at the launch event saw the capability agenda as coming from the top but I thought we came up with a very strong argument about why it should be seductive for academic staff. I remember talking about the benefits because it’s likely to get students more engaged, because it’s likely to get the learning that’s going on directed towards the reasons that students have chosen to study that particular field and the purpose is explicitly about them becoming viable actors in the field of the future. It’s all tangible and able to be explained to students directly. And I thought there was quite a lot of openness to the ideas. Enthusiasm might be taking it a bit far but there was interest in this thing progressing and a commitment from each of the schools about having an involvement. And I must say I was surprised in the early meetings to find there were people there who weren’t just not too interested in what they were going to be doing but they were actually opposed to the idea of doing it, and were trying to stop it happening.’

Andy, replaced design team member School 5: ‘Hang on a minute Frank. From my point of view the whole project was very confusing because there were so many conflicting signals and different agendas and whatnot. On the one hand I was getting the signal, possibly from the Office of the Dean that this was very much, how does one say, a cheap and nasty development. You do it, you do it quick, you get it done. One the other hand, there was the message that this was a wonderful, exciting new adventure and we were boldly going where no academic had previously gone. I found the whole thing very difficult. I’m not much of an educationalist, so a lot of the language was somewhat foreign to me. My mindset is that I cannot help but start with content. Even having been through this experience, if I were to design a new degree tomorrow I would still start with a foundation of discipline content and then add skills and whatnot. I think we should just have pulled some existing subjects off the shelf, put them together in some coherent sequence and be done with it.’

Kevin, Head of School 5: ‘Yes, I agree. If you scratch any Professional Studies academic here, they really do believe in a knowledge of the literature as the base, that there are core knowledge and skills that are fundamental to developing their students and they couldn’t surrender that need for that being at the heart of this or any other program they designed. On the other point, I think we had a confusion of objectives. Now all these objectives swirled around at different times and work just became impossible because you would think you were doing the right thing and then go to another meeting a month hence and you’d find that
the objective had shifted on you. I think everybody felt that. I mean take the financial model. I believe almost all our experience was negated. We were saying, “Stop, this is not going to fly”, you know? “Your teaching model is wrong, your financial model is complete rubbish.” I think our people felt, “Why didn’t the University come to us? We’re the only people in UTech with real credibility in developing offshore programs.” Because of some of the higher level decisions that were made about how this should be done, people just dismissed it as stupid, and to be frank, they were probably right.’

David, Project Leader: ‘From my perspective, the overwhelming frustration in terms of not so much the design of the project but the subsequent implementation was very much around the environment, the Division environment, where there really wasn’t the support from the Dean or from you Kevin and the other Heads of School. You weren’t as involved as you could have been. There was a real lack of clarity around direction and while we explicitly referenced the UTech Teaching and Learning Strategy, there was clearly a mismatch between that policy and that strategy and what the Dean intended for the program. And that was really frustrating because I came to the project because the opportunity to be involved with the Bachelor of Professional Studies excited me because it was a different educational model, and one that seemed to me to fit with my values, the way that I conceptualised learning.’

‘There were obviously very different perspectives from the different Schools but in terms of these multiple discourses; I actually see that as a strength rather than as a problem. I think that if there’s one thing that operating in a knowledge intensive environment tells us, it’s that diversity is what you require. We tried to set this up as action research so we could use that diversity in sustainable ways because people can use the discourses as a mechanism for avoiding engaging with others. I think there were some grounding principles about recognising the interdependency rather than independence of these discourses.’

‘The idea of the stakeholder conference was explicitly designed to address the issue of the relationship between the program and the other stakeholders who were in a position to influence the outcome. It was something I had in my head at the very beginning of the project. I mentioned it at the first meeting to a mixed reception because I thought engaging with and inviting movement from outside to inside in a planning and decision making event was needed, but it was something that people found very discomforting and not all were keen about it. Because you know, many people wish to preserve their discourse because that’s what makes them special and gives them prestige. I think relatively few people understand what action research really means for the way a team works, or the Division
might work, for the way the senior management team within the Vice Chancellor’s office might work.’

Howard, design team member School 4:
‘I understand what you’re saying David but my feeling is that that was an ideal approach but perhaps not the best approach and certainly not the way we would have handled this in the School. As you know we’ve worked very productively with the capability agenda in my School but when you’re thinking about business reengineering you’ve got to accept that it’s a top down process. It’s got to be top down. It probably would have been much clearer in the beginning if the guidelines had said, “This is the way it’s going to be, do it.”’

Hillary, design team member, School 2: ‘Howard, I understand your feeling that the process wasn’t defined clearly enough and that was causing people quite a lot of angst, but I was saying right from the start that what we were doing functionally was too complex for a top down approach. It’s got to come from the other direction. Working on the Bachelor of Professional Studies was my introduction to my awareness of how vital collaboration is.

‘I actually saw the capabilities as a huge opportunity to move into what I consider important about education. It allowed us to overcome that division between, well this is the content and this is what is really valuable for them to go through the rest of their lives and to work.’

Nola, design team member, School 5: ‘Yes that’s what excited me too. We were really looking at the possibility of developing capabilities rather than developing skills. And to me that was just such a conceptual change to what we’d been doing in the past that I left my first meeting after I replaced Andy on an incredible high. That was followed by the notion that there were saboteurs at that meeting. I think it is relatively easy for people to talk about how they are meeting University objectives without necessarily demonstrating that in outcomes. You know, emphasise aspects of what you’re doing so that they align with the University’s stated objectives, and kind of ignore other bits. I think when Gary spat the dummy and left, it was because he didn’t like the idea that we would pool and share ideas and brainstorm. I remember him saying that this was all a top down fad and that it was unnecessary as he and other academics knew what needed to be in their programs and already built skills into their subjects.’

Helen, design team member, School 3: ‘I probably took a more bigger picture perspective of the project, particularly in the early phases I think, around the general design philosophy when we were talking a lot about capabilities, what that actually meant. Cos’ I thought, again philosophically, you know, that principles of getting people together in a multi-disciplinary
Ian, design team member, School 1: ‘Well I'm a bit with Helen. I thought the idea of a multidisciplinary process was quite good because we had a mix of people and I thought we were willing to talk across the boundaries and try to pick up the language frameworks of others and see where we could get some common terminology to operate from.’

Andy, replaced design team member, School 5: ‘I want to go back to Helen’s point. I think you’re talking about me Helen. I did think initially the Bachelor of Professional Studies was going to consist of existing subjects. Of course one couldn’t criticise the aims and objectives of what people wanted to do with the generic degree, it’d be almost like criticising motherhood. But whether it was going to be practical, viable was my big concern. And I think at one stage my argument was that the offshore is very much a totally different market and that we cannot actually have the same product. I don’t think we could ever truly resolve it, because I think everyone who went and spoke to higher authorities came back with a different story depending on who they were.

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Stage 1 – The interpretation of initial problematizations

The Bachelor of Professional Studies project was set up as a special initiative outside the normal practices of episodic agency power and the accepted hierarchy of delegated authority within the Division, from the Dean through the Heads of School and Program Leaders to academic staff. The appointment of a Project Leader directly supervised and accountable to the Dean but working with staff from a range of schools effectively removed the Heads of School from direct participation and limited their ability to directly control the participation of their staff representatives within the design team. The Dean delegated the responsibility for the achievement of the generic degree to the Project Leader, David, but at the early stage of the project it was not clear how he intended to control David’s discretion in the exercise of this delegation. The risks were considerable as this was a new delegate working within a new and as yet undefined terrain, for which there were no established routines.
Within this context, the early stage of the project revealed the first tactical moves in the negotiation of the terms of the contract for this work.

During the early stages of the project, radically different problematizations of the project emerged. While there were many subtle variations of interpretation, two major ways of framing the task dominated, each of which explicitly referenced the UTech Teaching and Learning Strategy as its point of legitimacy.

One problematization drew on and alternated between the two major business discourses within the UTech Strategy. One thread emphasised the cost effective, efficient and well-managed provision of education through managerial processes reflecting the discourse of corporate strategic management and the other emphasised the need to provide tailored and marketable educational products. This was the primary framing of the task provided by the Dean at the launch event and in the above conversation, it was advanced by Kevin as a representative of the Heads of School and attracted support from some of the design team academics. These academics advocated the legitimacy of past degree design practices that restricted design to the selection of subjects from the current catalogue as consistent with this problematization. Such past approaches privileged the exclusive resource these academics controlled; their discipline knowledge.

Such a problematization sought to place the Heads of School in alliance with their representatives on the design team as the obligatory passage point for the development. It did so by privileging the Heads of School line management authority over program budgets and their responsibility for the maintenance of academic credibility, both within the University and with external employers and professionals, through the determination of program content from within the existing discipline specific specialised Schools. The appeal of this position to the academic staff within the design team was predicated on their maintenance of their autonomy in the design and delivery of discipline based programs and subjects. The design team leadership, in such a conception of the project, would simply become assistants in the negotiation of the University rules for degree approval through the assembly of the required documentation.

The second problematization drew upon the educational discourse of capability as described in the ATN report. By developing this problematization, I and the other leaders of the design team sought to position ourselves as the obligatory passage point by making the resource we controlled, as the only staff with the necessary educational expertise to design a capability based curriculum, indispensable to the
project. Initial attempts to attract academic staff in the design team to this position were based upon appeals to their interest in the employment outcomes of graduates and to their professional investments in themselves as scholars as the work, tackled in this way, was described as a form of research. Such appeals were designed to negate their anticipated desire to retain individual academic autonomy over content and pedagogy in their discipline subjects and to reassure Heads of School of the rigour of the proposed approach.

A key early tactic in support of this problematization was the proposal of a stakeholder conference that would introduce UTech internal stakeholders and external stakeholders, principally employers and representatives of professional bodies, into the design process. The leaders of the design team anticipated that employers and professional studies practitioners would be interested in immediately employable graduates with a range of capabilities beyond technical mastery. Their acceptance of this problematization was taken to be likely and their enrolment provided a means to overcome some of the obstacles presented by academics and line management. This tactic had the potential to redevelop the usual practices of program design where the role of external parties was one of review, and to reinterpret the rules of practice such that they might involve people external to the Division in discussion and decision making during the process of design.

The academics within the design team responded to these two distinct problematizations in different ways and advocated different approaches to undertaking the project, which reflect their particular discursive positioning.

In terms of the categorisation of approach developed in Chapter 4, Frank, David and I were all actively working as harmonisers. The major tactic in seeking to bridge between the UTech Teaching and Learning Strategy initiatives and the design team was to position the initiative as a work of scholarship, firmly located within the academic tradition of inquiry. It was intended that this research would bring together the discourse of education we controlled with the discourses of the disciplines that academics controlled. The integrated, team based nature of a capability based curriculum and the use of online technologies in its deployment, however, both had the potential to increase the visibility of individual academic work and to reduce individual control of the independent subjects each academic ‘owned’.

The statements made by Andy and Gary in the conversation reflect their dismissiveness of management as inept and intrusive and suggest that they defined their roles as policy reconstructionists seeking ways to appear to respond to the
UTech strategic initiative while maintaining local control and a high level of professional academic autonomy. Andy in particular drew upon a management discourse of financial viability to achieve this end. Their continued conflation of capability and skills denied the validity of the educational discourse upon which David, Frank and my authority was based.

The other members of the design team were more open to the problematization of the design team leaders and were prepared to admit to the possibility of value in the initiative. The acknowledgment that previously useful work had been done under the rubric of a central interest in capability, while within a corporate strategic management framing of the way UTech should work, suggested that Howard was most likely positioned as a swimmer able to pursue local projects effectively within a broad policy framework. Openness to interdisciplinary processes from Helen, Nola and Hillary suggested that positions as swimmers or intermediaries were most likely.

The progress of the different problematizations is followed in the next section as the various participants sought to interest others in their definitions of roles and processes. Enrolment of the Dean became critical.

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Stage 2 - Alliance anyone? Attempts at interessement

Overview of activities

August 29 to September 27

This stage was characterised by a variety of attempts by different constituencies to interest others in the roles they would need to accept for particular problematizations to prevail.

From the perspective of the design team leadership, a key aim was to secure the support of the Dean for the stakeholder conference. A detailed submission was prepared for a significant two-day event to which a range of employers and representatives from professional bodies from each of the discipline areas would be invited in addition to student and alumni participants. The participation of senior leaders from the UTech Chancellery and from other academic Divisions was also suggested. The submission emphasised the value of the proposed approach in terms of the marketability of the Division's degrees and the value of employer input into determining capabilities. A significant amount of funding was requested to host the event in an external location and for facilitation by two external consultants who were aligned to the view being advocated by the design team leaders. The Dean's initial response was, 'This seems like a great idea.'

In parallel to the proposal to the Dean, the regular design team workshops continued. A project website was established and the project leader used this to post information as he
attempted to clarify, with the Dean and with other senior UTech staff, concerns about the financial viability, practicality and mode of delivery that had been raised by design team members. The Dean agreed to write an introduction to the project website that would assist with this clarification. At this stage there was little discussion of mode of delivery which was taken to be mixed mode and the questions of viability remained unresolved. When the design team was advised of the Dean’s support for the stakeholder conference, Andy removed himself from the team and was replaced by Nola.

The design team commenced a study of the ATN capability report and some additional papers suggested by Frank from the central support group. This immersion in the literature concerning capability and workshops, where each School representative contributed their ideas, resulted in the generation of an initial capability profile for graduates from the Bachelor of Professional Studies. Two different initial proposals were made for the structural principles upon which the degree should be developed, one by me and the other by Gary. Gary’s design was based upon the amalgamation of independent courses controlled by School based academics and during the workshops, Gary continued to support an alternative approach to the project. After some vigorous and unresolved challenges around the meaning of a capability approach and collaborative processes within the design team David, the project leader, asked Ben, the relevant Head of School, to replace Gary and Hillary joined the group. The reformed team continued work on the meaning of capability, which resulted in a new formulation of the nature of a capability based curriculum that challenged the underpinning concepts of consensus in the ATN report that the group had studied.

A single meeting was held with the Heads of School and Dean to interest them in the approach that we were pursuing and to present the outcomes of work to that time. David, Helen and I attended this meeting. While the outcome was that formal support was given for the approach, there was a significant level of concern from all but one of the Heads of School and the Dean did not speak for the proposal during the meeting.

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Stage 2 – Conversations revealing processes of interessement

Frank, central T&L support: ‘I’m interested in talking a bit about how the design team came to function. At first what I saw was a group of people about to engage in something that they probably believed they had to engage in but not wanting to have any external influence or observation of it. I certainly experienced aggression from some of those people who wanted to use the standard defensive ploy of saying, “It’s senior management imposing a fashionable idea on us that nobody really wants and you’re from central management, who are you to tell us what to do and therefore you’re a bad person.” That kind of thing resonated right through a lot of the conversations in the early part. But I would have thought that by the
end, you know, that eighty, maybe ninety percent of the people in the group were not just accepting but were enthusiastic about it. And what happened is that people changed. And if they’ve changed, they’ve learned something.

Ilan, design team member, School 1: ‘What I really remember about those early days of the design team was that we had a bunch of people there with varying values and interests and histories and Frank and David and Robyn just consistently coming back and offering us an invitation to participate in a new activity. And that invitation in a sense evolved, the way it got described, the way it got framed, partly from the response of the group and partly from what you were hearing from outside the group. And the persistence of offering an invitation meant that a bunch of people who really didn’t want to have to go down that road, didn’t want to go on that journey, got worn down and we had to decide to put up or shut up or get out of it put simply. And what we ended up with was a group who wanted to be there and we started to think in fairly similar ways around key issues to do with approach and content and so on. Once we got over that critical hump things in the design team progressed very quickly, didn’t they?’

Helen, design team member, School 3: ‘There were very strong feelings in the group, and my sense was that what I liked about working in that group was there was some space to talk about some of that sort of thing whereas it was absolutely disallowed in most of the other forums in the faculty and in the university. Not much space.’

Nola, design team member, School 5: ‘It was really interesting for me to come in a bit later after I replaced Andy and actually say to a number of people “No it isn’t bullshit. This is absolutely bloody fantastic.” And it was just remarkable ... it was a very typical game structure of calling bluff. And all of a sudden by asking people to say why it was bullshit and what was bullshit about it, it just destroyed the game. I went to one member of staff and asked him to give me some syllabi, and I was given a response of “I have been told by my Head of School not to be involved at any level, not to do anything that you ask, and to do anything I can to subvert the situation.” Quote unquote. So it was really an interesting game of power, not just within the design team but in the whole Division. Once the bluff was called the people remaining in the room were very committed to what was going on, and I noticed just an enormous change in the energy and the energy really started to flow, and it was fantastic, absolutely fantastic, in terms of the excitement that was going on, the development of ideas, and the participation of the group.’

Howard, design team member, School 4: ‘I recall that it really started to come together in the design team with the consideration for those capabilities, starting probably from their ATN
report on graduate capabilities, and then we seemed to be building up a picture of what it was all about. I’ve been working in our School on capabilities for two or three years but it seemed to me that what we were doing there was really groundbreaking stuff, it was the sort of things that we’d never ever thought about that way.’

Robyn, Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning): ‘I thought that the breakthrough came when we realised that we could never agree on a single authoritative point of view for the capability profile. And then we decided that it would be undesirable to do so anyway. As I recall we discussed this as a different form of consensus, one based on making our different discipline languages and perspectives an explicit part of the curriculum.’

Helen, design team member, School 3: ‘Yeah ... I still haven’t fully thought through these things so what I’ll say will probably be extremely muddled. I think that our understanding was actually based on two absolutely critical pillars, one of which was self-awareness, around everyone engaged in the process, teacher, learner, the whole catastrophe, and about relationships. So that is actually a radically different view, I’ve come to realise than the more traditional I s’pose expert-driven teacher type. It’s different in its power relationships, issues of authority, you name it, at every level.’

Nola, design team member, School 5: ‘That was very difficult for me. At first I couldn’t understand the work Robyn and Helen had done on capabilities. And then something happened and it clicked. If it’s capabilities driven, it also needs to be student-centred. Because it’s not my capability ... well, I’ve developed my capabilities, but through my own capabilities-driven agenda. I can’t determine how the student is going to develop his or her capabilities unless they’re involved and we can negotiate around it.’

Frank, central T&L support: ‘There was the aspect of change by accepting and getting enthusiastic about a capability approach but the other aspect of change was that this was not just a curriculum-learning thing, it was actually a power thing. And I think that people were aware that the capabilities driven curriculum model denied the independent parts of the organisation. That it wasn’t enough for you to teach your subject in isolation with a wall around it that nobody else could breach. The actual curriculum model was calling for everything you do to be open to scrutiny and in fact to need to change to accommodate what was going on elsewhere. I think people were not only feeling that and expressing that for themselves, they were purporting to and may have been representing their School leader’s perceptions as well.’
David, project leader: ‘I s’pose that if I thought about the amount of work that was involved with actually working on the program itself, and the amount of work that was about managing the boundary relationships, I’d say more of my time went into managing those boundary relationships than did on, you know, nutting through the educational design issues. In terms of managing the boundary with the Heads of School and Dean, what was going on was that as you’d expect in the organisation people were putting their point of view to Brian, and there were those people who didn’t think that this was a particularly effective way to go about planning or positioning the program were again lobbying the Dean, and so it was a ... it was very, a very political process.’

Kevin, Head of School 5: ‘What you have to understand Frank and David, is that from the Heads’ perspective there was almost a complete separation of authority from responsibility in delivering this project. I think if you asked anybody in the school, any of the schools, they would say they had almost, if not no input ... they had input but they had no authority in the process. Except they knew very well that the various focus groups that set this thing up were going to walk away at the end and leave them with the baby to deliver.’

‘We, I mean the Heads went to the Dean. We went in thinking ... raising all of the pertinent issues, hoping that we would have an influence because we hadn’t come to a meeting of minds in any sense. So a lot of the negativity came out that way. I think at the end it was clear that we had absolutely none, almost zero, except responsibility for the final product. So it was one of those projects where we had none, but you’re not ... you’re never to find that out until it’s almost all over, you know. This is one of those issues that was clearly centrally driven from the outset.’

Helen, design team member, School 3: ‘I was at the one meeting we actually had with the Heads of School, Kevin. What I found interesting about that meeting in the light of what occurred was the silence of some of the Heads. Elaine and Brian, the Dean for heavens sake, I remember, said absolutely zip. And look I personally felt like saying, “Let’s stop a minute, you know, this is, this is actually a very significant piece of work that has huge implications for what we’re putting forward in the university and the world, please. And, you know, what’s this silence mean? What’s this about?” I mean, now when I look back I was right about that, that this sounds, this feels dangerous. And it became dangerous. And I think it was an absolute abdication of authority and leadership. I mean, I think Phillip, to his credit, was the only person who clearly and unambiguously and directly said “I support this, I think it’s good for these reasons, there are these issues, da dah da dah da dah.” And I think Ben was reasonably supportive. And I forget who else was there. I know there was formal support
at the end of the meeting, but in a sense the silence in that room was louder than the statement of support.’

Howard, Design team member, School 4: Well, I think, I think the first thing that, that one has to accept is that, that with a radical redesign, management’s got to support it, but management’s got to say what the constraints are that they want. There was by no means unanimous support for it at management level. You’ll never get that, but at least, at least there needs to be majority support, and that’s pretty important. Yeah, it’s kind of, I guess, even if there’s not complete support, there needs to at least be agreement by those who don’t support it that they won’t actually actively sabotage it.’

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Stage 2 – Interpretation concerning interessement

A key dimension of this stage was the effort to enrol members of the design team to the view of the problem being presented by Frank, David and me. This involved the transaction called interessement by Callon (1986) where we attempted to alter and stabilise the definition of meaning and membership of the other actors within the network in accordance with our problematization. To achieve this with the members of the design team it became clear that a means of cutting or weakening their links with their Heads of School would be essential. It was clearly revealed at the Heads of School meeting that only one of the Heads was supportive of the initiative and some had been actively working to enrol their staff to an alternate version of the problem.

In order to come between the Heads and the design team members and clear the way for their enrolment to our view, the design team leaders sought an alliance with the Dean, which appeared to be secured with his support for the stakeholder conference. An alliance with the Dean was essential, as the hierarchy of line management in the currently stabilised formal circuit of episodic agency power meant the design team members were vulnerable to marginalisation by the Heads who managed them, should they align themselves with us. Because the project was positioned outside the normal relations of episodic agency power, the paradox of successful interessement of design team members was the further alienation of another group of significant actors - the Heads of School. The separation of the project from the normal practices of Division work both created the conditions for the design team leaders to enrol the design team members in an environment we could control but simultaneously created an external environment where resistance could be sustained by those on the outside.
The tactics we used within the design team might best be characterised as those of seduction. The appeal was to the team member’s intrinsic interest in improved student outcomes. The struggle was to find a way of reconciling discipline based differences and a desire for academic autonomy with the need for a consensus about the capability to be achieved through the curriculum. The result was both a redefinition of the terms of membership and meaning of the design team members and a further development of the discourse of capability.

The achievement of this consolidation, however, required the removal of the two policy reconstructionists amongst the academic staff. The first of these, Andy, removed himself voluntarily when the Dean’s support for the stakeholder conference made it apparent that his version of problem definition would not be successful within the group. The second, Gary, was eventually removed, with the agreement of the team, when his continued resistance and advocacy of independent academic practice was rejected in favour of a multidisciplinary approach. Critical to the achievement of this was the intermediary role taken by Helen, who worked to negotiate within the space between the University Teaching and Learning Strategy’s capability based focus represented by Frank, David and me and the other academic staff in the team. This involved her immersion in the educational discourse of capability and her negotiation with me of a way in which this could be reconciled with a diversity of discipline discourses. Nola, clearly revealed as a swimmer, changed the dynamic of the design team with her membership and facilitated Helen’s contribution.

Because of the separation of the project from the normal circuit of episodic agency power, the processes of interessement in relation to the design team members and the Dean both required weakening of the third actor in the network, the Heads of School. This double marginalisation resulted in a failure to enrol the Heads of School. This was clearly revealed at the Heads of School meeting. The resolution of the differing positions of the Heads in an unconvincing agreement presaged further instability. The failure to secure the Dean’s public support for the design team approach at the meeting suggested that the alliance between the design team leaders and the Dean was insecure and had been undermined by the Heads attempts to interest him in their problematization.

In the next stage of the project, the outcomes and the alliances that resulted from these attempts at interessement were clearly revealed.
Stage 3 - Enrolment and dissidence – alliances formed and lost

Overview of activities

September 28 to November 20

The major event during this stage was the two day stakeholder conference attended by 60 people. On the first day, employers of Professional Studies graduates and representatives from professional bodies, along with UTech staff, students and alumni, contributed their insights into the likely development of the profession and the needs of specific offshore locations. They also reviewed the draft profile of capability prepared by the design team. They were very supportive of the capability based approach and endorsed the profile making only small suggestions for changes in emphasis and clarification of the meaning of some statements. They congratulated the design team on their work and UTech for having the vision to develop new degree programs in this way.

The second day was restricted to staff from the Division of Professional Studies. The submission for the event described the day as a discussion and decision making forum designed to clarify outstanding issues for the degree and to develop a process for the remaining stages of the design that would lead to the most positive outcomes for the Division.

Decision making at the forum was not possible, however, as two days before the conference was scheduled, the Dean notified the design team leadership of his decision not to attend. He agreed to make opening remarks and briefing notes were prepared by David. These drew significantly upon a speech by the UTech Vice Chancellor in which he argued that leadership was concerned with creating an environment where change could occur, that UTech needed to develop a culture that fostered creativity and informed risk taking, where groups with diverse languages learned to live together. The VC described capabilities as involving students learning ‘why and what for and not just how’. The briefing notes also included the VC’s assessment that UTech needed to develop different ways of working that involved ‘collaboration and respect’ and that these would ‘require not just different mental models and behaviours, ways of thinking, but new processes, different types of infrastructure.’ The Dean did not use these notes in his opening of the conference. The possibility of agreement about processes was further reduced by the participation of only two of the Heads of School, Kevin and Ben. Phillip had resigned from UTech and Elaine and Gordon declined to participate. As a consequence, on the second day of the conference the issues that remained unresolved concerning viability and offshore delivery resurfaced but could not be clarified.

The absence of the majority of Division line management from the conference followed a period in which relationships between the Dean and the leaders of the design team had
changed form. Communication was almost exclusively through email with only one meeting at which Brian expressed reservations about the conference and hesitated in authorising the needed funding. At this meeting, David and I emphasised its strategic and business benefits for the whole Division and Brian agreed to its going ahead and to his role in it.

Brian informed the design team leaders that they would not be invited to any more Heads of School meetings but that he would present our reports to the Heads. The text he had agreed to develop for the website had not been received.

A week after the conference, the consultants presented their draft report. This was discussed by the design team who agreed, that with minor changes, it would be an accurate record of the event. The report recorded the enthusiastic endorsement of the external industry representatives, but its main recommendation was the urgent need to form coalitions within the Division to address the ‘lack of vertical and horizontal coordination’ of the project. Such coalitions, it argued could deliberate to address the lack of clarity about the strategy and the nature of the work whilst recognising its complexity. Each coalition would be a ‘decision making unit composed of individuals who represent different resource bases, and different values.’ A coalition structure, it noted, could also help to address the ‘strong, pervasive confusion of leadership and management.’ The revised report was delivered to the Dean and a meeting scheduled for the consultants to discuss it at a Heads of School meeting. The Dean rejected the report as ‘not in a fit state’ for distribution and the scheduled meeting with the Heads of School was cancelled.

The first stage of the documentation required for approval of the degree, the New program Advice was submitted to the Division committee, was recommended and forwarded to the UTech committee for approval. This described the capability framework that had been developed and outlined the role and purposes of the stakeholder conference as one part of the collaborative approach to development being pursued by the design team.

* * *

Stage 3 – Conversation about enrolment

David, project leader: ‘In the light of what Howard said about the need for management support, I’d like to talk about the conference. I think that the, the first day with the more general questions about strategic positioning were not particularly challenging to people in terms of, you know, their own identity etc. There was a drop-off in the attendance towards the end of the second day I think, as it got down to more of a focus on how it applies within the Divisions and the Schools and what actions are going to be taken and I think that a number of issues that hadn’t been addressed on the way through, sort of either came to the fore at the end or people walked off and took them with them. I think despite that, that the
event wasn’t a total disaster, which many people expected, and I think that it quite genuinely gave people an opportunity to express the issues and their concerns, even though the Dean and most of the Heads weren’t there, and in doing that, I think it, it contributed to a sense of cohesion and purposefulness of what we were doing with the program design.’

‘But I s’pose the, the really interesting stuff about the event was that it, you know, it, it produced a document which identified some really important issues about the sustainability of the program. The Dean informed me that the report was not in a fit state to be presented to the Heads of School. Obviously that was a huge disappointment. I think within about one week delivered back a revised report. And from that point on, in fact I think it was three and a half months before the report was finally approved. But for me, this was one of the biggest disappointments of my involvement in the Bachelor of Professional Studies, simply because what was basically happening was that all debate was being shut down and there was no opportunity for people to continue the dialogue and the debate that had begun with the conference itself, and that had a very demotivating effect on those of us involved.’

_Howard, design team member, School 4: ‘I understand when you say it was disappointing David, but you can’t have been surprised. I think there was some very good discussion at the conference, but I thought that the suggestions that the consultants made, the conclusions they came to, based on what was discussed at the workshop were not the conclusions that management wanted to hear anyway. There was a management requirement for this project, which emanated from probably higher than this Division. And that was a management decision, not an academic decision. And you can’t buck it, and that’s, that’s just what we, that’s what the design team tried to do and didn’t succeed.’_

_Nola, design team member, School 5: ‘The way I see it is that it boils down to personal power and control. And by having a number of people who were not committed to the change, I think what happened was that people were trying to do everything that they possibly could to make sure that that design group wasn’t going to work, so that change wasn’t brought about, and that they could maintain their status quo and not feel threatened.’_

_Ian, design team member, School 1: ‘If you, if you’re not even going to support or engage in a process of supporting your core committed people, well, if those people walk away from it ultimately saying “The place doesn’t care” you can perfectly understand the reaction. I mean, the Bachelor of Professional Studies is a lovely case in point, you know, where the best advice of the best people in the university as far as teaching and learning was flatly rejected and an untenable position shoved down their throats. If the managers, whoever they are,_
whatever their frames are, don’t actually trust themselves to be in a room and have a lively conversation, even a debate, well, I think, what can you do?’

Kevin, Head of School 5: ‘Hang on a minute Ian. I was at the conference and I think there are a couple of things you are overlooking. I think our people who’d gone through the early tension, the clash between the process-driven versus content-driven model, were looking at that conference as providing hard evidence, information about the sort of graduate employment outcomes that were desirable, where the jobs were, what skills they actually wanted, especially offshore … and I think they got a very soft serve on all of that. I think they were really disappointed, because they saw that as the one opportunity for some of the content, the deep content fear they had, to surface, be given a second wind to re-establish some balance. The two Heads who were there were asking those sorts of questions and we were getting really waffly answers, not very expert advice. At the end of all that, there was this hollow feeling that we were designing something in a vacuum. So we were just even more contemptuous of the project than before. They weren’t just misgivings any more, it was quite malignant around the negativity that came out of it.’

‘And the other side of that was that the staff in my School really lost confidence in the design team. People had heard a report of some discussion in the design team. Apparently someone had been trying to explain the idea of subjects being connected and had said, “Think of it like the monkey has escaped from the cage and left, left its footprints on all the other boxes.” Now, as an educational idea that’s actually quite nice imagery. It went over like a lead balloon in the staff room, because people just said “What a pack of whackos,” you know. And all that was, was the result of a lot of hostility built up, and they found something that out of context seemed an outrageous thing to say, and were able to magnify it, and that went around the school in five minutes, about, “Look at the sort of people who are designing this degree.” Now, at that stage it was too late, the monkey had got out of the cage, you know what I mean? There were quite high-level project decisions on the fundamental nature of this project that were made way beyond the skill level, around the integrated nature of subjects, around the teaching models, around the design of course materials, around a whole range of things, and we were then left with the brief of the remainder of that. We felt sort of emasculated by it, and I think in the context of some of the other things I’ve been saying I think it just put people’s backs up.’

Howard, design team member, School 4: ‘In my School it was a bit different. I tried to keep them involved through school meetings, executive meetings. They weren’t particularly interested and they couldn’t see what it was about, why we were wasting time there. That about sums it up.’
Stage 3 – Interpretation of attempts at enrolment

The stage called enrolment by Callon involves, 'the group of multilateral negotiations, trials of strength and tricks that accompany the interessements and enable them to succeed (1986, p. 211).’ In the earlier stages of the Bachelor of Professional Studies, it appeared that the Dean had accepted the problematization of the design team leaders and would assist in enrolling the Heads of School to this position, in particular by taking a leading role at the stakeholder conference. The tactics of the design team leaders, when the Dean’s hesitation about their alliance became apparent, were to appeal to his concern for achievement against the corporate strategy targets and emphasise the links to his apparent interests in business outcomes. In particular the language of the Vice Chancellor was used in an attempt to ‘enrol’ the VC at a distance and legitimise the design team’s interpretation of meaning and membership in terms of the UTech Teaching and Learning Strategy. The stage was ultimately marked, however, by the Dean’s dissidence in Callon’s (1986) terms through his complete withdrawal from alliance with the ‘problem’ of the degree as constructed by the design team leadership. The withdrawal coincided with complete enrolment of the design team members to the design team leaders’ view.

The lack of participation by the Dean and majority of Heads of School in the conference and the absence of other forums within which to seek to interest the Heads of School in the design team’s problematization was exacerbated in this stage by the Dean’s insistence that all formal communication with the Heads of School be channelled through him. While a basis for interessement with the Heads was not established earlier in the project, this intervention served to make an alliance even less likely.

In contrast to earlier stages, where supervision of the project operated through the normal routines of meetings with the Dean, these were suspended during this period. Rather than replacement with more obvious and onerous disciplinary practices, distance was created between the Dean and the team by first dividing the design team and its leaders from management and secondly, by a refusal of most of management to participate in activities initiated by it. At the stakeholder conference the representatives of employers and professionals were successfully interested and enrolled to the design team view of capability, but the lack of participation by Division management meant that this enrolment remained on the margins of the project.
These tactics of removal or absence meant that no alternate construction of the problem was explicitly proposed. Whilst it became clear that the work of the design team did not take forms desired by the Dean, it was unclear at this stage what forms of production and creativity he wished to endorse. This was a form of discursive closure characterised by a refusal to entertain or respond to the problem when delineated within the educational discourse of capability and academic discourse of scholarly inquiry through action research.

These tactics contributed to an increase in reflexive awareness by the design team of itself as a particular group with distinct interests. In response to the team’s marginalisation from Division management, the design team commenced a new practice of *interessement* designed to ‘enrol’ senior management to their view of the problem by aligning the project with formal documents to legitimise the forms of meaning and membership their definition entailed. This commenced with the explicit referencing of the VC’s speech and was continued through the use of the UTech program approval rules in the *New Program Advice* to seek senior management endorsement for their position.

An outcome of the formation of the design group as a self reflexive entity and its separation from the Heads of School was the active or passive withdrawal of the endorsement by academics within at least some Schools, of their School representatives on the design team as representative. This occurred where the academic staff had been effectively enrolled to the Heads of School’ problematization.

**Stage 4 - Competing alliances – discipline and resistances**

**Overview of activities**

*November 21 to February 28*

During this stage the design team worked to complete the detailed design of the curriculum, map the development of capabilities across its subjects and develop detailed subject guides. Key features of the design were the integration of learning between subjects, the inclusion of a stream of integrating subjects where students would have the opportunity to test their developing capability in holistic and complex problem settings during each semester and the inclusion of a portfolio, where students would reflect on and critically analyse their learning experiences. In parallel with this work, the team presented the process and results at two internal UTech Teaching and Learning forums where the work received endorsement from two different members of the Chancellery. During this time, the *New Program Advice* was
approved and a memo was received from the PVC (Teaching and Learning), who was also the Chair of the University committee, praising the development very highly.

The major contact between the Dean and design team came in the form of a request for a report on progress based upon the Vice Chancellor’s concern that the flagship projects proceed in a timely manner. A report was provided and subsequently discussed at a single meeting. It reported that the development was two weeks behind its timeline but that this would not delay completion of the required course materials for the mixed mode of delivery that was planned. A number of practical matters were covered in the report including a reminder that the appointment of a Program Leader, who would be responsible for the delivery and academic quality of the new degree in accordance with the Position Description, developed previously on the Dean’s instruction, was now urgent and a request that the belated market research report be expedited and provided to the design team so any necessary redesign could be undertaken as effectively as possible.

The revised consultant’s report from the stakeholder conference was not circulated or discussed within the Division.

The Dean appointed a Program Leader, Audrey. The appointment was not based on the position description that had been developed. The newly appointed Program Leader reported directly to the Dean and was authorised by him to project manage the remaining development of the degree. New requirements for regular project reporting to the Assistant Dean, Elaine, were put in place and both Elaine and Audrey were to be invited to attend all meetings related to the project.

Following the appointment of the Program Leader, the Dean sent a memo to David clarifying Audrey’s role. He wrote, ‘You asked if Audrey would be coordinating local teaching staff at each of the delivery sites for the generic degree. As the Bachelor of Professional Studies will be offered on-line there will clearly be no reason for local staff coordination. The Heads of School confirmed that this is their understanding as well.’

The design team leaders drew the Dean’s attention to the Teaching and Learning strategy which required that flagship degrees be delivered ‘at a distance – accessible to students whether on or of campus’ and to the many references to delivery mode in the reports and documents he had received concerning the development, including the approved New Program Advice that described it as ‘remote delivery with online components and day to day learning support the responsibility of local staff.’
The market research report prepared by an external consultant was received at this time. It noted, ‘In general, these interviewees were not particularly attracted to an online B Prof Studies …The majority would not apply for an online B Prof Studies unless there was no other way to do it.’ On the basis of this report the design team leaders suggested to the Dean that the fully online requirement be moderated to allow a limited amount of face to face teaching. In response, the Dean sent a memo stating that fully online delivery had always been the Division’s position and that it was his expectation that the leaders of the design team would support the Division’s strategic priorities and work effectively to achieve this outcome.

* * *

Stage 4 – Conversations about alliances

David, project leader: ‘I know that after the experience of the conference there was still a lack of clarity about the directions for the program. And while we explicitly referenced it to the University’s Teaching and Learning Strategy, there was clearly a mismatch between that policy and that strategy and what the Dean intended for the, for the program. And that caused a lot of, a lot of angst and was very frustrating. In terms of managing a project such as this I took the view that in a sense it was about surrounding the buggers and making sure that there was sufficient … force … influence coming to bear that would provide people with a framework within which there was some consistency and support for proceeding in this particular direction. And even though we got the endorsement of a lot of senior managers through the New Program Advice and the forums, there was an element of quite, quite, quite a disillusioning experience, particularly in terms of the environment within which we were attempting to develop the program.’

Frank, central T&L support: ‘I have to say I am puzzled about the relationship between what we might call the vice-chancellery and the deans, because there seems to me to be a degree of autonomy of an individual dean from on the one hand the vice-chancellery, but on the other hand the management group of the vice-chancellery and the deans together. Individual deans seem to be autonomous in the decision-making in their Division. And it puzzles me because I don’t know how an organisation can manage itself if in fact the people who are paid at the highest level to chart directions, do so and they have people at that other level able to completely reject those and just not take them on board.

Howard, design team member, School 4: ‘I don’t think it’s as simple as that Frank. Like I said before, I think there were different management requirements emanating from outside the Division and we don’t know what decisions were being taken there.’

Helen, design team member, School 3: ‘Yeah and in that situation you need a way of holding all of that tension together and being able to actually work with all of those paradoxes and
contradictions. Because the fact of the matter is, if you are truly going to innovate as opposed to adapt or just come up with a good idea, then you’ve actually got to be prepared to go to difficult places. You know, at some level people know that real innovation is actually about, you know, pretty scary stuff and they disconnect so strongly in order to emotionally hold it that they become literally disconnected and authoritarian and distant and whatever. So this is why a thing like the Bachelor of Professional Studies was a subversive act at one level.’

*Kevin, Head of School 5:* ‘I agree with Howard. There were multiple objectives and they shifted. “Flexible delivery” became “online” and then “online” became “fully online”. And even “fully online” which in the stuff that I’ve read gives plenty of scope for face-to-face experience, was interpreted in a very rigid way in the Division meaning “absolutely zero face to face under all circumstances”.’ I think, instead of this rigidity, the right thing would have been to say, “How do we make this work?” That’s a candid, straight-from-the-shoulder start, you know? But we didn’t seem to be able to sustain that sort of candour through the project itself, you know? The Heads of School tried but we weren’t able to fix it, because we were being directed in the way it should be done.’

*Ian, design team member, School 1:* ‘That’s what disappointed me the most about all of this was the online issue. Despite Heads of Schools all agreeing that a hundred percent online wasn’t educationally sound, that despite the industry forum that we had for two days where those people came in and said “It’s a great model but it’s going to be very mediocre if it’s a hundred percent online,” despite all the top educational people giving advice that it should not be a hundred percent online, the fact that it ended up being a hundred percent online, I still think makes it questionable in its workability.’

‘And Audrey when she was appointed, it seemed to me that there was a gap of communication between her role and the leaders of the design team that was never clearly identified or put to bed. So there was a sore there that just then ended up festering, and she took the power that she had, and she simply shut the door on you. That was my perception.’

‘And Robyn and David kept asking the educationally hard questions, which you did consistently for over a year, and you were never getting an answer to your questions. So you kept asking them and we all kept moving forward knowing that we could break through one brick wall, and we could break through the next brick wall, and we could keep on breaking through, but eventually the wall was so high and so thick that eventually you could ask the educational questions but they kept on exploding back at you, and, and in the end, it worked in a negative way.’
Robyn, Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning): ‘Yes that was my perception too. Audrey had a different brief. I think you were at the meeting with me when she said, “Brian asked me to take charge of the project. I’ve done a lot of this kind of work before. I have extensive experience with project management and with delivering outcomes as efficiently as possible.” Do you remember, she turned to me and said, “It is my job to deliver a fully online program for Brian and if you don’t deliver four fully online subjects, Robyn, you’re dead.” She said it as a “joke” of course, but the project had changed.’

Nola, Design team representative, School 5: ‘Yes I remember the meeting. The one where Audrey as the program leader came in and my perception was that she had absolutely no idea of what we were talking about. Her brief was to get it up and running, to get it online, and that was the brief that she was given and that she was working to, quite appropriately, but it wasn’t the brief that we had been working to. So I think that’s how I saw it, that it was a dichotomy between the two approaches. And I think with the change in the leadership to Audrey the notion of capabilities went down in priority. At the one level the university’s calling for capability-driven curricula, but they’re still only words to a lot of staff members.’

Hillary, design team member, School 2: ‘I just felt a bit sad that it looked like the process had gone astray, and that people were getting upset, even though they had done a good job! Things weren’t clearly defined, the changeover wasn’t clear, new people were brought in, stuff was going on all around people with no clear lines of communication, and I could tell that people who had put a lot of themselves into the creation of the, the Bachelor of Professional Studies were feeling it. I mean, I could see how distressed Audrey was. I could see how distressed Robyn and David were, I could see how distressed a lot of people were, and I thought it just wasn’t any of your doing as far as I was concerned.’

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Stage 4 – Interpretation of competing alliances

In the previous stage, the educational discourse of capability and a participatory action research approach to the development of the innovation articulated by the design team were blocked and rendered invisible to Division management, without a clear alternative discursive position being advanced. During this stage, the Dean’s actions had the effect of terminating the impact of these discourses completely by the assertion of an alternative strategy interpretation and new determination of the forms of creativity deemed to be relevant for its enactment. The refusal to accept the consultant’s report, which persisted in making claims for the problem of the degree as constructed in the design team’s terms, was the clearest symbol of this change.
The capability based approach to curriculum as the aspect of the teaching innovation that had dominated the project, empowered the enrolled design team and leadership because it was essentially an educational discourse. The replacement of this with the privileging of the other prong of the innovation, the use of online technologies, effectively reduced the authority of the design team as it was introduced within a management discourse of efficiency, project management and timely project completion. It was posited as an alternate discourse and the tensions between capability and the use of online technologies were not acknowledged.

The authorisation of this aspect of the innovation was instituted through the appointment of Audrey as project manager, a new delegate of the Dean, whose direct reporting to him increased the previously intermittent surveillance of the project to a practice of continuous and direct surveillance. This is the first explicit move by the Dean to regain control of his delegated authority for the project by withdrawing his delegation from David, the appointed project leader and transferring it to Audrey. How the roles of the two project leaders would relate was unclear but Audrey’s authority was supported by new requirements for regular reporting to the Assistant Dean and the required presence of these staff at critical process meetings.

The forces external to the Division that were acting on the Dean were not clearly visible, however, their effects are. The tactic of ‘surrounding’ with positive support from senior leaders, with a view to limiting the discretion of the Dean through endorsement of the design team approach from his direct supervisors, appeared to have little effect. In a paradoxical way, Brian had clearly assumed the position of a strategic actor evident in his continued references to the need to respond to the UTech strategy imperatives and to the concerns of senior leaders, suggesting that the Dean was subject to multiple and contradictory strategies from senior leaders. Audrey, his new delegate was clearly and explicitly positioned as a strategic actor whose task was to deliver to the Dean the outcomes he required.

During previous stages, the design team had been successfully displaced from their previously accepted constructions of meaning and membership as individual discipline experts to become creators of a new entity drawing upon an educational discourse. This successful enrolment changed the ways in which its principal spokespeople, David and Robyn, could act and resulted in their insistence on the legitimacy and recognition of the design team’s work. This was a tactic of resistance by persistence (Collinson 1994) through the consistent raising of educational questions and demands that explanations be provided in those terms. The formation
and self-recognition of the design team as an entity with specific and clearly defined interests as only a partial mobilisation of agents, in relation to the whole network of players with interests in the new degree, committed the design team to the continuation of this tactic in ways which proved distressing and constraining. Brian’s authorising of Audrey as a direct bridge between the design team membership and him had the potential to break up the single entity that had emerged. The designation of the innovation as a special project effectively divided from the normal practices of the Division meant that isolation of the teams’ position was facilitated.

This stage was characterised by an increasing breakdown of the normal practices of episodic agency power where normal practice is understood to mean effective translation in Latour’s sense. Translation means that the success of a command ‘results from the actions of a chain of agents each of whom “translates” it in accordance with his/her own projects’ (Latour 1986, p. 264). In this case, the failure of episodic agency power was revealed through the Dean’s assertion of it as his possession, his ‘power over’ others in the written demands of David and Robyn for commitment to his interpretation of Division Strategy and unequivocal obedience to his direction. It was reinforced by Audrey’s threatening “joke” about the consequences of not conforming to the new requirements.

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Stage 5 - The outflanking of persistent resistance

Overview of activities

March 1 to June 29

The finalisation of the Program Accreditation Document and the conduct of the Program Accreditation Committee (PAC) meeting were the major events in this stage.

The Accreditation document was prepared in two parts. The explanatory section required by the UTech rules described a fully online mode of delivery and the approaches that would be used to support the students’ learning in this mode, including the use of self-managed student study groups by location, the involvement of industry mentors within the student’s home region and the provision of remote help services. Attached to this explanation was the stakeholder conference report, recently released by the Dean for distribution and the market research report. The former documented participant disagreement with fully online delivery and preference for a mixed mode. The latter documented a preference for face-to-face contact by both prospective students and employers of graduates of the program who were interviewed. The document was distributed to committee members one week prior to the meeting.
The Program Accreditation Committee approved by the Dean comprised five representatives from the profession all of whom had attended the stakeholder conference, one academic from another university, a nominee from the UTech Approval Committee where the proposal would next be considered, David the project leader and Robyn the Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning). One of the Division administrative staff was there to take minutes. The Program Leader, Audrey and the Assistant Dean, Elaine attended the meeting on behalf of the Dean.

Minutes from the PAC show that the majority of the two hour meeting was devoted to discussion of the choice of an online mode of delivery. The capability design was accepted without question. The external academic requested that his concerns be minuted as follows. ‘The students and prospective students interviewed for this research on demand said quite clearly that what they value is the face to face interaction with lecturers and that they have no interest in an online version. The employers have concerns as well about the quality of graduates from an online program. They are quite explicit about viewing them as inferior. These concerns do not appear to be acknowledged in this proposal’.

The result of the discussion was a provisional recommendation that the degree be endorsed, subject to the clarification of a range of matters relating to the online mode of delivery. Amendments were to be circulated to all committee members for their final endorsement.

An Implementation Group was established to lead the detailed development of the degree following its anticipated approval. Elaine chaired this meeting and membership included David, Robyn and Division staff involved in the design and production of online resources.

At the first meeting of the Implementation Group the design team leaders asked that the contradictions and significant concerns that had been raised at the PAC be considered with the possibility that the mode of delivery be reviewed.

This request was characterised by the Chair, Elaine, as continued resistance. The Program Leader, Audrey, characterised it as a continuation of ‘a deliberate campaign of misinformation about this degree’. David and Robyn were instructed to complete the amendments without further resistance and to send them to Audrey and Elaine for approval prior to distribution to the committee.

The Chair of the PAC, on behalf of the committee, recommended the amended document. A new section was inserted into the minutes of the PAC meeting at the request of one member of the PAC. The member wrote ‘I feel the minutes of the program accreditation meeting do
not sufficiently reflect the committee’s concerns about the lack of face-to-face interaction in the program. I would like the text in capitals to be inserted. THE COMMITTEE WAS CONCERNED AT THE LACK OF RESEARCH AND CONSULTATION WITH PROSPECTIVE ON-LINE STUDENTS. NO EVIDENCE OF STUDENT DEMAND FOR THE PROPOSED MODE OF DELIVERY WAS PROVIDED TO THE COMMITTEE AND INSTEAD HIGHLIGHTED THE VALUE PLACED ON INTERACTION WITH LECTURERS AND STUDENTS.

The amended document with the attached minutes from the PAC passed through the Division Committees without discussion and was recommended by the UTech Committee and received a formal letter of high praise from it. On June 5 it was passed by the UTech Academic Board and commended as exemplary.

The design team was formally dissolved and the completion of the work for the degree was managed through the Implementation Group under the project management of Audrey. Robyn and David were advised in writing by the Assistant Dean that their involvement was ‘no longer required.’

Audrey advised by email of the removal of the integrating student portfolio, a key feature of the capability based approach, on June 29.

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Stage 5 – Conversations about outflanking

Howard, design team member, School 4: ‘We never really talked about what happened after Audrey took charge because the team was really finished once the accreditation document was done. What do you think about what happened David?’

David, project leader: ‘I suppose it was probably a fairly, I’d have to say sobering experience, but at the same time it wasn’t one that was unexpected. I think that one of the areas that I’m most interested in understanding is around traditional bureaucratically designed and managed organisations, and UTech clearly falls into that category as do the vast majority of organisations. So I think that it was an enriching experience, albeit a frustrating one, in that I think that I have a way of, of making sense of a lot of the irrational behaviour that occurred throughout the process.’

‘The increase in managerialism within, in the university sector, this sort of collides with the traditional notions of academic autonomy, where academics were free to, to pursue their interests. I think that where they collide it’s very messy, because you’ve got the top down authoritarians coming one way, with an academic culture that’s based around a much more
laissez faire approach, and to actually develop a team modus operandi is about democracy, which is sort of, it’s another genotype, you know, and, and there aren’t, I can’t see where the conditions are, within the university sector, to be able to make the transition from the laissez faire one way and, and to, you know, reduce the, the managerialism and the autocracy from, from the other.’

Kevin, Head of School 5: ‘I think at the end of the day the fact that the project was in the Dean’s terms, not meeting its deadline, he went for a pragmatic solution and sat down and said “Instead of starting with a lot of integrated subjects we’ll have a stream of them and we’ll have some,” what he would regard as normal structure. I think the problem was he couldn’t see doing the innovative things and delivering successfully on the strategy.’

Ian, design team member, School 1: ‘I think that’s a real failure of leadership at the executive level, where policy initiatives are proposed, but there isn’t a culture in which any of those executives feel they can decline the invitation to participate. But then what happens is the thing gets handed down the line in a kind of out-of-my-trayitis, it’s a hot item, it’s terribly important, you have to do it, and here, take it away from me. You know, cascading irresponsibility. And does it always need to be like that? I don’t think it does.’

Nola, design team member, School 5: ‘Well, when I heard about the outcomes of the PAC and the Implementation Group I guess if I’m really, really honest, I thought and still think that there were incredible games going on. I saw the work with the Bachelor of Professional Studies being totally sabotaged because of some sort of power game that I thought the Dean was putting over the design team leaders, basically. It was almost as if to say “I’m going to show you who’s boss,” and it really had nothing to do with the degree, nothing to do with the outcomes, but rather the hidden agenda of “I don’t care what you say, I don’t care what you do, but I’m about to smack you.” OK? And that’s how it came across to me.’

Helen, design team member, School 3: ‘I’m not familiar enough with UTech or Division politics to know how it could have been better, but my own philosophy of fixing things is to talk and talk and keep on talking until you’ve exhausted every possible piece of talking and found some common ground to start from, to build back up where it could have been. I’ve heard everybody’s broken hearts, you know and I go, “It just didn’t have to be like this?”'

Robyn, Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning): ‘Oh Helen, that seems like a really bleak note to finish our lunch on. Maybe we should sing a chorus of the Bachelor of Professional Studies song. Remember Ian when you sent the little animation? The email said “This is what it feels like.” It was a video clip of a green, one-eyed animated creature singing the
Gloria Gaynor song *I will survive*. At first she is tentative but as she gains in confidence her volume increases and her gestures become more flamboyant. Just as she is belting out the line, ‘I will survive’, a mirror ball that was previously out of frame falls on her, squashing her completely.'

*Frank, central T&L support:* Well, I would like to go on record saying that around the world, wherever I go, I have expressed incredible pride in having been part of the Bachelor of Professional Studies, and I have incredible awe at the outcome from it, which largely was not my doing. I know I contributed the underpinnings, but I gladly tell the world that I was involved in this, this is the product and I think it's pretty good. So, yeah.

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**Stage 5 – Interpretation concerning the outflanking of resistance**

The Program Accreditation Committee is the critical point within the rules for approval of a new degree at UTech. The design team had been working to reshape this critical point, to alter the ways the rules were usually enacted and, therefore, to privilege a specific interpretation of the Teaching and Learning Strategy. The principal mechanisms for this attempted reshaping were increased utilisation of the external industry voice in validating and authorising the capability based degree and the alignment of senior leaders to the position by publicly disseminating the work as an enactment of UTech strategies. This tactic was aimed at countering the traditional, highly individualised, private and content driven focus of subject and degree development within the Division.

The successful introduction by the Dean of an alternative discourse of efficiency based on of the delivery of online courseware, changed this dynamic and threatened to undermine the integrated capability based curriculum and to reauthorise the individualistic, content based practices of the past. Control of the outcome of the Program Accreditation Committee became critical in this situation. The change of discourse, however, fundamentally reshaped the task of transforming the enactment of rules through the Program Accreditation Committee from one of endorsement of a specific approach to one of rejection. The paradox was that for the design team’s view to prevail the PAC would need to reject the approval document that was being put forward by the Division under the names of the leaders of the design team.

This outflanking of the design team position by the Dean was supported by direct, physical surveillance of the meeting by his agents through the required presence of Elaine and Audrey and their control of the subsequent amendment process.
Faced with the obvious difficulty of achieving the desired outcome, that is the rejection of the proposition they were themselves putting forward, David and the team had few alternatives. One alternative was withdrawal from the project. As Clegg suggests, however, in the face of ‘the necessity of labour’s dull compulsion in order to “earn” one’s living’ even ‘the blithest of theoretically free spirits’ can be disciplined ‘when the conditions of that freedom become evident.’ (Clegg 1998, p. 223). The tactic chosen was continued resistance by persistence. This amounted to a dogged determination to make evident the contradictions and to demand that management explicitly address them, without any conviction that change would be achieved.

This tactic led to an explosive failure of episodic agency power in the Implementation Group meeting. Through the instruction to stop resisting and do as directed, its form as ‘power over’ was explicitly revealed. The failure from the perspective of the Dean’s Office, to achieve translation of the changed direction for the innovation was acknowledged. It became clear that the innovation project, positioned outside the normal operation of episodic agency power through the Division’ line management hierarchy had failed to create its own functioning system of translation and legitimization.

Conformance with the explicit directives received from the Dean and his agents represented the final capitulation of design team resistance. As Clegg notes, ‘The most resistant of wills may bend in time when it is without the remotest chance of increasing the freedom to manoeuvre through recourse to some alternative (1998, p. 223).’

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Summary and critique

The ethnography presented above is one part of a continuing process of organisational renegotiation, one empirical episode cut from the continuum and presented as a relatively self contained case. As a single episode within this continuous process it must be considered a failure. It is clear from the conversations presented, that members of the design team and the Heads of School representative both consider it to have been a failure.

How did this failure occur? The ethnography presented highlights the fluctuations in the project’s progress and the evolution of power relations throughout the episode as a basis for a better understanding of the failure and for the construction of alternative approaches.

A key feature of the episode is that the initiative to design the generic Bachelor of Professional Studies was self consciously set up as a separate strategic initiative outside the normal practices of the Division. This resulted in the establishment of a project team and
reporting relations that sat alongside the day to day management hierarchy. There were no formal arrangements to connect the project to the normal operations of the circuit of episodic agency power. The failure to allow for these connections made the mobilisation of all the agents interested in the innovation to a single *problematization* unlikely. Of all the agents involved, the Dean, Heads of School, academics, educational leaders and external employers, it was the Heads of School who were especially distanced by this arrangement.

In the absence of forums in which to achieve agreement, two different and competing *problematizations* emerged. One is clearly visible within the story, that of the design team leadership and ultimately the design team. The other is not fully visible as much of the discussion and action of the Heads of School is out of view of the author as participant observer, however, its effects are clearly seen. Both *problematizations* can and do seek to legitimise themselves by reference to the formal strategies of UTech and both are able to do so because the strategies are in Clegg’s term *indexical*, that is, available for multiple interpretations such that the strategy cannot be used to finally arbitrate between them.

The design team *problematization* draws upon the educational discourse of capability and positions the design team leadership as the possessors of privileged knowledge and as the obligatory passage point for the initiative. The alternative *problematization*, that of the Heads of School, operates within the discourse of corporate strategic management. Based on an assessment of the proposed initiative for a generic Bachelor of Professional Studies as not financially viable and ill considered, the suggested response is minimal compliance to the senior leaders’ strategy requirements with a ‘quick and dirty’ degree made of available component parts. This *problematization* preserves their established position as academic leaders and seeks to position them and the discipline knowledge they represent as the obligatory passage points for the initiative.

Each of these *problematizations* defines the identities and roles of all of the actors with an interest in the initiative in different and competing ways. The processes of *interessement* that follow from these problematizations necessarily serve to fracture rather than consolidate the interest of the parties who need to be collectively mobilised. In order to secure *problematization* on their terms, the design team leadership must necessarily place barriers between the design team members and their respective Heads of School and the Heads of School must place a barrier between their representatives on the design team and its leadership. Both seek to interest the same agents and define their identities in different ways (Callon, 1986).
Both entities in seeking to secure their *problematization* must similarly interest and subsequently enrol the Dean. This process will necessarily involve the attempted marginalisation of the Heads of School on the one hand or the design team leadership on the other. In short, the establishment of the innovation as separate from the normal operations of episodic agency power, without any opportunities for dialogue, results in the entrenchment of two competing *problematizations* and a sustained period of *interessement* that results in antagonistic alignments rather than *enrolment* to an agreed project.

In Callon’s terms enrolment of all agents to an agreed understanding of the project would involve ‘mutual concessions’ and the displacement of each agent from ‘the focus of their current preoccupations and their projects’ (1986, p. 223). In the absence of opportunities for mutual concessions to be negotiated, the different discourses informing the positions of different agents are perpetuated as parallel discourses. During the extended and repeated periods of *interessement*, conversations were frequently conducted from distinctly different discursive positions. In this form of ‘conversation’ an argument from an alternative discourse is invoked in response to an argument presented from a discursive position being resisted by that agent. As mutual concessions cannot result from such exchanges, the circular arguments form a repetitive pattern with a critical instance being the return of economic and managerial arguments at the stakeholder conference. This form of interaction effectively undermines the possibility of collective enrolment to an agreed *problematization*.

One result of the failure to mobilise as a whole group, is the strengthening of the awareness of subgroups within the network of themselves as specific groups with specific interests. This is particularly evident within the design team. Following the enrolment of this group to the views initially propounded by the design team leaders, the group becomes increasingly aware of itself as following an explicit educational agenda and leading innovation within these terms. This ‘reflexive self awareness’, in Clegg’s (1989a) terms, changes the ways in which the spokespeople for this group, that is its leadership, can speak and act and contributes to the entrenchment of resistance in keeping with the educational discourses and the perceived self interest of the group.

A further result of the failure to mobilise as a whole around the innovation project is the continued separation and perpetuation of previously established relations of power in the circuit of episodic agency power from the innovation activities, as if these should have no impact upon them. As Clegg (1989a) notes, however, the circuit of episodic agency power is not an independent circuit constituted through the sovereign exercise of power by those who possess it, as it appears and is often taken to be. Rather the circuits are intermeshed such that changes to the circuit of system integration fundamental to the innovation studied here,
must impact upon the currently stabilised relations of episodic agency power. The renegotiation of these relations of power disrupted by the innovation necessarily involves the renegotiation of relations of meaning and membership. As Clegg (1998, p. 237) notes,

Where there is a plurality of relations of meaning and membership, there will be competitive bases of legitimation centred on the fixing of alternative nodal points, giving rise to differential resource-based capacities that enter into the episodic circuit of power … Once more the nub of power resides in the relations of meaning and membership.

The achievement of episodic agency power with respect to any command ‘results from the actions of a chain of agents each of whom “translates” it in accordance with his/her own projects’ (Latour 1986, p. 264). Translation in this sense is usually used to describe the ways in which organisational subordinates make sense of and incorporate (or resist) the commands of supervisors. A further complexity of translation within this context results from the separation of project leadership from the leadership of the Division through line management. The design team leaders have effectively been authorised to provide leadership in establishing the meaning of a flexibly delivered capability based curriculum within the context of the University’s strategy. Translation, therefore, needs to occur into and up the line management hierarchy, which is authorised to manage academic production, achievements and resources. This places line managers such as the Heads of School and Deans in an uncharacteristic position similar to the difference between teacher and learner in traditional pedagogical relations, a position that was characterised as ‘emasculating’ by one Head of School.

The absence of opportunities for such ‘translation’ results in the failure of the circuit of episodic agency power seen in the increasing use of coercion to reduce discretion and achieve ends that are not discussed but asserted as uncontestable. This is particularly evident in the imposition of a fully online delivery mode by the Dean, the assertion that this was always the case and the positioning of attempts at negotiation or ‘translation’ as acts of resistance. The disconnections between the circuits of power have the effect of undermining the innovation the organisation is seeking to develop. Without the possibility of translation between the circuit of meaning and membership and that of episodic agency power, the final imposition of this system innovation has the paradoxical effect of dissipating the curriculum and team based teaching production innovations. The result is a return to the teaching production system in place at the outset of the project, a system of individual and unconnected subjects taught by autonomous academics.

One area in which successful displacement or translation took place was the enrolment of the academic staff representatives to the problematization developed by the leaders of the
design team. Whilst this was not productive in terms of the overall innovation project, it provides insight into the detailed nature of processes of translation that may inform thinking about more productive approaches to innovation.

As Callon (1986, p. 223) notes, there are displacements in the ways agents ‘change the focus of their preoccupations and their projects’ at each stage of the process. Within the design team the first attempt to secure translation was made during problematization with an appeal to academics’ professional scholarly identities. The work of curriculum development was positioned as scholarship and the first breakthroughs were achieved when the members of the team began to immerse themselves in the literature of capability and the educational discourses that underpin it. Enrolment, however, was not achieved through a simple process of agreement ‘found through mutual concessions’ (Callon 1986, p. 223). Rather, enrolment involved an enrichment of the initial problematization and a development of the discourse upon which it was based.

The initial problematization of a capability based curriculum innovation was predicated upon a simple notion of consensus around the capabilities to be developed in the Bachelor of Professional Studies. The views of capability developed in the documents used as a foundation for the project suggested that the consensus on capability was an agreement by academics concerning what a graduate should be able to do at the conclusion of the program of study. Attempts at enrolment of the design team to this problematization revealed that any such agreement must be predicated on a particular view of practice and the values that underpin it, although these values most often remain implicit. Enrolment on these terms proved impossible. In practice, enrolment involved a development of the view of the consensus underpinning a capability based curriculum from one predicated on agreement concerning the conception of practice to one based on the recognition of multiple conceptions of practice, multiple discipline languages and different underpinning values. In curriculum terms, making these differences explicit became the guiding principle - a consensus on dissensus as it was termed (following Readings 1996). These developments of the discourse of capability bring it more closely in line with the discourses of education described as disruptive or postmodern in Chapter 3 and move the conception of academic role away from that of ‘universalizing spokesperson’ in Lather’s (1991, P. 47) words towards the recognition of difference. The processes of negotiation for enrolment involved both a displacement of the academics from their initial positions but also a displacement of the design team leadership from theirs. The result was not a simple accommodation or the straightforward negotiation of concessions but rather the redevelopment of the underpinning discourse with impacts for the roles and self conceptions of all parties to the agreement.
The conditions for the negotiation of this agreement and the enrolment of the design team were twofold. The first condition was the availability of time and space for negotiation. The regular meetings of the team provided this over the duration of the project. The second was willingness on the part of the members of the group to engage in negotiation.

All members of the final team, who were enrolled to the conception of the problem outlined above, fell into three of the role categories described in Chapter 4 at the start of the initiative with movement towards a different category through the impact of their engagement in the project. At the start, the design team leaders might best be categorised as harmonisers in that they all sought some form of consensus or reconciliation of views between the corporately set directions and those of local staff. All three favoured participative and conversational modes as a means to find consensus. The processes of negotiation with academics within the team moved these participants towards the role conception that more closely resembled that of interpreter described in Chapter 4. In this view there is greater recognition of the mosaic of different languages and cultures that make up organisations and a desire to find ways to preserve this diversity. The achievement of enrolment to the corporately driven idea of a capability based curriculum involved collaboration on a process that privileged the right of the local disciplines to make sense of corporate directions in their own terms and to make the nature of their sense making the subject of dialogue.

In one significant way, the role developed by the team leaders was not identical to that of the interpreter. This was not a case of a self authorised agency running between cultures and speaking for each to the other. In this instance, the role was one of engaging in a direct negotiation as one party with a particular discursive construction of the task and another with a different discursive construction. Translation was not through a third party but in a forum where each group spoke for itself.

The academics who made up the final team fell into two categories. Those who approached the project as intermediaries sought, in a manner similar to the design team leaders, to reconcile the corporate directions with the concerns of colleagues for autonomy and discretion in their work. Their respect for the local variants of practice stimulated the negotiation processes and the movement towards the interpretive role for all parties. Those who approached the work as swimmers entered the dialogue with an awareness of the corporate teaching and learning frameworks and willingness to find ways to locate their own work within what were seen as loose policy directions.

The achievement of consensus in this instance required the removal of two initial members of the design team whose orientation was as policy reconstructionists. For these staff the
If, as the example of the design team suggests, enrolment is a process of mutual displacement or translation through the development of a new and explicit discourse, ways of establishing the conditions for enrolment across all the interested agents need to be created. Where role constructions include those that preclude negotiation, such as strategic actors, this will be especially difficult.

**Transformative redefinition**

The critique presented above is provided as a basis for understanding the researched phenomenon in a new way that suggests the possible conditions for change towards more productive and participative forms of social practice. This is the stage called transformative redefinition in critical management research described in Chapter 2. Suggestions for change contained within the empirical data and those that arise from this critique are presented in the Epilogue along with reflections on the implications of these suggestions for my practice as a staff member supporting teaching change projects and final thoughts on the methodology used in this study.
Epilogue

REFLECTIONS FOR PRACTICE

Suggestions for new forms of organisational action
Ideas for alternative practices from the interviews following the completion of the project described in the previous chapter identify possibilities for transformative redefinition in two major but related categories. The first category addresses the ways in which innovation projects are set up within the structures of the organisation and the second suggests necessary characteristics of the processes used during the project for successful innovation.

The organisation of change projects
Comments in the interviews concerning the first category described the weaknesses of current arrangements as a form of organisational fragmentation. In David’s words, alternatives need to address the ‘issue of vertical fragmentation, which I think can be linked to bureaucracy, and also horizontal fragmentation. Within tertiary institutions, people are there because of their specialisation and there tends to be horizontal fragmentation which creates boundaries and barriers.’ The fragmentation of the organisation leads to isolation of staff at all levels and makes them fearful. ‘I think in many cases it’s because people aren’t exposed to alternatives’ (David).

A consequence of corporate fragmentation was described by some participants as the necessary failure of attempts to control the process of innovation from levels above those responsible for the project. This separation between authority and responsibility was described as counterproductive and led to suggestions that the organisation directly fund project teams and, therefore, ‘put responsibility in the hands of those who are responsible for the outcomes’ (Frank). Project teams, according to Frank,

… shouldn’t be beholden to two or three rungs up the ladder, to get things done. I mean so that they don’t fail because the messages change once they get up there and they get told to do something different.

This alternative, whilst seductive, overlooks one of the key lessons from the analysis of this case through the lens of organisational power circuits. Changes to the production of teaching in the circuit of system integration can never be simply educational matters with impacts confined to the roles of academic staff. The change of curriculum approach required in this
teaching change project was clearly revealed as a ‘structural power question’ (Frank). The changes generated through the innovation not only affected the ways academic staff constructed the meaning of their work and understandings of organisational membership, but, of necessity, had implications for those of their supervisors. To separate changes in teaching production in the circuit of system integration and its consequent impacts in the circuit of social integration from the circuit of episodic agency power is to void this circuit of any meaning at all. Any innovation will challenge the existing relations of episodic agency power and these challenges need to be addressed in any alternative innovation approach.

**Processes of transformation**

The second suite of ideas for alternative organisational practices from within the empirical material suggests that the way to address fragmentation, to bridge between constituencies is to ‘talk and talk and keep on talking’ (Helen). The forms that such talk might take within a managerialised organisational context become the critical question. Gergen (1992, p. 216) working from a postmodern theoretical position on organisation has suggested that to achieve new forms of talk, ‘requires a move away from modernist organizational concepts’ as the grand narrative generates ‘zero-sum conflicts and suppresses a multitude of alternative voices.’

I noted at the outset of this study that its intentions were to ‘point towards practical strategies’ rather than propose utopian plans for organisational redesigns. This approach requires that suggestions for alternative practices acknowledge the likely continuation of forms of pyramidal positional authority within universities and seek ways to modify, rather than replace, the corporate cascade of direction from the top of the pyramid. This is a search for ways to acknowledge Kevin’s suggestion that ‘it just isn’t sometimes smart to start top down’ and Ian’s characterisation of the current enactment of these systems as ‘cascading irresponsibility’. Gergen (1992, p. 222) suggests that even working for change within existing frameworks will ‘threaten the power base of the organisation as constituted’ but has the potential to ‘set in motion a process by which power will be reconstituted – but now with a broader social network.’

In the creation of alternative forms, emphasis needs to be given to disrupting the taken for granted forms of consensus and the sedimented practices within specific groups or units by bringing these into a productive relationship with those of others, such that displacements result and transformation is achieved through mutual displacements.
**Addressing multiple interpretations**

The Bachelor of Professional Studies project was vexed by lack of clarity concerning the strategic directions of UTech and the multiple interpretations made by separate and different constituencies resulting in different translations of its meaning and different determinations of appropriate project directions. An alternative to the separate interpretations by line management and the project leaders and team seen in this project would be a series of forums with overlapping membership where both the generation and interpretation of the strategy could proceed.

The organisation's Teaching and Learning Strategy, in this context, would constitute a guiding framework only with the expectation that it would require interpretation for any specific project and that time and effort to do so would be made available as the first stage of a project commenced. The strategy in this view would not be considered as universal, providing strong and rational leadership for all occasions but as a starting point for dialogue with the situated rationalities of different organisational units and groups in relation to specific initiatives.

For such forums to be of value they would need to be focused on specific activities or tasks rather than be general and their membership would need to cross the boundaries between groups with differently constituted interests. From the perspective of the Bachelor of Professional Studies, membership would need to include senior managers from the Division, line managers, support staff and academics.

**The roles of representatives in change projects**

As the members of any such a forum would be representatives of interest groups, a process would need to be developed such that the representatives, in fact, represent the interests of their constituencies. Examples from the Bachelor of Professional Studies where the representativeness of individuals was questioned include the Dean as representative of senior management and the academic members of the design team as representatives of academics from their Schools.

In a complex environment being a representative is not simple. The necessary displacements of the representatives from their starting positions, through their enrolment to a shared construction of the initiative in focus within a cross boundary project group, mean that their starting understandings will change and the same displacements need to be reflected within their constituencies in an iterative process where the various views inform each other. Being a representative can never be a simple process of reporting back but, in this form of dialogical development, would need to be one that engendered transformations
of both project participants and those they represent drawing upon the developing insights of each group.

In the words of Ian, the creation of the necessary displacements requires that a persistent invitation to participate be offered alongside a requirement to do so. Displacement is a process of learning and the experience from the design team shows that discursively constructed categories of work identity are not fixed but rather subject to a process of continuous creation that is reliant on access to and engagement with alternate discursive frameworks. The design team’s engagement with the literature of capability was essential to achieving the needed displacements that resulted in a new understanding of the capability dimension of the initiative for all design team participants. Access to and immersion in alternative discursive frameworks needs to occur throughout the organisation. Frank’s words with respect to the Deans might be taken to refer to all constituencies in relation to the discourses that are outside their experience.

So I think any Dean needs to not just accept something they don’t understand, because they won’t be able to actively work within their faculty to make it successful if they don’t understand it, and if they’re going to oppose it, they need to oppose it at the university level. So I think there is no way out except for the Deans to engage in a serious and substantial program of investigation of what the teaching and learning issues are in a capabilities-driven curriculum, and to come out understanding and take a position on it.

**Approaches to keeping different value positions in focus**

For any forums of the type described to be successful there needs to be an environment where all positions are acknowledged to have value. Suggestions from the empirical material concerning ways to maintain a focus on the value of difference throughout a project include the explicit incorporation of reflective sessions alongside task based ones and the use of a ‘project scholar’ whose role it is to act as the group’s mirror and reflect to it the history of its deliberations and the issues it continues to face. Helen suggested of the Bachelor of Professional Studies that the task based work was valued but the need to reflect on and explicitly address underlying differences could have been more strongly developed.

One of the possibilities with the Bachelor of Professional Studies could have been to have had that task group coming out of that and reflecting on the process in a different forum. Saying ‘Look, we’ve had half a dozen meetings, what’s happening here?’

On a longer term basis the role of project scholar might allow individuals to participate in the forums of groups outside their own unit and from significantly different interest groups. This
participation as observer and project historian would open the organisational doors of one section of the organisation to another, increase awareness of alternate organisational roles and identity constructions and decrease the isolation of Division staff observed in the Bachelor of Professional Studies.

The forms of talk, suggested in all the forums described, need to recognise the inevitability of multiple discourses, determination of interests and modes of rationality within any organisation and to see this heterogeneity as a source of organisational vitality.

Bakhtin (1981) developed the concept of heteroglossia to denote the inevitability and potential of multiple languages

... all languages of heteroglossia, whatever the principle underlying them and making each unique, are specific points of view on the world, forms for conceptualising the world in words, specific world views, each characterized by its own objects, meanings and values. As such they all may be juxtaposed to one another, mutually supplement one another, contradict one another and be interrelated dialogically (pp. 291-292).

The form in which they might ‘mutually supplement one another’ he termed a ‘double voiced discourse’ (Ibid, p. 324), a discourse that serves two speakers at the same time such that the direct intentions of the person who is speaking and the refracted intentions of the other are dialogically related and internalised. The concept of a double voiced discourse resonates with the experience within the design team, where the discourse of capability was enriched through the refraction of the voices of academic representatives with their situated concerns, into the more generalised theoretical starting point. The potential and necessity in educational change projects to develop such double voiced discourses is that educational discourses might be altered and enriched through the refraction of business or other discursive concepts and vice versa generating a new discourse.

The possibility of such double voiced discourses developing requires that all constituencies within the university approach the activity of innovation differently from the approach evidenced in the Bachelor of Professional Studies. Managers must relinquish the desire to control decision-making and the ideal of the permanent, unitary, organisational vision based on a common language. This requires the reform of the discursive category of strategic actor from one based on compliance with hierarchical directions to one which involves engagement in practices of interpretation so that initiatives from the top might be developed effectively through interaction with others. Academics and support staff must relinquish the right to speak only the language of their most favoured professional discourse and willingly engage in practices of local meaning making that are open to the perspectives of others.
Local perspectives must enter the public sphere of the organisation and it, in turn must be open to them (Gergen 1992). This requires the reform of the discursive category of policy reconstructionist so that dismissive and subversive behaviours are turned towards the collective construction of interpretations for specific tasks.

This is difficult terrain. The forms of dialogue suggested here would produce constant challenges to the operation of the university. They would take time; time that might be considered a waste by many. They would require constant vigilance to maintain openness to the discourses of others and a belief in the potential for one’s own position to be enriched through the processes of translation into and from other discourses. Eco (2003, p. 5) encapsulates the potential and tensions inherent within this position as a translated author when he notes,

> I have always been torn between the need to have a translation that respected what I believed to be my intentions, and the exciting discovery that my text, independently on my intentions, could elicit unexpected interpretations and be in some way improved when it was re-embodied in another language (Ibid, pp. 5-6).

The Bachelor of Professional Studies makes a compelling case for such approaches despite their difficulties. The alternatives would appear to be continued dissonance, distress and the failure of innovations to achieve their potential. The tensions between discourses will never be overcome. They need to be negotiated and renegotiated for each initiative. Rather than the unified and rational organisation these approaches require a form of organisational solidarity based upon a community who agree to work together, despite having little in common and seek limited and provisional forms of agreement and action within specific contexts and for specific purposes.

The analysis presented in Chapter 7 and suggestions for transformative redefinition above suggest some key foci when innovation projects are contemplated.

**Implications for the organisation of change projects**

First, ensure that the organisation of the initiative does not exclude any key participants such that the enrolment of one group to a project necessarily implies the exclusion of another.

Second, in recognition that any innovation will involve displacements (or learning) for the participants and transformations of their starting constructed work identities, make provision for this learning to include staff not directly involved but for whom the innovation has implications. This will include both management and academic staff.
Implications for the processes of change projects

Third, in recognition of the impossibility of controlling the interpretation of meaning, allocate time and privilege the need to determine the interpretation of strategy for each task and in each context.

Finally, in recognition of the necessary vitality that accrues through the productive exploration of difference, make this an explicit part of the innovation agenda and establish forums for its exploration.

This research was designed to explore the ability of concepts of discursively constructed work identities and relational concepts of power to shed light on current practices of teaching change and suggest direction for the future. There is no suggestion that these are the only theoretical lenses of value, however, the analysis and suggestions for change presented above suggest that the remote and distancing language of these discourses has the benefit of depersonalising what is often, in practice, a confusing and emotional experience to allow the effects of power and the constraining patterns of behaviour that result to be revealed. In particular, behaviour which was experienced by participants as heavy handed managerialism or as unjustifiable resistance are revealed as the result of the ways in which the innovation was set up, with the resultant separation of the circuit of episodic agency power from the other circuits.

The suggestions for transformative redefinition that have emerged from this study focus on the need to create alternative forums, different kinds of productive organisational talk that bridge between different roles and recognise the value of and build upon different discourses and constructed work identities in arriving at new conceptions of tasks and the most fruitful activities to achieve them.

Implications of the research for my own practice and that of support staff

In addition to the suggestions for different forms of organisational practice outlined above, in the Prologue I posed the more personal question of how I might work with integrity when worlds collide within the organisation. Earlier in this text I described the role constructions I observed in my own practice as those of the 

harmoniser/interpreter or the policy reconstructionist. The analysis of the Bachelor of Professional Studies suggests that none of these role constructions is adequate to the task and that a new conception is required to exploit the possibilities of different forms of dialogue and action.

One key to understanding the characteristics of the required role lies in the recognition that there is no possibility of a position outside of power; no possibility of a role in which neutral
facilitation is an option. In this context, the role of interpreter as described in Chapter 4 can be seen to be untenable, as this is a role predicated on the interpreter remaining outside of power, offering apparently objective translations from one language to another. The task cannot be one of interpreting one culture to another but of bringing all parties together so that they may negotiate for themselves. Rather than the vision of a mosaic of cultures traversed by the interpreter, the need is for a place where different constituencies can speak for themselves.

A second understanding that suggests the unviability of the role of harmoniser is that agreement on an approach to change for any specific initiative does not result from the harmonisation of different perspectives through the negotiation of compromise, but rather through a generative or creative process, where a conversation across differences results in a new conception of the task and an enrichment of the discourses that inform all starting positions.

Finally, the policy reconstructionist role is predicated on a presumed continuing inability of the organisationally dominant discourse to be modified through interaction with currently marginalised discourses. This research has been predicated on seeking approaches to overcome the oppositional divisions that currently vex change projects. Continued advocacy of this subversive role would represent the failure to find alternatives.

In developing a new practice that recognises my own ‘powerful’ investments in my role in supporting teaching change projects, it is essential to understand myself as a participant, amongst participants, engaged in the construction of new forms of organisational meaning and membership. Two key aspects emerge from the research that might differentiate my participation from that of others. First I, or other teaching and learning support staff, need the ability to engage others in the discourses of education while remaining open to the ways in which these discourses might be altered and enriched through their intersections with alternative discourses. Secondly I, or other support staff, may take a leading role in making the processes of meaning creation an explicit concern of the conversation. This might involve a willingness, at least initially, to ‘go first’ in contributing reflections upon process in relation to one’s own declared investments and to encourage the maintenance of reflective conversations during the course of a project.

The second aspect of a potential role in particular, is a way of understanding how the search for equilibrium first highlighted in my description of the program renewal game in the Prologue might be achieved. I described this aspiration for equilibrium as ‘the achievement of “balance” between all players through a process of constant adjustment within an open
ended and ill defined terrain.’ This research suggests that the tension can never be permanently overcome but that acceptance of this and an explicit focus on the processes of constant adjustment may lead to creative and vital outcomes for the organisation always understood as provisional and situated.

**Implications of the research for critical management methods**

Finding methods that would allow me to bring the subjective and intersubjective data from the world of organisational experience, with its narrative reasoning, into a productive relationship with the philosophical and sociological orientations of critical theory and its logico-scientific reasoning, has been a significant concern of the research presented here. Similarly, finding representational forms that adequately recognise the voices of participants in organisational life while making this data accessible for analysis has been another. In Latour’s words, the study has been a labour to find ways to ‘pack the world into words’ (1999, p. 24).

While the analysis of interviews used in case study one followed well trodden paths in research, the preparation of the ‘insightful’ and critical texts for the analysis of the ethnography required the development of new tools to bring the extensive and complex data from the change project into a form where emerging patterns might be seen and tested. The partial ethnographies typically used in critical management research are full transcripts of single meetings or the like where no reductions are needed, hence there is little guidance in the literature.

The methods I used to reduce the mass of data from field notes and interviews into a manageable form were described in Chapter 2. The experience of using these processes, which I referred to as a series of translations, and of presenting the findings, has revealed some key features and outcomes valuable in assessing their effectiveness.

One of the key tensions in reducing the mass of data for analysis was the fear that such reduction would mean that the voices of the many participants and the richness of their experiences would be concealed. In the interpretivist tradition the desire to produce evocative texts has a strong attraction and *reductionism* is often associated with narrow scientific approaches; the word used as a pejorative. The corollary of this position, also highlighted in Chapter 2, is that interpretivist work can remain at the level of description or evocation and not connect with broader social or theoretical concerns.

In the experience of this research my desire to retain the richness of experience meant that I first produced a narrative, impressionist tale as the form of representation. It was ethical
concerns associated with insider research that sent me looking for an alternative rather than
the desire for stronger analysis, and yet, the further reduction this required had the effect of
revealing more clearly the patterns that remained concealed within the linear, time bound
impressionist tale. As Latour (1999, p. 30) noted, the representations we construct of the
world through a series of reductions have the paradoxical effect of seeming ‘always to push it
away, but also bring it closer’. The final form of representation presented in this thesis had
the effect of giving greater visibility to the patterns of behaviour to be found in the data by
breaking the nexus between chronological time and events and allowing the parts to be
‘suffled’ around, matched with others distant in time and tested against each other. The
reduction of the data allowed the obscuring effect of the mass of events to be removed and
the theoretical lenses in use to become an alternative form of background against which
different relationships could be seen. The jettisoning of the narrative form also had the effect
of revealing more clearly to me, the investments I maintained in ‘looking good’ in the story
and required that I face and understand my own role more reflexively.

In a process of serial reductions the basis of each reduction and their relationships become
the critical concern for rigour. My experience in this research has highlighted that the
frameworks for ensuring that pertinent features are preserved in each translation should be
found in the data itself. As an example, my reduction of the mass of field notes to a sequence
of specific, critical events was determined by the events participants identified in interviews
rather than through the imposition of some frame external to the project. In testing the validity
of such frameworks for reduction, Latour’s (1999, p.74) concept of *circulating reference*
is pertinent. This suggests that the data reduction should be reversible, that you should ‘be able
to make your way back over your own footsteps, following the path you have just marked
out.’

In extending critical management research approaches beyond highly focussed analyses
based on full data requires both the rigorous reduction of data and its representation in ways
that preserves the richness of life. The work presented here provides some basis for
continued development of such approaches.

*     *     *

Reflecting upon method and thinking about the potential for different ways of understanding
my support role has caused me to think once again about practice and new data. I am
thinking, once again, about the Program Renewal Game and about how the results of this
research might be returned to the organisations upon which it is based.

It occurred to me that the Program Renewal Game might effectively be used to disrupt the
current practices within change projects and initiate thinking about the shortcomings of
current practices and alternative ways of working that might transcend the limits of existing practice.

The game, for example, might be played with a team that crosses the role boundaries of management, support and academic staff and be used to highlight the assumptions we make about the role definitions and identity constructions others bring to the change project. This explicit focus on differences, where each player speaks for another, might then be used as a reference point for a second hand of the game. In this hand, however, each player would have only one card. It would be both a simple game and the most complex game. One that allowed and required that every player speaks for themselves.

**Figure 5:** A different kind of game
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