The Professional Development and Training Needs of Literacy Coordinators in Secondary Schools in Victoria, Australia

An exploration of the skills and knowledge required by Literacy Coordinators to successfully manage literacy programs in secondary schools in Victoria, Australia

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I would like to acknowledge the support and advice provided by my supervisor Associate Professor Heather Ferhing throughout this study. I thank the six Literacy Coordinator participants, the staff, parents and students for giving generously of their time and for letting me participate in their programs. I would also like to thank the principals of the participating schools for allowing me to enter and observe the work of the school in progress.
Declaration of Originality

This thesis does not contain material that has been accepted for any other degree in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis does not contain material previously published or written by any other person, except where due reference is given in the text.

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The Professional Development and Training Needs of Literacy Coordinators in Secondary Schools in Victoria, Australia

Abstract

The research presented in this thesis investigates the professional development and training needs of Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools in Victoria, Australia. This study augments the extensive body of research pertaining to knowledge about literacy programs, theory and pedagogy and it aims to explore a further dimension relating to the skills and knowledge that Literacy Coordinators need to acquire and apply in order to successfully manage their programs. The research paradigm of this study, as described by Guba and Lincoln (1994), uses constructivist (naturalistic) inquiry methodology and a case study approach. The collection of the data in these case studies has been achieved using a semi-ethnographic approach described by Denzin and Lincoln (2000) where the researcher observes the classroom program as a non-participant observer and engages in active collaborative reflection and analysis of the key knowledge and strategies required for successful program management, in conjunction with the Literacy Coordinator participants. This study has also employed purposeful sampling (Patton, 1990) in the selection of the Literacy Coordinator participants and their schools and incorporates the use of teacher’s voice in the construction and interpretation of key issues.

The literature review examines the conceptualisation of literacy learning with a focus on the past three decades and explores current leadership and management theory as an
integral component of program provision. A historical background to the industrial and political influences on the provision of literacy support for the purpose of raising the literacy achievement of students in secondary schools in Victoria is also provided. The value and relevance of having a theory that informs the Literacy Coordinators’ practice is explored. The importance of professional development through participant observation and shared retelling and collaborative interpretation of the events is also examined. The case studies highlight the need for ongoing training in program design and diagnosing student needs. They also highlight the importance of training for the leadership component of the role.

The data collection involved six school sites and six Literacy Coordinators employed in secondary schools in the Northern metropolitan region of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia. To facilitate the triangulation of information additional data was collected. This data included key informant interviews, curriculum and strategic planning documents and program materials.

A number of key skills and knowledge criteria emerged as key factors in successful program management. They include the need for time and appropriate resources to effectively manage the program; the need for Literacy Coordinators to be trained in selecting and designing content to meet the needs of their students, the need to master pedagogical knowledge related to literacy program provision and the need for training in the use of testing instruments and interpretation of testing data. Other key knowledge and skill requirements include training in management, the ability to develop effective
partnerships and the ability to build and maintain teams. Recommendations for enhancing professional practice flow from this thesis; they have most relevance to Literacy Coordinators and other program leaders and for principals, policy makers and tertiary educators.
Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 The focus

This research aimed to identify the professional development and training needs of Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools in Victoria, Australia.

My research question was:

- What does a Literacy Coordinator in a secondary school in Victoria need to know and be able to do, in order to successfully manage the literacy program in his/her school?

My sub questions were:

- What experiences have highlighted, for Literacy Coordinators, the key skills and knowledge that they believe are important to the successful performance of their role?
- How might these skills and knowledge be shared with others in, or aspiring to, a similar role?
- How might the skills and knowledge be developed and communicated to others?

The key participants in this research were six practising, experienced Literacy Coordinators in six Victorian secondary schools in the metropolitan area of Melbourne. My intention was to observe and explore through discussion with the Literacy Coordinators, the key skills and knowledge that the Literacy Coordinators
employ in the design and management of their programs. My purpose was to identify the key skills and knowledge areas which might inform the professional development and training needs of Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools in Victoria. The assumption being that no single program or approach would necessarily provide all the answers. However, common themes emerging from these case studies might provide indicators of possible components of professional development and training needs in areas such as diagnosing student needs, management, organization and program design.

1.2 The significance of the study

This study aimed to identify important issues related to training and professional development for practising and aspiring Literacy Coordinators in Victoria. Furthermore, the results will be beneficial to teacher training providers such as schools of education in universities preparing prospective teachers for the profession and developing in-service programs for practising Literacy Coordinators. What is original about this research is that it aims to identify the key skills and knowledge required in order to successfully manage literacy programs in secondary schools in Victoria. The results of this investigation will inform the professional development and training needs of aspiring and practising Literacy Coordinators.
1.3 **Literacy Coordinators**

Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools in Victoria are four year trained secondary school teachers who are responsible for the development and management of the literacy program within their school. They are often, but not necessarily, teachers who have English Language method training. At present there is no specific qualification or training for this role. The purpose of this research was to identify the key skills and knowledge required to perform this role and to explore how the skills and knowledge might be used to provide indicators of possible components of a professional development program for aspiring/practising Literacy Coordinators in the future.

The position of Literacy Coordinator in a state secondary school is a leadership and management role involving responsibilities for developing the program and policy; providing support, advice and professional development to other teachers in matters relating to literacy; and provision of withdrawal programs and testing and monitoring of student literacy achievement. In secondary schools in Victoria, the role of a Literacy Coordinator is usually different and separate to the position of English Coordinator. The specific duties of Literacy Coordinators and the programs that they manage vary from school-to-school according to the perceived needs of the school and its prevailing philosophy; the philosophy of the Literacy Coordinator, the needs of students, availability of time and funding, and the school’s goals and priorities.
The role of the Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools in Victoria is to assess and identify students in need of support because they are not coping with the demands of the mainstream language program/the literacy demands of secondary schooling. Literacy Coordinators provide withdrawal/classroom based literacy support; develop and manage the literacy program budget and resources; recruit, train and supervise literacy aides and tutors; liaise with parents, administration, the school community and other program leaders in the school; develop and maintain support networks with professional bodies outside the school and provide professional development and support to classroom teachers in the area of literacy strategies across the curriculum.

The role of the Literacy Coordinator in secondary schools in Victoria is thus different to the role of the English Coordinator who is seen to be responsible for the management of the mainstream English language program. The English Coordinator manages program components which include: Text study, grammar, comprehension and spelling, oral literacy, writing in different styles and for different purposes and audiences, and the provision of language based elective programs within the mainstream program in the English Key Learning Area (KLA). Although many aspects of their duties may overlap, the roles are perceived in secondary schools to be separate and at both school level and across the state, when advertised, they are deemed different roles.

The role of Literacy Coordinator exists almost universally throughout the secondary school sector in Victoria. Recognition of this role and the need for literacy support programs is inherent in the funding that both State and Commonwealth
governments provide for the development of programs and initiatives at school, regional, State and Commonwealth levels. Literacy initiatives include funding for whole school programs designed to improve literacy across the school, or for targeted groups within the school and across the state. Targeted groups may include students in the Middle Years of schooling who are experiencing difficulties, disadvantaged boys, indigenous students, students from Non-English speaking backgrounds and students undertaking pre-vocational preparation programs. Recent examples of these are: Innovations and Excellence Funding, (Department of Education & Training, Victoria, 2002); Access to Excellence (Department of Education & Training, Victoria, 2001).

Literacy Coordinator positions are advertised across the state and the holder is selected as a result of being the person who best fits the pre-determined criteria for the role. These criteria are based on the Professional Standards as established in the Professional Recognition Program (Department of Education, Victoria, 1996), which are skills and propensity criteria that all teachers must meet depending on the position and level to which they are appointed. The chart below demonstrates the professional standards required for appointment to a Leading Teacher position.
1. Demonstrate exemplary teaching and learning performance

2. Demonstrate a strong commitment to personal leadership growth

3. Provide high level educational leadership in the school community and beyond

4. Build and maintain effective teams and develop cooperative working relationships that promote excellence in teaching and learning within the educational and broader community

5. Initiate, plan and manage significant change in response to new educational directions, and manage the planning, development, implementation and evaluation of curriculum policy and programs

6. Demonstrate a high level of ability to articulate educational issues and perspectives in communication with colleagues and others

**Figure 1.** Summary of the professional standards required for appointment to the position of Leading Teacher [Literacy Coordinator] in Victorian secondary and primary schools (Department of Education, Victoria, 2007)


The specific content and approach of literacy programs in secondary schools in Victoria, varies from school-to-school, but it almost always includes components of support and remediation for students experiencing difficulties with the demands of secondary education, especially in the areas of reading, writing, spelling and comprehension. These needs are often addressed via one or more of the following, depending on the availability of human and financial resources and the goals and priorities of the school. They include; withdrawal programs, in class support
programs, classroom support provided by tutors or aides, team teaching and individually tailored programs targeted to the student’s specific needs.

1.4 The political background

The challenges faced by Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools in Victoria, when developing and managing programs to meet the needs of students experiencing difficulties with the literacy demands of secondary education, have been an issue throughout the latter half of the twentieth century. These issues and the professional development and training needs of teachers in the role of Literacy Coordinator continue to be an issue at present. Anstey and Bull (1996) have explored the historical development of literacy in the past millennia and have shown how the definition of what it means to be literate has changed according to the social, political and economic mandates of the times. In the past two centuries, the definition of what it means to be literate has evolved from simply being able to read passages from the Bible and sign one’s name, to being able to read, write, speak, comprehend, critically evaluate and respond to the arguments and ideas of others and apply multimedia and information technologies related to communication in education, the workplace and everyday life.

Education has historically served the interests of the prevailing political and economic power groups in society. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, it was necessary to be able to read and write for the purpose of being able to follow directions in industrial contexts such as knowing how to fill in forms and read
operational manuals. In a society that is language focused and increasingly technical, literacy has remained a major concern for both State and Commonwealth governments in Australia.

Literacy Coordinators in State secondary schools are usually Leading Teachers or Expert Teachers (see Appendix 13). This means that they were selected as a result of being the person who best fitted the criteria for the role. People appointed to Leading Teacher positions in secondary schools in Victoria, are selected primarily on the basis of their demonstrated abilities as exemplary classroom teachers. Other selection criteria include their demonstrated ability to lead teams, manage projects, collaborate with members of the school community and the ability to support other teachers in the performance of their duties and in their professional development at the whole school level.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Victoria has undertaken to improve educational outcomes for students by improving the quality of teacher training and through ongoing professional development of teachers in the profession. Responsibility for their ongoing professional development has largely been left to the teacher via the implementation of annual teacher appraisals and the mandating of on-going professional development prescribed by the Victorian Institute of Teaching; the Department of Education, Victoria, June 2007 Student learning policy, Background paper, and in the Ministerial Blueprint for Government Schools (Minister of Education and Training, Victoria, 2003). All teachers in secondary schools in Victoria, Australia are encouraged to identify the skills that they need to improve in order to support their classroom teaching, their leadership responsibilities...
within the school and their career goals. The commitment by government to the improvement of teacher professional development makes this research timely.

There are a number of important differences in the role of Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools in Victoria compared with those in the primary school sector. A crucial difference is that in primary schools, all teachers are prepared for teaching literacy as part of their pre-service teacher education. Until recently, secondary school teachers have not been trained in literacy teaching strategies such as knowing the various techniques for teaching spelling and decoding or what processes are best suited for students experiencing difficulties such as hearing or visual impairment, cognitive processing difficulties, auditory lag and emotional issues or skill deficits due to a disrupted education. An individual undertaking the role of Literacy Coordinator in the secondary school sector needs to be trained in the essential knowledge and pedagogy in order that she/he may develop a quality program and in order to support other teachers and the students in their program.

In the past two decades Victorian secondary schools have also undergone significant changes in the degree of autonomy that they command in relation to the structure and content of their curriculum. Mandated curriculum structures such as the Curriculum Standards Frameworks 11 (Board of Studies, Victoria, 2000), the Victorian Certificate of Education (Board of Studies, Victoria, 1990) and The Victorian Essential Learning Standards (Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority, 2005) were developed as a result of the movement towards competency and standards based curriculum which came about as a result of criticism from employer groups and tertiary institutions and
parents regarding the perceived *ad hoc* nature of curriculum content and delivery in Victoria in the last decades of the twentieth century.

1.4.1 Mandated change

Tyak (1990) has argued that the delivery of education is ultimately the responsibility of both individual schools and the government bodies that fund and grant schools the authority to operate. In the mid 1980’s in Victoria, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and the Victorian Government became increasingly concerned with establishing policies that they argued would improve both school accountability and student performance. This approach has resulted in an increasing tendency by governments to mandate both policy and curriculum in schools in Victoria. It began in 1984 with Ministerial Paper 6 (Ministry of Education, Victoria, 1984) and the Frameworks P-12 (Ministry of Education, School Programs Division, Victoria, 1988) curriculum policies, and has continued until the present with the recent implementation of the Victorian Learning Essential Standards-VELS (Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority, 2005). With each new phase, the content of curriculum, the manner in which it is assessed and the desired outcomes of learning have been increasingly prescribed by Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Victoria policy.

In order to facilitate the adoption of these policies, accountability measures such as School Charters (Department of Education, Victoria, 1993), which were renamed Strategic Plans (Department of Education & Training, 2005a), Professional
Recognition Incentives (Department of Education, Victoria, 1996) and the Blueprint for Government Schools (Minister of Education and Training, Victoria, 2003), have been developed as a way of ensuring that those in upper and middle management in secondary schools, including Literacy Coordinators, are rewarded for implementing the externally imposed changes.

Newman, King and Rigson (1997) found that there is no guarantee that externally imposed accountability measures and mandated changes will enhance school performance, or that any significant change will result. Indeed, there is evidence to suggest that if inappropriately managed, these processes may disrupt internal accountability, weaken organisational capacity and interfere with the effective management of what works well in particular schools.

The typical process for curriculum policy making in Victorian secondary schools is that the program leaders and their teams are responsible for investigating and deliberating on program initiatives and presenting them to staff and the school community for endorsement. The need for program leaders such as Literacy Coordinators to be knowledgeable about their subject matter and to be able to manage and guide program development in a manner that supports the interests of their students has always been important but has become even more so at a time when mandated processes and outcomes have become the required mode of operation.
1.5 **Rationale**

Much of the current professional development programs available to Literacy Coordinators and teachers interested in literacy program provision, tend to focus on specific teaching strategies. My aim was to explore Literacy Coordinator participants’ perceptions of the knowledge and skills required to make informed judgements about the operational requirements of their programs and the management of students and others involved in the programs. To date these skills have been gradually acquired by Literacy Coordinators through experience and through their personal commitment to developing their skills. My interest in this area of research is that of a committed teacher with more than twenty-seven years experience and someone who has held a variety of positions related to literacy program provision in many schools. I have experienced the challenges involved in initiating and providing literacy programs and have come to appreciate the importance of the role of the Literacy Coordinator in improving the quality and success of student learning and self esteem and in the maintenance of the morale and the imaginative energy of teachers and volunteers.

1.6 **Thesis organisation**

Studies such as this one which attempt to describe, interpret and thereby understand the professional development and training needs of Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools in Victoria, Australia must address several issues in order to give a contextual framework to the investigations. The present chapter introduces the
context of the study. Chapter 2 explores the relevant literature related to the topic and research question under investigation. The literature review examines five interrelated areas of investigation in order to set the parameters of the research:

- Conceptualisation of literacy
- The role of the Literacy Coordinator in secondary schools
- The historical context of literacy program provision in state secondary schooling in Victoria
- Exploration of past and present programs and initiatives
- Leadership and management theory.

The first section in Chapter 2 deals with the philosophical and pragmatic issue of addressing the use of terminology. It is impossible to define literacy without examining the definitions of literacy during key periods throughout history and critically analysing the major influential theories underlying literacy learning. The second contextual framework to be investigated is the role of Literacy Coordinators in state secondary schools. The third area encompasses the history of literacy program provision and the political and social influences in this development. The fourth parameter examines current philosophies and theory related to the role of leaders and explores different approaches to management as a key area of relevance to the successful operation of literacy programs.

Chapter 3 explicates the research methodology used in this study. As many researchers have pointed out, the type of information sought is a major factor in the choice of paradigm, and conversely, the type of information gathered is dependant on the paradigm chosen (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). To understand and describe the
professional development and training needs of Literacy Coordinators, a constructivist paradigm of inquiry was selected (Guba & Lincoln). A range of research techniques relevant to constructivist method were selected. Data gathering methods used in this study included participant and non-participant observations, extended, focused and semi-structured interviews with the teacher participants and key informants, content analysis of literacy program documents and resources, policy documents and the collection of selected student work.

Chapter 4 outlines the context of the six case studies and the participants in the study. Extended involvement with the participants influenced the decision that purposely selected case study sites and participants be chosen for this study (Patton, 1990). Six metropolitan secondary schools in Melbourne, Victoria and six case study Literacy Coordinator participants were involved in this research.

Chapter 5 describes the main findings. Four main spheres of skills and knowledge emerge from the data collected; however, these four spheres consist of a complex integration of many other influences. Summaries of findings and conclusions relating to the professional development and training needs of Literacy coordinators are identified in Chapter 6.

1.7 **Boundaries of the research**

A Doctor of Philosophy dissertation is limited by the very nature of the investigation; one person exploring an issue in a limited time frame. In addition, this research must
be contextualised to the six metropolitan Melbourne, Victoria secondary school case study sites. The data is established within the settings of the six classrooms of experienced, successful Literacy Coordinators. This is both the strength and the limitation of the constructivist inquiry approach used in this thesis. What this research does present is a comprehensive landscape of a situation at a given point in time and under the contextual restriction outlined within this thesis.

The research in this thesis is established within a constructivist paradigm using a constructivist process of inquiry. The research is theoretically contextualised by the literature review undertaken to establish the parameters of this study and by the purposeful selection of six case study Literacy Coordinators within metropolitan Melbourne, Victoria. The information generated to elucidate the research question, what are the professional development and training needs of Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools in Victoria?, was an aggregation of qualitative methods of data collection. The research investigates the range of skills and knowledge that Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools use in the successful management of their program. The findings that emerged from the data collected across the six schools highlight a number of key skills and knowledge. Recommendations for changing practice and supporting the needs of aspirant and practising Literacy Coordinators stem from this study.
Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction: Context and parameters

In order to identify the professional development and training needs of Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools in Victoria, Australia it is important to establish the contextual factors in such a study. This literature review examines five interrelated areas of investigation in order to set the parameters of the research:

- Conceptualisation of literacy
- The role of the Literacy Coordinator in secondary schools
- The historical context of literacy program provision in secondary schooling in Melbourne, Victoria
- An exploration of past and present programs and initiatives.
- Leadership theory

The first section of this chapter explores the definition of literacy and the role of the Literacy Coordinator. Anstey and Bull (1996) have described the historical development of the concept of literacy in Western society over the past two centuries and have found that the concept of what it means to be literate has evolved according to the prevailing cultural context and the political and historical mandates of the times. In the last three decades of the twentieth century and in the beginning of the twenty first century it can no longer be taken for granted that literacy has one common meaning among educators and the community in general. Anstey and Bull suggest that “all teachers [and program leaders such as Literacy Coordinators] need to have a theory about learning that informs their practice” (p. 6). The development of a theory about
what happens in literacy contexts in classrooms is dependent on the pedagogical and content knowledge that the Literacy Coordinator has acquired regarding how language and literacy is learned and assessed. Good management and sound leadership is at the heart of any successful program and so the role of Literacy Coordinators and current theories of leadership are an essential component of this inquiry and are examined in this literature review as is the influence of the political and educational contexts underpinning the way literacy programs have been funded and supported in Victorian secondary schools in the last three decades. The final section of this literature review explores the breadth and scope of past and current research and initiatives into the professional development and training needs of Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools in Victoria, Australia.

2.2 Defining Literacy

Anstey and Bull (1996) have explored the concept of what it means to be literate and have found that the definition has varied considerably throughout history. In Cicero’s time a literate person was someone who was ‘learned’. In the Middle-Ages a ‘Litteratus’ was someone who could read Latin. According to the Oxford Dictionary the term ‘literacy’ first appeared in English in the early 1800s when at that time, to be literate one had to be able to write one’s own name and be able to read out loud from the Bible. In the 1950s a person was considered literate if they could “with understanding, both read and write a simple sentence on his/her own life” (Gill, 1993, p. 13).
In the mid to late twentieth century, governments in the western world were inclined to define literacy from a functional perspective. Literacy was thus seen as “an ability to successfully take part in everyday life and being able to read at a certain level, usually grade level” (Anstey & Bull, 1996, p. 39). In the 1970s UNESCO began using the concept of ‘functional literacy’ a term which encompassed the notion that the teaching of reading and writing should be integrated with occupational training and the two activities should not be conducted separately or disassociated in time from each other (UNESCO, 1970).

In the last decades of the twentieth century, the definition of literacy has evolved beyond the perception that literacy was a set of discrete skills used to create and decipher text. Literacy began to be interpreted as an active, dynamic and interactive process which can be used to extract meaning from and to build meaning around written texts. Court (1991) describes this facet of literacy as a state of being and a set of capabilities that enable the individual to have greater self determination, to think more critically and in a more informed manner and to learn vicariously from the experiences of others.

…the literate individual is able to utilise the interior world of self to act upon and interact with the exterior structures of the world around him in order to make sense of self and other (p. 4).

A further dimension of literacy has emerged as a result of the impact of information technology and the increasing use of multimedia such as video, film, mobile telephones and the use of computer software and hardware for the purpose of research and communication. Snyder (1996) has described the impact of information technology on teaching and learning and on communication in general as follows:

…a period of transition from a modern industrial society in which the principal mode of literate exchange is a book, to a post industrial society in which the principal mode of exchange is the evanescent video display terminal (p. 34).
It can be seen that the definition of what constitutes literacy and how it can be measured has varied significantly throughout history. In recent decades the definition of literacy has continued to evolve as a result of the development of different cultural and technological concepts of literacy. It has also altered in response to the way individual stakeholders such as teachers, parents and the government agencies responsible for the management of education perceive it to be. The definition of literacy as documented in the Board of Studies, Victoria: Curriculum Standards Framework 11 (Board of Studies, Victoria, 2000), which was the mandated curriculum planning and policy blueprint for use by teachers and program leaders in all State schools in Victoria, Australia from 1995 to 2005 is the definition adopted for the purposes of this study:

> Literacy involves speaking, listening, reading, writing and thinking within a cultural context. It enables a user to recognise and select language appropriate to different situations (Board of Studies, Victoria, 2000, p. 9).

In 2005 the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority, 2005) replaced Curriculum Standards Framework 11 (Board of Studies, Victoria, 2000) as the mandated curriculum structure for teaching and learning in the compulsory years of schooling which encompass the first year of primary schooling through to Year 10. At the time that this research was completed in 2007, the Board of Studies, Victoria definition of literacy as quoted above remained the official definition even though a revised version was being prepared for publication.

### 2.3 The role of the Literacy Coordinator

The role of the Literacy Coordinator in Victorian secondary schools is to manage the school’s literacy program. Depending on the school’s objectives the role may include;
the assessment and identification of students in need of support; provision of withdrawal programs and classroom based programs; the development, management, implementation and evaluation of program content; the testing and tracking of student literacy achievement and the management of the program’s budget and resources. Other key managerial and leadership components of the role may include recruitment, training and supervision of literacy assistants, volunteer tutors and classroom teachers that participate in the program. Wider leadership duties within the school include reporting to administration and collaborating with school committee structures and other program leaders, teaching within the program and liaison with parents.

Beyond the school the Literacy Coordinator is responsible for the development and maintenance of support networks with professional bodies such as regional consultants, local school cluster networks and professional associations. The Literacy Coordinator is also responsible for testing and tracking the literacy achievement of all students entering the school in order to determine whether they will require support or remediation or extension, and for developing programs to meet the needs of students “at risk” of not coping or not completing their secondary education due to deficits in their literacy skills which may impede their learning, the latter being the main focus of her/his responsibilities. Although many aspects of their duties may overlap, the roles of the English (Language) Coordinator and the Literacy Coordinator are perceived in Victorian secondary schools to be separate. When advertised, they are deemed different roles.

The specific content and approach of literacy programs in secondary schools in Victoria, varies from school-to-school, but it always includes testing to identify student
needs and achievement and the development of teaching programs that will bridge the gap between skill deficit and the level of skill required for successful functioning within the student’s current Year/age level. The strategies for supporting the students will include withdrawal programs, in class support programs, classroom support provided by a tutor/teacher/aide, modification of mainstream program content and materials, and individually tailored programs targeted to meet the student’s specific needs.

The implementation of Global Budgets by the Department of Education, Victoria (Department of Education, Victoria) in 1997 enabled secondary schools in Victoria, Australia to decide what leadership and management roles are required in each school on the basis of the school Strategic Plan (Department of Education & Training, Victoria, 2005a). The Strategic Plan, previously known as the School Charter (Department of Education, Victoria, 1993) describes the school goals and priorities for each three year cycle. While there is no official position titled ‘Literacy Coordinator’ in the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Victoria, structure; Literacy Coordinator positions are identified in each school in the same way that all other leadership and responsibility roles are identified, that is, they are roles developed by the school to support the achievement of the Strategic Plan (Department of Education & Training, Victoria, 2005a). Other such roles include Curriculum Coordinator, Year Level or Sub-School Leader, Learning Area Coordinator and Daily Organiser.

Literacy has been and remains a priority within the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Victoria over the past thirty years. Appointment to a position of leadership such as Literacy Coordinator is based on demonstrated skills and merit.
and as a result of interviews where the applicant is selected in contest with other teachers. Depending on the demands of the role, a Literacy Coordinator may be either a Leading Teacher or an Expert teacher (see Appendix 13) who is given additional responsibility for the program. The Department of Education & Training, Victoria, Career and Recruitment website (Department of Education, Victoria, 2006) describes Leading Teachers as:

Leading teachers will be outstanding classroom teachers and undertake leadership and management roles commensurate with their salary range. The objective of leading teachers is to improve the skill, knowledge and performance of the teaching workforce in a school or group of schools and to improve the curriculum program of a school. Leading teachers are responsible for demonstrating and modelling an outstanding level of teaching. Leading teachers will be expected to make a significant contribution to policy development relating to teaching and learning in the school. They also manage major curriculum or student activities across the school with a high degree of independence. A leading teacher has a direct impact and influence on the achievement of the school goals. These teachers provide professional support to teaching staff. (Department of Education, Victoria, 2007b www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/hrweb/careers/teach/lead.htm retrieved, 21-7-07).

An Expert Teacher is an experienced classroom teacher whose role is described as:

The primary focus of the expert teacher is on pedagogical excellence, engagement in ongoing professional learning, acting as a role model, mentor and coach to other teachers and facilitator of the professional learning needs of others. Expert teachers demonstrate a highly skilled level of teaching and the ability to guide and assist other teachers. (Department of Education, Victoria, 2007a www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/hrweb/careers/teach/expert.htm retrieved, 21-7-07).

Figure 2 is a teacher classification structure and illustrates the position of Leading Teachers and Expert Teacher in the Victorian, State secondary school system hierarchy.
The teacher class in State Secondary schools in Victoria, comprises the following classification:

Teacher Class
- Leading teacher
- Classroom teacher
  - i) expert
  - ii) accomplished
  - iii) graduate

Instructor Class (teacher aides)
- Level 3
- Level 2
- Level 1

*Figure 2. Teacher classification structure (see Appendix 13)*

A chart illustrating the position of Leading Teachers and Expert Teachers in relation to the hierarchy in the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Victoria, can be found in Appendix 10. Literacy Coordinators are usually appointed to one or other of the two categories.

The Literacy Coordinator may be given different titles such as Student Learning Coordinator or Student Support Manager; she/he may also perform other duties such as the leadership of one or more committees in addition to the coordination of the literacy program. The scope and range of duties depend on the individual arrangements outlined in the role description and the classification level to which the teacher is appointed.

Recognition that there is a need to provide programs in schools and professional development for teachers and program leaders such as Literacy Coordinators is
demonstrated in the range of funding provided at both State and Commonwealth
government levels. In recent years the focus has been on encouraging individual
schools and clusters of schools to identify local needs and to develop programs that
meet those needs with the help of targeted grants. Examples of such grants in recent
times have included: Access to Excellence (Department of Education & Training,
Victoria, 2001a); Restart (Department of Education & Training, Victoria, 2003a). Both
include funding for developing and resourcing the program as well as for the
professional development of program leaders such as Literacy Coordinators and
classroom teachers.

In the last two decades, much of the money invested in establishing politically correct,
or mandated approaches, has frequently failed to produce sustainable programs at the
school level. Examples of this include Making a Difference (Crilly, 2004; Furniss,
1993), Helping Students to Learn (Ellison & Stewart-Dore, 1993) and Writing in the
Subject Areas (Baker & McLaughlan, 1993). All of these secondary program
approaches to the teaching and learning of literacy incorporated valuable ideas and
resources based on sound theory, however, they met with limited success in terms of
their long term viability in schools because they were perceived to be too time
consuming, too resource intensive in terms of staffing and too demanding in terms of
the impact on the timetable. Another factor in the failure to sustain these programs was
that classroom teachers perceived them to be too complicated or, in the case of other
programs, philosophically at odds with their own beliefs about literacy learning.
Ultimately, the Literacy Coordinators in this study have selected strategies and content
that made sense to them and met the needs of their students and the context in which
the learning occurred.
In the past decade there has been a focus on funding locally developed literacy programs initiatives that meet Department of Education and Early Childhood Development objectives such as facilitating successful transition to secondary schooling by raising the literacy and numeracy skill levels of underachieving students entering Year 7. The Restart (Department of Education & Training, Victoria, 2003a) program is an example of this approach. Others include programs for skilling and engaging particular cohorts such as disengaged boys via the Success for Boys (Department of Education, Victoria, 2005) initiative and the VCAL and VET programs which focus on vocational literacy and numeracy skill acquisition for students in the middle to senior years of secondary education.

At the time that I was visiting their schools, two of the Literacy Coordinator participants in this research, expressed concerns that the initiatives that they had been implementing might not continue if alternative funding was not found at the end of the Restart (Department of Education and Training, Victoria) cycle. While VCAL and VET programs have been ongoing since their initial inception in the early 1990s, most initiatives have only limited funding cycles of approximately three years, and once accessed, funding can be re-directed to other priority areas of the school at the Principal’s discretion. The move to project based funding has enabled program leaders such as Literacy Coordinators to develop programs that are better targeted to meet the needs of the students in their school. Understanding the content and pedagogy that best meets the need of individual students in particular contexts and for different purposes is an essential component in the training of Literacy Coordinators but ongoing commitment at school level and by government is an essential ingredient in ensuring
the security of the program in order to building on gains achieved and in order to enable Literacy Coordinators to provide effective and relevant support to students.

Because an essential component of accessing the funding available for program development is centred on writing successful submissions, training in submission writing budgeting, data tracking and program design would assist aspiring and practising Literacy Coordinators to access the full range of resources available to them in order to build their programs.

Traditionally, students who are suspected of having severe language disorders such as Downs Syndrome, Autism and Asperser’s Syndrome are referred to speech pathologist or psychologist employed by the school in the Catholic and Independent schools sector, and by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Victoria in the State sector. These experts diagnose the cause of literacy problems that impede student learning and make recommendations regarding programs and strategies that will facilitate that learning. Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools in Victoria are usually left to diagnose and develop the programs and the strategies for the majority of students who experience difficulty with their literacy learning but do not fall into the category of having severe language disorders.

Students categorised as having severe language disorder may be granted additional support in the form of assistance from teacher aides, targeted material resources, mainstream classroom support and focused planning time. For students with severe language disorders, Individual Learning Plans (Department of Education, Victoria,
1999), designed to identify and address the specific needs of students, are developed and reviewed on a regular basis. Students with severe language disorder usually comprise approximately one to three per cent of the total student population in any school. Hempenstall (2005) has suggested that students who do not have a language disorder, but are still in need of literacy support, comprise 10 to 30 percent of the student population in secondary schools in Victoria. Programs for these students are developed, monitored and assessed by the Literacy Coordinator. The development of Individual Learning Plans for all students receiving literacy support would help to create targeted, relevant programs, track the strategies used in addressing each student’s learning difficulty and assist in evaluating the efficacy of the program in addressing those needs. One of the Literacy Coordinator participants in this research, had attempted to take this approach in her program, through the use of Individual Learning Plans for all students in her school.

Van Kraayenoord et al. (2001) have researched the learning needs of students in the Middle Years who experience difficulty with their literacy learning, and have found that these students do not all have the same needs. Some students may be lagging in all areas of their reading, writing and understanding of text but some may read well but not spell or write accurately. Some may read and write well but do not understand what they read. Others may be lagging behind due to disruptions in their education or as a result of poor health or family circumstances. Others may suffer from a physical or cognitive dysfunction such as an inability to process concepts or have short and long term memory problems. For this reason it is essential that Literacy Coordinators are trained in diagnosis of the physical, emotional, environmental and cognitive factors that
impede student learning and that they have the skills and expertise to develop targeted programs that meet those needs.

Commonly used testing instruments such as the Developmental Assessment Resource for Teachers-DART (Forster et al., 1994), Tests of Reading Comprehension - TORCH (Mossenson et al., 2003), Progressive Achievement Tests (Burton & Mossenson, 2001) and Achievement Improvement Monitor-AIM (Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority, 2004) quantify student achievement in reading, writing, spelling and vocabulary but they do not provide information about the nature of the problem and they do not indicate what strategies need to be put in place to address those needs. It is necessary therefore for Literacy Coordinators to be trained in the use of testing instruments and the range of assessment methods including how to interpret testing data and how to construct relevant and meaningful programs for each student based on the findings of that data.

In previous years government funded, pre-packaged programs designed to provide professional development for teachers and support the needs of students experiencing difficulties with literacy learning have included Making a Difference (Furniss, 1993), Writing in the Subject Areas (Baker & McLaughlin, 1993), Helping Students to Learn (Ellison & Stewart-Dore, 1993), Making a Difference, (Crilly, 2004). These programs, while being extensive in terms of resources have met with limited success because they are expensive in terms of the amount of time required to teach them and in terms of the human resources needed to implement them. They were introduced at a time (1980s and onwards) when the general curriculum was expanding and for the most part were adopted in part rather than implemented as prescribed by the program. They also had a
one program fits all approach, much like many of the other pre-packaged private industry resources such as Corrective Reading (Engelmann, Myer, Johnson & Carnine, 1999) and Teaching Handwriting Reading and Spelling Skills-THRASS (Davies & Ritchie, 2003).

Criticism of pre-packaged program approaches to literacy support centres around issues of teacher skilling. Pre-packaged programs provide the resources for implementing and operating of the program but they do not train teacher users in the theory that underpins the resources and pedagogy, thus theorists such as Luke (1993) believe that teachers are de-skilled if they rely on this type of approach for testing, diagnosis and evaluation of student literacy learning needs and for developing programs to meet those needs.

In his discussion paper presented to the New South Wales Institute of Teachers titled The importance of Teacher Quality as a key determinant of students’ experience and outcomes, Rowe (2003) suggests that “student’s literacy skills, behaviours and experiences of schooling are influenced by their background and intake characteristics [but] the magnitude of these effects pale into insignificance compared with class/teacher effects” (p. 1). The Ministerial Committee for Education, Employment and Training (2000) outlined strategies and programs that have been employed in order to improve the literacy, numeracy and general educational outcomes for all students. Among the findings of the report it was acknowledged that “the classroom teacher is the major determinant of success in learning for students” (p. 11). Rowe (2006) found that in order to improve learning and literacy outcomes for students:

Teacher training and professional development need to be enhanced. There must also be flexibility for teachers to use their knowledge and expertise to
provide the classroom environment and instruction that meets the needs of their students” (p. 2).

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Victoria has at various times developed and promoted literacy programs and professional development packages that incorporate content and strategies that were considered excellent examples of the latest developments in literacy practice and theory at the time. The Making a Difference (Crilly, 2004) program which was initially developed in the early 1990s and recently revised, and Bridging the Gap (Department of Education and Training, Victoria, 2001b) are examples of programs that incorporated a mixture of Psychocognitive and a Whole Language approaches to literacy learning which were considered exemplary practice. While the program resources in these packages were extensive, the theory and explanation of the rationale behind the strategies were not provided, furthermore the amount of time and human resources needed to implement the programs as intended could not be sustained in terms of cost. Many teachers interpreted these attempts to provide pre-packaged programs and resources as a process that de-skills teachers. They also opposed them because they felt that those programs failed to appreciate the importance and value of the first hand knowledge that teachers have of their students and the context in which the learning occurs.

Because pre-packaged programs were detailed and process oriented, they were frequently perceived by schools to be too difficult and time consuming to implement. Time and funding were made available for training school leaders in order that they might then train others, but eventually, due to lack of understanding and the constraints of diminishing funding, if used, they were often implemented piecemeal and in many cases eventually abandoned.
A program leader such as a Literacy Coordinator who is both a classroom teacher and a mentor to other teachers in his/her school needs to be trained in and to have the ability to apply and mentor other teachers in literacy program development and pedagogy. She/he also needs to have the skills and knowledge to write submissions, develop and manage the programs and provide professional development and support and mentor staff that work within her/his program. In 2004 the Department of Education and Training, Victoria, implemented an initiative titled Teacher Professional Leave, (Department of Education & Training, Victoria, 2004) which provided teachers with time to further their knowledge and expertise via time release for formal study and research/projects. In order to qualify for this time release applicants needed to write a proposal for what they wanted to achieve and how it would benefit their school or local cluster of schools and to publish their outcomes on the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Victoria website. This initiate gave some recognition to the importance for all teachers of continuing their professional development in order to build their expertise and to develop quality programs and share their learning and expertise with others. Its limitations were that it provided only a maximum of six weeks paid leave for study and research.

2.4 The training of Literacy Coordinators

Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools in Victoria, Australia are selected primarily on the basis of their demonstrated abilities as experienced and successful classroom teachers. Other selection criteria include: demonstrated knowledge and skills in developing programs, demonstrated ability to lead teams, manage projects, collaborate
with members of the school community and the ability to support other teachers in the performance of their role and in their professional development at whole school level. Accreditation for Leading Teachers in secondary schools has been available since 1996 via the Leading Teacher Accreditation process which was initially called the Professional Recognition Program (Department of Education, Victoria, 1996). This training addresses issues of leadership but is not role specific. While there have also been many programs that provide classroom materials and program content designed to support the work of Literacy Coordinators and their staff, few, if any, of these pre-packaged programs contain comprehensive training in the key areas of the role such as assessment and identification of student needs, selection of appropriate content, management and negotiation skills, budgeting, timetabling, recruitment of volunteers and training of staff in literacy strategies. The current research is timely in that it aims to identify the key skills and knowledge content that might be incorporated into a training program for Literacy Coordinators which might include all of the identified training needs as well as examining the key skills and knowledge applied by successful Literacy Coordinators in the management of their programs.

In secondary schools, responsibility for the professional development of Literacy Coordinators has largely been left to the Principal and to the individual teacher. Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools in Victoria hold their position for the term of three to five years, afterwards, they may be re-appointed or they may be required to re-contest the position with the possibility that they might lose it to another contender. Hargraves (1995) suggests that despite the rhetoric, commitment to the ongoing professional development of teachers and program leaders has been limited in the past three decades due to the demands on the program leader’s time at school level and the
cost of training in terms of replacement teacher salaries and training program costs. This continues to remain an issue despite the renewed emphasis on teacher professional development as described in the Blueprint for Education, a planning document published by the Victorian Minister of Education and Training in 2003:

The Blueprint for Government Schools outlines seven Flagship Strategies to be implemented through 21 initiatives that will further develop a system of effective government schools, delivering improved outcomes for all students. It aims to achieve the government’s primary objective for public education in Victoria to provide all students, irrespective of the school they attend, where they live or their social and economic status, with a high quality education and a genuine opportunity to succeed. Schools will have high expectations for all learners, a shared vision and goals, effective leaders and teachers, a stimulating and secure learning environment and strong accountability (Minister of Education and Training, 2003 www.eduction.vic.gov.au/about/publications/policy/blueprint retrieved, 21-06-2007).

There are a number of important differences in the role of Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools in Victoria compared with those in the primary school sector. A crucial difference is that in primary schools, all teachers are prepared for teaching literacy as part of their pre-service teacher education. To date, prospective secondary school teachers in pre-service teacher training programs have not been trained in literacy support and assessment strategies such as knowing how to help those students experiencing difficulty with reading and spelling or knowing how to build programs for assisting students with learning difficulties or skill deficits due to a disrupted education. Some limited support is available to secondary schools in the form of visiting experts such as speech therapists and psychologists, but access to the help provided by these experts is restricted chiefly to students who are deemed to have learning disorders such as autism and other severe physical and cognitive dysfunction that grossly impair the student’s learning. These students are categorised as Language Disorder students and they are usually supported separately by Integration Coordinators and their teams who collaborate with external agencies and with the individual student’s classroom teachers.
and family to develop individualised learning programs to meet the needs of that student.

In recent years training programs for teachers undertaking the role of Integration Coordinator and Gifted Education Coordinator have been established as Graduate Diploma programs and are provided in universities throughout Australia. The limited access to trained support personnel such as psychologists and speech pathologists means that students who are not deemed to have severe language disorders but are inexperienced or fall in, or under, the 30\textsuperscript{th} percentile (Cook, 2004; Hempenstall, 2005) in their literacy skill development for their age and Year level as measured by standardised testing, are the category of student who are targeted for support in literacy programs in secondary schools in Victoria.

\section*{2.5 Mandated curriculum}

In the past two decades Victorian secondary schools have undergone significant change in the degree of autonomy that they command in relation to the structure and content of their curriculum. Mandated curriculum structures such as The Victorian Essential Learning Standards-VELS (Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority, 2005), the Curriculum Standards Frameworks (Board of Studies, Victoria, 1996a), Curriculum Standards Frameworks II (Board of Studies, Victoria, 2000) and the Victorian Certificate of Education-VCE (Board of Studies, Victoria, 1990) [The Board of Studies, Victoria is now the Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority] offered in secondary schools, were developed in response to world wide movement towards outcomes and
competency based curriculum which was first implemented in Australia in the early 1990s. The VELS curriculum was a modification of the Curriculum Standards Frameworks II and it was implemented in response to teacher perception that the Curriculum Standards Frameworks II was too prescriptive. VELS curriculum was developed in order to return a measure of flexibility to teachers and schools regarding curriculum content but its structure still prescribes desired learning outcomes and levels of achievement related to skills and knowledge for the compulsory years of education in Years Preparatory to Year 10 (see Appendix 14 for an overview of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards structure.)

The process for curriculum program development and policy making in Victorian secondary schools is that the program leaders and their teams are responsible for investigating and deliberating on program initiatives, and then presenting their proposals to the staff and the school community for endorsement via the various committee and policy structures within the school. However, not all initiatives originate from within the school. In recent years, many major curriculum initiatives have originated within the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Victoria as statements of policy and their implementation has been mandatory. This has included the implementation of compulsory literacy and numeracy testing via the Achievement Improvement Monitor-AIM (Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority, 2004) for the purpose of tracking student achievement in literacy and numeracy at key stages in their education from Years 3 to 9.
When literacy is discussed in the print and electronic media and by politicians in Victoria and nationally in Australia, it is invariably presented as problematic (falling standards) or to do with concerns relating to reading or writing and whether there are significant differences and deficits related to literacy learning based on gender differences, socio-economic circumstances, race, location and having a Non-English speaking language background (Hempenstall, 2005). Other areas of criticism relate to the lack of teacher expertise and knowledge about appropriate strategies for intervention (Cook, 2004). As a result of the need to address these perceptions both State and Commonwealth governments invariably include literacy as a priority and provide inducements to schools to address the issue via policy statements, targeted funding and program initiatives. The following is an extract taken from the Blueprint for Government Schools, a policy statement by Lynne Kosky, the Victorian Minister for Education and Training, confirming the State Government’s commitment to improving literacy standards in Victorian schools and acknowledging that there are needs to be met (Minister of Education and Training, Victoria, 2003).

Despite all that has been achieved over the past four years, we need to concentrate further upon improved learning outcomes for students. Some groups of students continue to have poor levels of literacy and other basic skills. These students can be concentrated in particular schools and particular areas of the state. They tend to have high rates of absenteeism from school and are more likely to leave school early. There are also high variations in outcomes between classes within schools and between schools with similar student populations.

2.6 Research on the professional development and training needs of Literacy Coordinators

An increasing awareness of the need to address issues related to pre-service and in-service teacher training in the area of literacy teaching and literacy program provision has evolved over the past three decades. Many researchers have investigated the adequacy of teacher professional knowledge related to literacy teaching and program development and have found that the amount of time and access to training in this area, in both pre-service teacher training and ongoing professional development has been limited and inadequate (Apple, 1983; Bullock, 1975; Cambourne, 1987; Christie, 1990; Collins, 1994; Grundy, 1994; Rowe, 2003, 2006).

Similarly, Cambourne (1987), in his report to The Australian Language and Literacy Council and National Board of Employment, Education and Training (1995), Christie (1990), Rowe (2003, 2006) and Department of Education, Victoria, June 2007 Student learning policy, Background paper have highlighted the importance of teacher quality and preparation as a key determinant of students’ experience and outcomes in schooling. They have also argued that there has been and continues to be considerable concern among teachers and those who employ them, regarding the lack of adequate access to both pre-service and ongoing professional development in this area of curriculum:

We can observe that almost all staff interviewed in the course of this inquiry expressed dissatisfaction with the present proportion of programs devoted to training in the teaching and assessment of language and literacy (Christie, 1995, p. 77).
Teacher employing authorities have echoed and supported the perception that training in diagnosing student needs and in literacy program provision has been inadequate for both classroom teachers and for those responsible for managing literacy programs.

There is a need for a significantly greater proportion of teacher preparation time to be devoted to literacy studies. At present time it is inadequate, denying teachers scope to achieve a significant depth of understanding of many aspects of literacy development (Christie, 1991, p. 77).

The Australian Language and Literacy Council and the National Board of Training (1995) and the Victorian Minister of Education and Training’s (2003) Blueprint for Government Schools and the National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy (2005) reflect and acknowledge the need for both pre-service and ongoing education of teachers in the area of literacy program provision. A similar concern for the lack of availability of suitable training programs for those undertaking the role of Literacy Coordinator has been expressed by Literacy Coordinator participants in the current study.

Luke (1993) warns that the use of curriculum packages and mandated curriculum and measurement of outcomes using standardised testing can only de-skill teachers rather than improve the quality of teaching and learning in this area of curriculum. The possible erosion of teacher skills as a result of mandated curriculum and assessment has also been debated by researchers including Apple (1983), Collins (1994), and Grundy (1994). This debate centres on the need for literacy teachers and program providers to be trained in diagnosing student needs and constructing programs that meet the individual needs of their students; issues that are central to the role of Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools.
In order to successfully fulfil the requirements of their duties, Literacy Coordinators need to be knowledgeable about recent developments in government policy, literacy program strategies and theory, be conversant with a variety of testing programs, be competent managers and be able to access and provide professional development for themselves and for other teachers. This research is both timely and appropriate in that it seeks to identify the professional development and training needs of a specific group of leaders whose role it is to provide for the needs of the students and for other staff who are required to deliver those programs within their school.

2.6.1 The attributes of expert teachers

The attributes of teachers who excel in supporting students to achieve their maximum potential has been researched by Hattie, Clinton, Thompson and Schmidt Davies (1995); Hattie (2003); Brophy and Good (1986); Darling-Hammond (2000); Hay McBer (Dfee, 2000); Bond, Smith, Baker and Hattie (2000).

Hattie (2003) suggests that it is important for educational researchers to identify defensible examples of excellence in teaching. Hattie’s definition of an excellent teacher is one who ‘makes the difference’ (p.1) in student achievement. Hattie further suggests that the skills and knowledge demonstrated by excellent teachers should inform the content of professional development programs for both pre-service and experienced teachers.

Hattie (2003) has developed a model which identifies the six key factors influencing successful student learning. They include:

- The personal attributes of the student which account for 50% of the variance in achievement. Because the correlation between the student’s personal ability and his or her achievement is high the role of the teacher is to improve the achievement of all students so that whatever the basic ability of the student might be, the teacher should be able to move him or her forward
and build and enhance his or her achievement as a result of the course of instruction the teacher provides for the student.

- Home and parental influences account for 5–10% of the variance in student achievement, therefore teachers need to be aware and sensitive to the influence of the home and family environment and how it might impact on student achievement as a result of the level of expectation and encouragement that he or she receives.

- School structures and the learning environment provided to students in the classroom account for between 5 and 10% of student achievement. Hattie (2003) acknowledges that environmental factors such as class size, location of the classrooms should be taken into consideration, but that they are not as crucial as may have been considered in the past.

- The role of the Principal is accounted for within the figures attributed to school environment, but his or her role in creating a climate of both, physical and psychological safety, and the Principal’s role of facilitating a climate of teacher discussion relating to student learning and student needs has impact on the environmental factors.

- The influence of peers accounts for approximately 5–10% of the variance in student achievement. Peers are considered to have a positive effect on student learning if they can be used as co teachers, thus reducing the dominance of the adult in the classroom.

- Classroom teachers account for 30% of the variance in student achievement. What the teacher knows, does and cares about is considered by Hattie (2003) to be a powerful influence on student achievement (pp. 1-2).

The influence of the classroom teacher is therefore the most significant factor influencing student achievement, second only to the student’s personal attributes and abilities.

Hattie (2003) has identified five major dimensions of excellent teachers whom he describes as ‘Expert’ teachers. Expert teachers can:

- Identify essential representations of their subject.
- Guide learning through classroom interaction.
• Monitor learning and provide feedback.
• Attend to the affective attributes [of students].
• Influence final student outcomes (p. 5).

Hattie (2003) suggests that the differences between the experienced teacher and the expert teacher can be found in 16 prototypical attributes of Expert teacher expertise:

i. Expert teachers have a deeper representation of teaching and learning because they can use their knowledge in a more integrated way to combine new subject matter, content and knowledge with prior knowledge; relate lesson content to other subject matter in the curriculum; and make lessons uniquely their own by changing, combining and adding to them according to their students’ needs and their own goals.

ii. Expert teachers adopt a problem solving stance to their work by using available information and data to solve problems relating to individual student performance and achievement. They take advantage of information about their students to bring new interpretations and representations of problems to light.

iii. Expert teachers can anticipate, plan and improve their classroom strategies as required by the classroom situation; that is, they are greater seekers and users of feedback information about their teaching.

iv. Expert teachers are better decision makers and can identify what is important and what is less important. Decisions about key aspects of lesson planning and execution are left flexible so that student questions can be incorporated and responded to in the context of the lesson. They are skilful in keeping the lesson on track and accomplishing lesson objectives while allowing student questions and comments as springboards for discussion. The expert teacher achieves a balance between content centred and student centred instruction.

v. Expert teachers are proficient in creating an optimal classroom climate for learning because errors are welcomed as opportunities for learning, student questioning is high, engagement is the norm and students can gain reputations as effective learners.

vi. Expert teachers have a multi-dimensionally complex perception of classroom situations because they are more effective scanners of classroom behaviour and make greater reference to the language of instruction and learning of students.
vii. Expert teachers are more context dependent and have high situation cognition because they use existing context and setting to interpret scenarios.

viii. Expert teachers are more adept at monitoring student problems and assessing their level of understanding and progress, and they provide much more relevant, useful feedback. They are able to anticipate problems and act upon the information they gather to respond to student needs. They can detect when students lose interest or when they are not understanding. They are more adept at recognising relevant from non-relevant information.

ix. Expert teachers are more adept at developing and testing hypothesis about learning difficulties or instructional strategies and they use feedback to ascertain the effectiveness of their teaching.

x. Expert teachers are more automatic and are able to respond quickly to situations as they arise.

xi. Expert teachers have higher respect for students because they can recognise possible barriers to learning and seek to overcome those barriers.

xii. Expert teachers are passionate about teaching and learning and show more emotionality about the success and failures in their work.

xiii. Expert teachers engage students in learning and develop in their students, self-regulation, and involvement in mastery learning, enhanced self efficiency, and self-esteem as learners.

xiv. Expert teachers provide appropriate challenging tasks and goals for students.

xv. Expert teachers have positive influences on student achievement.

xvi. Expert teachers enhance surface and deep learning.

2.6.2 Effective professional development for teachers

In recent years there has been a renewed focus on teacher professional development. Interventions at the structural, home, policy or school level have been found to be less significant in influencing student levels of learning and achievement when compared to the quality of the teaching provided to them and the level of expertise of the teacher. It has therefore been suggested that we need to direct attention to better preparation of teachers in pre-service training and the ongoing in-service professional development. Rowe (2003) and Hattie (2003) argue that evidence based research indicates that what
matters most with regard to student achievement is quality teaching and teaching supported by strategic training and professional development of classroom teachers.

Ingvarson (2002) advocates a profound rethinking and transformation of teacher professional learning cultures and systems. He suggests that more structured and skill based professional development programs for teachers are necessary in order that teachers and leaders are able to address both individual student learning needs and agreed learning outcomes.

Munroe (2003) has examined teacher professional development needs related to effective diagnosis and intervention for students in need of literacy support. Munroe identified a range of what he calls High Reliability Teaching Procedures which he believes are an effective means of fostering literacy learning across the curriculum. Munroe argues strongly that there is a need for training all teachers across the curriculum in High Reliability Teaching Procedures, which include training in theory and pedagogy for supporting student literacy learning. Munroe’s descriptors of High Reliability Teaching Procedures include:

- Knowledge about strategies for enhancing students’ comprehension of text.
- Use of the High Reliability Teaching Procedures on a whole class basis not only to students with literacy deficits.
- Explicit teaching of the skills related to the learning outcomes in the students’ program.
- Teacher knowledge about leading and modelling reading strategies to enhance decoding and comprehension.
- Monitoring and measurement of the application of the strategies by students.
- Teaching spelling, vocabulary and grammatical rules.
- Tracking of student achievement through regular pre and post instructional tests.

Fullan and Steigelbauer (1991) have argued that curriculum change often flounders because teachers do not implement what they learn in out of school professional development activities. Johnson (2003) suggests that what is necessary to improve opportunities for effective professional development for teachers, is ongoing, on-site, collegial learning that enables teachers to acquire new and complex teaching skills and
support that enables teachers to successfully incorporate the skills and knowledge into their repertoire of teaching practices.

Hawley and Valli (2000) suggest that effective professional development for teachers should address a range of essential criteria:

- How to address the different problems that students experience in learning.
- The different goals and standards related to student learning.
- Identification of what teachers need to learn and the processes to be utilised in the teaching and learning.
- Should provide teachers with learning opportunities that relate to their individual needs but also be organised around collaborative problem solving.
- Should be continuous and ongoing and include follow up for further learning and support from sources external to the school.
- Should incorporate evaluation of what is learnt in the professional development.
- Should provide opportunities for teachers to engage in and develop a theoretical understanding of the knowledge and skills to be learned.
- Should be integrated with a comprehensive change process that addresses impediments to, and facilitators of learning.

In a paper delivered to the Leadership in the Middle Years Forum, Johnson (2003) outlines a process for developing Cluster Professional Development Learning Teams that can be set up to operate at school or regional level. Johnson’s concept of Professional Learning Teams has been widely adopted by schools in both the State and Private School sectors in Victoria, Australia. Johnson’s (2003) model suggests that project based, action learning teams are an effective approach to professional development of teachers because they provide the opportunity for teachers to collaboratively plan action and implement classroom strategies that address real needs and improve student learning. Johnson believes that it is not enough for teachers to undertake professional development that addresses personal needs or interests alone. Cluster Professional Learning Teams aim to develop skills and pedagogy that is
targeted to address agreed needs of students in each school and provide collegiate support for collaborative implementation of the team’s goals and objectives.

Johnson (2003) identified seven characteristics of Professional Action Learning Teams:

- Staff members working together to address identified teaching and learning challenges and engage in action learning.
- Meaningful collaboration and systematic reflection so that ideas and policies are transferred into practice.
- Collective responsibility for producing more effective learning for all students regardless of who teaches them.
- The opportunity to benefit from a combination of external workplace professional learning opportunities.
- The opportunity to address the tensions inherent in the personal and professional relationships within the learning team and to avoid embattled positions.
- The experience of three forms of support; personal, professional and structural.
- Requires knowledgeable, skilled and supportive leaders, who empathise and model the importance of staff learning and who act as coordinators, advocates and facilitators, as well as encouraging team members to see themselves as leaders of change and undertake tasks accordingly.

Johnson (2003) further suggests that such teams benefit from both externally provided and work-embedded support. Because work-embedded learning alone can often fail to provide the best knowledge base and strategic support, the ability to access resources outside the school as necessary, allows teachers to gain from mentoring by experts and benefit from ongoing systematic and reflective support for accomplishing their goal.

This current research is timely in that a crucial component of the strategies used by the Literacy Coordinator participants in these case studies includes the use of Professional Learning Teams as the basis of effective teacher professional development. The outcomes of the work accomplished by the teams, the benefits to the students and the
development of excellent programs provide a strong argument for the Professional Learning Teams approach.

2.7 *The importance of knowing and having a theory about how language and literacy is acquired*

In order to identify the professional development and training needs of Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools in Victoria, Australia six experienced, successful Literacy Coordinator participants were interviewed by the researcher and each participant was asked to nominate the key skills and knowledge that she/he believed were essential to the successful management of his/her program. A number of common themes emerged as a result of the discourses. One key component nominated by the Literacy Coordinator participants was the need to understand the theory relevant to how students learn, the various strategies and approaches relevant to the teaching and support of literacy learning, and how to diagnose the individual learning and support needs of each student. Anstey and Bull (1996) have argued that theories are at the heart of teaching and successful program development because an understanding of theory creates a framework which informs practice and assists in the explication and evaluation of outcomes. Good theory and good practice go hand-in-hand and form the key to successful learning. Anstey and Bull have defined theory as a set of expectations, which stem from the individual’s beliefs, attitudes, and practices with regard to what is deemed to be appropriate action. The very act of teaching is based on and promotes the development of theories about what creates meaning in particular situations and contexts. It is not enough to blindly follow theories that we do not understand or cannot articulate or endorse. Confusion and dissonance can occur if teachers use or are mandated to employ
theories that are not owned by those who apply them or if they are applied as a result of institutional pressures or policy.

Freeman (1991) suggests that the fluid nature of theories held by individuals are part of the ongoing, questioning processes that good teachers engage in as part of their day-to-day interactions with students and their reflection and evaluation of their practice. Superficially, the changing nature of beliefs and theories may appear to create dilemmas for teachers as they select or discard one theory in favor of another in the process of their work, but these knots, or dilemmas, are only part of their own learning process. Anstey and Bull (1996) have found that teachers (and Literacy Coordinators) who hold overt and well articulated ideas about the relationship between theory and practice are more likely to have developed their own theories about the definition of language and literacy. Problems, conflict or confusion can occur if the theory is not clearly articulated or understood or is covert rather than overt in its application. Anstey and Bull also suggest that inappropriate or conflicting practice in the classroom can also create confusion for students if the theories in operation are only used because they are mandated or applied randomly by those who do not support them or understand them.

In order to understand the key skills and knowledge required by Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools in Victoria; it is essential to explore the theories that they hold about how literacy is learned and how they apply those theories in their programs. This has been a key focus of the case studies in this research.
2.7.1 Contemporary theories about language and literacy

Central to the investigation of the professional development and training needs of Literacy Coordinators is the need to explore the development of the major theories related to literacy learning that have informed the practice of classroom teachers and Literacy Coordinators in the past three decades. The changing and often controversial nature of defining the concept of literacy and what is understood to be the goals of literacy learning vary considerably between individual teachers, parents and key stakeholders in the community. Anstey and Bull (1996) emphasise the importance of teachers such as Literacy Coordinators having an understanding of the theories that underpin their practice. The ability to articulate a theory regarding how language and literacy is learned and how it should be applied in the classroom helps the Literacy Coordinator to understand what is taking place; to explain their choices of strategies to others and to evaluate the outcomes of programs against the achievements of their students. Ascertaining whether the Literacy Coordinators in this study can articulate a theory that informs their practice is an important component of this research.

In the latter half of the twentieth century and in the early years of the current millennium, a number of theoretical influences relating to literacy education have been developed and adopted, these include the behaviourist and skills oriented theories of the 1950s - 1960s; the psycho-cognitive and whole language philosophy of the 1970s - 1980s; and the sociocultural and multiliteracies perspectives of the 1990s-2000 and the influence of the Information Age of the 21st century (see p. 51). Many of these theoretical paradigms can be found in use, in the varying degrees, in literacy programs in operation in secondary schools in Victoria today. They are also contained in the
numerous programs and program materials available for purchase from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Victoria and private industry providers.

The following section outlines the major philosophical and theoretical perspectives that have informed literacy teaching and learning in the latter half of the twentieth century till present. For the purposes of this study the focus of investigation will be on how these theories and philosophies have influenced literacy teaching and learning in secondary schools in Victoria throughout the past three decades. This section will lay the foundation for examining and understanding how these theoretical perspectives have shaped the choices made by Literacy Coordinators in this study with regard to the content and strategies in their programs.

At various stages throughout the past three decades the influence of the skills/behaviourist, psycho-cognitive, whole language and sociocultural approaches to the teaching of literacy have been promoted and adopted into practise in secondary school literacy programs in Victoria. Fehring (1998) has suggested that what is not known is the extent to which teachers have implemented these theories as purist models of language learning or modified and developed eclectic interpretations when applying them in their classroom. Investigating whether the Literacy Coordinators and their teams have developed strategies and content based on clearly understood and strongly supported theoretical strategies has been another priority in this study.
### 2.7.1.1 Behaviourist and skill era 1950s-1960s

In the early twentieth century, education did not exist as a discrete discipline as it does today. Those who conducted research related to literacy education did so with the expertise and vision of other disciplines such as psychology, philosophy and sociology. At this time attempts to understand how students acquired the skill of reading, centred on experimental design that investigated specific behavioural and cognitive aspects of the reading process. Research into literacy learning was frequently conducted by those trained in psychology and sociology and as a result it was largely quantitative. Anstey and Bull (1996) argue that this type of research enabled the researchers to make generalisations from the results but it did not explore the thinking of teachers regarding the choices they made and the strategies they used when teaching. This approach also failed to take into account the thinking and problem solving strategies that students applied in the course of learning to read or write.

The research conducted was concerned with experimental design that enabled examination of specific aspects of the reading process—discrimination between and identification of which were most important. The research was conducted with large numbers of experimental subjects which enabled researchers to make generalisations from the results. Obviously this approach was limited to just what was able to be studied; you can’t see inside the head in order examine the cognitive aspects of reading, so only external physical behaviours were observed (p. 62).

In the 1950s-1960s research related to the teaching of literacy was mainly focused on reading and was centred around the theory that reading was a perceptual process based on the recognition of graphic symbols (alphabetic letters) which have names and corresponding sounds. Combining these sounds resulted in monosyllabic and polysyllabic words. Christie (1990) suggests that the behaviourist model assumes that learning to read
and write involves the sequential acquisition of skills and knowledge about letters and sounds and that these skills are applied in chronological order and in ascending levels of complexity. This theory of teaching reading and writing has also been referred to as the ‘bottom–up’ theory.

Early behaviourist research focused on investigating visual perception, or how the eyes perceived print and how the brain processed the images in the mind. This research led to the development of pre-reading programs designed to assess the student’s readiness to learn to read by testing his/her ability to discriminate between pictures, letters, words and the component sounds associated with those letters and words. The underlying theory behind this approach supported the notion that small pieces of information stored in the brain combine with new learning to build more complex and abstract learning which is achieved through drill and repetition (Smith, 1978).

The skills oriented approach to literacy learning was also based on the theory that the whole is the sum of the parts, therefore the teaching and learning activities built around these models concentrate on the teaching of phonics and on whole word recognition. In learning to read a student translated graphic symbols into sounds and to learn to write the student translated sounds into graphic symbols. Having established the student’s readiness to learn to read through testing, basal reading schemes were developed. The purpose of these schemes was to provide materials that were ‘appropriate’ in terms of a pre-determined ‘reading age’.

The skills oriented approach to assessment focused on the product rather than the process of learning and was based on the use of standardised tests to assess progress and
achievement. Testing criteria in this type of assessment included being able to decipher meaning through decoding words, automatic recognition of words and comprehension measured by tests that involved reading test materials and answering questions about information in isolated sentences or short paragraphs. Programs that utilise this type of approach are still in use in secondary schools in Victoria today. These programs are based on three areas: decoding skills; sight vocabulary, word attack and meaning derived from contextual clues and pictures.

Sight vocabulary is based on recognition of whole words rather than breaking them into individual sounds. The two cues that the reader uses are ‘configuration’ cues and ‘picture’ cues. Configuration cues involve the recognition of the external and internal shape of words and the use of pictures that accompany the word. The term ‘word attack skills’ refers to the ability to break words down into manageable parts which then enable the reader to sound out or decode them. By uttering the component sounds and blending them together the reader recognises the word and its associated meaning. Examples of programs currently in use in many secondary school literacy programs that use this approach include Corrective Reading (Engelmann, Meyer, Johnson, & Carnine, 1999) and Teaching Handwriting Reading and Spelling Skills-THRASS (Davies & Ritchie, 2003).

2.7.1.2 Psycho-cognitive and whole language era 1970s-1980s

In the 1970s and 1980s the focus of research moved from perception; to perception and cognition. In the context of reading, cognition came to be referred to as comprehension.
The ideas of theorists such as Bloom (1956) contributed significantly to the teaching of comprehension through the identification of hierarchies of skills which might be taught. Anstey and Bull (1996, p. 74) suggest that despite the good intentions of such researchers their work was interpreted in the reading comprehension context as reading text and answering questions about what they read.

In the mid 1970s educational researchers began to move away from the concept of literacy learning as a sequential processes where students mastered discrete skills before moving on to the next level of learning in either reading or writing. Up to this point students had been required to master basic skills such as grammar, phonics and punctuation before developing their skills in essay writing or in reading of more sophisticated texts; even though it was acknowledged that some students were held back or lost interest as a result of this approach. At this time teachers were also beginning to redefine their role. Instead of seeing themselves as the providers of knowledge and suppliers of teacher centred learning activities, they began to seeing themselves as facilitators of student learning.

Chomsky (1965) has shown that rather than needing to be taught how to learn, children were innately predisposed to learn and that before reaching school they had already mastered significant skills related to language learning.

Smith (1978) proposed that in human beings, learning could be equated to a ‘theory of the world’ that is developed in the mind. This theory is continually being modified as a result of experience. What makes sense is accepted and incorporated, while what does not make sense or conflicts with the theory is rejected or will cause confusion. Thus
the extent to which children can understand and learn is influenced by their cognitive development, experiences, culture and the values that they bring to the learning, therefore, in any group of students the level of preparedness and the level of skills already mastered will vary considerably. If learning is in conflict with family or cultural values or if students are not gaining from the learning due to boredom or inability to cope with the concepts, they will experience difficulty remaining motivated or connected with the learning experience.

Goodman (1985) and Cambourne (1988b) observed the way children learned language at an early age and proposed that literacy learning in school should emulate the natural processes of language acquisition in childhood. Cambourne (1988b) developed a model for literacy learning which comprised of the seven conditions that facilitated the language learning that he had observed in young children. The conditions include being immersed in the act of reading, writing, speaking and listening which enables children to learn language in context; taking responsibility for their learning by risk taking and experimenting with their use of language; being provided with demonstrations of correct structures and models of appropriate usage; having their attempts (or approximations) accepted and by being given feedback on their efforts in order to correct misused or mispronounced words. Supporters of the ‘Whole Language’ approach incorporated this model into their teaching. They also believed that rather than teaching skills and rules in isolation, those rules and skills should be acquired in context. In conjunction with this was the proposition that students would be better motivated to learn if they were given choices about what they learned, how they learned it and when. It was also proposed that students should be involved in assessing, monitoring and evaluating their learning. Student engagement was considered an
important ingredient in the process, as was the necessity for their learning to be relevant, meaningful and purposeful.

Strategic approaches to writing (and later reading), developed by Donald Graves (1983) aimed to enhance and improve students’ motivation and proficiency by giving students choices and allowing them to negotiate what they read and wrote and by teaching them processes that emulated what professional or experienced writers do when they create texts. This strategic process has been described as a ‘top down’ approach to literacy learning because it begins with what students want or need to learn and moves down into addressing particular skills that need to be mastered as and when needed so that the skills are learned in context. Critics of the strategic approach to literacy learning felt that if students have a large degree of control regarding what they read and write and whether they completed the task, some students might not develop a sufficient range of expertise and in extreme cases, might never complete a single piece of writing or move beyond their comfort zone. The strategic approach was adopted by many teachers in Australian schools as the preferred method for teaching writing in the 1980s and was endorsed and supported through considerable investment in funding for programs and for professional development of teachers in the State education system in Victoria at that time. The approach was called Process Writing and Process Reading and was based on the theories of Graves (1983).
2.7.1.3 The genre era 1983-1995

After nearly two decades of Whole Language and Process approaches to reading and writing, reactionary forces fuelled by the world wide recession and the policies of economic rationalism at that time, demanded that all sectors of industry and government become more accountable for the quality and efficiency of their operations. The prevailing philosophy resulted in a review of education in Victoria and the implementation of accountability measures such as mandated curriculum and assessment measures in both the compulsory and post-compulsory years of education. These measures resulted in the implementation of the Curriculum and Standards Frameworks-CSF (Board of Studies, Victoria 1996a) in Preparatory to Year 10, Curriculum and Standards Frameworks Assessment (Board of Studies, Victoria, 1996b) and Literacy and Numeracy Profiles (Ministry of Education, School Programs Division, Victoria, 1990). The Victorian Certificate of Education-VCE (Board of Studies, Victoria, 1990) was implemented in the post compulsory years, Years 11 and 12, for the purpose of ensuring that all prospective tertiary students had satisfied the requirements and achieved a prescribed range of skills in the final years of secondary schooling.

While process methods and whole language approaches had given students ownership of their writing, there were concerns that many students were not moving beyond the mastery of personal and creative modes in writing and were not achieving proficiency in the formal language structures and skills required in higher order thinking, reading and writing.
Educational theorists such as Collerson (1994), Cope and Kalantzis (1993), Knoebel and Lankshear (1994), and Christie (1990) had become highly critical of the notion that students should be left to find their own way when learning the formal structures and conventions of language. The perceptions of many employer, political and parent organisations, which were widely reported and debated in the media at that time, were that students approaching the end of their secondary education in Victoria, Australia were not adequately prepared to cope with the demands of reading and writing in the workplace or for tertiary education. Other criticisms of student literacy achievement centred on the perception that while students were generally able to read and comprehend fiction, their ability to deconstruct non-fiction texts across the discipline areas was far less developed.

Hammond, 1987; Christie, 1990; Moorman, Blanton and McLaughlan, 1994; and Rowe, 2006; proposed that students needed greater guidance, teacher input and teacher support in order to develop their proficiency in writing and speaking for different purposes across the genre areas in the different disciplines. Hammond (1987) proposed that “formal instruction in different genre areas should not only be taught but also ‘scaffolded’ through exposure to appropriate models and through explicit instruction” (p. 172). Thus, the explicit teaching of different genres of writing gained momentum and as did a heightened awareness that literacy should be taught across the curriculum and should be the responsibility of all teachers. Professional development programs such as Helping Students to Learn (Elisson & Stewart-Dore, 1993) and Writing in the Subject Areas, (Baker & McLaughlin, 1993) were funded by the Directorate of School Education, to support teacher skill development. These programs were disseminated in all schools across Victoria and teachers were encouraged to
incorporate the strategies into their classroom programs across the discipline areas and to enlist the support of parents as volunteer tutors to help implement these programs. These teaching methods which are described as student centred, tend to be aligned with constructivism which advocates active and experimental approaches reflected in the work of Bruner (1968), Graham and Harris (1997), Grant (1991) and Vygotsky (1962), they include anchored instruction, situated learning, discovery learning, task based learning and scaffolding.

2.7.1.4 Sociocultural, multiliteracies and information technology era 1990-2007

In the last two decades of the twentieth century in Victoria, there also emerged a heightened awareness of the need to address the literacy needs of disadvantaged, marginalised, indigenous, recently arrived and second phase language learners. Educational theorists such as Court (1991), Gee (1992), Lankshear (1994), and Morrow and Pantore (1993) rejected the earlier psychocognitive and psycholinguistic theories founded on individual differences and on individual constructions of reality in favour of a sociocultural theory. The new focus which was based on the disciplines of sociology, ethnography, politics and linguistics began to interpret literacy as a social construct. Luke (1993) argued that traditional approaches to literacy ignore the way language may either confirm or deny the life histories and values of learners so that issues related to deficits and differences in literacy learning may be at least partly attributable to the sociocultural contexts in which the learner operates.
Sociocultural theorists such as Court (1991) suggested that many students whose family, social, economic and cultural values were at odds with the values inherent in the content and pedagogy of the programs offered by their school, were failing to succeed in their schooling in general and in their acquisition of literacy skills in particular.

Gee (1990) suggested that all social, cultural and economic groups have their own ‘Discourses’ which describe the various roles and the protocols for operating within that social group. The concept of ‘Discourse’ expressed with an upper case ‘D’ includes words, actions, beliefs, attitudes and social roles as well as modes of expression such as gestures and body language. Primary Discourses include ways of knowing that are culturally and socially derived including language structures, beliefs and attitudes derived from family and from our cultural environment. Secondary Discourses are values and beliefs learned from peers and from the social and educational groups to which the individual belongs.

Each of us is a member of many discourses and each Discourse represents one of our multiple identities. Each discourse incorporates a usually taken for granted and tacit ‘theory’ of what counts as ‘normal’ and the ‘right’ ways to think feel and behave (Gee, 1990, p. 4).

Gee (1992) proposed that when the content of the learning and the pedagogy of the teacher and the social or cultural beliefs of the student were in conflict, the student may become confused or may fail to incorporate the opposing ways of thinking and behaving into her/his mind set. The failure of the student to behave in the expected manner and to master the language structures and literacy standards of the dominant culture may cause the teacher to assume that the student is in need of literacy support or
remediation. Further complications can occur when program materials and tests for measuring student achievement employ language, concepts and values that are unfamiliar or at odds with those of the student and his/her culture.

In order to address some of these inequalities, followers of the sociocultural approach began to place greater emphasis on incorporating pedagogy, text, and language that catered for and reflected the diversity of the multicultural and varied socio-economic backgrounds of student populations.

The fact that some students achieved greater success than others might also be partly attributed to differences in values related to reading and writing at home, the ability of the family to support the student in their skill development and the socio-economic factors impacting on the student. During this period, increased emphasis was placed on incorporating into the literacy and general curriculum, texts that were sensitive to the diverse range of language development within any single cohort of students and the social and cultural perspectives of each cohort. An increased emphasis was also placed on writing activities that allowed students to explore and describe social issues that reflected the realities of their day-to-day lives and the use of age and development appropriate texts. Texts such as Down Borough (Arthur, 1982), Love, Ghosts and Nose Hair (Herrick, 1996) and The Girl with No Name (Lowe, 1994), which were written and widely used at that time, reflect the emphasis on culture, age and social relevance.

In addition to understanding and incorporating student culture and values, the sociocultural era attempted to move literacy learning beyond the mastery of literacy criticism based on analysis and evaluation of the works of great writers, to a mastery of,
and the ability to critically evaluate and respond to all manner of texts including written, visual, electronic and spoken modes; this approach was called Critical Literacy.

Shor (1993) describes Critical Literacy as:

>Analytical habits of thinking, reading, writing, speaking or discussing which go beyond surface impressions, traditional myths, mere opinions and routine clichés, to understanding the social contexts and consequences of any subject matter; discovering the deep meaning of any event, technique, process, object, statement, image, or situation and applying that meaning to your own context. (p. 32)

Court (1991) developed a definition of literacy that encapsulates the Critical Literacy model:

>The word literacy, then suggests a state of being and a set of capabilities through which the literate individual is able to utilise the internal world of self to act upon and interact with the exterior structures of the world around him [or her] in order to make sense of self and other. (p. 4)

Rivalland (1993) suggests that to be literate in today’s society, one also needs to have the skill to challenge the notion of text as “an incontestable representation of reality” so that the validity of ideas presented in text can be examined in relation to whose concept of reality they represent (p. 2). Luke (1995) further suggests that “learning to become literate by definition involves engaging with, and perhaps transforming and critiquing, a particular culture or sub-culture’s ways of seeing the world and its ways of valuing, weighing and understanding the world” (p. 168).

The purpose of Critical Literacy has been to empower learners to engage with the ideas of others and to analyse and evaluate the merits of their arguments. Through Critical Literacy learners understand how language and texts of various types can be used to instruct, persuade and influence the way the reader or viewer responds. Critical Literacy also aims to empower the learner to be able to identify the purpose of the
writer and to identify whose interests are served or promoted by the ideas and assumptions implicit in the text, and to have the skills to challenge those ideas and to express one’s own point of view both orally and in writing.

Snyder (1996) has explored the concept of Multiliteracies. In the late 1990s and in the early years of the twenty first century the explosion in information technology and multimedia has seen the influence of these communication modes dominate the modes of generating, storing and retrieving information in Western society. Communication technology and multimedia have permeated all aspects of daily life on a personal, employment and educational level for more than two decades. The ability to be literate in these technologies for the purpose of every-day communication has become as essential to the individual as breathing, eating and sleeping are to normal bodily functioning. It has therefore become imperative for teachers to teach the use and applications of multimedia and communication technology, especially the use of computers, in order to ensure that students are literate in the dominant means of communication, entertainment and research in Western society today.

The incorporation of computers and multimedia in education has raised many of the same issues related to literacy teaching and learning that have been explored earlier in this chapter. These issues have tended to centre on access more then culture or language. Increasingly, since the mid 1980s the use of computers for researching, drafting and management of information has permeated all aspects of teaching and learning in primary, secondary and tertiary education. In order to support the implementation of Information Technology Curriculum, numerous funding initiatives were made available from private industry, State government and Commonwealth government sources. In the mid 1980s organisations such as the Apple Foundation and later IBM provided grants that supplied hardware and software...
and supported professional development and curriculum program development for incorporating Information Technology Curriculum into the classroom. The implementation of the Curriculum and Standards Framework 11 (Board of Studies, 2000) promoted the teaching and use of Information Technology Curriculum as a teaching and research tool in every discipline area and as a consequence, Information Technology Curriculum was established as a separate study in secondary schools in order to develop in students, a mastery of the skills and knowledge required in the use and application of computers and multimedia. In order to encourage teacher use and skills development in the use of computers and multimedia in the mainstream classroom, the State government in Victoria began providing individual laptops to teachers for developing curriculum and resources, for use in assessment and reporting and for presentation purposes in the classroom.

Multiliteracies encompass the ability to use language and writing in modes appropriate to the task and context. Crilly (2004) defines Multiliteracies as: “the many and varied ways we use literacy in cultural and social contexts” (p. 34). Snyder (1996) has described Multiliteracies as the knowledge, skills, and capabilities required, in order to understand and be understood in our world. These include the language of advertising, the language of politics and media, and the language of the many forms of communication technology. Thus teachers have been required to build students’ capacity to use and interpret the many forms of communication genres and technologies that they will encounter in their schooling and later in their work and life in general. The need for this new form of teaching and learning to be incorporated into both mainstream and literacy support programs was based on the belief that students who experience difficulties with aspects of traditional literacy programs, might also have difficulty mastering information technology literacies.
Concentrating support programs on basic reading skills such as phonemic awareness, correct spelling and grammatical mastery is now considered by many to be inadequate for achieving literacy in the twenty first century. Students need to be taught repertoires of literacy strategies that will allow them to interact successfully with the new technologies and the new literacies that exist in the world today. Teachers need to be proficient in the use of technology in order to support and monitor the use of these resources in context. New languages related to the use of information and communication technology have emerged as a result of mobile telephone use and the language of e-mail and chat rooms. This has raised new issues in relation to literacy and language; including that of language use and structures, and whose language is valid. Other issues that have emerged in relation to the use of Information Technology Curriculum include the quality of the resources, student responsibility and equity of access.

2.7.1.5 Thinking curriculum-metacognition era 1990-2007

The belief that skilled thinkers monitor and control their thinking gave rise to the philosophy and practice in the 1990s of teaching metacognition as a way of making students more efficient learners, problems solvers and decision makers. These approaches have been incorporated across the curriculum as strategies to support student literacy learning and improve student learning outcomes. The prefix ‘meta’ is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as [a means of thinking] ‘above and beyond’. The aim of teaching students metacognition is to focus students on thinking about their thinking as they engage in learning. Lipton and Wellman (1998) define metacognitive practises in the classroom as
the process of engaging the student “in an inner dialogue that challenges them to question how they know what they know” (p. 47).

In conjunction with the concept of metacognition there has developed an industry and educational philosophy that employs strategic tools to support the development and application of more effective thinking. Theorists such as de Bono (1992) and Pohl (2000) have developed resources and processes to support evaluative and reflective thinking. de Bono’s Six Thinking Hats (de Bono, 1992) and more recently his Direct Attention Thinking Tools (de Bono, 1997) have provided explicit models and instruments that have been used in industry and in education for documenting and organising data and supporting reflection and evaluation.

Graphic organisers have also been adopted as aids to planning, and reflection (Lipton & Wellman, 1998). The purpose of graphic organisers is to select and describe; clarify and explain; and sort and organise information and to direct thinking. Examples of graphic organisers include Venn diagrams, brainstorms, flow charts, mind-maps and fishbone diagrams. Gardner (1983) also proposed that individuals have different styles and orientations to learning and that those different orientations need to be taken into account as part of the teaching and learning process.

In the early years of the 1990s the Schools Council, National Board of Education Employment and Training (1992) began discussing the concept of implementing Middle Years of Schooling, a philosophy that originated in the USA in the 1970s as a strategy for improving literacy, numeracy, engagement and transition issues in Years 5-8 (Later the range was extended to Years 5-9). In Victoria, funding was provided for
groups of local school networks to develop and trial strategies and provide professional development for school program leaders in order to implement the Middle Years programs and pedagogy in their school. Kruse (1996) collaborated with pilot schools in the Northern region of Melbourne, Victoria and prepared a report for government and school leaders on the characteristics and needs of Middle Years students which incorporated strategies for supporting wider implementation of Middle Years programs across the State. Later, resources and funding were made available for school based programs which included literacy and numeracy strategies, and for Literacy and Numeracy Coordinators to be trained. In addition to changes in the organisational framework of how students were managed, the Middle Years (Kruse, 1998) approach began promoting teaching and learning that emphasised metacognition as a strategy for enhancing learning in general and to facilitate literacy learning across the curriculum. This approach came to be known as the Thinking Curriculum. Targeted funding for schools with students functioning below the state average in their literacy and numeracy development were provided in order that those students could be ‘caught up’. These programs included Access to Excellence (Department of Education & Training, Victoria, 2001a), Innovation and Excellence (Department of Education & Training, Victoria, 2002) Restart (Department of Education & Training, Victoria, 2003a) and Success for Boys (Department of Education, Victoria, 2005).

Among the more recent initiatives designed to support literacy (and other program) development and the retention of students in the compulsory years of schooling are the Schools for Innovation and Excellence Clusters (Department of Education & Training, Victoria, 2003b). These clusters comprise groups of local primary and secondary schools who collaborate to develop curriculum and teaching and learning strategies for
the purpose of improving student learning outcomes and student engagement. The success of those strategies has been monitored and measured using standardised literacy and numeracy testing and via, student, teacher and parent satisfaction surveys.

The six Literacy Coordinator participants in this study have developed their literacy support program using a variety of combinations of the above-mentioned theories and strategies depending on their personal theory of what is appropriate for their students and contexts.

2.8 Assessing literacy needs and achievement

In order to plan appropriate intervention strategies for targeted students in literacy support programs, the Literacy Coordinator in secondary schools in Victoria, Australia, must be conversant with government policy related to student assessment, knowledgeable about a range of assessment and measurement strategies, and competent in the use and interpretation of testing and monitoring instruments available to them through State and Commonwealth governments and through private industry providers. The movement to Curriculum and Standards Frameworks assessment (Board of Studies, Victoria, 1996b) and Victorian Essential Learning Standards (Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority, 2005), has resulted in prescribed lists of skills and knowledge deemed to be appropriate levels of achievement for students in Victorian secondary schools by pre-determined age and Year levels. In addition to having a theory about how literacy learning can best be supported, the Literacy Coordinator in secondary schools is required to be able to use and interpret a range of testing and
measuring instruments and data that will assist him/her to identify what the student has achieved, what specific needs should be addressed, what strategies need to be implemented to support further skill development and whether those strategies are successful. The Literacy Coordinator should also be conversant with monitoring and documenting literacy outcomes and intervention measures. The following outlines the history of literacy assessment and identifies key research related to literacy support programs that have been endorsed by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Victoria in secondary schools in the past three decades.

2.8.1 Standardised testing: The historical context

In Europe in the early twentieth century, French psychologist Binet developed a system for measuring intelligence and for identifying “children with special educational needs” (Gipps & Stobart, 1993). Binet’s test quickly gained popularity as a scientific and objective means of describing I.Q and levels of achievement in verbal linguistic and mathematical/logical areas of ability. Madaus and Kellaghan (1993) have described how the continued development of Binet’s test by Terman at Stanford University in 1916 resulted in the Stanford Binet Scale which was quickly adopted for a variety of purposes such as assessment of I.Q. and as a diagnostic tool for determining learning needs.

In the second half of the twentieth century many standardised and norm referenced tests were developed by private industry providers and implemented for assessing student literacy achievement. Examples of these include Progressive Achievement Tests-PAT
(Ward 2001), Tests of Reading Comprehension -TORCH (Mossenson et al., 2003), and The Developmental Assessment Resource for Teachers-DART (Forster, Masters, & Mendelovits, 1994). These three forms of testing have been and continue to be widely used by Literacy Coordinators in Victorian secondary schools for the purpose of assessing and monitoring reading, spelling and vocabulary skills development.

The widespread use of standardised tests is based on the assumption that these tests are an objective means of assessing literacy skill development. Another factor in their popularity has been convenience, as they provide a quick and cost effective tool for assessing whole cohorts of students with a minimum of time and effort. Their format has also been seen by some educators to provide a scientific and uniform approach which aims to address disparities in the degree of rigor between individual teacher designed assessments.

The early popularity of standardised testing coincided with the skills based era of literacy teaching where codes, formulas and progress through stages of teaching were favoured. This type of testing has enjoyed a renewed popularity since the introduction of Curriculum and Standards Frameworks Assessment in Victorian schools by the Board of Studies, Victoria (1996b). The implementation of accountability measures such as the reporting of student literacy and numeracy achievement across the state, a process that compares results between schools, has also promoted the use of quantifiable standardised testing methods. In addition to standardised tests used by individual schools, the Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority has implemented the Achievement Improvement Monitor-AIM (Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority, 2004) in secondary (and primary) schools as the official standardised
assessment and monitoring tool for literacy (and numeracy) achievement. The Achievement Improvement Monitor combines a mainly standardised form of testing using multiple choice questions, and written responses. Students are assessed individually and in comparison with students in ‘Like’ schools (Appendix 15) and with students of the same age and Year level across the state.

The Developmental Assessment Resource for Teachers-DART (Forster et al., 1994) has also been a popular tool for assessing reading and writing in Middle Years literacy programs. In this resource, students read short texts and answer multiple-choice questions by completing a booklet provided. The test also includes written responses in the form of short answers and an essay based on responses of visual and printed stimuli. A marking guide helps teachers to quantify student levels of competence in relation to skills relevant to age and year of schooling. The descriptors are based on the National English Profiles, (Australian Education Council, 1994) but also aligned with the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority, 2005).

Tests of Reading Comprehension, commonly referred to as TORCH Tests (Mossenson et. al., 2003) have also been widely adopted as a testing tool and used for assessing literacy achievement by schools involved in the Innovations and Excellence Clusters (Department of Education & Training, Victoria, 2003b). TORCH tests are designed for use with students from Years 3-10. They comprise a reading task and a set of answer sheets resembling cloze (read and fill in the word that you think makes the most sense) activities that are used to assess the extent to which a reader gains meaning from text. Each answer sheet comprises a ‘re-telling’ of the corresponding reading passage with
some words deleted. Students complete the test by filling in the gaps on the answer sheet using one or more of their own words.

A period of reaction against the use of standardised testing by teachers in the secondary school system (and indeed across the Western world) occurred in the mid 1970s till late 1980s, when the Psycho-cognitive and Whole Language approaches were at their height in popularity. Opponents of standardised testing questioned how this type of test was being used and interpreted. The original purpose of standardised tests was to describe what the individual could do, whereas the aggregated data taken from wide-scale testing of students of similar age and Year levels were soon adopted by test makers as measures of what the average child of a particular age or Year level should be able to do. Bullock (1975) in his report to the Secretary of State for Education and Science questioned that skills such as the development of reading can be equated with arbitrary units of time or that development occurs at the same rate in individuals.

Learning to read [in standardised testing] is looked upon as consisting of equal steps, namely months and years. But there are no grounds whatever for supposing that reading progress is a linear process of this kind and indeed there is evidence to the contrary (Bullock, 1975, p. 33).

Cambourne (1987) further questioned the concept that assessment and measurement of student literacy through the use of standardised tests can account for differences in the development brought about by cultural, social and individual variations between students at various stages. He also questioned whether the content of such tests are able to be free of bias in terms of language, values and concepts that discriminate unfairly between individuals.

There is a strong belief “out there” that there is a universal standard of literacy which in some way can be measured, and that the scale along which it can be measured is a continuous one along which persons can be placed relative to each other (p. 5).
2.8.2 **Assessment in the intensive instruction approach**

The psycho-cognitive and whole language era in literacy education engendered a new approach to diagnostic assessment of literacy skill development. Neale (1988) proposed that:

> Reading is part of the language system interacting with and serving the adaptive needs of the individual in conjunction with the physical, sensorimotor, and emotional systems. It is thus subject to the principles of child growth and development, its patterning influenced by the integrity of the central nervous system and both the broad and immediate social context” (p. 2).

The Neale Analysis, first published in 1958 was designed to provide individualised assessment by setting up a dialogue between teacher/assessor and student to empathically explore ways of evaluating and facilitating the acquisition of reading. The key features of the process include:

- Listening to the student’s reading of a selected passage
- Asking questions that tap the student’s use of contextual cues, pictures, prompts, and the language of the text and any questions it might contain
- Providing practise passages so that the student knows what is expected in the text
- Assessing accuracy through recording of type and number of individual errors
- Scaffolding by providing prompts or corrections up to a certain point to facilitate the flow of reading and maintain meaning for the reader.

This system was modified by Clay (1987), and was known as ‘Running Records’ an approach widely used for assessing student reading skills in both primary and secondary schools in Victoria, Australia in the past three decades. A Running Record
is a tool for observing, recording and analysing student reading behaviour. In the revised Making a Difference manual Crilly, (2004) defines Running Records as a strategy that enables teachers to:

- Record the language cues and reading behaviours used by a student while it is occurring
- Evaluate appropriate text difficulty for individual students
- Note the behaviours a student uses when reading
- Observe the student’s attitude towards reading
- Note the progress of the student over time
- Determine how effectively the student is using these sources of information to construct meaning
- Identify the instructional needs of the student. (p. 58)

In addition to analysing student reading strategies, the Read and Retell approach (Cambourne, 1988a) was used to assess the student’s understanding of what he/she read and to monitor student reading skill improvement over time. In this approach, students were first immersed in the particular text genre to be used, then the assessor would ask questions about the text that would enable the assessor to make judgements about the student’s understanding of content and knowledge of language structures and vocabulary.

A similar approach to assessing writing and spelling was adopted. This process analysed student writing in order to evaluate:

- Topic knowledge - clarity, key ideas, coherence appropriateness to audience, content
- Organisation - structure, utility, sequence, appropriateness to text type
• Language features and conventions-grammar, spelling, punctuation, handwriting
• Aspects of writing - planning, composing, revising, recording, and publishing. (Crilly, 2004)

2.9 **Leadership and management theory**

A crucial component of the role of the Literacy Coordinator is that of leadership and management of their program. Burns (1978) defines leadership as the “ability to mobilise institutional, political, psychological and other resources in a manner that arouses, engages and satisfies the motives and needs of the followers and clients” (p. 18). Bennis and Nanus (1985) define leadership as “the capacity to translate intention into reality and sustain it” (p. 17). Robbins, Water-March and Cacioppe (1994) believe that “effective leadership is the ability to influence others toward the achievement of goals” (p. 467). De Pree (1987) has described leadership as “a form of stewardship where the leader builds and nurtures and provides for succession in order to achieve the best possible outcomes.” (p. 12). All of these components of leadership are key skills and knowledge required for effective and successful management of a literacy program.

While a considerable body of educational research has centred on the leadership role of the Principal and Assistant Principal in secondary schools in Victoria, Australia, by comparison very little research has focused on the leadership and management role of other school leaders such as Literacy Coordinators. Most, if not all, of the leadership and management theory referred to in this chapter was originally developed with
industry leaders and Principal Class leaders in mind. However, most, if not all of the key concepts and theories of leadership developed for Principals apply equally to the role of Literacy Coordinators.

As stated earlier, Literacy Coordinators are frequently appointed Leading Teachers or Expert teachers in the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development career structure (see Appendix 13) and as such, they are responsible for managing key operational duties related to their area of responsibility as identified in the school Charter/Strategic Plan (Department of Education and Training, 2005a):

To be classified as leading teacher, a position should have responsibility for the implementation of one or more priorities contained in the school charter. Typically, leading teachers are responsible for coordinating a large number of staff to achieve improvements in teaching and learning. Their focus is on the introduction of changes in methods and approaches to teaching and learning. However, they will also be responsible for the management and leadership of a significant area or function within the school to ensure the effective development, provision and evaluation of the school's education program.


According to De Pree (1987), leaders have many roles and obligations. They include:

- Delivering to their school or organisation, the appropriate service, products, tools, and equipment that people in the organisation or program need in order to undertake tasks
- Being accountable
- Being able to clearly articulate a statement of their own goals and values and the goals and values of the organisation
- Providing and maintaining direction, momentum and cohesion amongst their peers and co-workers (p. 12).

Therefore provision of professional development and training in leadership and management is an essential preparation for the role of Literacy Coordinator.
2.9.1 Broader views of leadership

Maccoby, (1981, as cited in Green, 1988) states that “the ability to understand and empathise with other human beings is an essential preparation for leadership” (p. 25). The ability of leaders such as Literacy Coordinators to empathise with the views of others can also help the Literacy Coordinator to be objective. Maccoby also suggests that leaders such as Literacy Coordinators should expand their understanding of the world through further study and the practice of reflection in order that they can see beyond their own goals and motivations and appreciate what motivates and influences others. Sergiovanni (1986) argues that in order to be a successful leader one must be prepared to be flexible and be prepared to change one’s mindscapes if appropriate. Inflexible mindscapes and leadership are at odds with today’s world and with what teachers want from their work; therefore, a dogmatic and inflexible leader will fail to enlist the cooperation of their staff and co-workers.

Beare, Caldwell and Milikan, (1989) point out that it is important for leaders to be in tune with the prevailing philosophies and values of the school community. Gaining the trust and cooperation of the Principal, teachers, and other key stake holders in their program is an essential component in managing a literacy program. Hambrick and Mason (1983, as cited in Bass, 1985) suggest that “trust for and cooperation with leaders is higher when other workers in the organisation see that the actions of the leaders, the analysis of the outcomes, and the life cycle of programs and products, are consistent with the stated aims and philosophy of the school as a whole.” (p. 9) Therefore, the Literacy Coordinator as leader not only needs to be attuned to the goals and priorities of the school, he/she also needs to be “consultative and maintain a strong
flow of information regarding his or her actions and decision making and be able to argue strongly and in a persuasive and informed manner in support of his or her point of view” (p. 9).

Sergiovanni (1986) believes that the head is shaped by the heart and drives the hand of leadership. Sergiovanni points out that a leader must base his/her actions and decision making on a mixture of logic, empathy, compassion and strategy. Literacy Coordinators who are unable to adapt their strategies to the needs, circumstances and priorities of their students, staff and the cultural and philosophical context in which they operate, will fail to gain the trust and cooperation of the teachers and the teams that they lead.

As leader, a Literacy Coordinator must demonstrate that she/he has a commitment to the welfare and learning of students. According to Sergiovanni, what a leader stands for can frequently be perceived by others to be more important than what he or she does. In addition to being seen to be ethical, the Literacy Coordinator’s needs to be seen to be a facilitator, a supporter and a unifying influence:

Leadership as cultural expression seeks to build unity and order within an organisation by giving attention to purposes, historical and philosophical traditions, ideals, and norms which define the way of life within the organisation and provides the basis for member unity and for obtaining compliance (Sergiovanni, 1986, p. 106).

The Literacy Coordinator achieves this by ensuring that his/her staff is adequately trained to perform the literacy tasks that they are required to undertake, teachers are consulted and kept informed about the students and the program, issues are addressed in a timely and consultative manner and information regarding the program, evaluation and achievements are communicated and celebrated.
2.9.2 Strategic leadership

Literacy Coordinators need to be strategic leaders. Mauriel (1989) has defined strategic leaders as people who have “a clear vision based on a widely shared set of values and aspirations” (p. 3). This vision provides a clear understanding of what direction the program should take. Strategic leaders are ones that can clearly articulate a vision in a manner that motivates others. Hambrick and Mason (1983, as cited in Bass, 1985) define a strategic leader as “one who has overall responsibility in a program/organisation that is influenced by both external and internal forces and priorities” (p. 85). Literacy Coordinators must therefore have a strong knowledge of the external forces and policies that impact on their program and be able to accommodate the external demands with the contextual needs and priorities of the school and its students.

Gardner and Schermerhorn (1992) consider strategic leadership to have two dimensions. One is the directional responsibility and the other is operational responsibility. Directional responsibility involves creating and communicating a unifying and inspirational vision and a sense of purpose for the school or the group which they lead. Operational responsibility involves creating group or organisational internal capacity in day-to-day performance to achieve desired outcomes which includes knowing how to resource the programs, provide funding and skill staff in the knowledge and pedagogy relevant to delivering the desired outcomes of the program. Caldwell (2000) suggests that leadership is strategic when it involves:

- Keeping abreast of trends, issues, threats and opportunities in the educational environment and in society at large, discerning the mega trends and anticipating
their impact on education generally and on the leader’s program or workplace in particular.

- Sharing such knowledge with others in the school community and encouraging other leaders within the organisation to do the same in their areas of responsibility.

- Establishing structures and processes which enable the organisation to set priorities and formulate strategies which take account of likely/preferred futures, and being a source of expertise as these occur.

- Ensuring that the attention of the organisation or program’s community is focused on matters of strategic importance.

- Monitoring the implementation of strategies as well as the emerging strategic issues in the wider environment and facilitating an ongoing process of review and evaluation.

2.9.3 Transactional and transformational leadership

Literacy Coordinators need to be aware that the approach that they take in relation to the leadership and management of their team can impact on the success of the program and the level of cooperation within the team. While transactional leadership is based on an exchange relationship between leader and followers and involves compliance (effort, productivity, loyalty) and expected rewards; transformational leadership, according to Burns (1978) raises followers’ awareness and understanding about the importance and value of designated outcomes and ways of achieving them.
Fisher and Koch (1996) found that effective leaders have a special kind of leadership philosophy. “They are strong, caring, action oriented visionaries who act on intuition. They are also transformational rather than transactional leaders and are willing to take risks rather than follow the usual precedents” (p. 57). In other words, Literacy Coordinators who are transformational leaders continually strive to find new and better strategies for achieving their goals, skilling their teams and improving their programs.

Because the role of Literacy Coordinator is an important leadership role within the school, an important component of the Literacy Coordinator’s success is based on her/his beliefs about leadership and they way s/he implements those beliefs. Training for the role of Literacy Coordinator should include training in the theoretical as well as the practical aspects of leadership. In this research I have attempted to explore and document the theoretical and practical basis of the leadership style of the Literacy Coordinator participants.

2.10 Chapter summary

The research involved in the current study investigated many of the issues raised in the current Chapter related to the professional development and training needs of Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools in Victoria, Australia. By establishing the study within the paradigm of constructivist inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and utilising qualitative methods of collecting data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000), the study aimed to describe through constructive, interpretive analysis the professional development and training needs of Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools. By utilising semi-
ethnographic methods of participant and non-participant observation (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984) and purposely selecting case study schools and Literacy Coordinator participants the researcher attempted to inductively identify the professional development and training needs of Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools in Victoria.

The literature review provides a foundation upon which to establish possible issues related to the identification of the professional development and training needs of Literacy Coordinators. The fieldwork aimed to consolidate and extend the researcher’s knowledge and provided the groundwork for an emergent theoretical model of explanation. The review of the literature raises the contention that there are un-met needs in the area of preparation for the role and for ongoing training and professional support and that there are a range of political, educational, contextual and pedagogical factors that impact on the ability of Literacy Coordinators to develop and manage a successful literacy support program.

The following chapter outlines the research design and the methodological processes undertaken in this study. Included in chapter three is a detailed description of the research methods used to gather data, a contextual analysis of the six research sites and a comprehensive time frame under which all aspects of the study were completed.
Chapter 3 Research Methodology

3.1 Research design in context

The following chapter contains a detailed explanation of the research paradigm, the processes of the inquiry; the methods used in the collection of the data, and the trustworthiness of the research undertaken in this study. Guba and Lincoln (1994) define a paradigm as “a basic belief system or world view that guides the investigator, not only in the choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamentally ways” (p. 105). The purpose of this research was to investigate the professional development and training needs of Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools in Victoria, Australia. A number of essential epistemological and methodological choices needed to be made by the researcher in undertaking this method of investigation, they included considerations of the way reality is perceived and constructed by individuals and groups, the nature of reality, the researcher/participant partnerships, the methods by which data is selected and recorded, the context and setting in which the data is collected and the trustworthiness of the data (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). Criteria for assessing the trustworthiness of data include the data’s credibility, transferability, dependability and how it would be verified. This chapter explains how a constructivist research paradigm and qualitative research methods have been used in the research to address the research issues.

In order to arrive at an understanding of what Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools in Victoria, need to know and be able to do when managing their programs, it is essential to capture the voice of the participants as they describe and explain both
the knowledge and skills that they believe are essential to the role as well as the values and beliefs that inform their practice. Exploring and analysing the thinking of Literacy Coordinator participants regarding what she/he needs to know and be able to do requires that the researcher collaborates with the participants in observing, documenting, reviewing and evaluating the Literacy Coordinators’ practices and programs. Observation of the program in operation, analysis of documents and artefacts and the examination of the perspectives of other key stakeholders facilitates the triangulation of data and assists the researcher to tease out important themes that emerge from the study. In order to investigate the key skills and knowledge required by a Literacy Coordinator when managing his/her program a constructivist paradigm of inquiry using naturalistic, analytical, and interpretative methodology as described by and Lincoln (1985, 1997) and Lincoln & Guba, (1985, 1990) was chosen.

Figure 3 is a diagrammatic representation of the main research design features. It provides a framework describing the research and an overview of the constructivist paradigm, the process of inquiry and the qualitative methods chosen in this study.
To investigate, describe and construct an interpretation of what Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools in Victoria, Australia need to know and be able to do in order to successfully and effectively manage the literacy program in their schools.

The Naturalistic and Educational design incorporates:
- Case study approach (Merrian, 1998; Stake, 1996; Yin, 1989)
- Analysis of the Literacy Coordinator philosophy and practice
- Prolonged engagement
- Fieldwork observations
- Immersion in the school and classroom activities
- Persistent observations
- Trustworthiness procedures including
  - participant checking
  - triangulation of data

The qualitative techniques incorporated in this research design include:
- In depth interviews with the Literacy Coordinator participants
- Key informant interviews/surveys
- Participant and non-participant observations
- Content analysis of school literacy policies and Charter/Strategic Plan, goals and priorities
- Analysis of artefacts
- Use of data analysis using selected key indicators/criteria.

Figure 3. Diagram of the main research features
3.2 **Research paradigm: The theoretical base**

Investigations involving research related to the professional development and training needs of Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools in Victoria seek to document programs and analyse the beliefs, attitudes and values that inform the practices of successful, experienced Literacy Coordinators. This research centres on identifying the professional development and training needs of Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools in Victoria, by constructing a description of what Literacy Coordinators do, their perceived needs and their rationale for the choices that they make relating to the programs and the strategies that they use in managing those programs. It aims to inductively analyse and interpret the common themes and issues that emerge in order to arrive at an understanding of what the key skills and knowledge might be and how these skills and knowledge might best be communicated to other practising or aspiring Literacy Coordinators. A constructivist paradigm as described by Glaser and Strauss (1967), Lincoln and Guba (1985), and Denzin and Lincoln (2000) has been chosen.

This study draws upon the initial work of Guba and Lincoln (1985) which was originally termed Naturalistic Inquiry, however, more recently Lincoln and Guba (1990) have referred to it as Constructivist Inquiry. Lincoln (1993) defines Constructivism as:

A set of emergent paradigms which can be rightfully considered either post-culturalist or post-modern, or both. It rejects the Grand Narratives, and focuses on the re-creation and re-presentation of multiple, socially constructed realities, created by multiple stakeholders and participants (p. iii).
The literature review examined some of the research studies that have sought to isolate and evaluate the professional development and training needs of literacy and language teachers in secondary schools in Victoria. All of the available literature identifies the issue that teachers of literacy and language have limited access to adequate preparation for the role. After considerable effort the researcher has found a lack of specific research related to the training of Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools on Victoria. This research is timely in that it highlights the need to address the availability and adequacy of both pre-service teacher training in literacy and ongoing professional development of teachers undertaking the role of Literacy Coordinator. The lack of adequate training of pre-service and in-service teachers in the area of literacy program provision has been identified in reports to government bodies and teacher associations by Bullock (1975), Cambourne (1987), Christie (1991), Rowe (2003) and Wheldall and Byers (2005). This issue has continued to be a concern in the literature for the past three decades.

The view that there can be any scientifically neutral, impersonal language with which to describe and interpret human behaviour and beliefs has been increasingly questioned. How human beings know and are known, and what constitutes an individual’s knowledge, is inextricably bound up with the nature and lived experiences of the individual. Howe (1998) suggests that man is a self-interpreting being and that there can be no structure for understanding an individual’s thoughts, beliefs and behaviour independently of his input and collaboration in the interpretation of them. The researcher in this study has collaborated with the Literacy Coordinator participants in the collection and interpretation of data and is herself, a practising and experienced Literacy Coordinator.
A theory of knowledge or epistemology should underpin any research paradigm. Educational researchers including Eisner (1985), Goetz and LeCompte (1984) and Woods (1998) have written extensively about the importance of personal knowledge and how there has been increasing acceptance over the past fifty years of qualitative, naturalistic research involving fieldwork, discourse analysis, case studies, interviews, and ethnographic methods of data collection in research relating to the knowledge base and practice of teachers. Ethnographies recreate for the reader the shared beliefs, practices, artefacts, folk knowledge and behaviours of the individuals or groups studied. The strategies employed in ethnological research include: The representation of the world view of the participants being investigated by providing firsthand, sensory information and holistic descriptions of total phenomena within the various contexts studied. Ethnographers seek to generate from these descriptions, the complex interrelationship of causes and consequences that influences human behaviour toward, and their belief about, the phenomenon. The value of ethnographic methodology is that this form of research enables both the researcher and the reader to learn vicariously from the informant and the contextual data as well as developing their own interpretation of the meaning.

The choice of a number of research techniques from within ethnographic methodology (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984) in this research was a logical one because of the intention of having prolonged engagement with the case study participants and to capture in as much detail the participants’ thinking and the processes that they employ in managing their programs. Ethnography allows the investigator to include both the subjective experiences of the investigator and those of the participants, thus
enabling a depth of understanding often lacking in other approaches to research. Many educational investigations related to teacher knowledge and skills as applied in the school environment have utilised the research methodology of ethnography. Examples of research that have incorporated educational ethnographical methodology include: Weiss’ (1995) study of the impact of teacher participation in democratic decision making as the basis of school reform; Wood’s (1992) investigation into the inner (reflective and evaluative) thinking experiences of teachers and how that thinking impacts on teacher performance, and Gudmundstottir’s (1991) research into the knowledge base of experienced teachers.

Goetz and LeCompte (1984) have outlined the four dimensions related to how social scientists attempt to explain and interpret reality, they are: inductive-deductive, generation-verification, construction-enumeration, subjective-objective:

i) Inductive - Deductive

The inductive-deductive dimension describes the place of theory in the research. Deductive researchers begin with a theory, develop operational definitions of the propositions and concepts of the theory and then seek to match them empirically to some body of data. The theory is supported or not supported by their findings (Popper, 1968). Inductive research begins with the collection of data, which might include observation of a phenomenon and then from successive examination of similar and dissimilar data, develops a theory to explain what was studied (Glasser & Strauss, 1967).
ii) Generation - Verification

The generative–verificative dimension refers to the position of evidence within a research study as well as the extent to which results can be generalized to other groups (Denzin, 1978). Verificative research tests propositions developed elsewhere and it attempts to provide evidence that a given hypothesis applies to several sets of data. It also tends to generalise beyond the scope of a single study. Generative research is concerned with discovering constructs, relationships and propositions in one or more data bases as a source of evidence (Smith, 1974).

iii) Construction – Enumeration

The ways in which the units of analysis in a study are formulated and delineated constitute the constructive-enumerative dimension of an investigation. A constructive strategy is aimed at discovering what analytical constructs or categories can be elicited from the behaviour; it is a process of abstraction in which units of analysis become apparent in the course of observation and description. Enumeration is a process by which derived or defined units of analysis are subjected to systematic counting or enumeration; it is usually preceded by the aforementioned constructive process (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984).

iv) Subjectivity - Objectivity

Ethnographers who describe cultural and behavioural patterns as they are viewed by the group under investigation are said to be applying subjective data collection techniques. The goal is to reconstruct the specific categories that participants use to conceptualize their own experiences and world views. The objective approach is to
apply conceptual categories and explanatory relationships brought by external observers to the analysis of unique populations.

Research into the skills and knowledge base of Literacy Coordinators does not lend itself to a theory driven by variable control, hypothesis testing, statistical probability, and generalisation production perspective. The emphasis in the current study is on describing and understanding the knowledge base and strategies and the problem solving skills that the Literacy Coordinator participants bring to their role, using induction, generation, construction and subjective principles (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). The selection of qualitative procedures and a constructivist research paradigm constitute a more appropriate approach to data collection for this type of inquiry.

3.3  The Constructivist inquiry process

In constructing the research design, qualitative and educational ethnographic methodologies were chosen, as was a case study and a multiple analysis approach which would enhance the trustworthiness of the data. A diagrammatic representation of the research design is presented in Figure 3.

To arrive at an understanding of the professional development and training needs of Literacy Coordinators there is a need to use language and dialogue; voice, interviews, reflections, and conversations to document the values, beliefs and experiences that inform the thinking and practice of the key participants. In attempting to identify common themes about what is essential to know and to be able to do, investigations of
the Literacy Coordinator participants’ personal and practical knowledge and an exploration of each participant’s rationale for selecting specific strategies and programs were essential. The school context and perceptions of the programs by key stakeholders have been taken into consideration.

Stenhouse (1978) argues strongly for the value and use of the practitioner’s voice in research into teacher practice. The use of Literacy Coordinators’ voices to describe what they know and do, and what they need to learn and the ability to reflect on past experience, allows the participants as well as the researcher to learn vicariously from that knowledge and those experiences.

The voice of teachers is often absent in research related to educational reform and professional development. Woods (1998) tells us that if we are to understand people and their attitudes and experiences, the researcher needs to devise strategies for understanding them in all their complexities. This includes understanding their point of view, the philosophical beliefs and values that inform their thinking as well as the social contexts in which they operate.

Tripp (1994) suggests that the practitioner’s voice presents a more authentic account of the genesis and stature of data contained in the research because it provides the practitioner’s perspective, frame of reference and insights. Social interactions are transactions that occur between two or more people and which are given meaning via the agreed cultural determinants of that action. Therefore the interpretations we place on them are influenced by the individual’s understanding and are confirmed by the defining acts of others. Elbaz (1991) and Woods (1998) suggest that the motivations
behind our behaviours are only partly known to us and can be better understood retrospectively in the light of new experiences. If the researcher is to understand what motivates people and how they perceive themselves, the researcher needs to put themselves in the shoes of the person whom they seek to understand and to see the world from their perspective.

Wagner (1998) suggests that in order to counter our own ignorance and biases as researchers we must learn to integrate into our methodology opportunities for rigorous and systemic joint analysis with the participants of our research. In this way we can reduce some, if not all, of the asymmetries that characterise the relationships that often exist between the researcher and participants in the research. This can be achieved through co-learning agreements whereby the researcher collaborates with the participants of the research so that the learning and the processes of collecting and analysing data is jointly shared by both, and so that the outcomes of the inquiry are mutually beneficial. In this co-learning partnership the researcher and the participants are both practitioners in the area of study. All of the participants of this research, like the researcher, are practising Literacy Coordinators engaged in planning, reflecting on and analysing the data that has been collected. The learning that emerged has enabled us to know more about our own work and the work of the other Literacy Coordinators.

3.3.1 Case study component

A qualitative case study “is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon or social unit” (Merriam, 1988, p. 21). Yin (1989) defines case
studies in terms of the research process as empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context. Stake’s (1996) notion of a case study is that it is a bounded system, a single entity around which there are parameters such as a class, a school, a community or a specific policy. In arguing for the value of case studies as research, Elbaz (1991) suggests that through telling their experiences teachers become conscious of what they know and through it share this learning as a way of assisting each other with their professional development. The use of case studies is therefore a way of adding to the body of knowledge about teaching from real life experience rather than just accumulating theories and statistics. The outcome of this form of research will be that participants will share with other practitioners the learning they have gained from experience as well as the learning that comes from collaborative reflection and evaluation in conjunction with the researcher.

Hargraves (1995) defines qualitative case studies as a collaborative way of exploring social action from the point of view of the actor and articulating taken-for-granted commonsense knowledge. Case studies also provide opportunities for reflection on one’s activities and for analysing macro theories that may be incorrect in their empirical assumptions, evaluating detail and inductively generating strongly grounded theory, thus assisting in the production of valid policy and practice. Stenhouse (1978) has further described case studies as a form of history "based on evidence of a case in progress [which] involves the gathering of evidence, its criticism and its interpretation" (p. 31).

Lincoln and Guba (1990) state that case studies are the logical and best form of reporting on research that aims to understand context and situation because they provide
thick descriptions, examples or metaphors useful for helping the reader to expand on what they already know or have learned from their own experience. Case studies provide a rich source of detailed information about the multiple realities of the subjects of the case studies. They display and take into account values which dictate the choices of both the researcher and the participants of the research and the values dictating the choices of the paradigm. They also, possibly, challenge the reader’s current understandings and allow the reader to arrive at new understandings that s/he previously had not considered by illustrating other ways of doing and interpreting situations, thus they provide vicarious experience from which the reader can learn.

Elbaz (1997) and Polkinghorne (1995) describe narrative case studies as a form of data gathering and analysis, which is collaboratively constructed by the researcher and the participant. Together they produce storied accounts of experience, which render the data meaningful. The value of this type of research, according to Elbaz, is that it provides an “emic” perspective or, in other words, knowledge from “the inside” rather than from the vantage point of the observer. The notion of telling stories of what we do, not only keeps the teller in focus, it involves the creation of coherent meaning and the successful resolution of whatever conflict threatens meaning. In other words, it forces us to think about what we have done and to evaluate it in order to learn. Stories about experiences that we usually keep to ourselves help us to understand the improvisations that we call coping, problem solving and action.

Wagner (1998) suggests that the use of co-learning agreements between researcher and participant recognises that practitioner cooperation is needed in any form of research that attempts to identify essential skills and knowledge and for the implementation of
any policies or change that might result from the research. Another advantage of co-
learning research is that by engaging practitioners in investigating their own workplaces
and practices, it places them in a position to be pro-active by stimulating discourse
about alternatives to present or recommended practice. Secondly, agreements of this
sort can stimulate researchers to investigate school policies and practices that
significantly affect students’ learning, and to explore the issues in context.

Wood (1992) described a process that she used for identifying the professional
development needs of experienced teachers in her school and for developing a plan
for addressing these needs. Wood based her research on the assumption that
experienced teachers are able to identify important themes and issues in their work
and in their professional development through the process of retelling critical episodes
(or incidents) in their professional practice. The process of reflection is one that
teachers constantly use in the performance of their teaching duties; therefore, Wood
believes that through it experienced teachers develop an instinct for identifying what
works well and what does not. Wood defines critical incidents as significant events in
one’s life which highlight a turning point in one’s understanding or cause ongoing
concern if they remain unresolved.

Woods (1998) in his research on collaborative case studies has shown that the nature
and reasons for our behaviour at the time of doing are only partly known to us but can
be better and more fully understood through the reconstruction of events and in the
light of new experiences over time. My intention was to take the role of both
participant and non-participant observer at various times, in order to have first hand
experience of the programs and of what the participants of my case studies did. This
allowed me to collaborate with them in interpreting their understandings and evaluation of their strategies. Weiss (1995) shows that collaborative reconstruction and reflection also have value as professional development tools because they enable the participants of the case study and the person with whom they share the reflection as well as the readers of the research to benefit from the experience. According to Bruner (1968), learning and the process of deriving meaning from the interactions that occur between ourselves and others is the product of the theory of the world that the brain constructs as a result of experience. This theory about how things are is then modified in the light of new information. Collaborative reconstruction of what we do allows us to share and learn by evaluating and reflecting in order to confirm or modify our understanding.

Stake (1994) has described three types of case studies:

(A) The Intrinsic Case Study - a case study chosen for the purpose of understanding specific individual cases. This type of case study is “not undertaken primarily because the case represents other cases or because it illustrates a particular trait or problem…The purpose is not to come to understand some abstract concept or generic phenomenon” (p. 237). It is undertaken as a result of the researcher’s interest in a particular person, social group, organisation, and programme or discipline area.

(B) The Instrumental Case Study – “a case study chosen for the purpose of deriving insight into an issue or to develop or refine a theory”. (p. 237). This type of research facilitates and further develops our understanding of other cases or issues external to that which is being studied.

(C) The Collective Case Study – an investigation studying of a number of cases jointly in order to understand a phenomenon. (p.237).

Merriam (1988) and Peshkin (1993) have categorised case studies in terms of the types of outcomes they aim to achieve and in terms of the final report. The intention
of a case study may be to describe, interpret or pass judgement. A descriptive case study is one that presents a detailed account of the phenomenon under study. Interpretive case studies also contain rich, thick description used to develop conceptual categories or illustrate, support or challenge theoretical assumptions. Evaluative case studies involve description, explanation and judgement.

The current research has adopted a collective approach in order to better understand what experienced, successful Literacy Coordinator practitioners do and for the purpose of developing theories about common themes and issues that are applicable in a larger collection of cases. The case studies in this thesis represent Stake’s (1994) collective case study categorisation and Merriam’s (1988) descriptive and interpretative case study classifications. The units of analysis or the six cases in this thesis are the six individual Literacy Coordinators. The contextual settings or case study sites are the classrooms, the schools and the educational system in which each of the Literacy Coordinators work.

Fieldwork is often an essential component in case study research. “Fieldwork can include mechanically recorded data, written accounts of observations undertaken on site, open ended interviews and the collection of documents and artefacts” (Merriam, 1988, p. 104). Another salient feature of fieldwork within case study research is that it provides the researcher with the opportunity to reflect on both the emic and etic perspective. According to Merriam the emic perspective allows the researcher to understand the phenomenon of interest from the participant’s point of view. The etic perspective is the perception of the phenomenon from the outsider’s view. Fieldwork techniques such as those mentioned above are compatible with the system of
inductive analysis which builds abstractions, concepts, hypothesis or theories rather than tests existing theory.

The fieldwork in the present study involved one-on-one, extended interactive interviews with a small number of individual case study participants and participant and non-participant observation of the Literacy Coordinator’s programs in operation. The school sites as well as the Literacy Coordinators were chosen in a purposeful manner as described by Patton (1990).

Elbaz (1997) and Gudmundstottir (1991) have shown the importance of studying what experienced teachers do because they can provide us with richly detailed descriptions of instructional events and critical reflection that can inform and contribute to our own and to the professional development of other teachers.

3.3.2 Sampling

Purposeful sampling is a form of data collection used in qualitative research to select information rich cases for in depth study. The use of information rich cases allows the researcher to “gain a great deal of information about issues of central importance to the research from relatively small samples or numbers of participants” (Patton 1990, p. 169).

The six Literacy Coordinators in this research were chosen on the basis of homogeneous and typical purposeful sampling. To understand the professional
development and training needs of Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools in Victoria, the researcher believed that it was important to select examples of articulate and experienced professionals. The six Literacy Coordinators in this study are homogenous in that they are all experienced, articulate and are considered by key stake holders in their schools to be successful operators. All six key participants are four year trained teachers. All have five or more years experience in management of literacy programs. Each Literacy Coordinator participant also represents a qualitatively typical Literacy Coordinator in the secondary system in Victoria in that they are selected on the basis of state wide criteria and the local needs identified by their school and they operate programs that are specifically designed to cater for the needs of students that are experiencing difficulties coping with the literacy demands of secondary schooling. All six Literacy Coordinators are responsible for the design and management of their program. The six case study schools also represent typical examples of secondary schools in the Northern region of Melbourne. Each school has varying percentages of students with differing socioeconomic and support needs. When assessing levels of student performance they are compared to other schools with students who have similar backgrounds and learning needs. The definition of ‘Like’ schools as published on the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development web site located at www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/standards/improve/likesch.htm (retrieved 12-7-07) which is the DOE accountability web site is as follows:

‘Like’ schools were developed to enable schools to allow for the composition of their student populations in assessing performance. Victorian schools have been divided into 9 groups based on the demographic background of students. The groups are identified by the proportion of students for whom the main language spoken at home is not English (LOTE), and the proportion of students who receive the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) or Commonwealth Youth Allowance (p.1).
For a more detailed description of each category see Appendix 15 ‘Like’ Schools.

The selection of the case study participants was also based on long standing knowledge of the schools and teachers by the researcher. There was an attempt to select schools that would vary in some degree in the style and content of the literacy program approach. All but one school had similar organisational and curriculum structures. Chapter 4 contains profile descriptions of each case study school that illustrate the similarities and differences between schools.
Table 1. Criteria for selection of the case study Literacy Coordinators and schools in this study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Four year qualified teacher (Victoria, Australia)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced defined as having a minimum of five years in the role of Literacy Coordinator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to articulate a philosophy and rationale for the programs and strategies that they use.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A commitment to their own professional development and the professional development of other teachers in relation to literacy program provision.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An ability to demonstrate an understanding of the literacy and program needs of students within their school.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literacy support provided by either withdrawal or mainstream or mixture of both</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years 7-9 students (male and female) in program selected as a result of testing and previous data / referral by parents / other class teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies including both targeted skill support and general literacy skill development.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive responses to the program and its management in parent, student and teacher satisfaction surveys related to the achievement of students involved in the literacy program.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of measurable achievement by students in the programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government Secondary school in Victoria</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban school in the Northern Metropolitan Melbourne</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessible to single researcher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of successful literacy program and management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher credibility established within the school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program catering for needs of a wide range of ability and literacy learning needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy program well established</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal and participant permission to undertake study in the school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Victoria, permission to undertake study in schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2: Participant pseudonyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher A</th>
<th>Teacher B</th>
<th>Teacher C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte</td>
<td>Sophie</td>
<td>Jane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bunjuck Secondary College</td>
<td>Riverview Secondary College</td>
<td>Eastwood High School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher D</th>
<th>Teacher E</th>
<th>Teacher F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Georgina</td>
<td>Stephen</td>
<td>Geraldine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merrifield Secondary College</td>
<td>Burtonholm Secondary College</td>
<td>Clarendon High School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4 The process of the inquiry

The following section details the sequence of activities undertaken to establish the research project, obtain official approval to conduct the research, develop rapport in the case study sites, undertake the data collection and trustworthiness process, analyse data and write up the research.

The key informants in this research were chosen because they were experienced, successful managers of their programs. Throughout the ongoing observation periods that involved both participant and non-participant observations in the classroom the researcher spoke informally to students about their perceptions of the programs and their progress and recorded these perceptions in her field notes. Students in the program group, provided responses via a questionnaire titled ‘Student Evaluation of the Literacy Program’ (see Appendix 11). Other informal observations of student
Accessibility and prior knowledge of the key participants/schools/programs enabled a trusting teacher-researcher relationship necessary to sound qualitative research related to classroom practice to occur. During Term 2 and 3 in 2003, Term 4, 2004 and again in Term 2, 2005, the researcher became an observer and participant-observer in six separate schools. The researcher spent varying amounts of time during each visit, depending on timetable/teacher constraints. Overall, a minimum of ten, fifty minute lessons in each school were observed. During this time the researcher spoke with students about the program and observed and sometimes participated in the literacy classes. On other occasions the researcher interviewed the Literacy Coordinator participants and read and collected program materials and curriculum policies and documents. Approximately three hours were spent on site during each visit. To maintain confidentiality of the participants' pseudonyms were used for each participant interviewed/surveyed in the studies (see Table 2). The six Literacy Coordinator participants and their schools have also been given pseudonyms; a Letter A-F was also assigned as an additional reference to connect both schools and the relevant key participant (see Table 2).
3.4.1 **Process of gaining access to research data**

The process of gaining access to research data was multifaceted and occurred at a number of levels within the research process. Figure 4 depicts the various levels at which access had to be sought.

**RMIT UNIVERSITY**

RMIT, Faculty of Education, Language and Community Services. (As a result of restructure in 2004 the Faculty is now called the School of Education.) Higher Degree Standing Committee approval of research project, 2001 (Appendix 3); University Higher Degree Committee approval of research project; Faculty Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee approval; (Human Research Ethics Committee approval- 2001 (Appendix 4)

Full documentation of the Ethics Policy of RMIT, can be found on the following RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee web site

www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=6sqqx7sd0wkp [Accessed 21-7-2007]

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING VICTORIA**

Permission to approach principals and conduct research in state schools approved 2002

Reciprocity: copy of research findings when completed. (Appendix 2)

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**Parents / Students**

Permission sought and consent forms signed to interview/survey/audiotape conversations. HREC Consent Form (see Appendix 5)

Plain Language Statement (see Appendix 6)

**Literacy Coordinators**

Consent to work with teachers and observe class routines. Permission to interview teachers and audiotape conversations and agreement to the collection of artefacts from the class room / program. 2002-2005

HREC Consent Form (see Appendix 5)

Plain Language Statement (see Appendix 7)

**School**

Principal approval to work in each school obtained. 2002-2005. Issues relating to permission to approach participants and maintain confidentiality approved.

HREC Consent Form (see Appendix 5)

Plain Language Statement (see Appendix 8)

*Figure 4. The process of gaining access to research data*
3.4.2 **Time and duration of data collection**

Table 3 summarises the amount of time and duration of the various phases involved in data collection, transcription, and preparation of data, participant member checking.

Table 3. Data collection and analytical interpretation time frame

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>School A</th>
<th>School B</th>
<th>School C</th>
<th>School D</th>
<th>School E</th>
<th>School F</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transcribing audio tapes</td>
<td>15 Hrs</td>
<td>12 Hrs</td>
<td>15 Hrs</td>
<td>10 Hrs.</td>
<td>10 Hrs</td>
<td>10 Hrs</td>
<td>72 Hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation of data for analysis</td>
<td>40 Hrs</td>
<td>40 Hrs</td>
<td>40 Hrs</td>
<td>40 Hrs</td>
<td>40 Hrs</td>
<td>40 Hrs</td>
<td>240 Hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of curriculum documents</td>
<td>10 Hrs</td>
<td>10 Hrs</td>
<td>10 Hrs</td>
<td>10 Hrs</td>
<td>10 Hrs</td>
<td>10 Hrs</td>
<td>60 Hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation and coding of data</td>
<td>40 Hrs</td>
<td>40 Hrs</td>
<td>40 Hrs</td>
<td>40 Hrs</td>
<td>40 Hrs</td>
<td>40 Hrs</td>
<td>240 Hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant member checking</td>
<td>2 Hrs</td>
<td>2 Hrs</td>
<td>2 Hrs</td>
<td>2 Hrs</td>
<td>2 Hrs</td>
<td>2 Hrs</td>
<td>12 Hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final thesis</td>
<td>153 Hrs</td>
<td>140 Hrs</td>
<td>153 Hrs.</td>
<td>138 Hrs</td>
<td>138 Hrs</td>
<td>158 Hrs</td>
<td>878 Hrs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.5 Research methods

The following section outlines the various qualitative methods used in the data collection process. The intention of this study was to investigate the professional development and training needs of Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools in Victoria, therefore the techniques selected needed to capture not only the Literacy Coordinators values and beliefs about the demands of the role, but also describe the program, strategies and the context of each site. The participants’ beliefs about the skills and knowledge were investigated through interviews as well as the researcher’s participant and non-participant observations of the classrooms and programs in this study. Triangulation of the multiple data sources such as key participant interviews, field notes and analysis of curriculum documentation and student perceptions of the program were important contributors to the researcher’s interpretations and to the establishment of the contextual interpretation of the study.

3.5.1 Key to data base

A number of different types of data were collected for this study. For reporting purposes abbreviated notes referring to the data are used. Table 4 contains the abbreviations used throughout the reporting process.
Table 4. Key to data source referencing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Data source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.2.234-239</td>
<td>Interview with participant from school A. interview 2. line 234-239.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FN(23.5.2003)</td>
<td>Field Notes (date referencing system used 23.5. 03 means the 23 of May 2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SQ</td>
<td>Student Questionnaire –written (Appendix 11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.SAI.29.7.05</td>
<td>School A, student audio-taped interview. 29th July 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC</td>
<td>Artefact Collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDC</td>
<td>School Document Collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KIA</td>
<td>Key Informant Analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following section describes the various types of data collected during this study.

3.5.2 Direct non-participant and participant observation

Case study and fieldwork research almost demands on site direct non-participant and participant observation be part of the empirical data collection process. Non-participant observational techniques can range from formal category counting observational sessions to casual data collection observational sessions that describe contextual situations. Single and multiple observers may record on site accounts. Multiple observers recording the same situation can facilitate the reliability of the
observational data collected. Participant observation is a special case of observation. In this situation the researcher is not merely a passive observer but may become actively involved in the site activities. Even though participant observation involves participation and involvement in the contextual setting, “the researcher needs to maintain a professional distance that ensures accurate observation and recording of data” (Yin, 1989, p. 116).

Denzin and Lincoln (2000) suggest that the advantage of participant/non-participant observation is that through this technique the participant observer has the ability to ascertain the reality of the study phenomenon from the point of view of the insider and to manipulate events and record the consequences of the changes on the study group. The disadvantage is that the participant may by his or her presence; change the group dynamics or the observed interactions so that what is observed may not reflect the reality of the phenomenon under investigation. Several factors contributed to the minimisation of observer influence:

i) The level of familiarity between the researcher and the case study Literacy Coordinators. In all six schools, the principal or the teachers and in some cases both, knew the researcher from years of collegiate interaction. In this respect the development of a trusting, non-judgemental relationship during the observation periods was easily established.

ii) The number and extended length of the observational periods (prolonged engagement). This helped develop confidence and integrity in the interpersonal relationship between the researcher and the participants thus enhancing the reality of the situation under investigation.

iii) The process of member checking or participant verification gave the participant the chance to reflect on their interview transcripts and the opportunity to add or delete information that they considered relevant or
inappropriate. This procedure added to the trustworthiness of the data (Lincoln and Guba, 1990).

3.5.2.1 Classroom observations

Taped structured interviews with each of the Literacy Coordinators were recorded prior to commencing the observation period (see Appendix 9 for interview questions). Further informal discussions and reflection were conducted with the key informants throughout the observation period. Semi-structured interviews with student participants asking them to reflect briefly on their perceptions of the program and their work were conducted during the course of the observations and recorded in the researcher’s field notes. An evaluation survey, relating to student perceptions of the programs was administered to each group of student participants in each school (see Appendix 11).

Observation of the programs in progress raised the question of whether students were satisfied with the literacy programs in operation in their school and whether they felt that it had improved their reading, writing and understanding of what they read, and their general communication skills. The following segment of an interview with students in one of the schools, recorded below, indicates that they were able to critically evaluate and identify both the strengths of the program and the areas that needed improvement.
Friday July 29th 2005

Interview with students at Clarendon High School

A You are all in Year 8 now and have been here two years. In the time that you have been here, do you think that your spelling and writing skills have improved as a result of having a 'Personal Learning Plan' related to literacy?

S1 Mine have improved a bit. Spelling wise and stuff.

A Do you think that it works better if you can nominate what skills to work on? Would it work better if there was a general class where you might get some personal help but, you were being taught in a [set] program? Do you think that if you had the opportunity to choose between the two, that you would still go for your own Personal Learning Plan?

S2 We like the Personal Learning Plan approach because it allows the teacher to know what we want to do and it [the goals in the Personal Learning Plan] can be incorporated into other areas of study.

A Do you get enough time to try and achieve all of the things that you want to achieve in the area of language?

S1 No, I don’t think that we get enough time in [the area of] language in PLT [Personal Learning Time]. Any way, some people don’t use it wisely.

A You say that you think that there should be more time?

S3 We’ve only got forty minutes per week. We have eighty minutes sessions but there are other things that we need to get done [in that time].

A If you could choose, would you choose to have more time in that area?

S3 Yes.

3.5.3 Interview data

The current research sought to document the professional development and training needs of Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools in Melbourne, Victoria. The research methodology involved analysing teacher’s voice which means recording and analysing Literacy Coordinators thinking and the beliefs and values that they espoused regarding the skills and knowledge essential to the role (Elbaz, 1991; Wagner, 1998).
Interviews may take several forms (Bowden & Walsh, 1994; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Merriam, 1998). The following types were used in this study:

i) Open ended interviews

Open-ended interviews usually take the form whereby the investigator asks the interviewees for their interpretation, opinion, point of view, or insights into the phenomenon under investigation. During the period of time spent in each school, many open-ended discussions took place between the researcher and the participants. They included discussing with participants about various aspects of their work including: their planning, rationale and evaluation of outcomes in relation to their work and the responses of the students to the programs.

ii) A focused interview

A focused interview comprises a number of questions that will help to illuminate and build the researcher’s understanding of the larger issues under investigation. A focused interview may require only a short period of time or varying amounts of time and interviews depending on the required amount of information and the nature of the issue under investigation. During the present study, focused interviews based on predetermined questions occurred before the observation period in order to develop an understanding of the values, beliefs and experiences that informed the practice of the participating Literacy Coordinators as well as the nature of their programs (see Appendix 9). The following is an example:
November 24 2004

Interview with Stephen, Literacy Coordinator, Burtonholm Secondary College

A  So your Restart class is still doing the mainstream curriculum with modification to meet their needs?

S  I wouldn’t call it modification. When I arrived at this school I took over the Restart program. The school had had a history of doing modified work and withdrawal programs and simplifications of the program. I wanted to get teachers out of the idea of doing that. They [the Restart students] do exactly the same curriculum as all the other student do, they do exactly the same assessment tasks and they have to use the same assessment criteria and they are marked in the same way as other students as well. If they get an E, they get an E. The difference is that they are taught differently that is really important because the Restart kids don’t know that they are the Restart class we keep it quiet and low key. We have had instances where teachers have told them. Up to that point the group’s confidence was just skyrocketing, then they were told -there was a change in their attitude, the way that they were sitting, everything changed. It was probably another three months before we built them back up. So we don’t have a culture of saying “you are the literacy class” or “you are the Restart class”, they do exactly the same as everyone else does. It has worked quite well I think. I could give you all the testing scores that support this.

A  In addition to taking that class you say that you are working as a mentor to other teachers?

S  Yes, I suppose it is related more to students more than to teachers. If a student is going with a literacy issue into another class, that is not a Restart class, say hypothetically that it is an auditory processing problem, I spend time working with the teacher and draw up a program of how to teach that student and how the classroom teaching strategies can be modified to cater for that type of need. That is usually done in the first month of the schooling. As soon as we identify the problem, that is when we begin to do something with that teacher to give them advice about how to manage that student. Sometimes we don’t know about the problem till three months have elapsed and the teacher comes and says “Johnny can’t cope with what I’m giving him to do” So I say “O.K., I’ll do some more testing” and [I] get the educational psychologist in and so on.

Key participant interviews with the Literacy Coordinators in this study were conducted individually and were recorded on audiotape. Group interviews were conducted and audio taped with five students in each school in the study. Student interviews were supported by a survey seeking student opinion regarding their satisfaction with the program (see Appendix 11 for sample questions). Table 5 contains details of all interviews conducted.
### Table 5: Interviews conducted

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>School A</th>
<th>School B</th>
<th>School C</th>
<th>School D</th>
<th>School E</th>
<th>School F</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key Informants</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Key Informants</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Students</strong></td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Other Teachers</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Member Checking Phase</strong></td>
<td><strong>Member Checking Phase</strong></td>
<td><strong>Member Checking Phase</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher A</strong></td>
<td><strong>Teacher B</strong></td>
<td><strong>Teacher C</strong></td>
<td><strong>Teacher D</strong></td>
<td><strong>Teacher E</strong></td>
<td><strong>Teacher F</strong></td>
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In accordance with RMIT ethics regulations all participants signed consent forms (see Appendix 5). In the case of minors, parental consent was obtained. When the data was transcribed, participant interviews were coded and pseudonyms were used for both the participants and the school to maintain confidentiality of identity. Transcripts of all interviews were analysed and codes were identified (see Table 2).
3.5.3.1 **Inductive data analysis**

Merriam (1988) defines inductive data analysis as “a process of building abstractions, concepts, hypothesis and theories through analysis of data collected in the field rather than testing existing theory” (p. 7). The process of inductive analysis can occur both during and after the data collection. Through the process of constant and ongoing comparison of data, reiterative categories of meaning such as themes, typologies and concepts emerge. Tesch (1990), and Lincoln (1985) have identified the characteristics that differentiate the researcher as a superior data collection tool (human as instrument) compared to other data collection instruments. The advantages of human as instrument include the researcher’s ability to better respond to contextual factors and changing circumstances. Glasser and Strauss (1967) have developed the concept of ‘grounded theory’ which they define as “the act of developing substantive theory based on everyday-world situations” (p. 274). The value of grounded theory is that it has specificity and hence is useful for understanding and informing practice. Grounded theory is built upon the constructivist notion of ‘thick description’ as described by Geertz (1973). Thick description is an ethnographic concept which has become a fundamental principle in constructivist research. Thick descriptions are descriptions rich in detail. The concept of thick description as developed by Geertz acknowledges that any given situation can be perceived and given different meaning by different observers, thus the researcher is an integral part of the data collection and needs to be aware, not only of the holistic components of the research setting but also of his or her responsibility to ensure the trustworthiness of the data. Interpretative, analytical induction was used in this study. An illustration of inductive analysis is provided in the next section.
The following extract was taken from an interview with Charlotte from Bunjuck Secondary College. The situation was one in which I was exploring the strategies she uses for identifying improvement in student literacy skill development as a result of student participation in her program. These segments have been categorised as ‘articulation’ to identify teachers who were able to explain why they do what they do. Articulation relates to the metacognitive ability to give reasons for thoughts, ideas, philosophies or actions. The segments illustrate Charlotte’s knowledge of testing and tracking strategies, the concept of triangulating data, and how to track improvement in her students’ literacy skill development. Through inductive analysis and constant comparison with other information, the category ‘articulation’ emerged to describe this data.

C: I try to spend the first two to three weeks testing. The teachers help me. Kerry and I did the testing, Nea helped as well. It is never perfect, Torch (2003) Tests are not necessarily the best, but it’s better than spending your whole time testing. So anyway, there are the kids in Year 8. We look to see if they have improved. I ask [each of their classroom teachers] say…Peter, if the kids that he taught had improved and look anecdotally, at what his comments [in semester reports] were. If I get two out of three (on the measures that I use) then I would say that there is indication of consistent improvement. We’ve got kids whose spelling increased in three out of four reports and tests…We look for improvement along three areas (reading, writing and spelling) but were happy to get improvement in two areas. All of those kids on the list Sue showed me have consistently improved except for one kid whose problem was only spelling anyway. She is a girl who stayed down in Grade 3 and has had consistent literacy help in primary school, but everybody says that she is going really well. She does not need that (withdrawal) help (A.1.129-146).

3.5.3.2 Audio records

In this study, the decision to audiotape interviews with the Literacy Coordinator participants was taken for the purpose of accuracy of reporting and to maintain the ability to revisit the original discourses and the context in which the conversations
were situated. Merriam (1988) suggests that in qualitative research the researcher cannot always know what discourse or data might become crucial to the investigation at a later stage of the analysis. Note taking alone may cause the researcher to miss important data or produce excessive and possibly irrelevant material. The use of audio tape enables the researcher to revisit data in order to draw out new information or to check and increase the fidelity of data. Once transcribed the data can be manipulated, checked and cross referencing and access to key words and comments can be gained via a data management and analysis program. In order to address issues of intrusiveness as described by Lincoln and Guba (1985) field notes rather than tape recordings were used for classroom observations. A single interview was recorded with groups of five students in each school for the purpose of gaining student perspectives on each program. These interviews were cross checked against a questionnaire (see Appendix 11) on the same topic completed by each student participant on the same day that the audio taped interviews took place.

The decision to audio tape interviews with the Literacy Coordinators participants was made by the researcher in this study in order to maintain a free flow of conversation and in order to be able to return to the original conversation multiple times during the interpretive process. The consent of all key participants was obtained before audio taping proceeded (see section 3.4.1, The Process of Gaining Access to Research Data; Appendices 5, 6, 7 and 8). In the structured interviews the key questions were the same for all participants and their answers were recorded on audio tape so the analysis of the answers was straight forward. Unstructured interviews took place anecdotally before or after class or during the observation period, these were recorded in the form of field notes. In the beginning of this study the researcher took considerable care to
lay the groundwork of professional trust and rapport. After gaining permission from the Principal to approach the Literacy Coordinator in each of the schools, (Appendix 8) an initial meeting was arranged with the Literacy Coordinator participants to discuss the project. The research design and the reasons for audio taping were explained, and the inbuilt member checking phase (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) gave participants the opportunity to read the transcripts of their interviews and amend any materials that they considered inaccurate or out of context.

During observation periods the researcher's observations and reflections were noted in field study notes. All audio taped interviews with the Literacy Coordinator participants were transcribed verbatim with the exception of expressions such as “um” and “er”. In addition, a preliminary letter explaining the aims and objectives of the research and seeking the participation of the key informants was sent to the Principal, the Literacy Coordinators and to parents of all students involved as participants in the research. A copy of the proposed interview questions was sent to the Literacy Coordinators to indicate the types of questions and areas of interest that would be explored during the structured interviews (see Appendix 9).

3.5.4 Interview questions

The initial interviews with the Literacy Coordinator participants in this research were conducted using structured questions designed to draw out the thinking of the key participants in specific areas related to the key skills and knowledge that they employ in their work (see Appendix 9). Most of the questions were open ended and the
participants were encouraged to address the topic but allowed to expand and elaborate on their responses. Some questions were of a closed nature requiring specific responses. The focus of the questions was on identifying participant beliefs and values related to the key skills and knowledge required to manage a literacy program in a secondary school. Some of the questions were designed to elicit participants’ thinking relating to programs, strategies and management issues. Other key questions were designed to identify the theories, values and beliefs about literacy learning that inform the participants’ practices.

The major areas of investigation covered by the interview questions were as follows:

A The Literacy Coordinator’s educational qualifications and experience
B A description of the context in which each operated
C The values and beliefs that inform The Literacy Coordinator’s practices
D An overview of the Literacy Coordinator’s program and policy and specific strategies
E The Literacy Coordinator’s beliefs about the skills and knowledge required to successfully perform his/her role (see Appendix 9).

The choice of questions, was based on what Schwab (1983) described as the matrix for curriculum planning, based on the four essential elements of curriculum: the teacher, the students, what is taught and the milieu (or context) in which the teaching and learning occur. The following examples of questions are taken from the preliminary copy of the interview questions provided to the Literacy Coordinator participants (see Appendix 9). The first question of an open ended nature is (Q5) however others are more structured to ascertain specific information about the program (Q8).

5 What philosophy informs your work as a Literacy Coordinator?
8 How do you identify students in need of support?
3.5.5 Field notes

Regular on-site notes were made during each of the observation visits. These notes consisted of descriptions of the classroom context; descriptions of the key content of the programs and the teaching and learning activities undertaken, descriptions of the interactions between teachers and their students and the responses of the students to the learning activities. The researcher recorded what she saw in as much detail as possible so that she could later reflect on the program and discuss points of interest with the teacher at the end of the lesson. The researcher’s second purpose was to document the activities in as much detail as possible in order to have a detailed sample of the content and strategies relevant to each of the six different programs. Comparison of the field note observations also helped the researcher to reflect on how each program met the individual and contextual needs of the students as described by the Literacy Coordinator in the preliminary interview.

3.5.6 Literacy program and policy document analysis

Reading and analysing school Strategic Plans, (Department of Education and Training, Victoria, 2005a), student workbooks and program resources within each school and within each program was integral to understanding the context in which the Literacy Coordinators operated and to understanding their strategies. The cyclic process of observation, reflection and analysis is a fundamental component of qualitative, interpretative research. The reading and analysis of curriculum documents and resources was a key component of the iterative process. Content analysis of the programs and artefacts was undertaken and the school Strategic Plan was collected.
from each site. One of the six schools (Clarendon High School) had not yet developed their Strategic Plan so the Report to School Council for 2005 which contains descriptions of the goals and priorities relating to the proposed school Strategic Plan was utilised. Literacy Policies were examined and a copy of one of the documents has been included in Appendix 16.
### 3.5.6.1 Literacy programs and policy documents collected

Table 6. List of documents and artefacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bunjuck Secondary College:</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>School Charter 2000-2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Literacy program description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Teaching Handwriting, Reading and Spelling Skills (Davis &amp; Ritchie (2003) program material and handbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Student Assessment forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Samples of student work</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Literacy Coordinator’s personal literacy policy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Riverview Secondary College 2004-2006</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>School Charter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Literacy Coordinator’s personal literacy policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Corrective Reading program manuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Developmental Assessment Resource for Teachers-DART (Forster, Mendelovits &amp; Masters 1994, 2002), diagnostic literacy testing materials</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eastwood High School 2004-2006</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>School Charter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Corrective Reading program and manuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Corrective reading testing materials</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Literacy Coordinator’s personal literacy policy</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Merrifield Secondary College</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>School Charter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Classroom artefacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Literacy Coordinator’s personal literacy policy</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Burtonholm Secondary College</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>School Charter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Literacy Coordinator’s personal literacy policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Classroom resource materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Student self assessment materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Student program assessment materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>DART (2002) diagnostic tests</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clarendon High School</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Literacy Coordinator’s personal literacy policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Classroom resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Student timetables</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For the purposes of this research, the school Strategic Plan (Department of Education and Training, Victoria, 2005a) was examined in order to identify the school’s goals and priorities related to student literacy needs. These were compared against the Literacy Coordinators’ programs. For the purpose of documenting student perceptions of the program and how well they felt it met their needs, a student satisfaction survey and student anecdotal comments on the program were analysed. These were compared against the Literacy Coordinators’ description of his/her program and his/her personal program policy as described to the researcher in the case study interviews.

3.5.7 Classroom artefacts analysis

Classroom artefacts such as student work samples, program texts and resources were collected. Student testing materials and monitoring data was collected and discussed with the Literacy Coordinators as a means of identifying how students were diagnosed, monitored and assessed. Resources and strategies related to the measurement of student progress were compared with other forms of external standardised testing such as Achievement Improvement Monitor Testing-AIM (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2004).

3.6 Trustworthiness

Research which utilises a constructivist paradigm aims to build meaning from the data through the process of induction. In this process the researcher constructs and
reconstructs meaning by analysing data and measuring the possible meaning of the data against the research question. This process is different to the deductive approach where the researcher measures the data against a pre-conceived theory which is supported or not supported by the data. In constructivist research it is important to address the issue of trustworthiness as described by Lincoln and Guba (1985).

The data in the current research includes the Literacy Coordinators’ interviews and information gleaned from other participants including students, field notes and other program resources and artefacts. Elbaz (1991), Polkinhorne (1995), and Wagner (1998) have argued in favour of co-learning partnerships and the importance of including the key participants in the process of checking and constructing the meaning of the data. Lincoln and Guber, (1985) have also argued that a major criterion for achieving trustworthiness and credibility of data is “that the findings and conclusions be checked and endorsed by the key participants” (p. 213). Participant member checking was part of the inquiry process in this study (see Table 3).

### 3.6.1 Prolonged engagement and persistent observation

The presence of a researcher or observer in any given situation can cause the normal processes and behaviours of the key informants to be altered. Prolonged engagement “requires that the investigator be involved with the site sufficiently long enough to detect and take account of distortions that might otherwise creep into the data” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 302). To overcome the effects of his or her own preconceptions, to prevent misinformation and distortion, and in order to overcome
the possibility of deception by the informants, the researcher needs to take time to build trust and rapport with the participants in the study. In order to address these issues the researcher in this study applied the technique of prolonged engagement. During these periods of prolonged engagement the researcher engaged in both formal and informal contact with the Literacy Coordinators, their students and other teachers in the school.

Prolonged engagement occurred both within the classrooms and through participation in all aspects of the Literacy Coordinators’ routines during the time that the researcher was in the schools. This facilitated a bond of trust and rapport that allowed both frank discussion with each Literacy Coordinator and other teachers in the school; it also enabled the researcher to approach students in order to discuss and explore their perceptions of the literacy program. The process of participant observation also allowed the researcher to employ the technique of persistent observation. Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe the purpose of persistent observation as adding a dimension of salience, to what might otherwise be little more than immersion “the purpose of persistent observation is to identify those characteristics and elements in the situation that are most relevant to the problem or issue being pursued and focusing on them in detail” (p. 304).

In addition to revisiting the data in order to identify the themes and issues that emerged, the frequent visiting and revisiting of the field and the participation in the classroom activities allowed the researcher to seek and confirm or review evidence in the light of emerging patterns.
3.6.2 **Triangulation of data**

Triangulation is an established research practice designed to minimise bias and allow for the elimination of other plausible alternative explanations. Denzin (1978) has identified four basic methods of triangulation:

(1) Data triangulation through the use of a variety sources of data in a study.

(2) Investigator triangulation through the use of several different researchers or evaluators.

(3) Theory triangulation through the use of multiple perspectives to interpret a single set of data.

(4) Methodological triangulation through the use of multiple methods to study a single problem or phenomenon.

In the current investigation, two types of triangulation were used. Triangulation of analysis in this study was ensured through the application of the following techniques:

- qualitative analysis of interview data
- content analysis of program, classroom artefacts, strategic plans and policy documents
- analysis of student questionnaires
- Interpretative analysis of classroom observations.
3.6.2.1 Participant Member Checking Process

Member checking is an established procedure to test for factual or interpretive accuracy within an investigation using qualitative case studies as a research technique (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In order to enhance the trustworthiness of the data, the researcher provided an individual copy of the transcript of the interviews conducted with each of the Literacy Coordinators to the relevant Literacy Coordinator. These initial transcripts were sent to each of the key participants in December 2004 in order that each participant could reflect on the content of the transcript and note any errors or suggest any amendments that needed to be made. Early in February 2005, the researcher visited each of the participants and collected from them the transcripts and discussed with them any required amendments. In March and April 2005 the transcripts were amended and returned to the Literacy Coordinator participants for further checking.

The member checking process gives the interviewee an opportunity to:

- revisit the original conversations and reflect on the researcher’s interpretations
- correct errors of fact
- challenge what are perceived to be wrong interpretations
- volunteer additional information
- affirm for the record the accuracy of the documented information and that the interpretation is a true and factual reconstruction of his/her statements (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).
3.7 **Phase D: Theoretical framework for data reduction, explanation and reporting**

An interactive model of the qualitative approach developed by Miles and Huberman (1994) was used for the qualitative data analysis. This model includes data collection, data reduction, data display and drawing and verifying conclusions. The cyclical, interactive process is represented in Figure 5 below.

*Figure 5. Inductive model of data analysis*
3.7.1 **Data collection**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted. A pre-determined set of questions relating to key areas of the Literacy Coordinators role were asked in order to achieve uniformity of data across the six participants (see Appendix 9). Open-ended questions were asked so that the Literacy Coordinator participants could explain and expand on the information that they provided. The open-ended questions afforded the researcher the opportunity to re-phrase and seek further explanation of key questions if required. It also enabled the Literacy Coordinator participants to expand on their responses if they chose to do so. All interviews in this study were audio-taped (with the permission of the participant) and transcribed then forwarded to the individual Literacy Coordinator participants in order for them to confirm the accuracy of the data and to provide the opportunity for amendments if needed.

3.7.2 **Data reduction**

Data reduction was undertaken immediately after each interview. The key points emerged from the interviews, later those points and the transcripts were classified and categorised into the semi-fixed grid set out in Table 7. Pre-determined structured questions were asked of all Literacy Coordinator participants in order to ensure comparability of responses.
3.7.3 **Data display**

The qualitative data derived from the six Literacy Coordinator participants is described in Chapter 5. The data from the interviews was supported by data from field note observations and analysed documents or artefacts wherever necessary. Table 7 is not completed here, but it exemplifies the semi-fixed grid utilised for data reduction and display.

Table 7. Key questions asked in each interview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Question 1</th>
<th>Question 2</th>
<th>Question 3</th>
<th>Question 4</th>
<th>Key Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophie</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgina</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geraldine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8 shows examples of responses to question number 3 “What preparation or training have you undertaken the role of Literacy Coordinator?” (see Appendix 9).
Table 8. Comparison of answers to interview question 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Charlotte</th>
<th>Sophie</th>
<th>Jane</th>
<th>Georgina</th>
<th>Stephen</th>
<th>Geraldine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What preparation or training have you undertaken the role of</td>
<td>BA-English Dip Ed.</td>
<td>BA-English Dip Ed</td>
<td>BA-English Grad Ed</td>
<td>BA-English Grad Diploma Reading Education</td>
<td>BA-English Grad Diploma Reading Education</td>
<td>BA Geography and Sociology Dip Ed M. Ed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy Coordinator?</td>
<td>Dip Applied Linguistics</td>
<td>Teaching English as a Second Language</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Links were drawn and key professional development and training needs were identified by documenting the key skills and knowledge areas nominated by the Literacy Coordinator participants.

Table 9. Summary of key skills and knowledge areas that emerged in the discourses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge about theory.</th>
<th>Curriculum and pedagogical skills and knowledge.</th>
<th>Curriculum and pedagogical skills and knowledge.</th>
<th>Exemplary and accomplished classroom practitioner.</th>
<th>Leadership and management skills and knowledge.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An knowledge of the various theoretical constructs regarding literacy learning.</td>
<td>Ability to lead and manage program teams.</td>
<td>Knowledge about and access to a range of good quality resources and testing instruments.</td>
<td>Can structure program and lesson content and strategies to meet the specific needs of groups/individual students.</td>
<td>Ability to communicate and negotiate effectively with stake holders and leadership.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A theory about how to support students experiencing difficulty with skill acquisition.</td>
<td>Skills in diagnosing and catering to specific needs of students.</td>
<td>Ability to provide support and training to other teachers, non-teacher support staff, and volunteers.</td>
<td>Creates a classroom climate that supports and facilitates learning and engagement.</td>
<td>Knowledge of committee structures and processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of how specific physical, emotional and environmental factors impact on literacy learning.</td>
<td>Ability to reflect and evaluate own practice and to lead others in planning, evaluation and reflection.</td>
<td>Ability to manage, analyse and in interpret data pertaining to student learning and outcomes.</td>
<td>Acts on information gained from testing and student responses to monitor and improve student outcomes.</td>
<td>Contextual knowledge of students and school.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Is passionate about their program and addressing student needs.
### 3.7.4 Validity of data

Johnson and Christienson (2000) identify three types of validity that are important to qualitative research: descriptive validity, interpretative validity, and theoretical validity. In order to determine descriptive validity the researcher needs to determine “did the researcher accurately report what they saw and heard?” (Johnson & Christienson, p. 209).

In this study descriptive validity was supported through the use of observation and field notes and informal collaborative reflection and evaluation by the researcher and key participants in the study. The researcher also studied a variety of documents including School Charters/ Strategic Plans, program resources and classroom artefacts. During the data collection and interpretation phase, the researcher sought clarification when necessary from the Literacy Coordinator participants and their students in order to minimise bias and avoid the influence of personal views.

Interpretive Validity refers to the degree to which the research participants’ viewpoints, thoughts, feelings and interactions were accurately understood by the researcher. The opportunity for participants to read and provide feedback on the transcripts attempted to address this issue.

Theoretical validity describes the degree to which an explanation of phenomena by the researcher fits the data and is therefore “credible and defensible (Johnson & Christienson, 2000, p. 210). In order to address this issue the researcher decided to use theory triangulation. According to Johnson and Christienson the use of

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triangulation or multiple perspectives to help integrate the data enables the researcher to arrive at a clearer understanding and leads to more coherent explanations. For the purpose of this study the researcher applied triangulation theory through the use of multiple perspectives including the perspectives of students in the Literacy Coordinators’ programs and through formal and informal discussions with other classroom teachers and support staff.

Johnson and Christienson (2000) define reliability as “consistency or stability of the scores from tests and assessment procedures” (p. 100). In order to enhance the reliability of key factors in determining the professional development and training needs of Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools in Victoria, Australia, the emerging themes and issues were interpreted in terms of relevant theories. The following steps were therefore applied to ensure the reliability of findings:

- Key participants in the study were selected from experienced practising and successful Literacy Coordinators who were known to the researcher and considered by key stakeholders in their schools as successful operators
- A strong theoretical background was used to frame the conceptual framework of the study
- Triangulation was employed during data collection (interviews, questionnaires, and observations)
- Multiple interview sources were used
- Transcripts of interviews were checked by the Literacy Coordinator participants.
3.8 **Summary: Thesis methodology**

The research in this study took a constructivist interpretive approach (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; 1997; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It attempted to arrive at an understanding through description and analysis of data. In addition the methodology employed a case study approach. The focus of this study was centred on the knowledge, skills and experiences of six successful, practising Literacy Coordinators. The research site comprised six schools located within the Northern-metropolitan area of Melbourne.

Qualitative methods of data collection were the main sources of information in this study. Techniques such as on-site field observations, participant and non-participant observation, interviews involving the six Literacy Coordinators and key informants, content analysis of school curriculum and policy documents, and artefact analysis were the main sources of data. Educational Ethnographic procedures such as prolonged engagement and persistent observation were also an integral part of the research design.

The next chapter contextualises the study by describing in detail the six case study sites. In addition, profiles of the six Literacy Coordinators, who are the main participants in this research, are documented.
Chapter 4 Results: Case Studies

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research was to identify the professional development and training needs of Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools in Victoria, Australia.

The research question was:

- What does a Literacy Coordinator in secondary schools in Victoria need to know and be able to do, in order to successfully manage the literacy program in his/her school?

The sub-questions were:

- What experiences have highlighted, for Literacy Coordinators, the key skills and knowledge that they believe are important to the successful performance of their role?
- How might these skills and knowledge be shared with others in, or aspiring to, a similar role?
- How might these skills and knowledge be developed and communicated to others?

Investigating the professional development and training needs of Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools in Victoria, is a complex and challenging task. Ling (1998) when developing a model for the skills and knowledge required of curriculum leaders describes such roles as a complex mix of learned skills and knowledge and personal attributes. The need for and benefits of such research have been identified and discussed in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 explored in detail the
theoretical and methodological paradigm of the process of inquiry involved in this thesis. This chapter describes the context of the study and presents data from six case studies. The case studies report data from the six Literacy Coordinator participants in this study were collected through interviews with the teacher participants and through observation of the participant in the course of managing and teaching in their programs. The data also includes artefacts such as program materials and student work samples, Strategic Plans (Department of Education & Training, Victoria, 2005a), program outlines and minutes of meetings. This data was analysed in the process of attempting to arrive at an understanding of the key skills and knowledge that the participants employ in the management of their programs.

4.2 The school context

As stated in Chapter 3, the method of selection of the participants in this study is best described as purposeful sampling (Patton, 1990). The aim was to select Literacy Coordinators who were considered to be experienced, committed Literacy Coordinators who had approximately five years experience in the role and who were judged by their peers and by other stakeholders in the school (i.e. parents, students, classroom teachers and administrators) as successful managers and communicators. The schools that were selected for the research sites were not in any major way atypical or unusual, except that their literacy programs were considered by the researcher, teacher peers, the school Principals and regional consultants known to the researcher as examples of successful programs. My definition of a successful program is one where there is tangible evidence of student achievement and positive
perceptions of the program by relevant stakeholders. A working knowledge of the schools, personal contacts within the schools and teacher peers known to both the researcher and the participants were the other main criteria for selection of the particular participants and schools.

The ethnographic nature of this type of case study approach requires the researcher to spend regular, extended periods of time in observing and collaboratively reflecting with the participants about their action and philosophy, therefore accessibility to the schools and the participants was a factor in selection of the locations. All of the schools could be described as located in the Northern metropolitan region of Victoria. Two of the schools were in the Northern region, one was in the North-Eastern region, two are in the Inner-Northern region and one is located in the North-Western metropolitan region.

For the purpose of this research the school sites are referred to as A - Bunjuck Secondary College, B - Riverview Secondary College, C - Eastwood High School, D - Merrifield Secondary College, E - Burtonholm Secondary College, and F - Clarendon High School (Table 2, p. 90). As stated in Chapter 3 individual pseudonyms have been assigned to all participants including the Literacy Coordinator, the schools, the school Principals, other teachers and students interviewed in the study. Four of the schools had a Year 7 to 12 structure; one is a newly re-established Year 7 - 10 structure that will progressively become a Year 7 - 12 structure; and one is a Preparatory to Year 12 campus. The students are predominantly first or second generation Australian. The families are from a wide cultural mix: They include students whose families have been in Australia for more than four generations,
Eastern and Southern Europeans, Asians whose families have lived in Australia for ten or less years and a minority from recently arrived Middle Eastern, Asian and Horn of African origins.

4.3 The six case studies: Site profiles

4.3.1 School A - Bunjuck Secondary College

Bunjuck Secondary College is a Year 7-12 State government school with approximately 60 teaching staff and 650 students in 2004. The Principal, Mr. Terry Stewart, is relatively new to the school having taken up the position in 2005. The organisational structure of the school is based on two mini schools and a two “house” system. The house structure operates on the basis of having within each house a mixture of students from all year levels; this provides a pastoral care approach where older students help with the support of junior students as well as promoting a student leadership structure. The School Charter describes Bunjuck Secondary College as having:

- A diverse socioeconomic and multicultural base
- Staff and parents who work together with and for the benefit of students
- A comprehensive and challenging curriculum
- Programs that take into account the social, intellectual and emotional needs of students
- The expectation that students will work cooperatively and conscientiously
- Aims that develop in students a positive outlook to life, high self esteem and a
  sense of community
- An ideology that seeks to protect and nurture students by providing a secure,
  purposeful and orderly environment (Secondary College, School Charter 2000

The school is arranged in a courtyard style and has excellent facilities including a
library, resource centre, gymnasium, drama centre, an arts centre and computer,
music, home economics and science laboratories. The mini schools have centrally
located computer pods that service the surrounding classrooms providing easy access
to students via the classrooms and supervision by teachers. The school is set in a
spacious, grassed and treed environment.

The teaching and learning goals of the literacy program at Bunjuck Secondary
College aim to:
- Target, support and monitor individual students who are experiencing
difficulty coping with the demands of secondary education
- Test, monitor and track the literacy achievement of all students in order to
  identify, plan for and improve the literacy achievement of all students
- Provide programs and staffing that allow for flexible and varied grouping of
  students in the mainstream classroom
- Incorporate teaching strategies which promote thinking skills and independent
  and reflective learning.
4.3.2 School B – Riverview Secondary College

Riverview College is a large secondary college in the Northern region of Melbourne. The Principal of Riverview College, Ms. Marcia Collins, was appointed in 1992. After this research was begun Ms. Collins retired and a new principal was appointed in 2005. Riverview College is a State government school with a student population in excess of 940 students and 120 teaching staff. The school’s student population is drawn from widely diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. Many of the older families in the area come originally from English speaking backgrounds and from Italian and Greek families that first arrived in Australia after World War II. Subsequent groups settling in the area include students from all parts of Asia and more recently from the Horn of Africa and from the Middle East.

The school is well equipped and has extensive facilities including spacious grounds and a sporting complex, a well resourced technology program, spaces for specialised teaching programs including a Restart program (Department of Education & Training, Victoria, 2003a) funded by the Department of Education and Training, Victoria, in 2003 for the purpose of addressing the literacy and learning needs of Year 7 students entering secondary education. The support programs are located in a Learning Centre complex that is accessible by all students in need of help. Many of the students have a wide range of religious and cultural backgrounds and many do not speak English as their first language. Many of the recently arrived students come from conflict zones and have had disrupted educations. All staff members in the school are encouraged to participate and become trained in providing support for the literacy and pastoral care
needs of the students and one of the duties of the Literacy Coordinator in this school is to train and mentor staff who have an interest in this area.

Riverview Secondary College provides a comprehensive curriculum based on the Victoria Essential Learning Standards-VELS (Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority, 2005) which is a framework for curriculum development and assessment in Years 7-10 and the Victorian Certificate of Education-VCE (Board of Studies, Victoria, 1990) which is the official framework for curriculum and assessment in the two final years of schooling in Victoria Australia. There is also a strong focus on providing targeted programs to cater to the diverse needs of the student population.

In addition to the mainstream classes, Riverview Secondary College offers a High Achiever program for more able students who wish to be accelerated and challenged. The Literacy Support Program is provided in addition to the mainstream language (English) program. There are a variety of vocational preparatory programs for students choosing careers in the trade areas or who need alternative pathways to the Victorian Certificate of Education in Years 11 and 12. The college also supports literacy through an integrated curriculum approach to learning and in recent years has incorporated Middle Years of Schooling (Hill & Crevola, 1997) philosophy into its teaching and learning strategies. Student learning needs are also addressed through the use of Professional Learning Teams (Johnson & Scull, 2003) that use a multi-disciplinary team approach to planning curriculum and by providing for the professional development needs of teachers in order to support the implementation of the school’s programs. Students follow a set program in Years 7 and 8 which incorporates studies in English, Mathematics, Science, Study of Society and
Environment, Health and Physical Education, Languages Other Than English, The Arts and Technology. As students progress to Years 9 and 10 there are core studies and a limited range of guided choice electives in preparation for the Victorian Certificate of Education, (Board of Studies, Victoria, 1990) or the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning, (Board of Studies, Victoria, 1992) or work place and a school based pre-apprenticeship program titled Vocational Education Training-VET, (Department of Education, Science and Training, 2004) in Years 11 and 12.

The policy related to literacy and literacy support at Riverview Secondary College is to provide targeted programs for all students according to their needs. Staffing includes a Literacy Coordinator whose role it is to manage the program, two trained teachers and six teacher aides who help with the delivery of the programs. There is a strong team approach to curriculum development and professional development.

4.3.3 School C - Eastwood High School

Eastwood High School is a Years 7-12 state secondary school located in the North-Eastern region of Melbourne. The school has an enrolment of 1200 students and 120 teaching staff. The principal Mr. Jack North took up his appointment in 2004. The school documentation describes the school as:

- A homogenous social and economic base
- Highly valuing the individuality of its students
- Striving and achieving excellent outcomes for its students in both academic endeavours and in the arts and performing arts
• Strong community links and involvement
• Close and supportive student/teacher and student/student relationships


The school is set in spacious and idyllic surroundings in park like grounds and is well supplied with ample playing fields and a mixture of both old and new buildings which are well resourced with generalist classrooms and specialist areas. Students, with very few exceptions, come from Anglo-Saxon backgrounds and speak only English at home. Typically, students in this school have come from well resourced primary schools and have had little disruption to their education. The students in this school have the expectation that they will complete some form of tertiary studies so there is considerable emphasis on recovering those students who are not coping with the demands of reading and writing and communication.

The Literacy program and policy at Eastwood High School aims to:
• Provide withdrawal support to students in danger of not meeting the demands of reading and writing in the mainstream classroom in order to enable them to consolidate and catch up
• Monitor and support students in areas of individual need and track outcomes
• Build student confidence, motivation and success.
4.3.4 **School D - Merrifield Secondary College**

Merrifield Secondary College is a medium size state secondary school in the North-Western region of Melbourne. The school has a student population of 640 and a staff of 60 teachers. The school’s population reflects extensive cultural diversity, with the majority of students coming from Italian, Greek, Macedonian and Lebanese backgrounds. Most students are second generation Australian but often have backgrounds where English is not spoken at home. The school also has a language centre and a literacy program to cater for the interests and needs of its significant population of Non-English speaking background students and its growing population of recently arrived migrant and refugee students. The literacy program in the school also provides support for students experiencing difficulties with literacy in the mainstream classroom.

The literacy support program at Merrifield Secondary College is overseen by an experienced Literacy Coordinator who manages the Professional Learning Team and works with other teachers in the Junior School program to develop and manage teams, provide professional development for Year 7 and 8 team teachers and model effective literacy strategies in the mainstream classroom program.

The literacy policy at Merrifield Secondary College aims to:

- Provide support and the opportunity for students experiencing difficulty to be helped to improve their literacy skills in the mainstream classroom and through individualised withdrawal programs
• Support teachers in the mainstream program to modify and develop suitable classroom materials and teaching strategies via a Professional Learning Team approach
• Provide a withdrawal program for targeted students with significant literacy needs
• Test and track the literacy skill development of all students across the College for the purpose of developing strategies for improving literacy outcomes and monitoring program success
• Support the implementation of effective teaching strategies through the implementation of Professional Learning Teams and Middle Years (Hill & Crevola, 1997) strategies


4.3.5 School E - Burtonholm Secondary College

Burtonholm Secondary College is an Inner-North suburban, co-educational school that has been established for over sixty years. It is located in what was once a working class suburb of Melbourne but has now become a mixture of working and middle class families with a very high proportion of recent migrants. The school’s student population is more than sixty-five percent male and it is not uncommon, especially in the junior years, to have all male classes. The cultural mix includes recent migrants from the Horn of Africa, which comprise ten per cent of the total student population. Lebanese students, often of Muslim background, comprise twenty percent of the population. European students comprise twenty percent and
Asian/Mandarin Chinese students comprise a further fifteen percent. The remainder are Australian born with Anglo-Saxon origins.

Many of the students are recent migrants with disrupted educations and the school has a language centre which is located on the site. Many of the students begin English language learning in the language centre and are later absorbed into Burtonholm Secondary College. The current population totals 680 and is growing.

In order to facilitate integration of students into the school and support their transition from primary school, the school operates a Pastoral Care program that has vertical grouping. It further supports the transition of Year 7 students through a buddy system called “Mates” where Year 7 students are matched with Year 9 students in order that each student will have at least one “special” support person from among the older student population. There is also a Pastoral Care program and a teacher allocated to each group who is the primary reference person for all aspects of the student’s program and welfare. Because the student population is very diverse, the school has a strong welfare emphasis and a strong commitment to programs that enhance student integration. Student well-being is further supported and enhanced by sport and health days, food classes and many other strategies designed to unite the diverse social and cultural mix of the student population.
4.3.6 School F- Clarendon High School

Clarendon High School (in the early 1990s, all secondary schools were renamed College, however some were permitted to retain the previous title of High School,) was an Inner-Northern metropolitan school with a student population of approximately one hundred and forty students and fifteen teaching staff in 2004. In 2005 its population doubled to approximately 250. The school is located in a spacious period style building constructed early in the twentieth century. It is now refurbished to make it a modern, state of the art building in terms of the way facilities and classrooms are organised. The tri-level building comprises a complex of classrooms with flexible floor plans, which allow spaces to accommodate up to fifty students when the rooms are opened to a single space. These rooms can also be reduced to two average size rooms with a central computer pod or four small seminar style rooms with a central computer pod. The complex also contains a variety of specialist classrooms. The flexible classroom structure allows for team teaching and shared supervision which is an integral part of the operational structure of the school.

The school population is divided into two teams, each containing groups of Year 7 and Year 8 students. When it reopened in 2004 the school operated only two year levels, but added further year levels in subsequent years. Each student is assigned to either the Streeton or McCubbin team. Each team has its own area within the school and the classes operate from that area. The teaching team offices are located in the team area for ease of access by students and for supervision purposes. Each teacher has her/his own classroom which is the Homeroom or as it is called in this school, Advisory Centre for his/her group.
The school was designated a *Leading School*, which means that its mission is to model innovative teaching and learning practises that reflect current Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Victoria teaching and learning policy and practise. This includes, Middle Years (Hill & Crevola, 1997) Philosophy, the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority, 2005) structures for organising the curriculum and an integrated approach to the manner of delivering curriculum. It utilises a Professional Learning Team approach for planning, curriculum development, and the professional development of teachers and for student management. This means that there are no individual Faculties or Key Learning Areas in the school. Teachers are affiliated with a team of teachers that work with particular groups of students at each year level and collaboratively develop curriculum and monitor student progress and achievement.

Clarendon High School does not have a separate literacy program and policy. English/ Literacy skills are taught and supported as “Communication” in various forms and are delivered, as are all other areas of curriculum, as integrated curriculum. Students experiencing difficulties with literacy learning are provided with literacy support via a negotiated program agreed to by the student, the parents and their Advisory Group teacher. They are also provided withdrawal support. The key components of the teaching policy of the school are to provide:

- Innovative curriculum that is relevant, cohesive and based on learning for real life purposes
• Differentiated curriculum via Personal Learning Plans and close, supportive relationships between students and teachers through a team approach to teaching, learning and student management

• An integrated and flexible approach for learning and time-table management

• Student self management and responsibility and active participation in all aspects of school life

• Students are drawn from a radius of approximately five kilometres, including middle class, well educated families, single parent families with progressive and often alternate life styles and working class families from nearby government housing estates. The student population comprises an even mixture of Anglo-Saxon derived population that have lived in Australia for up to three generations, second generation Australians from Greek, Italian and Middle Eastern families and recently arrived African, Asian and East-European families. Parents are inclined to be employed as public servants, managers, professionals and artists (F.1.1-450).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Years of teaching</th>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>Major Teaching Subjects</th>
<th>Specialist Qualification</th>
<th>Specialist P.D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jane Eastwood High School</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Bachelor of Arts, Diploma of Education</td>
<td>English, English as a Second Language</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>(Graves) Process writing. Writing in the Subject Areas Making a Difference. SRA Corrective Reading THRASS Helping Students to Learn. Bridging the Gap.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen Burtonholm Secondary College</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Bachelor of Arts, Graduate Diploma in Education</td>
<td>English, Cultural Studies, Politics History</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Restart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geraldine Clarendon High School</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Bachelor of Arts, Diploma of Education, Master of Education</td>
<td>Geography, Sociology</td>
<td>Middle years Literacy Consultant Restart program Co-developer and consultant Regional Consultant</td>
<td>(Graves) Process writing. Writing in the Subject Areas Making a Difference. Helping Students to Learn. Bridging the Gap. Restart</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4 **Case studies: The Literacy Coordinators**

The role of the Literacy Coordinator in secondary schools in Victoria, Australia is to manage the literacy program in that school. The specific duties of the Literacy Coordinator may vary slightly from school to school and are determined by the role description developed by the school as part of the school Strategic Plan (Department of Education and Training, Victoria, 2005a). Depending on the objectives of the school the role may include:

- The assessment and identification of students in need of support, provision of withdrawal programs/mainstream classroom based programs
- Development, management, implementation and evaluation of program content
- Management of the budget and resources
- Recruitment, training and supervision of teachers, literacy aides and tutors
- Liaising with parents, administration, the school community and other program leaders in the school
- Development and maintenance of support networks with feeder primary schools and professional bodies outside the school
- Provision of professional development and support for classroom teachers in the area of literacy strategies in the mainstream classroom across the curriculum.
4.4.1 Charlotte

Charlotte was the Literacy Coordinator at Bunjuck Secondary College and had held that position for more than six years. Charlotte’s interest in literacy began in the early 1980s while training in the pre-service teacher education program at Marshland University. She was, as she describes it, a “whole language girl” and very much an admirer of Donald Graves (1983) and process writing approaches. She worked in a Northern Melbourne region school for ten years after graduating from her pre-service teacher training and held, at various stages, both English Coordinator and Literacy Coordinator positions of responsibility throughout the 1980s. During this period Charlotte developed an interest in the concept of teaching writing across the different Key Learning Areas-KLAs and in teaching the essential structures of different styles of writing through deconstructing different types of text in order to understand the key components.

Charlotte’s qualifications include a Bachelor of Arts with a major in English, a Diploma of Education and a Diploma in Applied Linguistics which she obtained later in her career from an interstate university. In the early 1990s Charlotte and her husband were teachers in a community school in the Northern Territory of Australia for two years. It was this period that awakened Charlotte’s curiosity about how young people learn to read and write and why some people had difficulties. She noted that for Aboriginal students, (and many others that have difficulty reading,) the opportunity to read in context and to read for pleasure was not always available. Often, for various reasons, families were not able to nurture or support the student’s learning of reading and writing, either because they themselves had difficulties or
because of economic circumstances there may have been little time to support their children or because there may have been few, if any, books or reading materials in the home.

Charlotte and her husband were the entire staff of their high school in the Northern Territory and so she quickly learned the importance of literacy support and the value of access to that support in the lives of students:

I saw how poor village schools were up there and how difficult it is was for the students to succeed and I thought, my God, there is something wrong; surely there is something more we can do...(A.1.14-16).

On her return to Melbourne, Victoria, Charlotte resumed teaching in her previous school and applied her interest in deconstructing text to developing a booklet of different writing genres across the curriculum. This aroused her interest in the concept of deconstructing words as a strategy for improving spelling. Charlotte is very much a seeker of knowledge and a technician in the way she goes about building her programs. She believes strongly in keeping her mind open to all new ideas and seeking out the best and most appropriate strategies to incorporate into her programs. She is also a very systematic person. She believes that structure is an important part of her overall program as well as an important component in the content of what is taught.

Charlotte’s program comprised different testing procedures for assessing the needs of students and for monitoring their progress. Student needs in the areas of reading, writing and spelling were addressed via an approach to spelling and reading that employed an intensive-instruction/phonics model and a deconstruction model for teaching writing in context across the subject areas. Charlotte believed strongly in
developing her staff so that each person could contribute constructively to the various aspects of the program. When Nea, who was also a qualified secondary teacher, became her assistant she quickly trained her into the essential components of the program that she had already built in the school. This included a variety of testing procedures to determine student needs and achievement levels, a phonic approach to spelling, and a deconstruction approach to reading and writing strategies. By training her literacy aides in a variety of program strategies she was able to offer targeted intensive instruction to students who need one-to-one attention. Charlotte and her assistant worked alternatively in the mainstream classroom with other teachers modelling writing genres and research techniques for two of the four school terms each year. In the other two terms they provided a withdrawal program to students who needed the opportunity to catch up on skills that they had not adequately developed.

### 4.4.1.1 Charlotte’s classroom

As a result of extensive research and observation of the conditions that facilitate literacy learning and indeed, all forms of learning, Brian Cambourne (1987) has identified seven “conditions” that facilitate effective learning; they include immersion in the process both as practitioner and in examples of the type of product to be produced, a supportive environment where the learner feels at ease and is willing to take risks so that s/he can learn from his/her mistakes as well as his/her successes; scaffolding which enables the learner to understand the essential steps involved in the task and how to go about it, the opportunity to practise what is being learned and the
provision of feedback from the teacher/mentor. Charlotte’s program contained all of these elements. My observations of students for this research were in Nea’s classroom due to timetable constraints, but the program was essentially Charlotte’s. In secondary schools in Victoria it is common that the overall coordinator/manager of the literacy program is responsible for the design and management of the program but they do not necessarily teach every class themselves.

On first entering the ‘Literacy Room’ I was struck by the colourful visual display, the atmosphere of comfort and cooperation and the efficient organisation of the room. In addition to samples of student work displayed around the room, I saw charts and program equipment which were pinned on walls or laid out ready to be used. Student work-books and a variety of resources such as pens, coloured pencils and erasers were stored on shelves for easy access by the students. This, Nea told me, was her way of eliminating the problem of students forgetting to bring their equipment. Because the room was small (four meters by three meters) everything was within easy reach. Fortunately, the withdrawal groups ranged between six and nine students per group, so that rather than being crowded, the room seemed cosy. It was obvious that students were both familiar and comfortable with the routine as they moved to their places and prepared for the task at hand. The day was hot and so Nea had provided water and drinking cups which students used. There were sweets on the table which Nea used as rewards for tasks well done. At the beginning of the lesson, Nea engaged students in conversation about their day, previous work and their progress. She was always softly spoken and calm. Her demeanour was reflected in the behaviour of the group.
As she moved about the room observing student work in progress, Nea questioned students about their work in order to encourage students to remember steps and processes that they needed to apply. Many of the students’ questions were answered with a question designed to encourage them to reflect or apply what they had learned. There was also written feedback provided in their workbooks, the feedback outlined both the strengths and the areas of the work that need further improvement. Notes regarding student progress, skill development and samples of their work were kept in a folder that Nea had set up for each student. Nea also maintained a folder of the students’ completed writing tasks, which she checked and monitored at the end of each lesson. Other regular components of the program included a white board activity where the students collaboratively de-constructed the correct spelling of nominated words using the ‘Teaching Handwriting Reading and Spelling Skills’ known as THRASS (Mossenson et al., 2003) morphemic attack approach. Nominated words were deconstructed by the group by collaboratively identifying the various sound groupings/blends in words or by using flash cards and a quiz approach to recognising and decoding whole words or by creating lists of words with similar sound blends/structures and putting words into boxes that divide the different sound units within each word.

Many of the activities included a critical thinking component. When students completed a word successfully or if they were having difficulty with a word, students were asked by Nea to explain how they worked out the spelling of particular words and to reflect on the process that they used to arrive at the answer. Usually this led to a discussion that included the other students in the group, who might confirm what was said or add their own opinions or perspectives. This allowed the whole group to
share and see that sometimes there might be more than one way to attack the problem. Students also learned about the difference in the type of sound made by long/short vowels and applied their learning by identifying the type of sound in words that Nea nominated. In order to teach that different blends of letters create different sounds, there was an activity where Nea dictated groups of words with particular sound blends and students had to both spell and explain how the sound represented by the letter “c” in chair, ceiling or cat is different depending on the other letters with which you combine it.

Almost every lesson had a reading component designed to encourage students to apply the decoding strategies that they had been taught which were sound out, break the word up, what does it look like, have a go. Nea also regularly modelled different styles of writing by producing a piece of her own and asking students to identify key components of the structure such as introduction, main body, and conclusion, she also encouraged students to self assess; for this, she provided self assessment sheets that students completed at the end of each topic.

In the course of a brief conversation that I had with one of the students in Nea’s group during my second observation Con, one of the Year 8 students, said:

I didn’t really want to come at first, but now I think it is O.K. I think that my reading has improved and I am learning how to combine the sounds and break up the words that I can’t spell. I think I’m getting better (FN.21.5.03).

One of the measures of Con’s success was his eagerness to read to the group and volunteer answers to questions, compared with his unwavering reluctance to do so at the beginning of the term. Another of Nea’s students, Mary, was uncertain about how she felt about being in the group. In the early weeks of Term 2, Mary’s response to
my question about whether she felt she was benefiting from the program and whether she liked it was:

I’m not good at reading and writing and I don’t like it and I don’t like being in the dumb class (FN.21.5.03).

Initially, Nea found it a challenge to get Mary to come to class, her frequent absences from school also made it difficult for Mary to gain a sense of continuity and to maintain her motivation. Within the first few weeks, Mary stopped attending the group. Nea gave Mary the option to think about whether she wanted to remain. At first Mary stopped attending, but soon she returned because she decided that she really did want to improve her skills and that she was being helped by the program.

In addition to feeling that they had made progress, the feedback provided to me by students suggested that they enjoyed the environment, responded positively to the structure and predicability of the program and responded positively to the “big sister” approach that Nea adopted by listening to their problems so that they saw her as a supportive friend as well as a teacher. In our first interview Charlotte spoke of the difficulty that literacy teachers and co-ordinators face in enlisting the enthusiasm and cooperation of secondary students and to some extent other teachers.

Many of the students selected into secondary school literacy programs have already been identified in the lower grades as ‘in deficit’ so they frequently suffer from poor self-esteem. Students in secondary school literacy programs are frequently labelled or see themselves as ‘dummies’ and are reluctant to participate because of the stigma attached to being in a literacy program and the expectation by many teachers that they
will catch up missed classes in the mainstream classes puts them at a further disadvantage. Classroom teachers often see withdrawal programs as a disruption to the mainstream program but do not feel competent that they have the time or the knowledge to address the needs of such students in the mainstream classroom without the help of someone with expertise in the area.

4.4.1.2 Charlotte’s program and policy

Charlotte’s policy was that students were selected into the literacy program only if they were willing and agreed to take responsibility for their learning and to attend punctually and regularly. For one term in each semester, the literacy team at Bunjuck Secondary College worked in the mainstream class-rooms in order to help teachers to modify programs, to teach specific content such as research skills and different styles of writing; to team teach decoding strategies in the wide reading program; to provide professional development to teachers across the different learning areas/disciplines by modelling appropriate literacy strategies, and to work with the learning team to develop program content.

Charlotte’s program used a variety of approaches. In Term One of each year, all students were tested and the literacy team members provided support in the mainstream classroom and identified students in need of additional help. In Term Two of each year the program operated as a three, 50 minute period per week withdrawal program, which selected students undertake in addition to the mainstream English program in Years 7 and 8. In Years 9 and 10 students were given additional
help in the mainstream classroom if they chose to have it, or they could seek out help as required outside of normal class time. This pattern was repeated in Term Three and Term Four. Students were selected into the program as a consequence of the results that they achieved on the South Australian Spelling Test, (Westwood, 1999), the Scholastic Reading Inventory, (Ashton Scholastic, 1999) and the Australian Council for Educational Research, Tests of Reading Comprehension - TORCH Test (Mossenson et al., 2003). Students were also referred by teachers or by parents. The main spelling and reading strategy in operation was based on Teaching Hand Writing, Reading and Spelling Strategies known as THRASS (Davies & Ritchie, 2003). The THRASS program was based on teaching students to recognise the different sounds made by blending various combinations of letters, then applying this knowledge to decoding words of similar structure. The program aimed to improve student spelling and reading strategies through the teaching of sound blends. The program focused on a phonic sound blend approach to spelling and decoding words and on the improvement of the clarity and accuracy of the students’ handwriting. Students were also taught how to structure different pieces of writing for different purposes and audiences.

Charlotte felt that the Teaching Hand Writing, Reading and Spelling Strategies - THRASS (Davies & Ritchie, 2003) component of the program allowed students to apply the Multiple Intelligences approach (Gardner, 1983) which was based on the theory that students have different preferred modes of learning and different skill areas in which they excel. She believed that through the application of linguistic, musical and kinaesthetic activities such as the “Rap” which was an essential component of the program, students learn how different letter combinations in words
create different sounds. The “Rap” comprised reading from a wall chart that combined pictures and sound blends with a recorded musical beat. The chant was repeated out loud by the group each lesson, this was designed to help students to learn, practise and remember the rules so that they could apply them when they write and read. Charlotte believed that the structure of the program enabled students to build their spelling strategies through repetition and application of sound and visual cues. Students also completed workbook activities that included creating lists of words with similar sound patterns, cutting and pasting, writing and drawing words and pictures that go with the sounds. The THRASS program materials were augmented with reading materials that included scientific, mathematical, environmental and other content. The theme and topics reflected vocabulary in use in other subjects that the students were studying in the mainstream program.

At the time that I observed the group, students were reading from the short story collection, *Swinging from the Clothes Line* (Griffith, 1994). They had read the story and used the ideas as a starting point for a personal writing piece which Nea initiated by writing a piece about her family. This encouraged students to discuss their families and produced ideas for content for the stories they might write about their families. Later Nea showed students a plan for how they might structure this type of story. In order to encourage students to be actively involved and committed to the learning process, students were asked to take leadership of the different activities involved in each lesson such as leading the “Rap” chant and sharing the stories that they had written or leading the board-work activities.
4.4.1.3 Charlotte’s beliefs about the key skills and knowledge

Charlotte believed that a Literacy Coordinator needed to be knowledgeable about a wide range of programs, resources and strategies, in order to be able to select the most appropriate components to include in his/her program and to be able to advise and support other teachers. It is therefore essential to remain informed about current developments and programs and to read widely, attend professional development activities relevant to their area of expertise and to communicate with colleagues in the same area of program management. She believed that it is essential to remain aware and responsive to the needs of teachers in the mainstream classroom so she also felt that by teaching in the mainstream as well as in her literacy program she was able to empathise with the needs and issues of her classroom teacher colleagues.

Charlotte believed that it was important to have an effective and cohesive team approach to the management and delivery of her program. Her team met weekly to plan and share ideas, to generate resources and to debrief about the progress of students. Together they worked and learned from each-other and supported each other. Because it was important to keep classroom teachers on side and to develop a close supportive relationship with both the teachers and the students, Charlotte and her team attended meetings of teachers in other curriculum areas. This helped them to get feedback, facilitated communication and helped them to plan how they would support students in the mainstream program and work with teachers to modify work for students experiencing difficulty coping.
By working with teachers in their classroom Charlotte believed that her team also provided support and professional development to classroom teachers by modelling literacy strategies appropriate to the teachers’ Key Learning Areas. These might include how to structure different types of essays depending on the topic, purpose and audience and a variety of research strategies including data logging, brainstorming and data processing strategies such as Graphic Outlines and Three Level Guides.

Both Charlotte and Nea felt fortunate to have the support of the Principal and the Assistant Principal who were willing to listen to their ideas and ensure that their proposals were given a fair hearing at staff and curriculum forums. The Principal had, at times, spoken at staff meetings in support of initiatives that the team wished to implement. He provided them with adequate time, funding and staffing to operate the program as intended. The Principal and Assistant Principal had also made themselves available to be mentors to staff in the program.

The support for Charlotte’s program by the Principal was not only due to his interest and commitment to the program and to the development of staff in the program, but also stemmed from the school’s commitment to improving literacy as part of the major priority in the school Charter. In Victoria, School Charters (Department of Education, Victoria, 1993) were documents that identify the key goals and priorities that the school aimed to address in each three year cycle of their operation. Addressing the literacy needs of students was a priority in the Bunjuck Secondary College’s Charter (see Appendix 16) and with the entire staff; therefore the team were able to enlist the support of staff for their projects and initiatives. Charlotte was also aware that being conversant with the school’s priorities and operational policies can
be a powerful tool in achieving her goals as a leader. When one of the literacy team’s proposals met with some opposition at Curriculum Committee, Charlotte approached the Curriculum Coordinator and outlined the relevance of her proposal to the curriculum goals of the school and provided a rationale for the initiative. At the subsequent meeting the Curriculum Coordinator spoke in support of and explained the goals of the initiative and this helped to carry the proposal.

Charlotte and Nea were aware that informal networking such as the friendly interactions and conversations at staff social functions could make a big difference to the success of their enterprises. Another important skill was the ability to address the particular needs of the students in a way that was appropriate to the student and the context in which the school operates. Charlotte’s team constantly searched for ways of improving the literacy program at Bunjuck Secondary College especially in the hope of supporting the concept of incorporating literacy into the mainstream classroom.

In June, 2003, Charlotte and Nea were preparing to incorporate both Gardner (1983) and De Bono (1992) Thinking Curriculum strategies into a program that they hoped to initiate for students in need of literacy support in Years 9 and 10. They hoped that the program would meet the needs of students who were not able to cope with academic subjects but were reluctant to accept help. The strategies included Thinking Curriculum approaches such as brainstorming, flow charting and data processing and a variety of Direct Attention Thinking Tools (de Bono, 1997) for researching. The objective was to provide an integrated curriculum approach to developing literacy skills via an activity based horticultural elective called Backyard Blitz. In the
preceding months there had been a series of Thinking Curriculum professional
development activities provided by the local school cluster network leader and Nea
hoped to put some of the ideas into practise. Nea would be in charge of teaching the
elective and so she hoped that she would be able to integrate practical activity based
work, with relevant reading, writing and research activities. She hoped to also teach
students about the process of setting up a business and marketing their product.

Charlotte was aware that it is important to work within the school’s operational
processes and to plan the strategy carefully in order to get other staff on side. The
following is Nea’s retelling of the processes that the team used:

During our one period of time on Thursday, we sat together and wrote
up a design of what we wanted to have in the program. Charlotte typed
it up, later I made some adjustments. On Friday night during happy
hour one of the staff members who was on the Curriculum Committee
happened to be sitting there when I spoke to my team leader. I got
them to look at the proposal and asked if they thought I should add
anything to it. They gave me a few ideas and we adjusted it then gave
it to the Curriculum Coordinator to present to the Curriculum
Committee on the following Monday. It was passed with no objections
(FN.21.5.03).

An essential part of the process of initiating a new program was getting the
cooperation of other teachers whose program might be detrimentally
influenced by the initiative:

I had to speak to the SOSE [Humanities] Coordinator. He was concerned that
we were going to steal kids out of the SOSE electives. He wanted to know
exactly how many kids we were targeting but once I told him who they were
and what it was for, he was OK with it. It was an issue, and he got quite
snaky about it because he didn’t want his numbers reduced. That was
something I hadn’t anticipated, but once I spoke to him and said why we were
doing it, I mean, half these kids were kicked out of their subjects for half the
time anyway. So when I gave him the kids’ names he said, “Oh, yeah, you can
have them, you can take them, that’s fine.” So it was not a big deal (A.2.234-
239).

A very important component of the success of Charlotte’s program was the
availability of time and staffing for planning and reflection.
We are meant to teach twenty-two periods, we have a literacy aide as well; she comes in on Monday, Tuesdays and Thursdays, which are the same as Charlotte’s days. I have nine students that I want to work with because they are at risk. This coming term I will have three SOSE periods, eight Backyard Blitz that leaves me ten [for other literacy work] but I wanted to have eleven because the way the timetable worked out I won’t get round to all of the kids, especially one of the boys who has come back from one of the outside units. We organise our timetable to fit in whatever we can then we print off a copy and give it to the Assistant Principal and then he uses it to work out what we are doing and when to give us extras (A.2.77-83).

At the time that I visited in Term 2, Charlotte and Nea were in the process of developing a plan to implement Backyard Blitz. Nea described both the support and the possible blockers to the initiative and the strategy that they used for overcoming the blockers which was to get staff to see the advantages in it for them. In the end they were able to bring both the reluctant staff members and students on side:

I was very surprised at how totally behind us they were. The Junior School Coordinator printed off a list of subjects and blocks, which had subjects that were not appropriate for those kids, and then I had to go round and find the kids and ask them if they would like to be in this subject (FN.21.5.03).

The next step in the process for Charlotte was to negotiate the appropriate times and class numbers:

One girl had the option to get out of pottery or home economics, but she wanted to do both, so I said don’t worry about it, whereas I was more inclined to take kids out of subjects such as Chemistry or Business if it was a subject that might be too difficult for them. …I didn’t want any more than ten kids in any one group. When I had spoken to them I went back to the Coordinator and he locked it into the timetable (A.3.194-204).

Another very important ingredient was the support of administration:

I spoke to the Assistant Principal about funding and the land that I would need to do it in. Then I thought that we are going to need money for seeds and equipment, he told me that it could come out of our special projects funding. This subject came under the umbrella of SOSE but they were a bit unhappy about handing over the cash and my taking students out of the existing elective program. So it was taken from special projects funding. The assistant principal wrote a list of things that we would need. Both the Principal and the Assistant Principal have been very supportive. The librarian offered to look to
see what books already exist in the library that might be of use to us but she said that she was prepared to buy whatever books were required for the program if I gave her a list. Everyone has come to the party (A.2.204-215).

4.4.1.4  **Charlotte in summary**

Charlotte was an effective operator because she made every effort to ensure that she was well informed about what she did and she communicated well with others. Charlotte endeavoured to gain the support of all relevant stakeholders and applied formal policies and procedures as well as fostered good will by sharing and being approachable. Charlotte planned primarily with the interests of students in mind. She was careful to identify and to reflect on both the positives and the blockers in any project. She was able to reflect and evaluate her own and her team’s actions in order to learn from both the successes and the failures. The degree of dedication and effort that she put into her programs was reflected in the positive responses of both staff and students to what she did. There was also a strong team and strong support by both staff and the Principal Class, all of which were important ingredients in the success of her program.
4.4.2 Sophie

Sophie was the head of student support programs and an appointed Leading Teacher (see Appendix 13) at Riverview Secondary College. Sophie had held the position of Literacy Coordinator for the past five years but her role extended far beyond managing the literacy program. Her interest in literacy and her involvement in developing support programs began when she first became aware that students in her school were experiencing problems in relation to literacy learning and behaviour. She believed that the behavioural issues were very much related to the curriculum and that if the curriculum could better meet the needs of students, a lot of the problems would disappear.

Sophie was a four year trained English teacher. She held a Batchelor of Arts and a Diploma of Education from an inner city university. Sophie began her career in a remote Queensland school with a significant proportion of indigenous students. She later moved to Victoria and taught in an inner city school where the majority of students were learners of English as a Second Language so she undertook further training as an English as a Second Language-ESL teacher. Sophie subsequently taught English as a Second Language as a ten week courses, three times a week, to students who were relatively recent arrivals in Australia. Soon, she began to see that there were some similarities in the needs of inexperienced language learners and those who had difficulty with literacy and so she began her quest to support the literacy learning needs of students in her school, hoping that she would be able to improve their learning across the discipline areas of the school program.
4.4.2.1 Sophie’s classroom

In the time that I spent at Sophie’s school, I attended all of the various support programs offered by her team. The members of Sophie’s staff formed a strong team. Multiple components of the program operated from the (Literacy) ‘Reading Centre’ at any one time. I have not provided a detailed description of the Corrective Reading (Engelman et al., 1999) program offered at Years 7, 8 and 9 because it comprises a set content and mode of delivery that does not change from lesson to lesson and indeed school to school. The next case study “Jane” describes the lesson structure in detail.

The teacher of the Year 9 Corrective Reading (Engelman et al., 1999) program at Sophie’s school had incorporated an adult literacy learning model, which she adopted from a local adult learning institution as a way of developing the program for students who had made significant progress since Year 7. She also hoped to cater for the fact that students in Year 9 were maturing and needed more age relevant reading content. In this group students read in turn from age appropriate texts and from newspapers and other resources. In one of the lessons I observed, the teacher, who had worked with that group since Year 7, asked each student to read in turn from different areas of the same newspaper. As they read, the teacher coached strategies if needed, and questioned students about the content of what they read. This led to a critical or explorative discussion of the topic and content of each article. I could see that the students felt comfortable with the teacher and with each-other. As the students read, the teacher asked questions that would lead them to focus on key features of the resource materials:
Does anyone want to predict why the writer gave this piece the title The Fierce People?

Various answer from the students.

Have a look at the map of South America. Look at some of the pictures in the text. What kind of people live here? What kind of environment is it?

There was frequent explorative talk designed to raise questions about content and check comprehension. At times the students’ vocabulary was being checked and expanded. “What does remote mean?” she asked. Whenever a difficult word was encountered students were encouraged to “Have a go.” If this did not work the teacher modelled a strategy for decoding the word.

After the lesson I approached one of the students and asked him whether he felt that the program was helping him to improve his reading and comprehension skills:

We have improved a lot in our reading since Year 7

Are you a confident reader now?

Yes, we read really well and we understand what we read.

As part of my observations of Sophie’s program I attended a number of Year 7 Restart (Department of Education & Training, Victoria, 2003a) classes. The Restart program was developed by John Munroe, a senior university lecturer in Victoria Australia. It was funded and implemented in selected schools by the Department of Education and Training, Victoria in 2003. The funding for the Restart program was made available to schools where the literacy and numeracy levels for targeted students fell significantly below the State average. That is, the student literacy/numeracy levels were
approximately three years below the level of other students of the same age and Year level. The Restart Program provided professional development for teachers in intervention strategies and testing procedures of the literacy needs of students experiencing difficulty. The program included training in phonological awareness and issues related to developmental stages that impact on student’s reading and engagement. It also trained teachers and Literacy Coordinators in the use and selection of assessment instruments and strategies for their program.

The Year 7 Restart class (Department of Education & Training, Victoria, 2003a) was taught by Mary, a trained secondary teacher who had undertaken additional qualifications in Special Education. Mary’s students comprised students who had limited vocabulary and language skills due to their Non-English speaking backgrounds and their limited experience of the English language. At the beginning of the lesson Mary engaged the group in conversation about a recent visit to the zoo. Students were excited and enthusiastic about the previous day’s excursion. The discussion provided an opportunity for the group, many of whom were relatively recent arrivals in Australia and had been exposed to learning three to four different languages in the first thirteen to fourteen years of their lives, to practise their language skills.

Mary had taken photographs of the animals and the students and she had loaded the pictures onto her laptop. In addition to talking about the animals Mary engaged the group in conversation about the kind of environment that had been constructed for the animals at the zoo and how it related to the animals natural environment in the Savannah in Africa. This allowed Mary to link the vocabulary and the concept
content of the seemingly casual conversation to key themes in their current Study of Society and Environment (SoSE) program. Mary had been teaching these students English for five periods and Study of Society and Environment-SoSE for three periods as part of the Restart (Department of Education & Training, Victoria, 2003a) program.

M Look at the picture. Why does the zoo grow those grasses? What difference would growing this type of grass make to the animal?  
(FN.10.11.04)

As the students responded Mary gradually brought the conversation back to thinking about their own environment. The emphasis in Mary’s classes seemed to be strongly focused on language and vocabulary development and the oral exploration of ideas as well as building a relationship with the group because this was what her students need. Often the class had the flavour of an ongoing conversation among friends. Students happily participated and were willing to take risks venturing opinions and exploring concepts as they enthusiastically discussed their ideas and responses to Mary’s questions or the various stimuli that she provided to encourage conversation.

Later in the lesson Mary brought out a set of cards with words and definitions that had been cut up to comprise one set that contained a word and another set that contained definitions. The theme of the collection of cards was endangered species. By turning the activity into a game and by tapping into the students’ natural competitive nature Mary was able to enlist their enthusiasm and engagement in an activity that aimed to develop their decoding, research, critical thinking, analytical skills and their vocabulary:
M We are going to match the words with the definitions. What is a definition?
C When something gives the meaning of a word.
M How will we do this task?
A Read them, sort them out, match them and check if it makes sense.
M Spread the words and the meanings out. The words are in capital letters, the meanings are also in the packet with them. You need to match them up.
(Pairs of students took a packet of words each and started sorting them.)
M We’d better check to see if you can say the words. (FN.10.11.04)

Students read the words out loud then continued matching the words with their definitions, Mary walked around and checked, asking questions designed to help students solve problems and at the same time coaching decoding skills to the group. Questions flowed as the students worked on the sorting. Many of the questions were exploratory questions as students tested their theories about the definition of the words. At one stage Mary suggested that each pair should read all of the definitions in order to get an overview of what they were before they started matching. As individual pairs of students matched words and definitions, Mary asked them to explain and give examples of how they might apply that word or definition. To test the definition of “species” Mary said:

Yesterday we looked at tiger species. What is a tiger species?
(FN 10.11.04)

At a later stage in the lesson students swapped their matched words and definitions with another pair of students, then Mary gave out three discs; a green, a red and a yellow disc to each pair. Students were asked to place the other group’s definitions
under one of each category; red if they disagreed with the definition, yellow if they were not sure or green if they agreed. The teacher then coached a checking strategy:

M  If you are not sure of a definition how can you check it?
P  In the glossary of the text book.
M  What is a glossary for?
A  To find words.
M  What does it match up with?
C  Special words in the book. (FN.10.11.04)

Students then used the definitions found in the Study of Society and Environment text book to confirm the definitions that they were checking. When this activity finished the students discussed the importance of ecosystems.

4.4.2.2 Sophie’s program and policy

Characteristically, Sophie’s program reflected the needs of her students and her wide range of interest and expertise and that of her staff. The program was located in a literacy program complex called The Reading Centre which was separate to the main body of the school and contained three small classrooms used exclusively for the program. The rooms were modern, well heated and ventilated and appropriately furnished with enough desks and tables to comfortably equip the group.

The size of the rooms and the furnishings allowed for each teacher to arrange the room to suit the lesson. Because they were only used for this purpose, program texts and equipment were stored in the rooms for easy access. Program groups were allocated to one of these rooms and the lessons for that group were always in the same
room. This assisted students in the transition years and beyond to develop a sense of belonging. Teachers often followed students through the year levels which also promoted a sense of continuity and relationship with the teacher. The program itself was multifaceted and attempted to provide for a wide range of needs; they included a withdrawal Corrective Reading, (Engelmann et al., 1999) program that was offered from Years 7 to 9, which focused on intensive instruction for three periods per week in reading and spelling. A Restart program (Department of Education & Training, Victoria, 2003a) which was offered for five periods per week for English and three periods a week for Study of Society and Environment to targeted Year 7 students who have significant literacy learning needs. These needs included language skills such as vocabulary development due to unfamiliarity with English language, spelling, reading, writing skills and comprehension. It attempted to integrate the strategies previously mentioned with current mainstream themes and topics so as to support both the students’ language needs and the work that students were undertaking in other subjects in the mainstream classroom. There was also a “Skills Centre” program that had its own designated venue for students in danger of not completing their studies. The venue provided resources such as computers, work spaces, time out and support staff to assist students with high emotional and other learning needs.

Sophie also managed the Professional Learning Teams in her school which provided both professional development for interested staff to learn effective teaching and learning strategies as well a forum for collegiate development of targeted programs for student groups in each learning area. At Year 10 the school operated a targeted vocation course structure called Pathways (Department of Education & Training, Victoria, 1992). The program was funded through an initiative called Access to
Excellence (Department of Education & Training, Victoria, 2001a) which provided money for literacy and other skill development programs for students in danger of not successfully completing their secondary education in the compulsory years. In Year 11 students were able to choose to undertake the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (Board of Studies, Victoria, 1992) program which provided language, numeracy and communication skills required for entry to vocational training courses in the Technical and Further Education sector.

Because her school was a Restart (Department of Education & Training, Victoria, 2003a) School, Sophie’s programs included approximately two Restart teachers who targeted twenty-seven Year 7 students in that program, six literacy aides and two further teachers who worked with students in other areas of literacy and numeracy support. The Restart program ran parallel to other English and Study of Society and Environment classes. The classroom teachers at that level in each Key Learning Area, plus the Restart teachers were part of a Professional Learning Team-PLT. The purpose of the PLT was to develop effective teaching strategies and curriculum resources and to disseminate what the group learned about the best way to address the needs of students then to share the strategies and resources that they developed with the staff across the school. Each Professional Learning Team had a leader who had a one period time allowance and who was responsible for ensuring that the programs were developed, documented and distributed.

As part of her allotment Sophie also undertook the role of Literacy Mentor and worked with classroom teachers for up to four periods per week. She had performed this role for more than four years and worked with teachers in areas such as
woodwork classes, computer classes and science classes in order to model language and literacy strategies relevant to that Key Learning Area. Sophie told me that in previous years she had also organised Literacy Action Teams which were learning area/discipline based. In the Literacy Action Teams, Restart teachers and Sophie provided six one hour workshops for teachers based on strategies for addressing the literacy needs of students in that learning area. All the examples that were used in the professional development activities were made relevant to the particular learning area/discipline and so each of the learning areas/disciplines went through a six-week program of “good literacy” teaching as applied to their particular context.

In Year 7 a number of students in the reading program participated in Restart (Department of Education & Training, Victoria, 2003a) rather than undertaking the Languages Other Than English –LOTE program. According to Sophie, the students in her programs had such profound literacy needs that it was deemed more important to focus on their English language and literacy skills rather than undertake the study of another language:

Some of them have the need to learn to decode because they read very slowly and so they lose meaning. There is a group who on the surface appear to read well; when they read aloud it sounds very beautiful, but they are not developing meaning. That group also tends to not have a grasp of formal written English that is required at school. They tend not to think or speak in complete thoughts. So it is very hard for them to write, because if you do not think in complete thoughts it is very hard to make sense of information and to understand concepts (B.1.86-93).

The oral part of Sophie’s Restart (Department of Education & Training, Victoria, 2003a) program was focused on developing the student’s thinking and conceptual skills and his/her oral language as well as reading and writing. This was important because students in this program may well have had a variety of reasons for not coping in the mainstream classroom or being behind in their literacy learning.
This may have included being inexperienced with the language and/or not having the opportunity or access to experiences that were commonplace for other students of the same age.

Their lives are not experience rich, so it is very hard for them to make sense of the more abstract concepts covered in their schooling. Their world is very concrete, so the higher up the school they go, the bigger the gap there is between their experience and the curriculum (B.1.94-98).

During my observations I discussed with students what they had learned in the program. One of the students told me that the program had helped him to focus his attention on the text in order to be able to answer the questions and in order to participate in the discussion that would follow. The result being that his ability to engage with the text and his comprehension skills had improved.

I’ve learned to pay attention when I read. Before I would read the words and not think about what they said. Now I think about them because we are going to talk about them, so now what I read makes sense and I understand it more (FN.1.12.04).

Sophie’s program used a variety of testing measures to assess whether students needed literacy support. The measures included a literacy testing program called Developmental Assessment Resource for Teachers-DART (Forster et al., 1994), plus variations of DART which the school had developed. Sophie told me that the teachers in her school developed their own tests based on annotated work samples because DART only tested up to the equivalent Level 5 of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority, 2005). Level Five standards are the equivalent of Years 7 and 8 skills and knowledge requirements in Victorian state secondary schools. The school developed their own tests for Level Six (Years 9 and 10). The school’s Victorian Certificate of Education (Board of Studies, Victoria, 1990) results helped the teachers to identify the support needs of the students at that level. In Sophie’s opinion the judgements of teachers relevant to the Victorian
Essential Learning Standards were not a good reflection of student achievement, so the teachers needed professional development in arriving at clear and consistent judgements about student learning outcomes:

We have lots of meetings and each night is devoted to a particular year level. In these meetings each learning area has developed assessment task for each subject that they offer at each year level and then we apply them in practise situations to firm them up so that we can learn to make better judgements (B.1.108-111).

Sophie believed that the Achievement Improvement Monitor-AIM (Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority, 2004) data also helped teachers to have a better understanding of student needs and achievement. The school established Strategic Plan Action Groups focused on literacy which had helped to make teachers aware of the needs of their students. Sophie’s school used Developmental Assessment Resource for Teachers-DART, (Forster et al., 1994) reading and writing tests at the beginning of each year to identify students in need of support and to track and monitor improvement at the end of each year. The DART program also included testing based on oral and viewing components but instead of this aspect of DART testing, assessment of oral and visual literacy at Sophie’s school was addressed via observations, undertaken by classroom teachers, of student performance in the normal classroom situation and by careful collection of data about student performance.

We keep a database, which gives us a detailed picture of each student. For example, students who are now in Year 10, we have a detailed data base about all sorts of things about them, for example, their attendance patterns, what sort of intervention programs they have had and whether they get an Educational Maintenance Allowance. Teachers do this little summary of the good ways of managing those students and good ways of teaching those students, it is actually a separate data base that one. All their DART scores, their literacy and numeracy whether they are ESL, what language they speak at home, what primary school they have come from…and so it goes, it is quite detailed. One teacher has as her job, [as a responsibility position], to manage the data. We can usually get a Year Eight and Nine intervention program started from the first day. Our Year 7 one would start from Week Four or Week Five. We are practised at it now we have been doing it for a while (B.1.126-138).
Sophie’s team included three part-time teachers employed to teach the Restart (Department of Education & Training, Victoria, 2003a) program, but any teacher could be part of the literacy mentoring team. Sophie told me that over time, twenty or more teachers in her school had participated in that program. These teachers completed the relevant professional development, and then they mentored other teachers. The intervention programs other than Restart were delivered by support staff because it was the only way that the literacy team could meet the needs of all the students who needed to be helped. Sophie believed that the school couldn’t fund the entire literacy support program if they used teachers only. Two of the staff in the Corrective Reading program were trained primary school teachers. The team aimed to finish up to Level C of the Corrective Reading, (Englemann et al., 1999), by the end of Year 8. The Year 9 program was not a decoding program but a reading for meaning program. In past years the school had collaborated with a local institute of technology in a project where a number of the adult Access teachers came and worked with the literacy support staff. As a result the team had developed their own program based on the work that the institute’s adult Access department developed with the teacher support staff at Sophie’s school. The program focused on reading for meaning and high interest texts such as newspapers and magazines oriented on student interests. There was a focus strategy on the Three Level Guide approach which included: Identification of literal and inferential meaning, learning to write and respond to literal and inferential content in texts, paraphrasing and summarising what they have learned. The Reciprocal Teaching content used as part of the program included clarification and training in diction. Both of these strategies were originally adopted from a resource manual called “Helping Students to Learn” (Elisson & Stewart-Dore, 1993).
Sophie’s team streamed students in the Corrective Reading (Englemann et al., 1999), program so that students at Year 9 who were operating at a very low level could be taught decoding if they needed it. Development and management of resources was important in terms of delivering a quality program and so the team regularly reviewed and evaluated the program options for students. The aim was to provide a variety of programs and approaches that met the needs of students through selective grouping.

Having enough funding to resource and staff programs as they were intended to operate had always been a major priority.

When the Corrective Reading (Engleman et al., 19994) intervention program first started, it was given to under allotted teachers and it was much messier and students came out of one period of a subject here and one period of a subject there, and it wasn’t a good program. But then I reluctantly managed to convince the LOTE staff to allow it to be run parallel to LOTE they didn’t realize the great benefits, it got rid of some of the naughty students. They are quite supportive of it now (B.1.232-238).

Sophie’s ideal program would not be intervention based. She would like to see all the necessary interventions mainstreamed, but she believed that it was not possible because it was much more resource intensive that way. She believed that if every teacher taught literacy in all their subjects, intervention programs would not be required, except for those students that could not decode. If all the reading and writing that went on was scaffolded and meaningful, students would learn more effectively and there would be fewer problems. Sophie believed that in schools like hers, where the management of students was a challenge, programs where teacher or support staff work intensively with a group of students, while the rest of the class
work independently are very hard to achieve. Sophie believed primary schools have an ideal model:

You do the ‘Shared Reading’, or the ‘Guided Reading’ or the ‘Reciprocal Teaching’ with one group while the others are working independently on other things. [Situations] where you all work on the same tasks together, but the tasks are different, is ideal, but our students don’t have the independent learning skills to do that. My ideal would be that all teachers took on that model and saw their students as individuals and challenged them as individuals. And so they wouldn’t do just filling the gaps or colouring in because they were integration students. It would be that they were all engaged and challenged, and that literacy wasn’t avoided because they are poor readers and writers, so you avoid reading and writing tasks (B.1.261-270).

Sophie’s previous school operated a program where team teaching in Science, English and the Humanities was the norm. She believed that this approach was a powerful way to teach but teachers working in this way had to be competent, they had to know how to do it well and both teachers [working in the program together] need to be committed to that approach.

4.4.2.3 Sophie’s beliefs about the key skills and knowledge

In terms of her professional development needs, Sophie believed that she needed to study beyond what she already knew. Sophie’s interests at that time were in exploring how the teaching of philosophy at secondary school level might be used to encourage the development of thinking and critical literacy. She believed that for an experienced Literacy Coordinator such as herself, many of the workshops and one day sessions available through private and government providers contained little if anything that was new. At the same time she had faith and a
sense of optimism that there would always be more to know and she was clear about her own professional development needs.

My biggest challenge is to discover the best model for actually changing teacher practice. Really genuinely change. This is my big ponder at the moment; what things could I do in the school that could really make a difference? And what model of doing that would really make a difference? (B.1.461-464).

Sophie thought that as a result of her previous learning and experience, she had acquired a sound understanding of what good teaching, good practice and good pedagogy should be, but there was no point in just having that knowledge; she believed that she needed to develop the skills to be able to share that knowledge in a genuine, meaningful way that changes practice. One strategy that she thought was important was mentoring:

I like mentoring as a way of learning, you know, doing it and having somebody as a critical friend. I think that is a good model for professional development. One of the Assistant Principals has taken that role with me, always asking the hard questions because I have some bright idea about something. That is often the best way. Once you get to my age, you’ve got a lot of basic knowledge, and you want to start doing things; having someone that will just probe and question and makes you clarify and refine your ideas is very useful (B.1.322-329).

Sophie was very keen to visit and learn more by observing successful programs in operation; at the time I was interviewing her she had been reading about the John Thurgood High School in the United States and the reading had been an inspiration for her.

They set themselves the task of teaching their students academic English. Their goal was to give every student access to a college education and they set up this literacy across the curriculum type approach. I think I would like to go there (B.1.333-336).

What interested Sophie about the Thurgood model at the time that I interviewed her in 2003 was that the successful strategies developed by Thurgood were
adopted into the mainstream classroom and at the time she wanted to find out how they had put those strategies into operation. In subsequent visits I noticed that she had put the theory into practise through her strategy of working in the mainstream classroom to model strategies for other teachers and through the use of Professional Learning Teams.

A lot of those models of Reciprocal Teaching and the little strategies, the one off strategies are part of it, but the whole is what is more important. I mean I can teach the teachers here structural overviews, graphic outlines all that sort of thing, but unless they are understood in a really deep way they just don’t become part of what you teach. I’d love to see a school that at least on paper, says that they have done that. So that the strategies are really part of the teaching rather than just an add on (B.1.345-352).

Sophie questioned some of the strategies used in initiatives such as the Innovation and Excellence (Department of Education & Training, Victoria, 2002) project because she believed that while it was good to have an expert, to model the theory, the challenge was to identify what needed to be done to ensure that teachers had the support to actually take new ideas on board and to incorporate those ideas into their programs and pedagogy. She believed that this required school based leaders who have the skill of group management, knowledge of literacy and knowledge of the curriculum area and the ability to gain the confidence of the classroom teachers so that they would be willing to expose themselves and talk openly about what works and what does not work for them.

4.4.2.4 Sophie in summary

Sophie by nature was gregarious and inquisitive; she read widely, was well informed and competent and was liked and respected by other teachers. She spoke with a ring
of laughter in her voice and was always willing to help and support her colleagues both within her school and in the wider educational community. She was a person that constantly aimed to improve her own knowledge and to support the learning of others, both students and colleagues. Her colleagues and the administration held her in high regard. Sophie was also aware of the value of this high regard in relation to her role in the school; it made it easier for her to negotiate with the Principal and other Leading Teachers and to achieve her goals. Her expertise and leadership skills made her an integral part of the leadership team in the school. Being highly regarded and valued, (more by others than she values herself according to Sophie,) enabled her to fulfil her role as mentor to staff in relation to program needs and the initiatives that she led and managed.

I believe Sophie clearly demonstrated the skills and propensities that she identified as important skills and knowledge for someone in her role. She was an excellent negotiator, mentor and manager and she had an open and inquisitive mind that was always looking for ways to improve her own skills, her program and the skills of others. She had the admiration of her students, her team and her colleagues. Perhaps her greatest strength was her ability to harness an expert and dedicated team that was the backbone of her program.

4.4.3 Jane

Jane had been a teacher at Eastwood High School for more than thirty-four years; her case study typifies the dilemma that many Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools
experience; the challenge of finding or building a program that works. Jane was a four year trained secondary school teacher; she held a Bachelor of Arts and a Diploma of Education. Jane first became interested in literacy while on maternity leave in the 1980’s when she commenced a Graduate Diploma in Reading Education, to satisfy her curiosity regarding why most people learn to read and why some have difficulty. Several years after she returned to teaching she was appointed to the position of Literacy Coordinator. When I interviewed her, she had already managed the program in her school for six years.

In addition to her role as manager of the Literacy Program, Jane taught English and History. Prior to undertaking the role of Literacy Coordinator, Jane had held the position of Year 12 Coordinator in her school. Many secondary schools in the Northern region of Melbourne, Victoria, identify up to thirty per cent of all students in their school as being in need of some level of literacy remediation (Hempenstall, 2005). Jane’s school averaged less than ten per cent, so while the school acknowledged the need and importance of having an excellent program for students experiencing difficulty, Jane was aware that literacy did not attract the same levels of staffing and funding that were given to other areas of curriculum in that school. Even so, the program was valued and operated efficiently and successfully.

Jane remembered that in the late 1990’s her position was created as a result of funding that became available due to a Department of Education, Employment and Training, Victoria initiative. In recent years the Literacy Coordinator position had been an Expert Teacher position (see Appendix 13). Jane did not receive a time allowance but she managed the program as part of her normal teaching load. Jane spoke confidently...
and with pride about her program and the high level of success that she and other teachers in the program had achieved with students. For a number of years Jane had also provided professional development and mentoring for other teachers seeking to implement Corrective Reading programs in their schools by allowing teachers from across the metropolitan area to visit and observe her program. In addition to setting up the program Jane had trained a number of staff, some of whom were initially sceptical, in the program strategies. The following is Janes re-telling of how she encouraged other teachers to work in her program and to develop their literacy teaching skills and promote the program within the school:

Our Curriculum Coordinator got talked into taking a literacy class by me. He has been doing it for a couple of years now. He just finished with a group today; really rough boys, you know. He said that he is so pleased with them. He battled with them for two years. It took him that long to take them through, kicking and screaming, but their skills have improved dramatically. There is no way that they would have improved like that in an ordinary classroom. They are actually able to read newspapers now. You can only do it with a small group of similar ability where they are all working together to improve their skills. I said to him, “Now R…. I want you to immediately sit down and write about your response to that [the program], because we have to write reports to justify our programs and you will forget about all that by the end of the year…” (C.2.255-266).

On being appointed to the position of Literacy Coordinator, Jane set about attempting to find an answer to the challenge of what to do with the students who were not coping with the demands of reading and writing. Like many secondary school teachers, Jane found that the literature that she had read as part of her Bachelor of Arts degree and her pre-service teacher (Diploma of Education) training year had not prepared her for the task of teaching literacy. Jane believed that even her post graduate studies had not helped. Jane’s early experiences typify the problems faced by both English teachers and Literacy Coordinators in many secondary schools; that is, knowing what strategies actually work for helping students who have specific difficulties reading, spelling and writing; how to put a program in place and how to
staff and structure it so that it is a meaningful and worthwhile program within the school’s curriculum.

The reading course that I had completed really didn’t tell me that much. I remembered a bit but I had to start from scratch. I was really looking for a program that we could use for addressing the needs of our weakest students, they [the needs] obviously were not being addressed in the classroom. Nobody else seemed to know what to do, so it was up to me to come up with something… (C.2.286-291).

Because their teacher training did not include training in diagnosing and structuring programs, many Literacy Coordinators and classroom teachers gravitated to packaged programs available from both the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Victoria or private providers, in the hope of finding one that contained the essential resources and strategies that would help them to meet the needs of their students. Jane’s belief was that most Literacy Coordinators simply do not have the time or the expertise in many cases, to invent a program. Programs like Corrective Reading (Englemann et al., 1999), Making a Difference (Furniss, 1993) and Teaching Handwriting Reading and Spelling Skills - THRASS (Davies & Ritchie, 2003) are already developed and resourced and all the strategies for delivering the program are provided in the manuals. Many teachers use them because they feel that they can set up a support program without delay and rely on the expertise of the authors of the program for the strategies needed in the instruction process. Because she had difficulty getting advice, Jane adopted the Corrective Reading approach because she felt that it made sense to her. She has continued using Corrective Reading because she was strongly convinced that the program was successful, she believed that the program’s approach of intensive, direct instruction, taught in sequence, has proven to be successful in supporting the literacy learning of students in her school. She believed that the emphasis of the program on developing phonics and word attack
skills and the daily practise of the skills as well as the team work, rewards and self monitoring kept the students motivated.

4.4.3.1 Jane’s classroom

When I first observed Jane’s program in 2002 her classes were located in a portable at the back of the school. In 2003 the literacy classroom had been re-located to one of the modern, recently built wings of the school. One of the rooms in the complex was specially set up and used exclusively as a Corrective Reading classroom. Jane reflected that this space was passionately fought for and acquired in order that the program might have a suitable, specially designed space in which to operate. Lessons took place in the literacy room which was approximately three meters in width and four meters in length, an excellent size for the groups of between eight to ten students. In the centre of the room were desks, arranged in a horse shoe shape. The room had minimal adornment perhaps a poster or two, program texts were stored in an easily accessible space at the back right hand side of the room, and the materials and textbooks related to different levels of the program and the students’ workbooks were stored on shelves in the room for easy access.

The following are observations of the program in operation taken from my field notes in November 2004:

Charles, one of Jane’s team of teachers, speaks to the group with a quiet modulated voice that assumes obedience and cooperation. The observer senses an atmosphere of familiar routine in the activities; students know exactly what is expected of them and fall quickly into the routine. Each student seems to know and use the agreed procedures and is familiar with the various components of the lesson which proceeds like clockwork. As students work through the various tasks Charles provides feedback and encouragement. The smiles on the faces and the obvious effort and concentration
confirm that the students take this lesson seriously. The pace of the lesson is brisk, this keeps students focused on the task and is designed to encourage students to read at a speed that enables them to retain the information that they read, the theory being that very slow and halting readers often forget the information by the time they get to the end of the line that they are reading (F.N.21.11.04).

The lesson has different phases; it begins with a vocabulary development and sound blending component which supports the learning and application of sounds to be applied in the reading content that follows. The process for this part of the lesson is that the teacher reads and models the pronunciation of the word while the students look at it and point to it. Once the words have been read, pronounced and spelt, they are re-read in chorus together, and then individual students are chosen at random to read a row of words. The second phase of the program is the choral reading followed by an oral question and answer section designed to test students’ comprehension. Next there is a timed individual reading task which students undertake in pairs, one partner reads while the other keeps track of the pace and accuracy, then they exchange roles. Finally, there is an individual workbook exercise designed to test the student’s comprehension and phonic skills. New sound blends and new vocabulary is scaffolded by the teacher who says the word or sound then asks students to repeat it as they look at the word and point to it in their text. At other stages students are asked to identify the new word on their own after they have had a chance to practise it with the group. At the end of each phase of the lesson the teacher informs students of the score that they have achieved for each component and then finally the students enter their score in the back of the program workbook (F.N.21.11.04).

When I spoke to the students at the end of the lesson, the students confirmed that the rules and strategies that they learned in the program had given them a feeling that they were now well equipped to deal with the challenges of decoding and deriving meaning from texts in the mainstream classroom. John, responding to Charles’ prompt to re-read a word to correct a misread item during one of the observed lessons, beamed happily as his efforts were confirmed as correct. What remained with the observer at the end of the lesson was the sense of confidence, purpose and achievement that the students exuded. Informal conversations with students at intervals confirmed this:

Since I stated three years ago, I have moved up two levels. I can read more difficult books and I like to read now, before I didn’t read at all (FN.29.11.04).
4.4.3.2 Jane’s program and policy

Jane’s literacy classroom was the designated centre for the program. Both Jane and the two other teachers that worked in the program used this room which was exclusively set up for that purpose. The program operated from Years 7-9 and provided a fifty minute withdrawal program for four periods per week. Groups of up to ten students undertake the course for a semester at each year level. Students were selected into the program as a result of the scores that they obtained on a purposely designed dictation test and a Running Records/reading test that is administered to all Year 7 students on entry to the school. Students were also referred by teachers or parents that have concerns about their child’s literacy needs. Students were tested at regular intervals using program testing materials to monitor their achievement. The scores were tracked and compared with Achievement and Improvement Monitor-AIM (Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority, 2004) data and The Victorian Essential Learning Standards (Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority, 2005) progression points. At the end of each year, students provided feedback on Jane’s program via an evaluation sheet and discussion with the program teachers.

Jane, like many Literacy Coordinators, had searched widely for a program that would provide the answers to the problems that students who experience difficulty with reading encounter on entering secondary education. Jane had continued to use the Corrective Reading program because in her opinion it contained training in the essential skills and knowledge that students need to apply in order to improve their spelling and reading. She believed that while many would argue that teaching rules and strategies for skills such as spelling is an artificial way to address the literacy
learning needs of students, the school’s testing and tracking data supported her theory that it worked.

In the Eastwood High School community the ability to read and spell accurately are considered essential skills:

Whether you like it or not, spelling is still a basic skill and kids see it as important. I’ve just had my Year 10 students writing a review of their semester’s work and they often say “I really want to improve my spelling.” They see spelling as something important. All their exams are still done by hand and poor spelling is seen as something that they should have mastered. I’m not talking about the odd [unusual] word; I’m talking about basic words. A lot of teachers say “They can’t spell”… they come to me and say, “How do I deal with it? (C.1.124-126).

It is obvious that Jane thought carefully and reflectively about the underlying causes of literacy problems among secondary school students and attempted to understand what needed to be done to address the problems that students experience:

The weaker students with the poor writing, poor reading, poor spelling and word attack skills don’t get that extra exposure to vocabulary. It’s getting that bottom third to engage with language because it is still the basic tool that we use [in education] isn’t it? If they don’t grasp the words that represent concepts, like “emulsification” if they can’t even write it, or spell it or form it into other types of words; that is what really limits them when they get up into the senior classes (C.1.137-143).

4.4.3.3 Jane’s beliefs about the key skills and knowledge

Jane believed that in order to be a successful manager of a literacy program you must have a strong interest in the welfare of students, the flexibility to deal with the individual needs and personalities of students, a sense of humour when things don’t go the way you had anticipated and willingness to work collaboratively with other
staff to enthuse and persuade them that what students do in literacy programs is important. Jane also believed that Literacy Coordinators have to be good negotiators and be able to keep the administration on side; they need to be an advocate and promoter of the program because the conflicting demands of the various programs and interest groups in any school can impact on the survival of individual programs, and she/he needs to be able to show through the engagement and success of the student cohort that the program is worthwhile. Other important skills include the ability to manage staff and resources in the program, to work within the constraints of the timetable and to communicate effectively with the relevant stakeholders. Jane believed that creating a sense of purpose and belonging for the students is also an important factor in the success of a literacy program. The creation of a specific room as a base for her program followed the Middle Years (Hill & Crevola, 1997) philosophy:

You need to have a place to hold the lessons. We are lucky that we have a little room now which is like a little seminar room. It is our literacy room and all lessons take place in there and we store all our books in there and so on. It would be impossible to have it on a rotating room basis because you would not have that sense of community. It is important to have our own little room and we really had to fight for that. It makes an enormous difference if you are in a friendly room, big enough for ten to twelve people as opposed to a big classroom (C.1.506-513).

Most importantly, the program needed to have value and credibility in the eyes of the students. Jane believed that students in her program responded positively to its structure because they saw a sense of order in it [the program] and they saw evidence of their progress as they developed their literacy skills. Jane also believed that other teachers respond positively when they are able to see evidence of success in students through the application of the skills in other areas of curriculum.
4.4.3.4 Jane in summary

Jane was a passionate, successful and committed Literacy Coordinator who had worked continually to build a program that in her estimation was logical and had relevance for her and for her students. This did not mean that Jane had ceased to question and seek out further opportunities to fine tune and incorporate new strategies into her program. She was a thoughtful and reflective person who was none-the-less knowledgeable and willing to use her well developed people and negotiation skills to protect and promote her program and to build bridges to collaborative literacy development with other teachers across her school.

4.4.4 Georgina

Georgina has coordinated literacy at Merrifield Secondary College and other programs in secondary schools throughout her twenty years as a teacher in the Victorian State Education system. Her qualifications include a Bachelor of Arts and a Diploma of Education with major studies in English and Humanities. Georgina had not completed other formal qualifications as far as literacy was concerned but had completed various professional development activities provided by both the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Victoria and private providers in the past. In 2004 Georgina attended training in the Restart (Department of Education & Training, Victoria, 2003a) program for leaders. This included an intensive professional development program in the area of testing and evaluating the literacy needs of students. Georgina believed that it had been a valuable experience
for someone in her role because it had helped her to understand and implement appropriate assessment strategies. It had also helped her to develop strategies for structuring her literacy support team and program. Georgina felt that after completing the program and training, she was better able to provide for the literacy needs of students through the Professional Learning Team (Johnson & Scull, 2003) structure that enabled teachers in her school to deliver targeted, specific, curriculum that meets the needs of both individual students and the needs of specific cohorts.

Georgina first became interested in coordinating literacy programs because she wanted to learn more about why some students have difficulties in relation to specific areas of their learning and what things she needed to be able to do in order to support the learning of students who were experiencing difficulties. Georgina’s philosophy of teaching was that every student can learn and build onto their literacy skills with the help of caring others. She believed that rather than being constrained by dictates of what a student ‘should’ be able to do at any given period of time in their education, a teacher’s role is to identify what a student needs to learn and to take them on a journey to discover and achieve their goals. Georgina believed that the journey of learning was the most important part of the teaching process and that in order to help their students to undertake that journey; teachers need to develop a trusting relationship with the students.

It is the journey aspect of it. You look and see where they are and then take them on that journey. The relationship stuff is really important to me. I think that it is the most important thing to me. You really can’t teach someone that you don’t have a relationship with. So it is about really getting to know kids and to know their interests and their needs and their background and then taking them forward. That is basically where I come from. Unfortunately we have fallen, a lot of the time, into the trap of thinking [that teaching] is about where kids are supposed to be. Pushing them and saying “this is where they are” rather than taking them forward. I guess that that is where I come from. That is why I teach (D.1.332-343).
Georgina believed that in her school and in many other schools, there are often differences of opinion and priorities between the people who feel pressured to prepare students for tertiary entrance or passing exams and those that feel students need to be engaged and supported according to their needs and abilities. She believed that she was supported by both the Principal and the staff in her work and what she was hoping to achieve, partly because people appreciated what she was doing and partly because classroom teachers often did not know how to deal with literacy issues themselves. Georgina felt that her mission was to make the important changes in the way her team and the classroom teachers in her school addressed the learning needs of students. She believed that students would be better supported and encouraged to learn by establishing teams of teachers who learn together and work intensively with their students to understand them and form relationships with them. Georgina felt that a Professional Learning Team (Johnson & Scull, 2003) approach would help her to achieve her goals and help classroom teachers to acquire the skills they needed in order to build the best possible learning opportunities for their students. Another of her aims as Literacy Coordinator was to educate teachers out of the mentality that literacy is the domain of the Literacy Coordinator or of the English teacher alone.

Georgina was certain that the Professional Learning Teams (Johnson & Scull) approach, which was based on small multi-disciplinary teams of teachers working intensively with a particular cohort of students to plan all aspects of their programs, would enable her goals for literacy and student programs in general to be achieved. Georgina also believed that the Professional Learning Teams (Johnson & Scull) approach would help her to incorporate literacy, engagement and multiple abilities strategies into all aspects of the mainstream program. In 2005 her literacy team and the Year 7 Professional Learning
Teams added a focus of student wellbeing to the overall strategies in their programs because they believed that this approach would support both the students and the work of all classroom teachers, many of whom might otherwise have had difficulty coping without this level of collaborative and supportive learning.

A place like this is quite daunting and I think that getting the idea across that the responsibility for literacy belongs to the whole school is slowly changing (D.1.347-349).

4.4.4.1 Georgina’s classroom

In Georgina’s program, Year 7 students in need of literacy support were grouped together and they remained in that same group for all subjects for that year. The program and the funding for additional aide support was provided as part of the Restart, (Department of Education &Training, Victoria, 2003a) program which aimed to provide catch up support for Year 7 students entering secondary education with deficits in their literacy and numeracy skill development. The literacy support in Georgina’s program was delivered as a mainstream classroom program in English but the learning content and pedagogy was tailored to meet the needs of those students in all subject areas. A small number of students with severe learning difficulties were also provided one-to-one withdrawal classes for three periods per week in order to address areas of extreme deficit. There was also a Professional Learning Team (Johnson & Scull, 2003) established which comprised all of the Year 7G teachers in all subject areas, this included the Homeroom teacher, the Year Level Coordinator and the Literacy Coordinator. This group met fortnightly as a team and planned and evaluated and discussed the program for that particular cohort of students.
Georgina’s class operated in the school’s Literacy Centre which was located in a small room in a complex of portables. The room was set up for the program and contained a number of resources essential to the program. Along one wall were a series of corrals that contained listening posts and computers so that students could use the computers to process their work, and the corrals to listen to recorded texts. Students could also use corrals for private reading and individual work. The room was set up in a semi-circle of desks in order to maximise face-to-face contact with the teacher as many of the students in the group were from Non-English speaking backgrounds or were first phase language learners. Many of the strategies in use in the classroom incorporated significant English as a Second Language-ESL approaches to address the specific needs of students with limited experience of English. In line with Restart (Department of Education & Training, Victoria, 2003a) principles, the group did not exceed eighteen students.

The walls of the classroom contained many colourful posters and examples of student work. They also contained posters with examples of key processes involved in different types of reading and writing activities so that they could be used as a quick reference for students. There were shelves containing dictionaries, pens and pencils for student use and both fiction and non fiction texts which had been arranged according to type and reading ability level. Each student had a resource file which was stored in the Literacy Centre and included their workbook and other materials that they were utilising. At the beginning of each lesson students selected the required materials from their file and returned them at the end of the lesson. This approach of keeping student materials in the room was designed to minimise loss of work and to ensure that students had all of the required materials and texts on hand. The following
is a summary of my observations as recorded in my field notes. It illustrates the activities in a typical English/Literacy class at Merrifield.

The lesson was the first in a unit designed to integrate language skills, research and the study of the structure, function and behaviours of birds. The aim was to develop vocabulary and the ability to write descriptions, to teach research, to identify different types of texts and their function and then later teach students to write procedural texts of their own. Many of the students in this group were second phase language learners but were only able to decipher one and two syllable words in printed texts and they had very limited vocabularies.

The lesson began with an overview of the aims and objectives of the proposed unit of work. The teacher cued students into the first task of the lesson by providing a Powerpoint presentation on the behaviour of two or three species of birds; the teacher then invited students to reflect on the presentation and record their responses in their workbooks. At the end of the presentation the students were asked to share what they had noted down and to spend time adding to their list. Students were also challenged to expand on some of the words that they volunteered:

T What word would you use to describe this bird?
S Big
T What is another word for big?
S Huge (FN.25.5.05)

As the students worked the teacher circulated around the room and prompted students who were experiencing difficulties by getting them to think and verbally describe some of the characteristics of the birds that they had seen. A strong focus of these
lessons was to connect visual and printed images and to encourage students to use the relevant vocabulary in discussion. Recorded sounds were used to support visualisation. Another focus was to encourage students to expand on their existing vocabulary by exploring other words that might be used in the same context. In these instances students shared and discussed the words they had chosen and this enabled individuals to add to their original list.

Next the teacher demonstrated different types of texts about birds and asked students to identify the type of writing that they might contain. The texts were varied and included both fictional and non fiction types. In order to develop reading skills, students were invited to select a text from a range that included texts of different degrees of difficulty. While each student read, some students using text and recorded versions of the text on tape to support their decoding, the teacher coached strategies as needed and provided supportive feedback. At the end of this activity students wrote summaries of their findings and shared their writing with the group. Lessons always included a variety of speaking, listening and writing content. They also included the opportunity for students to work at their own pace on various tasks. A typical lesson might include a small group of students completing their reading of texts and taking notes, one or two students might read and listen to the text using a listening post, two or three students drafted or revised their writing or researched using the computer and a small group of students worked with the teacher on a reading or writing task or held conferences with each other on work that they had produced.
Georgina’s program and policy

Georgina was relatively new to her current school, however, in the time that she had been coordinating the literacy program, she had been planning and evaluating and building in order to achieve her ideal which was to develop a program that addressed the needs of individual students, developed their skills in a manner that was cognizant of their individual learning styles and abilities and integrated literacy support into the mainstream classroom.

In 2004 a Junior School Centre was set up in Georgina’s school. In line with Middle Years (Hill & Crevola, 1997) research recommendations, the junior school teaching team encouraged students to feel ownership of the group of portables which comprised the Years 7 and 8 Centre, as their domain. Georgina had established a Literacy Resource Centre within the Years 7 and 8 complex and had incorporated different learning resources within the centre. The centre’s key resources included listening posts, computer pods and different hands on activities so that students in the literacy program could be engaged in different forms of group and self directed work in the room at any one time. As stated previously, along one wall, there were cubicles where students could sit when working on individual activities without being disturbed. The room was also furnished with a variety of texts arranged on shelves. The texts had been graded according to different degrees of reading age/ability. Each student had been allocated a file which contained their workbook and other handouts and completed tasks. The room was colourfully decorated with samples of student work, posters and step by step reminders of key processes to be followed regarding different types of writing activities. The desks were arranged according to the task at
hand but were usually organised in a semi-circle, facing the front of the room. Having the workbooks available to them in the classroom addressed the issue of forgetting to bring books and equipment to class. Eventually Georgina hoped that the structure and operation of the Literacy Resource Centre might become a model, for other classrooms within the school.

Before Georgina began Coordinating the literacy program at Merrifield Secondary College the literacy support program had comprised mainly of Corrective Reading, but Georgina perceived Corrective Reading to be predominantly about decoding words, which she believed did not sufficiently prepare students for what happens in the mainstream classroom. In 2005, Georgina planned that the program would change again in order to move away from the idea that students with literacy problems are strictly the domain of the literacy team. Georgina aimed to implement literacy teaching across the curriculum in the form of targeted programs and strategies directed at the needs of both individual students and individual cohorts of students.

The role of the Professional Learning Team was to plan the curriculum for all students in the team’s cohort but also have a literacy focus which included Thinking Curriculum (de Bono, 1992) and Multiple Intelligences (Gardner, 1983) approaches. In addition to collaborating in the planning process, the literacy support person assigned to each team worked with teachers in their classroom to model literacy strategies, thus professional development in the use of new strategies took place in context.

In 2005, all Year 7 Form Groups will have their own Professional Learning Team. Pastoral Care teachers will be given a time allowance to run the Professional Learning Team if they are the ones who have completed the relevant professional development. Again, it is very much literacy based and you get to know the class very well so that you can look at the different learning styles of the kids and direct the curriculum to cater for their
learning styles and what their needs might be, but you are also giving teachers professional development in different literacy strategies that they will be required to use. It’s going to be quite prescriptive. We want every teacher to be applying the strategies in class; not so much in subject matter but in the strategies that they use in their teaching (D.1.109-123).

Georgina told me, that in the following year there would be an overall professional Learning Team Coordinator, probably herself, who would set the agenda for what happened each year. Previously the Professional Learning Teams (Johnson & Scull, 2003) had not been as effective as Georgina would have liked them to be because planning for a whole year level cohort did not enable teachers to sufficiently target their teaching strategies to meet the individual needs of students in the group. In 2005 Georgina envisaged that the literacy team would work with individual groups of students and their teachers to ensure that professional development was taking place as planned; to support teachers to implement the strategies and to implement the concept of team teaching.

Individual members of Georgina’s literacy team were attached to a Professional Learning Team to provide expertise and to model specific teaching strategies or to team teach. At the time I spoke to her in December 2004, Georgina was planning to implement the strategy at the beginning of 2005 with the Year 7s. In 2006 it was Georgina’s intention that the strategy would be expanded into Year 8. Her plan was that members of the Year 7 Professional Learning Team might volunteer to lead a team at Year 8 in the following year in order to build the team approach upwards through the year levels. Because she believed that the availability of adequate time to plan, implement and review programs and strategies is a key to their successful operation, Georgina’s teams used Access to Excellence (Department of Education & Training, Victoria, 2001a) money which was given over to the Pastoral Care Program so that each pastoral care teacher had a two period allowance for developing and managing the program team in addition to the PLT time for meetings.
However, in 2005, due to cuts in funding, a one period time allowance was provided only to the PLT leaders and meetings of the PLT team took place as part of the normal meeting schedule in the school (after school).

In 2005, along with the PLT there were two literacy support teachers who worked with targeted students in that program. The literacy team provided a three period withdrawal program for the fifteen weakest Year 7 students, not including ESL students. Georgina believed that a withdrawal program in addition to the mainstream program for a limited number of students was necessary because in some cases students in that group might need to be taught very basic skills such as letter clusters and other early developmental work. The fifteen students in the Restart (Department of Education & Training, Victoria, 2003a) group would progress up into a separate literacy class in the following year but up to eight other students may have been added to the group depending on emerging needs. The group worked as a separate literacy class with targeted withdrawal blocked against Languages Other Than English.

At Year 7 Restart (Department of Education & Training, Victoria, 2003a) students were withdrawn during Languages Other Than English time because Georgina was conscious of the fact that it was not helpful to take students out of mainstream classes if it put them behind in all their other learning. The very weakest members were taken out of Languages Other Than English-LOTE for targeted skill work but then they were supported in normal classes where those literacy strategies were applied in their mainstream learning across the curriculum. The Restart teaching team instructed the Restart (Department of Education & Training, Victoria, 2003a) students in a range of subjects. The Restart group were together for all areas of their learning. This
approach enabled their teachers to modify and select appropriate teaching and
learning content and strategies for them.

In Georgina’s school, the literacy team targeted subjects such as Science for support and
team teaching because many of students had difficulty reading and understanding concepts
in Science. In addition to targeting the support, the team also targeted teachers who were
open to learning the new strategies. It was Georgina’s role to look closely at where she
thought the support and training would be the most effective.

Georgina believed that students responded to different strategies depending on their
learning styles, so another focus was on getting to know the student and knowing what
learning style they preferred and how they could best be engaged. All the strategies that
students learned in the withdrawal program were related to the skills and strategies that
students needed to apply in the mainstream classroom. The topics and content were the
same as those offered to other students in the same year level. For example, in Science
students might be learning about electricity, so the support program used that topic and
content while also teaching literacy strategies. In Georgina’s opinion the program was
successful and the evidence was that many of her students, when tested, had improved up to
two progression points in the Victorian Essential Learning Standards-VELS (Victorian
Curriculum Assessment Authority, 2005) level points in the time that they have been in the
program. Georgina believed the content of curriculum in the case of students with literacy
deficits was less important than the strategies that need to be taught. In her opinion:

We almost have to let the curriculum go; which sounds really strange,
but we have got to teach the kids the skills in order for them to be able
to take on the content. It is no good standing up there with your Year 8
Science book and saying “We are going to do Electricity,” if the kids
don’t understand a word of it. There is this idea that we’ve got this
syllabus and we have got to teach this syllabus, and it is no good doing
that if the kids can’t cope with it (D.1.474-480).
In order to determine which students needed support Georgina administered Tests of Reading Comprehension-TORCH, (Mossenson et al., 2003) known as TORCH Tests and the Development Assessment Resource for Teachers, (Forster et al., 1994) known as DART Tests, at the beginning of each year. The school maintained a data base of results and at the end of the year the students in the literacy program were re-tested, particularly those in Restart program because the Restart (Department of Education & Training, Victoria, 2003a) program had been monitored closely by Department of Education and Training, Victoria, as an accountability measure for those schools who received funding. The results for Restart students were also compared with a control group within the school to determine whether there was evidence that the program was effective. In 2005 the whole year level was administered the same test. TORCH tests were used initially because Georgina believed that it gave a comprehensive picture of student needs. DART was also used to assess reading and comprehension. Restart students were selected from the bottom fifteen in the Year 7 cohort based on the various test results and what was known about the students via the transition information passed on by their feeder primary school and their parents.

In the past Georgina administered the whole of the Development Assessment Resource for Teachers-DART (Forster et. al., 1994) testing program including the reading, writing and the oral components of the tests. Ideally she wanted to continue to administer the whole regime but in her opinion it took too much time, so at that time she was using only the reading component. For Georgina and for other teachers and schools in her local cluster, (a group of feeder primary schools in the area) the testing issue and how best to acquire and manage useful, relevant information was still being debated. With regard to data
management, Georgina felt that she needed to build her skills in this area, but for the time being she was grateful that her Assistant Principal was willing and able to manage data for her.

Georgina believed that it is also important to talk to students and find out their interests and get to know them. Her plan for 2005 was to spend time getting to know the students at the beginning of the year. In addition to the testing process and looking at transition forms from primary school, Georgina planned to telephone their primary teachers and talked to them about the student’s strengths and weaknesses. In each Professional Learning Team (Johnson & Scull, 2003) in her school, there were up to four teachers, so each teacher interviewed four or five students in each class. This helped the team to really get to know the students, their needs and interests, and how they like to learn. In the first month the team spent time getting to know each student’s preferred learning style.

In 2004 Georgina’s literacy team comprised four full time teachers, but in 2005 it was cut to one and a half teachers due to the ending of the initial phase of Restart (Department of Education & Training, Victoria, 2003a). While Restart funding was continued beyond the initial phase Georgina noted that the uncertainty of funding beyond 2005 made it difficult to plan with any degree of confidence. One of the strategies that Georgina used to ensure that her literacy program had continuity was to provide professional development to teachers through the Professional Learning Team (Johnson & Scull, 2003) in order that the skills and strategies were disseminated across the school. Her objective was to equip classroom teachers to provide support and modify programs according to the needs of their students and to model those strategies for other teachers, once they had acquired the skills.
For Georgina, the experiences that really challenged and tested her skills as a Literacy Coordinator were primarily the challenges related to identifying the specific needs of each child. Georgina was aware that students in her school may need support for a variety of reasons, whether because they are refugees and have limited experience of their new language or because they have missed opportunities for acquiring the skills due to personal circumstances, emotional issues or cognitive development issues.

Many of the students that Georgina supported had not had positive experiences in the school system so she believed that in order to get to know them she needed to build trust. She believed that this type of student may have built up numerous defences and rationalisations for not wanting to read and it was a matter of chipping away at these defences. Georgina believed that it was important for teachers working with such students to focus on building trust and knowing students and to avoid being driven by time constraints or the need to “get through” specific quantities of work.

The child might have so many difficulties, not just learning difficulties and social difficulties and emotional difficulties. Working out what is the best approach to take. Before you even think about teaching you have got to get all that trust (D.1.363-366).

4.4.4.3 Georgina’s beliefs about the key skills and knowledge

Georgina’s ideal literacy program would be undertaken in the mainstream classroom across all curriculum areas. Georgina acknowledged that there would always be a need for targeted programs for students who have severe learning difficulties but ideally she would like to move towards team teaching rather than having withdrawal programs. Georgina’s ideal literacy support program would operate as follows:
One of the teachers might take the kids out to do some targeted skill work and there might be a fairly fluid movement of students coming in and out according to individual student needs. Classrooms would also be set up as learning centres where different activities could operate at the same time. It still staggers me how many classrooms are set up in rows. I think a lot of it is still discipline, they [teachers] think that they have greater control of student if they sit in rows. It is a lot of work. I’m not just totally idealistic, but that would be my ideal (D.1.397-403).

The skills and knowledge that Georgina believed were essential for someone undertaking the role of Literacy Coordinator included having that ability to communicate effectively, having the courage of your convictions, the ability to build positive working relationships and teams and having credible evidence to support your theory. Georgina also believed that being able to effectively direct staff, being able to explain to people the reasons for one’s strategies, and being open and able to address the concerns of other teachers are important skills needed in the role.

When you strongly believe in something, there is that fine line between being overly pedantic and being able to say, “No this is what we need to do.” In order to be able to do that, you need to have the power of research behind you so as to be able to say “This is what has been proven to work and this is why we are doing it this way.” To have the conviction of your beliefs but not to be ramming things down people’s throats (D.1.436-442).

In Georgina’s opinion Literacy Coordinators need to be able to build teams and be conversant with a variety of program structures that meet the different needs of students. They need to be given the time to work with other teachers in their classrooms across the curriculum, to model strategies. She also believed that it is important for a Literacy Coordinators to know how to harness resources both human and financial in order to take advantage of opportunities to build and improve their program. Georgina was a strong advocate of Professional Learning Teams (Johnson & Scull, 2003) as a method of school based curriculum development and professional learning, especially for beginning teachers.
It is also about grabbing the young teachers before they get jaded and really driving the philosophy. It is about being able to generate and drive the enthusiasm and getting things happening. Seeing that people can work together and support each other, that is what is important (D.1.466-469).

4.4.4.4 Georgina in summary

Georgina was a leader with a strong commitment and a passion to achieve her goals. She understood the diversity of each student’s needs and was aware of the importance of the journey ahead for herself and for other teachers in knowing and understanding her students and having a clear concept of what needed to be done for them. Her belief that it was more important to support students in taking the important steps along the path of learning was a sustaining belief for both herself and her students. She understood that programs cannot be all that we wish them to be without time and resources and the ongoing commitment of teachers and administrators within and beyond the school. She also understood the need to share the skill base and incorporate strategies and processes that would provide continuity. She was open and reflective about her own skills and strengths and about what else she needed to know and be able to do. Her understanding of the key skills required to perform the role indicate that she is a strong and resourceful and considerate leader.

4.4.5 Stephen

Stephen was the Literacy Coordinator at Burtonholm Secondary College; he was a young and enthusiastic teacher who graduated with a Bachelor of Arts and a Diploma
of Education from an inner city university. His majors were English / Cultural Studies, Politics and History. Like many of the recent graduates, Stephen was quickly picked up by Burtonholm Secondary College as a result of the skill, enthusiasm and dedication that he was able to demonstrate during his pre-service teaching round at the school. In the following year Stephen was offered the role of Literacy Coordinator at Burtonholm.

Stephen’s interest in developing and managing support programs for students with literacy and other learning difficulties began when he was a pre-service teacher. Stephen was placed for a teaching round at his current school and worked with a very experienced and successful Literacy Coordinator who became his mentor and who had since been promoted to Assistant Principal. Once he was qualified and began working in his present school, Stephen was given responsibility for the Year 7 Restart (Department of Education & Training, Victoria, 2003a) class and for managing the Restart program which was designed to cater for students who had difficulty with the literacy and numeracy demands of their learning programs. The purpose of the program was to catch up or recover those students in the early years of secondary education. The year following Stephen’s arrival, Burtonholm Secondary College had grown to the extent where they could afford to formally re-establish the role of Literacy Coordinator as a higher duties position, so Stephen applied for it and was appointed.

Stephen told me that his commitment to literacy was driven by his desire to help students to help themselves to overcome their literacy problems and to facilitate positive outcomes for all students. Stephen’s delight was to be able to be a part of that process of improvement. As an under-graduate, Stephen chose to complete
several units of study in the area of language skills development. Stephen believed that his lecturers were influential in informing how he operated as a teacher. With regard to literacy, Stephen believed that literacy should be addressed in the mainstream classroom and so his program was based on the use of effective, targeted strategies which were chosen in order to engage and support students in the mainstream classroom, rather than withdrawal. Stephen had also completed a series of professional development activities with John Munroe who was employed through the Northern region office of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Victoria to provide training for Literacy Coordinators and literacy teachers in effective program strategies. Stephen claimed to have found these activities very useful in terms of the role that he performed in the school and for providing a process for organising curriculum development and teacher professional development in a team environment.

4.4.5.1 Stephen’s classroom

Stephen’s classroom was located in the Years 7 and 8 Wing of the school. Like many schools that have adopted the Middle Years (Hill & Crevola, 1997) philosophy, the junior wing comprised a collection of Year 7 and 8 classrooms, in a specially designated building containing a mixture of generalist as well as specialist classrooms within the complex. Most of the Middle School program teaching took place in the Year 7 and 8 complex. Student lockers and a covered recreation space were also located within the complex. The junior school team of teachers shared a staff-room in
the building so that they were close by for supervision purposes and for easy access by students.

Stephen’s classroom was a spacious and well appointed general purpose class-room. The desks were grouped in twos to form a square that seated four students at each desk. The Year 7W Restart group was all boys in 2003. When I observed another of Stephen’s groups in 2005 the group was a mixture of both males and females. There was no specific “Literacy Centre” in the school as Stephen was a strong believer in providing the same curriculum to all students and assessing them using the same criteria as other students, however, he believed that the pedagogy was what needed to be targeted in order to meet the needs of students experiencing difficulty with their literacy learning. Accordingly the room was not set up as a ‘Literacy’ classroom, students were expected to bring their own books and the walls contained samples of student work from a variety of curriculum areas. In accordance with Middle Years (Hill & Crevola, 1997) philosophy, this was Year 7W’s Homeroom so a majority of their classes across different areas of curriculum were conducted in this room.

The program for Year 7W operated on an Integrated Curriculum approach which incorporated skills and content from a number of curriculum areas into an integrated program. On one of my visits, Stephen was collaborating with the Science teacher and incorporating what the group had learned about Forensic Science into the Creative Writing component of the English program.
Because many of the students in this group had difficulty with long term memory and with structuring ideas when planning an essay, Stephen’s strategy was to model and support the process of planning and writing a story.

The following is a sample taken from my field notes. It provides an example of the strategies that Stephen used in his Restart (Department of Education & Training, Victoria, 2003a) literacy program.

The lesson had a number of components. Students were tuned into the task by reviewing what had happened in the previous lesson and given a summary of what would be covered in the current lesson. One student, in response to Stephen’s request, summarised the story that the group had read the previous day. A number of the students in Stephen’s group had difficulty with long term memory so Stephen invited one student to summarise the key points covered in the previous lesson. There was some brief discussion about how the characters in the story had used the clues found at the crime scene to solve the mystery. In order to promote student vocabulary development and to reinforce the key concepts being discussed, Stephen listed on the board, the clues that students recalled and how they were discovered. At the same time he used questions to explore students understanding of key vocabulary and concepts:

T  What is DNA?
S  Chains of amino acids
T  What gives DNA?
S  Blood, hair, skin (FN.23.11.04)
Up to half of the students in Stephen’s Restart group were a mixture of recently arrived migrants who had experienced disrupted educations and frequently did not speak English at home. During the time I spent observing Stephen’s group, I found that the students were often willing and cooperative and eager to learn even though their skill levels were well below their age and Year level. The program itself focused on building vocabulary, developing grammar and reading and writing activities which included different styles of writing and group work to develop strategies and share ideas. Lessons usually began with a spelling or a grammar or a reading activity. Writing tasks were usually undertaken in a double period which might begin with a brief spelling test using words from the current topic or a grammar activity. This formula was followed each week. When teaching reading or writing Stephen’s approach was to coach or model strategies or scaffold student learning. An example of scaffolding was as when Stephen distributed hand-out sheets, he provided an outline of key areas to be covered and he asked individual students to read from the handout, as they did the he clarified points to ensure that they understood:

T What do I mean by “a murder scenario?” (FN.23.11.04.)

The following is what Stephen provided to students when they began the process for writing of the “Forensic Murder Mystery”:

- Write an outline of the story
- Include clues that require you to apply thinking and problem solving skills
- Draw or create photographs of the crime scene
- Present the crime scene using time sequences
- Create medical reports
- Construct interviews with witnesses.
Stephen often used co-operative learning approaches such as jig-saw techniques where students moved from one group to the other to share ideas then moved back to their original group to pool what they had learned and report on the feedback that they had received. At these times, students worked with their partner, or with a small group, to develop ideas for their writing. When writing or reading texts students often used a conference approach as developed by Graves (1983) where partners would read while the other listened and asked questions and provided feedback. Because remembering or unfamiliarity with the English language was a common issue, the tasks were frequently chunked into manageable smaller tasks such as writing their one hundred word synopsis of a scenario before they started writing their story. At the end of each lesson Stephen listed a number of key words related to the task which students then noted. These words often became the basis of their spelling lists. In addition to recording and learning the spelling of the word, students were usually asked to find definitions of the words for homework (FN.23.11.04).

4.4.5.2 Stephen’s program and policy

Stephen’s policy was that there was no withdrawal in his support programs. Work was not modified for students other than those who had severe language disorders such as visual or auditory processing problems, short term and long term memory impairment or profound difficulties with processing and applying concepts. Students classified as having a ‘Language Disorder’, that is, having severe learning and language impairment, were tested and also provided support
by the school’s speech pathologist and by the ‘Language Centre’ which operated independently of the school’s program but was located in the school.

Students in the Restart (Department of Education & Training, Victoria, 2003a) program were students whose literacy levels were below ‘Like’ school levels (see Appendix 15) for their age and Year level.

At the time that Stephen was appointed to the role of Literacy Coordinator, the school had had a history of providing modified work and withdrawal programs and simplifications of the mainstream program for students with literacy and learning difficulties. One of Stephens’s objectives was to change this model of operation. Under Stephen’s management, the Restart (Department of Education & Training, Victoria, 2003a) students were provided exactly the same program as other students in the same year level; they completed the same assessment tasks and they had to meet the same assessment criteria, which meant that they were marked in the same way as other students. Stephen believed that this approach minimised the chance of students being stigmatised as the deficit group in the eyes of other students and in their own minds. It also provided them with the opportunity to extend themselves rather than undertaking programs that kept them behind and different to what the mainstream students do. The main difference was that teachers used different teaching strategies in the program to support the students’ learning:

If they get an E, they get an E. The difference is that they are taught differently. This is really important because the Restart kids don’t know that they are the Restart class, we keep it quiet and low key. We have had instances where teachers have told them and difficulties arose as a result. Up to that point, the group’s confidence was just skyrocketing but when they found out that they were a deficit group, there was a
change in their attitude and even in the way that they were sitting. It was probably another three months before teachers could build them back up. So now the school does not have a culture of saying “You are the literacy class.” they do exactly the same as everyone else does (E.1.145-153).

It was also decided that the Restart (Department of Education & Training, Victoria, 2003a) students should be placed in a group together in order that the additional support strategies could be delivered in the mainstream classroom rather than withdrawing them for help:

The school made that decision three years ago because the teachers were convinced that withdrawal was too disruptive. It was also decided that the Restart students would be one group of eighteen and that they would have one teacher for English and SOSE [Stephen], and one teacher for Maths and Science. One of those two teachers would be their pastoral teacher. These two core subject teachers share the Restart group and work closely together to develop a program based on the students’ skill needs (E.1.101-107).

In order to pitch the strategies at a level that would meet each student’s needs, Stephen ensured that he developed a very detailed understanding of any learning problems that individuals, as well as the group in general, might need to address and then he incorporated strategies for dealing with those problems into the pedagogy and the classroom management. Stephen also collaborated with teachers in other subject areas to develop an integrated approach to the teaching and management strategies. At the time that I observed Stephen’s class in December 2004, the group were engaged in writing activities that integrated creative writing in the form of a mystery story with the forensic science that they had been studying. Previously, students had studied the functions of the human brain and cut up a rat brain, then wrote a procedural piece in English. The story that they were writing also incorporated the use of Thinking Curriculum (Pohl, 2000) as part of the story writing process by getting students to consciously plan and discuss and evaluate the steps in the writing process as their short story was developed.
Part of Stephen’s teaching strategy was to pace the lesson and degree of difficulty to meet the needs of the group. There was plenty of time and lots of discussion in order that concepts could be modelled and explored and understood. Stephen told me that in previous years, the main focus of the program was to achieve a good level of engagement. In 2003, eight out of the eighteen students in the group had had auditory processing problems. Therefore, Stephen believed that knowing what to do when teaching students with auditory processing problems was important to teachers of that group. Once the cohort of students were identified and assessed each year, the team of teachers working with the Restart (Department of Education & Training, Victoria, 2003a) group identified the needs of students and the strategies that would be the focus of the teaching and learning. The teachers also attended professional development programs that helped them to know and apply the correct strategies.

Because the withdrawal support for students with severe learning difficulties (Language Disorder) was blocked against Languages Other Than English, Stephen had to know before the first day of the school year where students were going to be placed. If students needed specific withdrawal it was provided through an outside agency and was delivered at the time that other students were undertaking Languages Other Than English-LOTE because it had been decided by the school that students who had significant literacy needs usually did not cope well with the demands of LOTE. As a result, Restart (Department of Education & Training, Victoria, 2003a) students were grouped together for all of their subjects and were given additional time to complete the Year 7 program (other than LOTE). In 2004, the Restart group was all boys. In 2005 it was half boys and half girls, a fact which, Stephen noted, was unusual. In 2002 it had
been all boys. The students were selected if they had literacy and learning support needs and for their propensity to make improvement and work cohesively together. If, in Stephen’s opinion, there was a student who was incapable of functioning in the normal classroom [because of behaviour problems], that student was not placed in the Restart (Department of Education & Training, Victoria, 2003a) class. The group was chosen with a view to it being a cooperative and cohesive group that would be able to make significant improvements in their learning during the time that they were together.

Stephen’s program catered for about eighty percent of the Year 7 students that had literacy problems, the other twenty percent were supported via other programs and through the professional development and pedagogical support that Stephen provided for other teachers. Stephen’s theory about how literacy programs should operate was oriented around changing the pedagogy of teachers in the mainstream classroom in terms of how they teach the same curriculum to different students.

Stephen had developed a screening process that he applied before students entered Year 7. He aimed to draw together information from all the key sources including parents, Year 6 teachers and the results of any testing that may have been completed in previous years and he placed students with teachers who were best able to meet their needs:

Those records help me to decide which students will be placed in each class and which teacher is most suited to meet their specific needs. High performing students do not go into the Restart class. At the end of each year and at the beginning of following year, I compile the Year 7 course lists with the help of the Year 7 Coordinator. We sit together and work out all the class groupings and which teachers will go with what class. We try to pair up the students with teachers best suited to the student’s needs. If there is a teacher who is skilled in literacy provision then they are put with that class and I support that teacher in their classroom (E.1.73-83).
Once the Year 7 students were settled into the school Stephen began his own testing using the Developmental Assessment Resource for Teachers-DART (Forster et al., 1994) reading test to establish their reading levels and then conducted reading interviews for students whom he suspected might be experiencing difficulties, in order to assess both their skills and attitudes to reading. This form of reading interview was repeated two or three times a year to monitor progress. If a student with a literacy issue was placed into another class that was not a Restart (Department of Education & Training, Victoria, 2003a) class, Stephen spent time working with the teacher/s to develop a strategy for addressing each student’s needs, this was usually done in the first month of the school year.

As soon as we identify the problem we begin to do something with that teacher to give them advice about how to manage that student. Sometimes we don’t know about the problem till three months down the track and the teacher comes and says “Johnny can’t cope with what I’m giving him to do” So I say O.K. lets do some more testing and get the educational psychologist in and so on (E.1.165-169).

Stephen believed that all teachers need to really understand the practical issues related to providing support in the mainstream classroom and he was trying to address this through Professional Learning Teams (Johnson & Scull, 2003) which already operated within his school and were structured to incorporate all teachers from the various disciplines who teach each cohort of students. Together they planned the program content and the teaching strategies for each group and provided professional development for members of the team to ensure that they were aware and able to implement the appropriate strategies:

Professional development about Thinking Curriculum is very prominent in this school. The school is quite innovative in the programs it offers and there is a lot of professional development that is provided not by me but by the school. The focus is on higher order
thinking skills and restructuring how our assessment works so I have not had to provide professional development at that level. What we do is have teams of teachers that work together at Year 7 in particular, but it also happens at all year levels. The Year 7 classroom teachers and I work closely together and one of my jobs is where there is an issue, whether it is behaviour management, literacy, poor performance, engagement or whatever it is, I sit with that group of teachers and work out what their needs are and how they (as a group) can handle it (E.1.173-183).

Professional Learning Teams for each group of students in Stephen’s school met fortnightly or as needed. The focus of the planning related to both management and engagement, at the start of the year they tended to meet more frequently. In the team meeting times, the teachers of each group worked together to plan content, discuss student progress and to identify the needs of both students and the teachers who teach them. As a team leader, Stephen coordinated the work of the team and ensured that the decisions were implemented.

4.4.5.3 Stephen’s beliefs about the key skills and knowledge

Stephen believed that Literacy Coordinators need to know how to cater for individual differences and how to engage unmotivated students. Stephen felt that, with regards to literacy program development, many of the professional development activities that he attended did not inform him beyond what he already knew and that sometimes he needed to search more widely to find the solutions. Stephen told me that he had chosen to attend Thinking Curriculum (Pohl, 2000) and Philosophy professional development in recent times in preference to mainstream literacy professional development sessions and he had begun applying some of what he has learned in those programs to develop the thinking skills of his Year 7 students.
Stephen also believed that Literacy Coordinators needed to be trained in understanding cognitive behaviour. He believed that the average teacher and indeed most Literacy Coordinators do not properly understand how the brain functions in relation to language and learning, and that knowing about these things is very important. He had attended some professional development in this area and believed that it was the most useful professional development that he has undertaken to date because he believed that it was particularly relevant for him to know the physical, environmental and cognitive factors that impact on the student’s learning. He also believed that Literacy Coordinators need to learn strategies for assessing student needs and capabilities, track and interpret data about achievement, and be knowledgeable about how to develop programs that address individual student literacy learning needs.

Stephen was convinced that all teachers need to know more about literacy than they do. He also acknowledged that there is a lot of catching up to do in this area. Stephen was convinced that the role of a Literacy Coordinator should be to model appropriate strategies and support other teachers in developing those skills. He believed that all pre-service teachers should receive literacy training as part of their preparation to teach. He believed that much of it should be focused on engagement issues. At that time, Stephen’s school was focused on training their teachers across the curriculum in literacy support, and on methods for engaging students and exploring ways to incorporate philosophy as a study, for the purpose of training students in thinking.

Stephen told me that his management skills had been learned in context. They included people skills, strategic planning and resource management. One of the
greatest challenges for Stephen as Literacy Coordinator in his school was dealing with teachers who were not interested or who are dis-engaged and did not want to expand their teaching repertoire. Stephen believed that if teachers were unwilling to develop their skills, it was better not to give them a literacy class but, because it was not always possible for him to control who was allotted that type of class, he tried to support and engage the teachers by appealing to their desire to help students and by skilling them:

Whatever the issue may be, but the way to handle a difficult teacher is through the student’s needs. Make the student the focus, because fundamentally all teachers do want to help students, you wouldn’t want to be a teacher if you didn’t care about the students. I think that the interpersonal skills are the most important because anybody can do a test and anyone can get results or find out why student X is performing poorly, but meaningful change can only happen by dealing with parents, students and other teachers and so I do things like home visits and have meetings with the students both individually and in groups; things like that. I think that the main thing that you need to have is that interpersonal skill (E.1.312-324).

4.4.5.4 Stephen in summary

The impression that I formed of Stephen during our interviews was that he was a confident and efficient operator. He was knowledgeable about his area of responsibility and well established in the school’s leadership team. My observation of him as he interacted with other staff was that he was well liked and respected. He seemed to have an easy going, confident demeanour that commanded respect without seeming to be overbearing. He was also establishing himself as a leader through his involvement in many aspects of the school’s operations from the coffee club to curriculum design and development teams across the school and as a mentor to other teachers.
Stephen had a strong sense of what he was trying to achieve and how to go about it. Along with his vision he had a keen desire to know more and to help both his students and other teachers to achieve the best possible learning environment and opportunities for students in his school.

4.4.6 Geraldine

Geraldine was the Literacy Coordinator at Clarendon High School and she had been a teacher for the past twenty eight years. She was a four year trained secondary teacher and her qualifications included a Bachelor of Arts and a Diploma in Education with major studies in Geography and Sociology; a Masters Degree in Education and a number of Graduate Diplomas. Her experience in teaching and coordinating literacy programs included several years as a regional consultant for literacy and Middle Years (Hill & Crevola, 1997) programs. Other literacy and curriculum roles that Geraldine had performed in her career include being Cluster Educator for one of the regional school clusters and collaborating in the implementation of the Restart (Department of Education & Training, Victoria, 2003a) program which had provided funding for program development and professional development for Literacy Coordinators and teachers in schools where a significant number of Year 7 students have literacy levels below the state average. Geraldine was a Leading Teacher and Team Leader in the newly re-opened Clarendon High School. By collaborating with a senior university lecturer in developing the Restart project, Geraldine felt that she had learned a great deal about assessing and diagnosing student literacy needs and about the use of Professional Learning Teams which were first initiated as part of the Hill and Crevola, Middle Years model.
Geraldine’s interest in literacy emerged as a result of teaching Geography and History early in her career. In her previous schools Geraldine had worked with recently arrived students of Non-English speaking backgrounds including Vietnamese, Greek, Turkish and Lebanese students who had settled in Australia. Many of those students had been subjected to interrupted schooling and in many cases had developed psychological trauma due to personal experiences, sometimes in war zones and they had developed complex literacy and learning needs for a variety of personal or other reasons. When working with those students Geraldine found that although she taught Geography and History, she needed to know and apply English as a Second Language-LOTE and literacy approaches and strategies in her mainstream classroom when teaching. Geraldine’s work in schools with high populations of students experiencing language and literacy problems taught her to appreciate the importance of being able to read and communicate as an integral part of success in learning. She was also strongly aware of the negative effects of poor literacy skills on student’s success and self-esteem. Geraldine had retained a note to her from a student from many years earlier, where the student sadly expressed his poor opinion of himself as a learner, based on his inability to read. The note has served as a reminder to Geraldine of the impact that poor literacy skills can have on the individual:

It is the only piece of writing that I ever got from him. He wrote it at the end of three years and that is what he thought about himself. It is tragic because his whole [poor] self image was about his reading (F.1.513-516).

In Geraldine’s current school, curriculum was integrated and so there was no separate English or Literacy program as such. The school was fortunate to have only a small number of students with significant literacy needs. The learning of language and communication skills was mainly incorporated into the mainstream program.
Remediation in the area of literacy was addressed as part of what the school called Personal Learning Plans. The concept was similar to what have become known as Individual Learning Plans (Department of Education, Victoria, 1999) in other schools where students, parents and teachers collaborate to identify and complete learning programs that are designed to meet the specific learning goals identified for individual students. Student problems and needs related to literacy skills were addressed in Geraldine’s program, as required, by teachers in the Advisory Groups (a type of pastoral care) sessions or as part of negotiated studies component of the curriculum called Personal Learning Modules. Geraldine recognised that even though there were not a large number of students who required literacy support in her school, the needs of those students in deficit must be addressed.

According to Geraldine, the school’s curriculum model could be described as a three layered circle. At the centre were the attributes that the school would like to foster in each child, resilience, sound ethics and spirituality; qualities that the school community [parents, students and teachers] believed that individuals in a civil society should possess. The next level was about habits of mind such as humour and perseverance. The outer circle included academic skills such as the ability to communicate clearly and effectively and the ability to use and apply mathematical and scientific concepts.

We start with the person in the centre then we move out to the context and then the content of learning. We don’t start with the discipline related skills, but with what a person who lives in a civil community needs to be and to know. Our task is to decide how we will support them to be that kind of person and to give them the tools and access to their community and society. So that’s our school philosophy (F.1.549-555).
4.4.6.1 Geraldine’s classroom

Geraldine’s role in the Streeton Team was to manage all aspects of the program which included the role of Sub-School Leader, Curriculum and Literacy Coordinator, staff supervision and support and overseeing the welfare of students. Incorporated into her curriculum role was the need to address the learning support needs of students in her team including the literacy and numeracy needs of those students. Teaching staff for the team included four recently graduated teachers and a team leader in addition to Geraldine. At the time of my observations the school had only been reopened for two years and so the student population comprised only Years 7 and 8.

The teaching content and program activities in the school were modelled on the Victorian Essential Learning Standards-VELS, (Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority, 2005). The purpose was to integrate disciplines and develop skills and knowledge competencies in context. At the time that I visited much of the curriculum was offered as integrated learning modules which were developed by the team, the exceptions to this were Language Other Than English-LOTE and Music. Literacy skills were developed in context throughout the program.

One-to-one intensive instruction for students experiencing difficulty with their language skills was provided during class-time through a team teaching approach where students in language classes or during the subject called Personal Learning Time could work with a staff member on specific skills that they had targeted as part of their Personal Learning Plan. Personal Learning Plans were negotiated by students as part of his/her course selection. This allowed students to undertake a program of
extension or personal interest studies at a level that met his/her needs. A student requiring literacy support could negotiate a Personal Learning Plan related to his/her literacy needs and focus on his/her targets. The plan was negotiated in conjunction with the student, the student’s teacher and his/her parents. Parents were encouraged to become involved in supporting their child to achieve his/her personal learning targets in literacy by making time to work with him/her at home. Specific targets were set and students were required to provide evidence of the tasks and activities undertaken in order to achieve his/her goals.

As part of the schools’ commitment to personal learning and in order to achieve student skill and knowledge targets, a significant amount of time was provided for personal learning. Each week students were given two eighty minute sessions of Personal Learning Time in which they undertook to fulfil their Personal Learning Plan goals. Additional time was also available during Advisory Group to work on individual literacy needs.
Table 11. Sample of a Year 8 student timetable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Saturday</th>
<th>Sunday</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Management</td>
<td>Personal Management</td>
<td>Maths Skills</td>
<td>Alternate Weeks</td>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td>Alternate Weeks</td>
<td>Personal Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advisories</td>
<td>Advisories</td>
<td>Physical Activity</td>
<td>Social skills</td>
<td>Physical Activity</td>
<td>Social skills</td>
<td>Physical Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 1</td>
<td>Session 2</td>
<td>Team Literature Circles</td>
<td>Team Working Mathematically</td>
<td>Team Art, Technology, Multimedia Food</td>
<td>LOTE Italian</td>
<td>Team Personal Learning Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recess</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Session 3</td>
<td>Team Science</td>
<td>Team Personal Learning Time</td>
<td>Personal Learning Modules</td>
<td>Sport</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4.6.2 Geraldine’s program and policy

Geraldine’s team comprised fifty Year 7 students and four teachers who delivered the curriculum through a team-based approach. The team members developed their own timetable, and organised how their time was spent with students. Some days Geraldine would schedule four teachers to work with those fifty students, one of these would be a literacy expert who would take between one and three students and work with them intensively on their literacy needs. The circumstance in which the specialist teacher for Geraldine’s literacy program was employed highlighted the importance of funding for the ongoing success and continuity of such programs:
An individual or small group may be withdrawn depending on the task...if we were doing a writing activity she would take those identified as having trouble. We approach it through the team. I’m lucky this year that because I took over another role and she was employed to release me, we have been able to organise our time to get that extra withdrawal with her for the needy students. Next year I won’t be able to do that, so if I had the money, I would have another teacher to work back in with us so that there can be that flexibility to provide for those students; flexibility to rearrange the groups in order to help them while they are still part of the big group (F.1.89-100).

At the beginning of the year, students entering the school were tested to determine their literacy and numeracy levels. The school also took into account information provided by the primary schools and previous Achievement Improvement Monitor-AIM (Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority, 2003) testing. Early in the year Geraldine used Developmental Assessment Resource for Teachers-DART (Forster et al., 1994) testing but only the reading component. For very weak students further testing was conducted by the school psychologist using the Neale Analysis (Neale, 1988) and the South Australian Spelling test (Westwood, 1999). Geraldine believed that the DART comprehension testing alone is not enough to identify all of the students’ needs but is conscious of the time and work involved in testing all students on the entire range of the DART areas which include a reading, viewing and writing component. Geraldine believed that teachers do need a writing component in the program because there are a number of factors that need to be taken into account, such as students who read words accurately but don’t understand what they have read; students who read and understand but write poorly; and students who do not spell correctly. Geraldine found AIM data to be quite useful in identifying both student and program needs because it gave an in depth understanding of what it was that students
can or can not do. Patterns that emerge in the data also helped to identify areas in the program and teaching pedagogy that needed improvement or needed to be developed.

Geraldine explained that because the school had only recently re-opened there had not been enough time to decide which would be the most appropriate testing instruments. The school chose the Developmental Assessment Resource for Teachers-DART (Forster et al., 1994) test simply because they were aware that many other schools are using this type of testing. Geraldine anticipated that further reflection will need to occur in future in order to decide which testing instruments best meets the needs of the school. Geraldine hoped that she could identify a program that tests the range of literacy skills, without requiring a lot of time and human resources in administration and processing of the test.

In order to identify the needs and goals of students, the team took their Year 6 results and any other data from previous testing and then met with parents and the students to develop Individual Learning Plans. A plan was developed for each student based on what they hoped to achieve in each Semester. Students who needed literacy support identified their literacy goals and incorporated those goals into their Individual Learning Plans. For students needing support, Geraldine employed an English/ESL teacher who met with them for two, eighty-five minute sessions per week to work on the skills and goals identified in their Personal Learning Plans. Students identified a range of goals that they wanted to address by the end of the year and what tasks they would undertake to achieve those goals. They also developed a timeline for completing the goals and were expected to take responsibility for completing the tasks and managing their own time in order to fulfil their commitments.
Because the school was recently re-opened and many of the structures were not yet formalised, each team had its own approach to language and literacy development for students in the mainstream program. In the McCubbin team, the team leader provided a writing class each week where he instructed students in the craft of writing. Geraldine’s team operated an integrated curriculum approach.

One of the units that students were completing was designed to explore the physiology and the function of the brain. Geraldine’s team used it as an opportunity to teach students about the role of the brain in learning, it included learning from a variety of areas of curriculum such as Science, Health, Mathematical Concepts and Communication. The unit explored a variety of factors that influence individual learning. Part of the work related to the unit was a Science practicum where the students cut up a brain and completed a piece of procedural writing. The teaching process followed the Victorian Essential Learning Standards-VELS (Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority, 2005) approach and the Munroe (1999) Effective Diagnosis and Intervention for Literacy Difficulties, philosophy. The unit was developed by the multi-disciplinary group of teachers that worked in Geraldine’s team, and then each section was taught by the relevant specialists for that area of learning. Science teachers undertook the teaching of the Science component related to the dissection of the rat brain and then the English teachers led the literacy component related to procedural writing. Geraldine was convinced that to teach in this manner was a really powerful way to design and deliver the curriculum.
Grouping of students varied depending on the topic and circumstances. The brain topic had a scientific and literacy focus, so it was integrated. The grouping of the Maths classes, as a result of numeracy testing that had occurred, were organised in a different, more streamed approach, based on student needs and abilities. Some groups were learning about the place values of decimals, some were studying algebra, then after four of five weeks students changed groups or the team re-arranged them. Placement of each student depended on the ability of the student in that particular area of Mathematics and his/her individual learning goals.

Geraldine found that there were challenges to be met regarding the literacy needs of students in her school, even when students were gifted. Geraldine found that the students who need extending in that area [literacy] either don’t want to be extended or they had other literacy problems. For example, even a gifted student might be a poor speller or their writing may be in need of attention because they don’t use paragraphs; or they do not know the correct structure for different modes of writing. Geraldine believed that even when students had good imaginations and sophisticated ideas and language, they might still have difficulty with other areas of their literacy such as the mechanics of writing or they make errors because they rush to complete the task.

My most gifted language student has a high level of sophistication in what he thinks about and what he can produce but to look at his writing you would never guess it. I was only made aware [of his higher ability] because his parents had chatted to me and I had seen his reports. I would never have picked it. I find it really had to work with him. I find him as challenging as I do ESL students on Level 3. I don’t know where to steer him, how to bring him in (F.1.157-164).

At Clarendon High School every student had a Personal Learning Plan, which identified his/her literacy, numeracy, social skills and physical well being needs. Each Semester, (for reporting purposes secondary schools divide their teaching
program into two half years or semesters) staff, students and their parents work together to identify and map out the student’s Personal Learning Plan for that Semester. Geraldine told me of a Year 7 student who wanted to extend her skills in Algebra, so she set herself the goal to complete Year 8 level Algebra by the end of the year. Even though she wanted to complete the Year 8 component of Algebra, she was not interested in advanced studies in other areas of Mathematics. In order to meet her needs the team constructed a Personal Learning Plan for her, based on what she wanted to achieve. Geraldine believed that Personal Learning Plans helped students to remain engaged and motivated and teach the students responsibility. She also believed that students love this approach. “If you ask them,” she told me, “what is the best time that they spend at school, they say Personal Learning Time”. This claim was supported by students when I spoke to them and by my own observations of students working in Personal Learning Time. It was also supported by their enthusiastic engagement in the activities (FN9.12.04).

In 2005 Geraldine planned to expand the Personal Learning Time to four, eighty five minute sessions per week. She believed that students were intensely engaged in what they do during this phase of their program because they had chosen to do it. Geraldine was surprised at how well this component of program had worked to date, she had anticipated that it might have been problematical because her students were only twelve and thirteen years old and they were not used to taking responsibility for their learning and to working in a self directed manner but she has been delighted with the success of the program to date.
The skill of self management of one’s own learning is highly valued at Clarendon High School. In order to track and monitor student achievement, students were required to keep reading logs. Geraldine also maintained organisational logs as well as signing the students’ dairies to confirm to parents and students that the agreed tasks had been completed. In order to help students manage their time, their Personal Learning Plans were broken down into time frames for completing the tasks, they also contained a description of the work and the evidence that they needed to retain as proof that they had achieved their goals. Part of the process of assessment and evaluation belonged to the student. When they come to evaluate how they had performed, the students had to provide evidence upon which to base their evaluation. Usually they had identified the goal that they wish to attain in their Personal Learning Plans; there were also a variety of other strategies in use to support them. For two sessions each week, students completed a component of the program called Language Communication. During that time students completed activities related to the mastery of standard grammar and communication skills and so the activities were targeted to the student needs. Students were also able to include literacy targets in the Personal Learning Plans, if so, they negotiated with Geraldine or other relevant teachers what would be done and how it would be documented and assessed.

Geraldine believed that at Clarendon High School most literacy issues would always need to be addressed in the manner described above, largely because there was not a critical mass of students that had literacy deficits. Geraldine hoped that in future, she would to be able to employ a literacy specialist for those students who need further individual support. Geraldine believed that even with groups that had strong literacy
it was hard for a classroom teacher to do all of the things that needed to be done with their class-group and still have time to attend to individual support needs. In the Literature Circles lesson, students worked in small groups to complete tasks while the teacher circulated among the group monitoring the activities and noting what had been completed and giving advice. Students had their weekly tasks laminated on their sheets and they worked to complete tasks and had discussions with the teacher about their progress and findings. Geraldine explained that even though the work was very self-directed, she was unable to ask individual students to read to her because many other students also needed to talk to her or they needed her attention. Therefore a specialist teacher or an additional team member was essential in order to cater for the needs of all students in a mainstream class.

So I find that the way we teach and because we try to be as constructive as possible and keep kids really active, it does not give you any down time to work with individuals in that sense. It does give you a lot of time to sit with students and see what they are doing and question them and help direct where they are going; but it is not like you can say, “Well let’s go over here and concentrate on some literacy skill.” It is not easy to do that (FN.1.339-346).

4.4.6.3 Geraldine’s beliefs about the key skills and knowledge

Geraldine believed that in order to understand and address student literacy needs, Literacy Coordinators needed to be able collect data about students and be able to interpret it and explain the meaning of the data to others. She believed that for some, this may well be a professional development issue as many Literacy Coordinators have never done this before. From her experience as a regional support person, she was aware that some Literacy Coordinators have never tested students or analysed data and do not know how to select from the many testing instruments available on
the market. Geraldine believed that for many schools, the increased trend to data collection in both numeracy and literacy in recent years has been something of a shock and somewhat demoralizing in terms of what has been learned. Geraldine also believed that in order to allay fears about how data is used, Literacy Coordinators also needed to be able to demonstrate to classroom teachers, the value of testing in terms of what it tells us about our programs and what students can do and can’t do, as well as what areas of teaching and learning need to be addressed and improved.

While there are many individual professional development programs relating to particular strategies available to Literacy Coordinators, Geraldine believed that there was no training that helped Literacy Coordinators to develop and manage an entire program including budgets, resources, timetables and relevant content and strategies. Like Stephen in the previous case study, Geraldine had become aware that Literacy Coordinators also needed to understand both the developmental, cognitive and environmental factors that influence a child’s ability to learn and how these should be taken into consideration when constructing programs for students.

Geraldine believed that the ability to get and retain the support of colleagues and other important stakeholders was essential to the successful management of any program. She felt that not all of the required people skills can be taught, but Literacy Coordinators need to know about people management skills and how to negotiate. Geraldine also felt that Literacy Coordinators should have a passion and commitment to their role. An efficient Literacy Coordinator also needed to be able to develop strategic plans and time frames for what they aimed to achieve, how they would achieve it and when. Literacy Coordinators needed to be able to manage funds and be
able to negotiate with administration and other key leaders. A person in this role needed to be able to plan, manage and argue from a position of knowledge. Their opinion and advice should be valued.

Geraldine described her ideal literacy program as possibly having many of the characteristics of the program in her school. Geraldine’s ideal literacy program should adequately address the issues of students with low skills in literacy; provide regular contact with a support person and be delivered individually or at least in small group situations of not more that six students. Geraldine believed that support programs cannot work well if delivered in large groups because of the large number of differences in the nature of the problems experienced by individual students and because, for example, all the students who do nor spell well do not all make the same spelling errors. Geraldine believed that a good literacy program requires adequate personnel who are able to identifying the needs of students and are able to design programs that address their individual needs whether it is in the mainstream class or withdrawal or a combination of the two.

Geraldine told me that one of her mentors had suggested that the best way to address literacy problems and support students was simply on a one-on-one basis. In Geraldine’s opinion, teachers, more than anything else, make the ideal program. She believed that the teachers in her team were the key ingredient of the success of her program. Geraldine frequently had three teachers in a classroom working with fifty students in order that someone could be concentrating on individuals while others concentrated on the remainder of the group. This approach enabled her to have small withdrawal groups even if it was only three or
four times a week. Geraldine would also ideally like parents to be involved at home; but she conceded that parents often do not have the time or the expertise to help.

4.4.6.4 Geraldine in summary

Geraldine had a well thought out philosophy and program which she believed suited her needs and the needs of her students. Geraldine recognised that an open mind and the willingness to learn and to build on our understanding of student needs and program strategies are an integral part of being an effective Literacy Coordinator. Geraldine’s ability to reflect on and evaluate her programs had already enabled her to make important decisions about the future directions of her program and about how she would assess student literacy needs in the coming year. Her strong beliefs about the need for literacy programs to cater to the specific individual needs of students and the key component of one-to-one or small group instruction were already incorporated into her mainstream program. Another key component of Geraldine’s success was the team approach that her school applied in relation to supporting the literacy needs of students. Like many other Literacy Coordinators, Geraldine had recognised the need for Literacy Coordinators to be trained in assessing and diagnosing specific developmental and cognitive, factors that impact on student learning as key factors in addressing the learner’s needs.
4.5 **Student questionnaires and interview data**

In order to gauge student perceptions of the literacy program in the schools in this study a questionnaire was administered and was followed by incidental questioning of students and the responses were recorded in the researcher’s field notes. Approximately ten students in each school completed the questionnaire. The purpose of the questionnaire was to identify whether students could articulate their perceptions of the literacy program, evaluate their own efforts and commitment, identify the skills and knowledge that they had derived from the program and describe both the strengths of the program and any areas that would benefit from further improvement.

A copy of the questionnaire is included in Appendix 11. The following is an example of the questions and an explanation of what the question aimed to explore.

**Question 1** *What kind of things did you learn in this program?* This question was designed to elicit responses that indicated whether students could identify the specific learning content of the program.

**Question 2** *How have your reading and spelling skills improved?* This question was designed to assess whether the student could identify evidence of improvement in their literacy skill development.

**Question 3** *Has this program helped you with other parts of your school work?* This question was designed to gauge students’ perception of the transferability and wider application of the learning.

**Question 4** *How would you rate your efforts in this subject?* This question was designed to assess the level of student motivation and engagement.

**Question 5** *What did you like best?* This question was designed to ascertain the students’ perceptions of the strengths of the program.

**Question 6** *How could this subject be improved?* This question designed was designed to identify the student’s perceptions of what were the least engaging aspects of the program or possible gaps and omissions that might need to be amended.
4.5.1 Results of student survey

In order to discriminate between student responses a five point scale was developed. Responses were classified and given a numerical weighting: The weighting applied to responses was as follows:

Strongly positive with more than one example = 5, positive with at least one example = 4, not sure or no specific answer = 3, negative with examples = 2, strongly negative more than one example = 1, no response 0. Students in each group were identified numerically according to the number of students in each observation group. As far as possible approximately ten students were sampled but in some cases the groups were less then ten, two others were 14 and 17 students respectively, due to the way the class groups were configured. The tables below illustrate student responses to each question. These results were later averaged and analysed in order to arrive at an aggregate response to each question by each of the schools’ groups. The results for each school are summarised below.

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Table 13. Student perceptions of literacy program - Riverwood Secondary College

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Table 14. Student perceptions of literacy program - Eastwood High School

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4.5.2 Analysis of student surveys

Bunjuck Secondary College

Student responses to the literacy program at Bunjuck Secondary College were very positive. Students tended to have a clear understanding of the structure, content and
processes involved in the program. The majority of the responses suggested that they could see definite improvement in their literacy skills and could name specific examples of how their skills had improved. They felt that the program had helped them in other areas of their studies. There was also strong evidence that they were able to evaluate their own levels of engagement and identify the strengths of the program. The Bunjuck Secondary College program was based on a variety of testing and measurement strategies, on the use of phonics based reading and spelling program and on a mixture of targeted withdrawal and mainstream classroom support which integrated literacy strategies across the curriculum.

![Graph](image.png)

*Figure 6. Analysis of student perceptions of literacy program
Bunjuck Secondary College*

**Riverview Secondary College**

Students rated the program very highly on all of the criteria. Their responses indicated that they felt that they understood the program, were able to see improvement in their skills as a result of involvement in the program and could
articulate the strengths of the program. Perhaps the area that a few students were least clear about was how the skills that they had learned transferred to other areas of their learning. Riverview provided a program that utilised a direct instruction approach but it also incorporated integrated curriculum approaches in language and humanities; withdrawal programs to cater for students who were below the state and Year level average in their literacy development; separate grouping of students with like needs in Year 7, and a strong oral component for developing vocabulary and exploring language concepts. The program also incorporated a variety of assessment approaches and a variety of whole language strategies as well as direct instruction. It had a strong focus on professional learning teams who worked closely with specific groups of students and curriculum development teams that incorporate literacy across the curriculum strategies into the mainstream programs.

Figure 7. Analysis of student perceptions of literacy program Riverview Secondary College
Eastwood High School

Students at Eastwood High School demonstrated a strong understanding of the strategies and goals of the program. They were able to articulate the skills that they had learned and generally felt that those skills had benefited them in other areas of their work. Students seemed satisfied and comfortable with the structure and predictability of the program. A constant theme in student responses was that students’ confidence was improved through participation in the program. Students stated that they enjoyed the reward system and they enjoyed being able to track their progress and get immediate feedback on their learning at the end of each lesson.

Figure 8. Analysis of student perceptions of literacy program Eastwood High School
Merrifield Secondary College

Students in the Merrifield program were able to describe the program content and strategies. They were also able to describe what aspects of their literacy skills had improved. They seemed less certain of how these skills had helped them in other areas of their learning and how they would rate their efforts. They seemed clear about what they thought were the strengths of the program and the areas that needed improvement. The key features of the Merrifield program included an integrated studies approach, differentiated teaching strategies, and the teaching of literacy skills in context as part of the mainstream program.

Figure 9. Analysis of student perceptions of literacy program Merrifield Secondary College
Burtonholm Secondary College

In terms of student responses Burtonholm Secondary College scored very highly on all criteria. Students rated the program and their perceptions of their skill development and their engagement, effort and participation in the 90-100 percentile. This program is based on an integrating curriculum approach. Language skill instruction was provided both in context across the subject areas and separately with regard to the perceived needs of targeted students. The Literacy Coordinator in this school described the essential difference in his program, as opposed to the mainstream English program, as being that students were selected into the program on the basis of need and they were taught differently rather than being given different program content compared to mainstream students. The program follows the Munroe (1999) High Effective Diagnosis and Intervention for Literacy Difficulties.

Figure 10. Analysis of student perceptions of literacy program Burtonholm Secondary College
Clarendon High School

The literacy program at Clarendon High School was based on the use of Personal Learning Plans which were individualised contracts that were developed in collaboration with students, teachers and parents. Once the learning goals and the strategies for achieving and evaluating the Personal Learning Plans were negotiated, the student accepted responsibility for completion of the plan. At the time of this study the college was only recently opened and students had entered a new and unfamiliar learning environment and the Individual Learn Plan approach was an unfamiliar strategy for them. The responses of the students indicated that they understood the program goals and processes well, but that students were still coming to terms with the minimal structure and the concept of placing responsibility for completion of the program on the individual student. Many of the students interviewed and surveyed were ambivalent about how they felt about the program and about whether it had improved their skills. On a subsequent visit several months later this response had not changed but students stated that they probably preferred the level of control that they were permitted in terms of making decisions about what they learned and how they learned it. The lack of structure in the program was perceived by the students to be the central issue.
4.6 Document analysis

As part of the data triangulation process, the School Charter (Department of Education, Victoria, 1993) later re-named School Strategic Plan (Department of Education, Victoria, 2005a) for each school, was collected and analysed and compared against the Literacy Co-ordinator’s policy as described to the researcher by each Literacy Coordinator participant during the initial interviews (A sample School Charter has been included in Appendix 16). The key features of the Literacy Co-ordinator’s program were compared against the goals and priorities of the School Charter/Strategic Plan and the Literacy Coordinator’s stated policy. Bywaters (2003) has suggested that successful curriculum leaders build their programs not only on good pedagogy but also on how their programs and policies fit the culture and priorities of the school and the milieu in which the learning occurs. By comparing the Literacy Coordinators’ policy and program against the goals and priorities of the School Charter/Strategic Plan it is possible to
hypothesise about how the program addressed the needs of students and the culture of the school as perceived by the key stakeholders in the program.

The purpose of a School Charter/Strategic Plan (Department of Education, Victoria, 2005a) is to identify the goals and priorities that inform the major operational focus of the school for each three-year cycle. These goals and priorities, once identified, are the driving influence on the choices made by the school in relation to programs, budgeting, professional development, staffing and leadership positions. A School Charter/Strategic Plan contains much more than the goals and priorities of the school, it includes a school profile, a description of the key curriculum programs, a mission statement and the codes of conduct for staff, students and the school community in general. In each three-year cycle the school community identifies a number of goals related to curriculum, school environment and school management which become the chief operational focus of the school in that cycle. Within each of these goals a priority target is established which becomes a major focus of the work done by that school. Once these goals and priorities are identified, an action plan is developed for achieving and evaluating the desired outcomes. For the purpose of this study the researcher has examined each school’s goals and priorities related to literacy in order to determine how closely the agreed literacy goals and priorities match the literacy program and each Literacy Coordinator’s stated policy.
4.6.1 Bunjuck Secondary College Charter

The Bunjuck Secondary College Charter for 2000-2002 identified literacy as Priority 1 for the three year cycle. The main priority was to improve student achievement in Years 7-10 with particular emphasis on literacy skills.

Table 18. Bunjuck Secondary College Charter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus for Improvement</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Achievement Measures School Level</th>
<th>Achievement Measures State Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Priority 1</td>
<td>To improve student outcomes in Years 7-10 with particular reference to:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Literacy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Establish a budget sufficient to implement a literacy support program</td>
<td>Improved identification of students with literacy problems</td>
<td>Results of testing by the Literacy Coordinator</td>
<td>Comparison to state-wide benchmarks for Like schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>across Years 7-10</td>
<td>Improved levels of student achievement as indicated CSF* assessment, school testing and ongoing teacher assessment</td>
<td>Measurement against the CSF</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Appoint a literacy Coordinator with responsibility for the development of</td>
<td>Increased expertise amongst classroom teachers in employing a whole school approach to literacy</td>
<td>Longitudinal improvement measures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a Literacy policy which encompasses a whole school approach to literacy</td>
<td>Additional training of teaching staff members trained to provide intensive instruction literacy support</td>
<td>Implementation of defined literacy support strategies in Key Learning Area course outlines</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>including:</td>
<td></td>
<td>At least two teaching staff members trained to provide intensive instruction literacy support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- the identification of students with low levels of literacy</td>
<td></td>
<td>Student participation rate in program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- implementation of intervention literacy strategies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- implementation of a professional development strategy plan for</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mainstream staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- encouragement of individual staff members to undertake training in</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>literacy programs to supplement the work of the Literacy Coordinator</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ongoing evaluation of the program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The Curriculum and Standards Frameworks II was the official Department of Education, Victoria mandated structure for curriculum development in Victorian primary and secondary schools from 1996 to 2005.
4.6.2 Riverview Secondary College Charter

Riverview identified Literacy as priority area for its 2004-2006 Charter in conjunction with English and Mathematics performance.

Table 19. Riverview Secondary College Charter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus for Improvement</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Achievement Measures School Level</th>
<th>Achievement Measures State Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improve student achievement in English, Mathematics and Literacy</td>
<td>• Develop a study skills program for all year levels with a focus on improving exam technique</td>
<td>Improved student performance in all strands of English at Years 7-10 and VCE</td>
<td>Literacy 5% of students above the expected levels at Year 8 and 10 in all strands</td>
<td>VCE English results above Like school means by 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Charter Action Teams to be established using the professional learning team model to develop classroom practice that enhances study skills</td>
<td>Improved student competence in handling the literacies demanded in all key learning areas</td>
<td>Numeracy 8% of students will be above the expected levels at Years 8-10</td>
<td>Student performance at or above Like school means in all strands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Undertake pre and post testing in all mathematic strands</td>
<td>Improved reliability of CSF judgements</td>
<td></td>
<td>All VCE Math subject results at or above Like school levels by 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Undertake DART literacy testing in Years 7-10</td>
<td>Improved student performance on test scores</td>
<td></td>
<td>Student performance in general at or above Like schools in all strands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Identify writing styles central to English in Years 8-10 and models for teaching and assessing them.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.6.3 **Eastwood High School Charter**

Literacy was a goal area in Eastwood’s Charter and constituted one of the goals related to the priority of teaching and learning that would maximise student achievement.

Table 20. Eastwood High School Charter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Performance Measure</th>
<th>Improvement Areas</th>
<th>School base line performance</th>
<th>School Targets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Achievement</td>
<td>Required Measures</td>
<td>Number of students</td>
<td>90% of students receiving literacy or numeracy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To provide high quality teaching and</td>
<td>Teacher assessments against the CSF - English &amp; Mathematics</td>
<td>literacy and numeracy</td>
<td>support to successfully complete the program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learning strategies which maximise</td>
<td>VCE Results in English &amp; Maths</td>
<td></td>
<td>For appropriate VCE studies (reliability 0.8 and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>students’ chances of achieving their</td>
<td>VCE aggregated grades for all studies</td>
<td>Outcomes in the gender adjusted VCE data</td>
<td>above), there should be a positive trend in the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>full potential</td>
<td>Additional School Measures</td>
<td>Implementing targeted programs for the 2002 Year 7</td>
<td>estimate over 3 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gender specific A+, A &amp; E, UG grades by Year levels for all studies 7 to 11</td>
<td>cohort</td>
<td>2004 Year 9 students attend a team building</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gender specific Profile Descriptors by Year level, all studies 7 to 11</td>
<td>Engaging students more fully in their own learning.</td>
<td>leadership camp</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2004 expand literacy and numeracy support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2004 &amp; 2005 increase the proportion of A+/As &amp;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>decrease the proportion of Es &amp; UGs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Maintain previous real retention rate for this</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>cohort from Year 10 to 11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Increase the proportion of Highs in the 4 Profile</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Descriptors over the life of the Charter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Increase the proportion of “S”s in Overall</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>outcomes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The literacy goals outlined above were subsidiary targets to the main priority of improving teaching and learning in the Eastwood High School Charter 2004-2006. Therefore, this chart is set out differently to the others because it describes Goals rather than Priorities.
The Language Centre and the Language Centre (Literacy) Program was a priority for Merrifield Secondary College in its 2003-2005 School Charter.

Table 21. Merrifield Secondary College Charter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus for Improvement</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Achievement Measures School Level</th>
<th>Achievement Measures State Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To improve the curriculum provision for students who have low literacy</td>
<td>Identification of students in particular cohorts by testing on arrival</td>
<td>Improved levels of literacy and numeracy for this cohort of students as measured by AIM data</td>
<td>Student achievement in English measured against CSF outcomes at exit</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To enable all students to develop the language skills necessary to effectively participate in the Australian educational system</td>
<td>Analysis of the effectiveness of Personal Learning Plan approach to literacy skill development</td>
<td>Evidence of student achievement in literacy measured against a literacy skills checklist monitored each term</td>
<td>Improved levels of student achievement as measured by AMI testing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Program options for older low literacy students established and in operation
4.6.5 **Burtonholm Secondary College Charter**

Literacy was a priority in the Burtonholm Secondary College Charter for Years 7-9 and Years 10-12 curriculum.

**Table 22. Burtonholm Secondary College Charter**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus for Improvement</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Achievement Measures – School Level</th>
<th>Achievement Measures – State Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To ensure a strong grounding in literacy and thinking skills</td>
<td>Establish separate cohort of Year 7 students in need of support.</td>
<td>Improved levels of literacy and numeracy as measured by AIM data and VELS assessment</td>
<td>Literacy levels of students in Years 8-12 at or above Like school levels</td>
<td>Literacy levels of students in Years 8-12 at or above state levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Select and train classroom teachers in effective literacy teaching and learning strategies</td>
<td>Successful integration and engagement of students into secondary education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monitor student progress via DART testing and AIM data</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.6.6 Clarendon High School Strategic Plan

Literacy was a priority in the Clarendon High School Strategic Plan 2005-2007.

Table 23. Clarendon High School Strategic Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus for Improvement</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Achievement Measures – School Level</th>
<th>Achievement measures – State Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improve student attainment in literacy and numeracy</td>
<td>Ongoing implementation of Personal Learning Plans</td>
<td>Improved student engagement</td>
<td>In Years 8-10 a 10% increase in the numbers of students at or above the expected level of achievement against Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) or their equivalent</td>
<td>Year 8-10 literacy achievement at or above Like school and state levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Investigate further program options for supporting student literacy skill development</td>
<td>Measurable improvement in student literacy achievement in Years 8-10 over a two year period</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employ Literacy teacher to provide withdrawal and classroom support to targeted students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ongoing implementation of DART literacy testing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis of the School Charters (Department of Education, Victoria 1993)/Strategic Plans (Department of Education, Victoria 2003a) described above, demonstrate a close link with the stated policy and program as described by each of the Literacy Coordinator participants and reported in the case studies detailed earlier in this chapter. This indicates that the Literacy Coordinators in this study are attuned to the perceived needs of the students and the wider school community. A further factor influencing the high levels of similarity between the
Leading Teacher Appraisal (Department of Education & Training, Victoria, 1996) which began in 1996 provided incentives in terms of both promotion and salary increments for Leading Teachers who successfully implement the School Charter/Strategic Plans goals and priorities. Successful achievement of School Charter/Strategic Plans goals and priorities also influenced whether a Leading Teacher or other teacher holding a position of leadership would continue to hold that position.

4.7 Summary: Case studies

The purpose of this chapter was to describe the contextual settings in which the six Literacy Coordinators work. The context was described in terms of the classroom settings, management strategies and resources used in the program. In addition, this chapter described the Literacy Coordinator participants’ program, policies and beliefs about the professional development and training needs relevant to their role and it provided the foundation for understanding the conclusions drawn in Chapter 5 from the analysis of the key factors as described by the Literacy Coordinator participants.

As the descriptions indicate, the programs have been influenced by a variety of personal, philosophical, policy and political issues that impact on the choices that each Literacy Coordinator makes in relation to his/her program. Their perceptions about the professional development and training needs of individuals
undertaking the role of Literacy Coordinator are based on their experience and on their understanding of the contextual and political issues that impact on their program as well as their understanding of the needs of their students.

The interviews in these cases studies revealed that there was a range of skills and knowledge required in order to successfully fulfil the role Literacy Coordinator. They include knowledge about programs and resources; knowledge about how student learn and about the learning issues that prevent them from learning successfully; knowledge about the school and context in which the school operates; the knowledge and the skill to build and maintain effective teams, knowledge of how to negotiate within the political and operational structures within the school, and knowledge of current government policies that impact on the operations of the school.

These case studies indicate that there is a perception, even among experienced Literacy Coordinators that there is a need for both initial training and ongoing professional development of Literacy Coordinators in Secondary Schools in order to ensure that their knowledge and expertise is sufficiently developed and that they are skilled in all of the areas relevant to their role. While training in the use of pre-packaged programs is readily available, much of the important skills and knowledge related to identifying student needs, assessment and program management are presently acquired ad hoc. A summary of the skills and knowledge and the perceived training needs as described by the Literacy Coordinator participants has been provided (refer to Table 9 Chapter 3 p. 118). These themes constitute the focus of the following chapter.
Chapter 5 Analysis of the Main Findings

5.1 Introduction

The case studies presented in the previous chapter describe the context and environment in which six successful and experienced Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools in Victoria, Australia operate their programs. The case studies also provided an overview of the programs and of the Literacy Coordinator participants’ beliefs about the skills and knowledge required to successfully manage those programs. Chapter 4 highlighted a common concern among experienced Literacy Coordinators relating to the lack of professional development and training for this role. A number of key skills and knowledge areas essential to the successful management of literacy programs were identified via an analysis of the programs and of the management strategies identified by the Literacy Coordinator participants in the case studies. The data highlights the need for a systematic approach to the training of teachers undertaking the role of Literacy Coordinator.

5.2 Characteristics of successful Literacy Coordinators

This chapter provides an explanatory analysis of the key skills and knowledge identified by the Literacy Coordinators participants in this research which they believe should form essential components of a possible professional development and training program for aspiring and practising Literacy Coordinators. It begins with a detailed list of the main characteristics shown by the Literacy Coordinator participants (see Table 24) and explains how those characteristics can be reduced down to the key skills and
knowledge that might comprise essential components of a professional development and training program for aspiring or practising Literacy Coordinators as summarised in Table 25.

The four categories were derived from the responses provided the literacy coordinator participants in the case study interviews (See appendix 9) to the questions:

16 What does a Literacy Coordinator need to be able to know and do in terms of supporting students’ literacy learning?

17 What does a Literacy Coordinator need to know and be able to do in order to successfully manage the human resources and program components of a literacy program in a secondary school?

The Literacy Coordinators responses were also analysed in the light of the research literature relating to the training needs of literacy and language teachers and current theory related to leadership and management reviewed in Chapter 2. Four themes emerged and are summarised in Table 25 as the key skills and knowledge relevant to the professional development and training of aspiring and practising Literacy Coordinators.

Schwab (1983) has characterised the role of accomplished curriculum leaders. His model of the essential skills and knowledge required by an accomplished and exemplary curriculum leader includes: knowing how to lead the deliberations of her/his team; having the knowledge and expertise to investigate, develop and implement programs and policies; having the skill and knowledge to monitor, guide and evaluate the teaching and learning provided by the program; having the ability to provide expert and informed advice regarding the program, having an extensive
knowledge of current theory, practice and policy related to his/her curriculum area, and having strong interpersonal and negotiation skills. (pp. 261-262)

Schwab’s (1983) matrix for curriculum planning is based on four essentials, which he calls the “commonplaces of curriculum” they include “…the teachers, the students, what is taught and the milieu in which the teaching and learning occurs.” (p.241)

Weiss (1995) has researched school culture and has developed a model for explaining what influences teacher attitudes and their willingness to collaborate with leaders. The model, which Weiss has called ‘The four Is,’ includes teachers’ interests, ideologies, the level of information available to them and the institutional culture.

Schwab’s (19830 matrix and Weiss’ (1995) model became the basis of the questionnaire developed by the researcher and presented to the Literacy Coordinator participants in this research. (See appendix 9) The responses provided by the Literacy Coordinator participants to the interview questions were subjected to a meta-analysis and common themes and issues related to the Literacy Coordinator participants’ beliefs about the key skills and knowledge required in order to successfully manage their literacy program emerged. The four categories were reviewed in light of the key skills and knowledge identified in the research literature explored in Chapter 2. The four key skills and knowledge areas are:

- Being able to articulate the theories that inform the literacy Coordinators beliefs about literacy learning
- The need for sound curriculum and pedagogical knowledge
- The need for the leader to be an exemplary and accomplished classroom practitioner.
- The importance of having strong leadership and management skills.

Table 24 provides a summary of the characteristics shown by each of the Literacy Coordinator participants. The asterisk in each column under the Literacy Coordinator participant’s name denotes that the Literacy Coordinator has identified that characteristic as a key aspect of his/her practise. Table 24 suggests a high level of similarity in what the participants perceive to be the key characteristic skills and knowledge essential to the successful leadership and management of their respective programs.

Table 25 illustrates the four key skill and knowledge areas that emerge from the discourses which might comprise the components of a professional development and training program for aspiring and practising Literacy Coordinators. They are coded as follows (a) a theory that informs practice; (b) curriculum and pedagogical knowledge; (c) experienced, exemplary and accomplished classroom practitioner; (d) leadership and management skills.
Table 24. Summary of the characteristics shown by each successful Literacy Coordinator participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Charlotte</th>
<th>Sophie</th>
<th>Jane</th>
<th>Georgina</th>
<th>Stephen</th>
<th>Geraldine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(c) Experienced teacher 5 years or more.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Undertaken post graduate studies to enhance skills and knowledge related to literacy program provision</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Regularly undertakes relevant short term professional development whenever available in order to remain informed about policies, developments and strategies.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Involvement in development of literacy teams across the Key Learning Areas in the school.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Contributes to literacy program development and documentation across the Key Learning Areas.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Experiments with and evaluates different approaches to literacy teaching and learning.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Explores and evaluates various theories related to literacy teaching and learning.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Able to explain and interpret literacy issues and developments to other teachers and to school community.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Able to explain and justify his/her program policies and strategies.</td>
<td>*</td>
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<tr>
<td>(b) Program characterised by a variety of approaches, resources and strategies.</td>
<td>*</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Desire to know more about physical and psychological factors involved in learning and cognition.</td>
<td>*</td>
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<tr>
<td>(b) Able to use and interpret data about student outcomes to track student progress and evaluate program.</td>
<td>*</td>
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<tr>
<td>(b) Contributes to school based teacher professional development related to literacy across the curriculum.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(b) Teaches in the literacy program and in the mainstream program.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Table 25 (below) depicts the four themes and the sub-categories related to those themes as they emerged in the discourse with the Literacy Coordinator participants. The analysis that follows explores the themes and sub-categories that emerged in those discourses.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A Theory that informs beliefs and practice</th>
<th>Curriculum and Pedagogical Knowledge</th>
<th>Exemplary, Experienced and Accomplished classroom practitioner</th>
<th>Leadership and Management Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of and ability to articulate theory about:</td>
<td>Commitment to ongoing learning and professional development</td>
<td>Provide a supportive and productive classroom environment</td>
<td>Be an effective communicator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How students learn</td>
<td>Flexibility and openness to new ideas</td>
<td>Attuned to the needs of students</td>
<td>Be attuned to the needs and priorities of the students, teachers and school community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Different approaches to literacy teaching and learning</td>
<td>Knowledge of strategies for constructing programs that meet individual needs of students</td>
<td>Able to gain student trust and confidence</td>
<td>Have strong negotiation skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Physical, environmental and emotional factors that impact on students' learning</td>
<td>Ability to use and interpret testing and tracking instruments</td>
<td>Have a deep understanding of their subject area</td>
<td>Be a role model to other teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ability to reflect on and evaluate the program, student needs, teacher needs and student outcomes</td>
<td>Able to monitor and adapt classroom teaching and learning strategies to the needs of students and of the situation</td>
<td>Be able to lead deliberations related to their program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have a sound knowledge of strategies for supporting and training mainstream teachers and team members</td>
<td>Able to gain, interpret and employ data and feedback on student performance to facilitate improved student outcomes and achievement of program goals</td>
<td>Be able to advise key stakeholders about matters related to the program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have a knowledge of how to engage and motivate students</td>
<td>Able to adapt and transfer knowledge about literacy learning to other areas of the curriculum</td>
<td>Have the ability to gain and maintain the support of key stakeholders including the Principal, other school leaders, teachers and the school community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Be able to locate, develop and evaluate appropriate resources</td>
<td>Able to mentor and support other teachers in implementing effective literacy strategies in their classrooms</td>
<td>Be knowledgeable and conversant with current policy and priorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Be an innovator</td>
<td>Able to demonstrate evidence of successful practice via student outcomes</td>
<td>Be able to build and maintain an effective and cohesive team</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Be a problem solver</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Remain connected to the mainstream through teaching and consultation with classroom teachers</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Have a strong interest in the welfare of students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 25. The four key skills and knowledge areas that might comprise essential components of a professional development and training program for aspiring or practising Literacy Coordinators
5.2.1 Ability to articulate a theory

Anstey and Bull (1996) suggest that “every teacher holds a set of beliefs or theories about what works in the classroom and translates those beliefs into actions” (p. 11). If these beliefs are overt and explicit, meaning that the teacher can explain them and use them to explain the learning that occurs in the classroom, then they comprise a rationale that enables the teacher to make sense of what s/he does and why s/he does it. If they are covert or only followed as a result of mandated policy, then the theory becomes disempowering and can result in chaotic and unsuccessful programs and experiences for both teachers and students.

Literacy Coordinators need to be knowledgeable about how literacy and language are learned and how that learning can be supported in the classroom. As the leader of the program it is important that the Literacy Coordinator is able to articulate the theory that informs his or her practice. It is also important that he or she is able to explain the relevance of the theory in terms of how it supports the literacy learning of students.

Marland and Osborne (1990) and Wood (1992) have researched the thinking and decision making processes that teachers practice and have proposed that teachers become expert constructors of theories. In this process teachers select, test and adopt, or discard, what makes sense to them and what does not fit. Thus, Literacy Coordinators might move from one set of theories to another over time, constantly refining their notions of what works best for teachers and for the students.
Charlotte’s theory about how students can best be supported in their literacy learning was a complex mixture of accumulated experience, the trial and testing of different strategies and approaches, and a combination of intuition and judgment about what works best based on evidence. Her early influences included the theories of Graves (1983), Cambourne (1998), Halliday (1975), Hornsby, Sukarno and Parry (1986) and other theorists related to the Language Experience Approach and the Genre writing approach. Charlotte still used these approaches in her work in conjunction with other phonics-based programs with both mainstream classes and for developing essay writing within her withdrawal program.

While teaching about deconstructing text in writing, Charlotte began to theorise about how the teaching of reading and spelling might be supported. As a result she began to consider strategies that would assist students to deconstruct sounds in spelling and decode words in reading because she believed, as did Jane, that when students fail to master the concepts related to how sounds are combined and decoded at the appropriate reading age, they need to be explicitly instructed and shown how to do this as part of the teaching and learning process in literacy support programs.

Charlotte’s search for answers regarding how to teach reading and spelling and how to assess student needs took her back to the skills/behaviorist theories found in direct instruction programs such as Corrective Reading (Engelmann et al., 1999), phonics approaches such as Teaching Handwriting Reading and Spelling Skills-THRASS (Davies & Ritchie, 2003) and the use of testing materials including Tests of Reading Comprehension-TORCH (Mossenson et al., 2003) reading and comprehension tests, The South Australian Spelling Test (Westwood, 1999) and the Ashton Scholastic
(Ashton Scholastic, 1999) reading inventory. In recent years she has added Thinking Curriculum strategies to support her students’ ability to manage information in areas such as planning, research and analysis of data. These resources include de Bono Thinking Hats (1992), Graphic Organizers (Pohl, 2000) and Direct Attention Thinking Tools-DATT (de Bono, 1997) to the strategies in her programs.

Charlotte continually aimed to build onto her theories and programs by thinking through the issues and challenges and by maintaining an open mind and a willingness to consider alternatives and new ideas. Her interest in deconstructing text to teach writing led her to investigate deconstructing words as a way of teaching reading and spelling.

I thought, this fits because it starts to deconstruct words in a meaningful way for the kids. I think that that is what some of the failure is…these kids don’t know how the words are made they just use their visual memories; or their auditory processing problems make these basic units of meaning not make sense (A. 1.38-42).

Sergiovanni (1986) states that “personal beliefs, values, dreams and commitments are at the heart of leadership and help create the individual’s reality and provide a basis for decision making” (p. 6). When necessary, Charlotte has been willing to undertake further studies or seek support and share ideas with other teachers in order to find solutions to challenges and to expand her theories about what works and does not work. Sergiovanni has also suggested that the combination of reflection, personal vision, and the leader’s internal system of values form the basis of sound leadership and actions. “The head is shaped by the heart and drives the hand of leadership therefore, in order to be successful a leader must be flexible and prepared to change [his/her] mindscapes to better understand and fit current practice” (p. 6). Charlotte’s experiences working with Aboriginal students in the Northern Territory led her to undertake further studies in applied linguistics:
Like Charlotte, Sophie likes to select from a range of programs and strategies that best suit the needs of her students. Sophie’s theory about how literacy learning is best supported included the use of a wide range of strategies and resources, remaining open to new ideas and having a commitment to being a lifelong learner. Perhaps her main theory about literacy teaching and learning was that many of the answers to the issues of literacy learning can be found in the quality of the teaching and the relevance of the curriculum offered to students and how it met their individual needs.

I am an ESL (English as a Second Language) teacher, and often I could see that the problems that students were having, the behavioral issues, were very much related to the curriculum and that if the curriculum met their needs better, then a lot of the problems would disappear (B.1.8-11).

In order to do this Sophie focused a great deal of her time and energy on supporting and facilitating the professional development of other teachers across the curriculum areas in her school. Her goal was to help teachers to provide programs that were relevant to student needs and supported their literacy development within the mainstream program.

I’ve tried to model with the teachers how you can make language and literacy explicit in that KLA (Key Learning Area). There are also some mainstream interventions. Last year we ran these things called LAT’s (Literacy Action Teams) which were KLA based and the Restart teachers and I ran six one–hour workshops based on [the needs of] the KLA so that all the examples that were used were relevant (B.1.39-45).

Jane, like other Literacy Coordinator participants in this study believed that there was no single cause of the difficulties experienced by students who have deficits in their literacy development and that there was no single method that will achieve success. Her theory was that if students had not mastered an essential literacy skill through
learning in the mainstream classroom, her role was to help them to develop those skills by explicit instruction in the area of deficit:

Most kids who can’t read have never developed their skills through enough practice or they have never grasped the strategies of how to recognise words. If you don’t make it [learn the skills] automatically, you have to be shown how to make those connections explicitly (C.1.450-454).

Jane also believed that the ability to build a rapport and a relationship with the student is another important ingredient in successful learning. She shared with Georgina the philosophy that students learn best from people they trust and with whom they have a rapport. Both Jane and Georgina also believed that they needed to know their students well, understand the contextual and personal issues that impact on their learning and gain their trust because the journey of learning is as important as the outcome itself:

You’ve got to be a person who has got that empathy with the kids you might say, you have got to have the willingness and you have to be willing to experiment; to go off on a tangent to meet the kid’s needs, be quick to respond to individual kids who might be wacky or strange [and] be able to react appropriately (C.1.431-436).

Stephen’s theory about teaching students with deficits in their literacy learning was that it is the pedagogy rather than drills or modified content that is the most important ingredient. He combined this with an integrated curriculum approach. His theories were based on the Munroe (1999) approach.

My idea about how literacy programs should be run is not about students doing different work; it is about changing teacher pedagogy in terms of how they teach the same curriculum to everybody (E.1.27-29).

Stephen, like all of the other Literacy Coordinators in this study, believed that students need to take responsibility for their learning; therefore Stephen’s criteria for
selecting students into his literacy program included the willingness of students to
commit to the program and to take responsibility for improving their skills.

The class is selected for their language ability [needs] and for the
student’s ability to make improvement and work cohesively with
others. If we have a student who is incapable of functioning in the
normal classroom [because of poor behaviour] we don’t put them
into the Restart [literacy support] class (E.1.16-19).

Geraldine’s concept of students taking responsibility for their learning extended to
giving students an active role in identifying, selecting, completing and evaluating the
progress of their literacy learning. Geraldine not only ascribed to the Munroe (1999)
concept that it is the pedagogy rather than the content that is the most important
ingredient, but she also followed the Boomer (1982, 1989) approach of negotiating
the curriculum and giving students responsibility for their learning as a way of
increasing their engagement and their motivation.

What the students do is, in a set time frame, the students identify a
range of goals that they want to address by the end of the year and [they
state] specifically what tasks they will undertake to achieve those goals.
(F.1.225-228)

5.2.2 Ability to select appropriate content and pedagogy

In order to successfully manage their programs, Literacy Coordinators need to be
trained in both pedagogical and content knowledge. Research undertaken for both
and Rowe (2003, 2006) support the assertions of Literacy Coordinator participants in
this study that there has been inadequate support and preparation in pre-service
teacher training and in subsequent professional development for the needs of teachers
and leaders working in the area of literacy program provision in secondary schools.
All of the Literacy Coordinator participants in this study have expressed a strong
5.2.3 Exemplary and accomplished classroom practitioner

All of the Literacy Coordinator participants in this study have shown themselves to be open to an ongoing process of learning and commitment to their own professional development and to the professional development of their teams. A passion and commitment to supporting their students and a desire to building their knowledge about how students learn is a common theme among the Literacy Coordinator participants in this study. All of the Literacy Coordinator participants have undertaken further training to build on their knowledge and expertise in their area of responsibility as well as seeking out examples of good programs and strategies among their peers.

Jane remembered that her first task as Literacy Coordinator was to research the field to ensure that she made informed choices about the program and strategies she would
use. Jane also noted that informed advice about specific programs and resources, and their relative use and merits was difficult to locate.

I had gone into the Department and talked to the woman in charge of literacy there and she couldn’t suggest much. She said that there was some research being done in various schools, but she had nothing to offer me (C.1.290-294).

Sophie was conscious of the need to read widely and remain informed about developments and new ideas and to seek out mentors and examples of good practice to share with colleagues and team members:

I’ve been reading a book about reading for understanding; I think that that is what it might be called. It was about a school set up in a ghetto in San Francisco. They set themselves a task of teaching their students academic English… (B.1. 331-334).

Knowing how to diagnose and identify the nature and source of each student’s individual learning needs would assist Literacy Coordinators to develop programs that better address those issues. Sophie practises a skill that all of the participants have had to develop; the ability to constantly monitor, reflect on and respond to those needs.

A How would you characterise the needs of the students in your program?

S Some of them have the need to learn to decode, some of them are that basic, they don’t decode well, they don’t decode efficiently. They read very slowly so they lose meaning. There is a group who on the surface appear to read well. When they read aloud it sounds very beautiful, but they are not developing meaning. That group also tends to not have a grasp of formal written English that is required at school. They tend not to think or speak in complete thoughts. So it is very hard for them to write, because if you do not think in complete thoughts it is very hard (B.1.84-93).

Stephen believed that it is impossible to address student needs without having a strong grounding in cognition and the physical and psychological factors that impact on that learning.
I suppose what I would like to find out more about is the cognitive behaviours of literacy students. I think it is not properly understood how language and brain function [together] and I think that that is very important. That is the most useful P. D that I have done, when I have learned about how the brain functions. It is particularly relevant for kids with auditory and other processing problems. You can’t tailor a program for kids just by knowing that they can’t do something, you need to know why they can’t do it (E.1.272-278).

Charlotte and Sophie believe that a one program fits all approach does not meet the needs of students and so they have attempted to seek out and employ a range of options and strategies in order to understand what is best suited to the needs of individual students. Because the Literacy Coordinator is responsible for the literacy learning across the school as well as within the literacy support program, it is also essential that s/he has the skills and expertise to advise other teachers and to provide professional development for their teams. Sophie had made this a key component of her role:

I have as part of my allotment the position of Literacy Mentor, and I work in other teacher’s classrooms for four periods a week. I have done that for three or four years now…Last year we ran these things called LAT’s (Literacy Action Teams) which were KLA (Key Learning Area) based and the restart teachers and I ran six one hour workshops based on the KLA so that all the examples that were used were relevant…Each of the KLA’s went through this six-week program of “good literacy” teaching as applied to their KLA. That was focused on reading. We hope to repeat something like that focused on writing this year (B.2.35-52).

While there is a plethora of materials and theories related to diagnosis and assessment of students needs and for monitoring and tracking student learning, the Literacy Coordinator participants in this study believed that it is important for Literacy Coordinators to be conversant with the theory that informs the testing instruments available to them and to be able to interpret the data: Programs and resources available from private industry providers not only have a one program fits all approach, they also do not explain the rationale underpinning the construction of test
items and even when it is provided it can be difficult to understand. This issue is demonstrated in Charlotte’s difficulty in interpreting the meaning of her students’ Tests of Reading Comprehension - TORCH (Mossenson et al., 2003) test scores when she first started using that system. At the time TORCH testing had been introduced as part of a local school network testing regime.

…he’s got his TORCH (Mossenson et al., 2003) score: 36…now I wouldn’t mind knowing a little more about reading them [what the scores mean] (A.100-103).

5.2.4 Leadership and management skills

A crucial component of the role of Literacy Coordinators is the leadership and management of their programs. According to Bywaters (2003) an accomplished leader must possess the ability to mobilise institutional, political, psychological and other resources in a manner that arouses, engages and satisfies the motives and needs of the followers and clients. Bywaters suggests:

Good leaders are strategic, facilitative and transformative…clear about their values, roles and responsibilities…able to establish processes and provide guidance to others…able to articulate a vision and identify processes that enable others to see a way forward…clear about the type of team and program they want in order to meet the learning needs of their students…and able to engage with staff to build programs and strengthen and extend the professional capacity of their team and other staff members in the school (pp. 3 - 4).

Geraldine was attuned to the goals and philosophy of her school and she had a clear vision of what her school and her programs were trying to achieve. She supported the school’s philosophy that education should start with the learner as central and move out to educating them about life and provide them with the appropriate skills to become productive members of society. (F.1.544-550)
Maccoby (1981, as cited in Green, 1988) believes that expanding our understanding of other human beings through further studies provides leaders with the capacity to understand their own values and to better understand the world. Nea, who worked in Charlotte’s program and aspired to be a Literacy Coordinator, was, like Charlotte, initially inspired by voluntary work done as part of further studies:

I was made aware of literacy problems when I was doing my criminal justice degree. I helped inmates with literacy problems in prisons, that is where I became interested in the needs of people with literacy problems. (A.2. 35-37).

Maccoby argues that the ability to understand and empathise with other human beings is an essential preparation for leadership. Stephen’s appreciation of the importance of self-esteem is the reason that he was careful to avoid labels that might stigmatise or marginalise the students in his program.

…the Restart kids don’t know that they are the Restart class. We keep it quiet and low key. We have had instances where teachers have told them. Up to that point the group’s confidence was just skyrocketing, then they were told there was a change; their attitude, the way that they were sitting, everything changed. It was probably another three months before we built them back up. So we don’t have a culture of saying “you are the literacy class” (E.1.146-152).

Bywaters (2003) describes a strategic leader in education as one who is focused on the well being and progress of students and engaged with their staff in the business of learning. Geraldine, Charlotte and Georgina’s sensitivity to the differing learning styles of their students inspired them to provide learning environments and resources that cater for those different learning orientations. During one of my visits, Charlotte’s assistant described the literacy room:

We have a designated room with a white board and we have it set up with the THRASS charts. They have pictures on them that are brightly coloured and we also display students’ work. We also have theme posters such as Ch for chemist and other different words. I’m in the process of making more posters for the long and the short vowels. Some students didn’t understand THRASS until they heard it on the tapes and heard the
different speech sounds. You have to use different resources and strategies to cater for the different learning style of the students (A.3.279-287).

Jane, along with the other Literacy Coordinator participants, was conscious of the need to be strategic and to utilise school structures in order to achieve her goals for her program and to acquire and maintain important resources such as enough time to operate her program as intended and to retain sufficient staffing and a designated location for the program.

It makes a difference if you are in a friendly room big enough for ten to twelve people as opposed to a big classroom. We have fought those battles and we have just got to keep fighting them. There is always something new coming up (C.1.500-504).

The Literacy Coordinator also needs to be strategic in maintaining and defending the program in the face of many other demands on the school timetable and budget:

You have to be passionate about it. You have to believe that these kids have a right. Last year when there were cut backs mooted, I wrote a letter to the administration and I said this, that and the other and I went around lobbying to get the support so that they did not cut back as much as they were going to. (C.1.506-509).

Mauriel (1989) has defined strategic leaders as “people who have a clear vision based on widely shared beliefs, values and aspirations” (p. 3). Bass (1985) describes transactional leaders as ones who “recognise what it is that teachers want to get from their work and try to see that they get it if their work warrants it” (p. 11). Because she understood the power relations in operation in her school, Charlotte was careful to gain the support and commitment of staff by collaborating with classroom teachers and other program leaders in order to gain their support, she was also able to apply her knowledge and experience of the meeting and committee structures of her school to identify what the staff and the school community believed needed to be achieved in
literacy across the curriculum; then her team worked to help teachers achieve those goals.

Jane understood the importance of communication and endorsement by other leaders and those who have both power and are held in high regard by the school community, so she encouraged other leaders to participate in her programs and to share what they had learned.

Our curriculum Coordinator got talked into taking a literacy class by me. He has been doing it for a couple of years now…I said to him, “Now Ron I want you to immediately sit down and write about your response (C.1.255-266).

Leithwood and Jantzi (1997) suggest that “transformational leadership is well suited to the challenges of program management because it can raise the level of commitment of followers and promote the development of growth in the follower’s capacity to respond productively” (p. 313). In order to ensure that her initiatives and the quality of her program were sustained over time, Georgina provided leadership and collaborated with team members to devise policies and structures, organise professional development and ensure that the processes for monitoring the quality and success of the program were implemented.

…you need literacy teaching across the curriculum so we are developing Professional Learning Teams at the moment, and they are to have a real literacy focus. There will be intensive literacy professional development happening through the team. There will still be some targeted withdrawal but we are moving towards team teaching where you have the literacy person working with someone else to model literacy strategies (D.1.71-5).

Hambrick and Mason (1983 cited in Bass, 1985) suggest that “trust for and cooperation with leaders is higher when other workers [or teachers] in the organisation see that the actions of the leaders, the analysis of the outcomes and life cycle of the programs and products are consistent with the philosophy of the school as a whole” (p. 9).
In the vision statement of Riverview’s Charter (see Appendix 17) Sophie’s school identified (among other key criteria) the aim to ensure “equality of opportunity, team structures, an emphasis on developing skills in literacy, intervention as required, to overcome learning difficulties and careful monitoring of student’s progress” (p. 3). Sophie incorporated these objectives into her program and she had implemented strategies to ensure that they were tracked, monitored documented and evaluated.

We keep a database, which gives us a detailed picture of each student. For example, students who are now in Year ten, we have a detailed database about all sorts of things about them, their attendance patterns, what sort of intervention programs they have had, whether they get EMA (Education Maintenance Allowance). Teachers do this little summary of the good ways of managing those students, good ways of teaching those students; it’s actually a separate database (B.1.126-132).

Hambrick and Mason (1983, cited in Bass, 1985) also suggest that a strategic leader is “consultative and maintains a strong flow of information regarding his/her actions and decision making and is able to argue strongly and in a persuasive and informed manner in support of his/her point of view” (p. 9). When promoting her strategies, Sophie was able to utilise the formal committee structures within the school and use her status as an experienced, exemplary and accomplished leader and classroom teacher to gain support for her program goals. She was also mindful of the need to address the concerns of other stakeholders and to have the support of the Principal and other leaders.

I know that the management team and the administration team will support the idea. There may be some resistance from some of the Key Learning Area leaders; I will need to convince the English KLA leader for example that his subject will not be threatened by this approach (B.1. 56-61).

Hambrick (1989, as cited in Blair & Rivera, 1992) defines a strategic leader as one who is “cognisant of both the internal and external forces and priorities” (p. 85). S/he
also knows the sort of team needed to achieve program objectives. Stephen was clear that in order to maintain the success of his program it was essential that he selected the most suitable teaching staff and maintained a close working and supportive relationship with them through his Professional Learning Team.

I have to be strategic about how to pick and choose teachers and how to target the PD support. You have to give them the information that they need and somewhere else to go with it (D.1.288-290).

5.3 **The perceived needs of Literacy Coordinators**

Tyak (1990) has argued that the delivery of quality education is ultimately the responsibility of the school and the government bodies that fund and give schools the authority to operate. Thus, the school and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Victoria, should accept responsibility for ensuring that Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools in Victoria are given both the resources to operate their program efficiently and access to professional development that will enable them to undertake, as effectively as possible, their duties as designers and managers of their program. All of the Literacy Coordinator participants in this study have expressed a desire for a targeted professional development program that addresses the skills and knowledge areas and the leadership component of their role. At present the bulk of the professional development available to them comprises classroom resources and pre-packaged programs and strategies that do not discriminate between the individual needs of students and do not address the management and leadership issues.
In order to improve the quality of educational outcomes in schools, consideration needs to be given to the instructional capacity of the school and its program leaders. Corcoran and Goertz (1995) developed a paradigm for measuring the instructional capacity of schools in terms of teachers’ skills and knowledge; the amount of time provided for instructing students; the number of staff available to instruct students; class sizes and the availability of appropriate spaces in which to operate. These dimensions of organizational capacity have been eroded in the last three decades in Victorian secondary schools by the implementation of Global Budgets (Department of Education, Victoria, 1997) and School Charters, (Department of Education and Training, Victoria, 2005a) the mandating of learning outcomes as prescribed in the Curriculum Standards Frameworks 11 (Board of Studies, Victoria, 2000), and in recent years the Victorian, Essential Learning Standards (Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority, 2005)

The implementation of School Charters later re-named School Strategic Plans (Department of Education and Training, Victoria, 2005a) and Global Budgets (Department of Education, Victoria, 1997) has allowed schools to identify priority areas that they wish to target in order to improve outcomes for students and to achieve mutually agreed goals as identified by the school community in their Strategic Plans. In addition to local funding, literacy and numeracy, especially in the primary school years and more recently in the Middle Years (Years 5 - 9), have attracted considerable attention and various forms of financial support from both State and Commonwealth governments, however, this funding is usually limited to specific time-frames and conditions. Government funded initiatives for programs such as Restart (Department of Education and Training, Victoria, 2003a) which provided the financial basis of the
staffing and resourcing of the literacy program in Stephen, Georgina and Sophie’s schools was limited to a three year cycle, at the end of that cycle the program and funding were terminated so alternative forms of funding had to be found to ensure the continuity of staffing and resources in its ideal state. Class size and the importance of appropriate resources and a designated space for operating the program have also been identified by the Literacy Coordinator participants in this study as crucial ingredients in the success of their programs. All of these important ingredients in successful programs are vulnerable in the light of uncertain funding and competing demands from other programs and priorities. Each funding initiative normally has a specified period of operation, the Restart program for example, had a life span of three tears which is a common time-frame for a funding initiative and it was concluded in 2005.

The Literacy Coordinators’ ability to argue persuasively and utilise the school decision making and policy structures can be crucial to the viability and security of his/her program. Since the implementation of Global Budgets (Department of Education, Victoria, 1997) the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Victoria has given school Principals and school councils the freedom to allocate funds as they see fit and there are many competing programs and needs within each school. The Literacy Coordinator needs to have the skills and expertise to argue persuasively in support of his/her program, to produce data that demonstrates the program’s efficacy, and to mobilise support for the program. The training of Literacy coordinators in negotiation skills, submission writing and understanding of committee structures and operations must therefore be considered a priority in preparation for their role.
Curriculum reform in areas such as literacy program provision has focused on change and rhetorically grounded philosophies derived from the interests and funding priorities of successive State and Commonwealth governments, private industry, marketing, and knee jerk responses to pressure from the media. In recent years the collection and publication of data such as Achievement Improvement Monitor-AIM (Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority, 2004) which quantifies the literacy and numeracy achievement of students in individual secondary schools in comparison with “Like” schools (see Appendix 15) and “state averages” (see Appendix 15) has been utilised as a measure for making schools accountable. The policy of making teachers and schools more accountable for the ongoing literacy achievement of students over the past decade has also seen numerous other measurement strategies implemented. Examples of accountability measures include; Literacy Profiles (Ministry of Education, School Programs Division, Victoria, 1990), Outcomes Based Assessment (Victorian Ministry of Education, 1993) and AIM testing.

Newman, King and Rigson (1997) question whether increasing accountability to external agents has actually helped to improve school and teacher performance, given the individual needs of students within and across schools. Newman et al. suggest that the focus of improvement should be on developing teacher expertise and on providing the resources and support for teachers and leaders to meet the needs of students in their school. All of the Literacy Coordinator participants in this study have acknowledged the need to be trained in testing and tracking strategies, the use of data bases and the ability to evaluate the efficacy of their program in achieving the desired outcomes for their students. At present the Department of Education and
Early Childhood Development, Victoria has implemented training in interpreting Achievement Improvement Monitor-AIM (Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority, 2004) literacy testing and tracking data, but AIM testing is separate to the testing instruments used within literacy programs therefore Literacy Coordinators need to know how to use and discriminate between the range of testing and tracking instruments available to them via private industry providers and how to select a testing instrument or strategy that best suits the needs of their students and programs.

Weiss (1995) found that the instructional environment of schools, the information available to teachers and program leaders and their ideology shapes the way teachers interpret their interests. Often the way Literacy Coordinators manage and develop their program will depend on their beliefs about learning, what is available to them and on the prevailing ideology amongst teachers in their school about what the literacy program should incorporate and how it should operate. All of the Literacy Coordinators in this study have expressed a desire to learn more about how students acquire literacy skills and they have identified a need to be able to understand the physical and cognitive processes involved in learning. They believe that an understanding of these processes will assist them in selecting the most suitable strategies to meet the different needs of their students.

Since the early 1990s the opportunity for effective professional development and the time to implement what is learned through professional development activities has been eroded by an ever increasing crowded curriculum and accountability processes that involve all teachers, particularly those with middle management roles within schools. The introduction of Victorian Essential Learning Standards-VELS
(Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority, 2005), which is designed to return a
welcome measure of freedom related to curriculum design and delivery, requires that
teachers and schools once again review and restructure curriculum and assessment
along new government directed guidelines. While the VELS structure claims to
provide more freedom to teachers to develop programs that meet the needs of students
at local level it should be accompanied by a corresponding commitment to
professional development and training programs that meet the specific leadership and
program needs of learning area managers such as Literacy Coordinators and the time
and resources needed to operate the programs as intended.

Siskin (1994) found that secondary teachers primarily identify themselves in terms of
the subjects/disciplines that they teach and the subject departments or Key Learning
Areas to which they belong. A crucial part of this identity is the acquisition of
knowledge and expertise in the content and pedagogy of their discipline. Literacy
Coordinators therefore need to be trained in the skills and knowledge to address the
needs of their students and have the expertise to lead the professional development of
other teachers and the deliberations on issues related to the management of their
program. The Literacy Coordinator participants in this study have highlighted in their
discourse the need for specific training in a range of program and leadership strategies
that are seminal to their duties and responsibilities in order that they can select what is
appropriate for the needs of their students and provide informed and relevant
leadership for other teachers and for literacy program staff. They have particularly
highlighted the need for training in the theory related to different content and
pedagogy, diagnosis of individual student needs, understanding of the physical and
psychological factors that influence learning and the relevant skills required in order to lead and manage the daily operations of their staff and program.

The skills and knowledge issues related to the professional development and training needs of Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools in Victoria, Australia have ramifications for the pre-service and post-service training of secondary teachers. Understanding the importance of these needs also has ramifications for the development of policy and training programs at school, government and tertiary levels. These issues will be addressed in the final chapter which will also include study conclusions and recommendations for further research.

This chapter has provided a summary of the characteristics of experienced Literacy Coordinators as demonstrated by the participants in this research. Common themes emerging from that data were used to identify possible skill and knowledge areas that might comprise the content of a professional development and training program for aspiring and practising Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools in Victoria, Australia. The following chapter explores how the skills and knowledge might be communicated to aspiring and practising Literacy Coordinators and makes recommendations to schools, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and tertiary providers for how these skills and knowledge might be incorporated into a professional development and training program.
Chapter 6 Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the conclusions drawn from the data in this thesis. The chapter revisits the main focus of the thesis, summarises the main findings, presents the conclusion and makes recommendations pertinent to educators in the secondary and tertiary sectors and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Victoria. Critical analysis of the perceived limitations of the current research and suggestions for further studies conclude this chapter.

To recapitulate, in the introductory chapter of this thesis, the main focus of the study was outlined as an investigation of the professional development and training needs of Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools in Victoria, Australia.

The research question was:

- What does a Literacy Coordinator in a secondary school in Victoria need to know and be able to do, in order to successfully manage the literacy program in his/her school?

The sub questions were:
• What experiences have highlighted, for Literacy Coordinators, the key skills and knowledge that they believe are important to the successful performance of their role?

• How might these skills and knowledge be shared with others in, or aspiring to, a similar role?

• How might the skills and knowledge be developed and communicated to others?

Understanding the professional development and training needs of Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools in Victoria, enriches the field of research related to literacy program management. The investigation focused on examining the key skills and knowledge areas nominated by Literacy Coordinators as essential to the successful management of their program in order to identify possible components of a professional development and training program for aspiring and experienced Literacy Coordinators.

To examine in detail the professional development and training needs of Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools in Victoria, six case studies of successful, practising Literacy Coordinators were undertaken. The choice of case study methodology to document the key skills and knowledge has been highlighted in Chapters 2 and 3. Much of the limited available research on the professional development and training needs of Literacy Coordinators has focused on adult and workplace literacy, and migrant literacy program management. This research is timely in that it addresses a need that as yet has not been addressed in this area of teacher training: the professional development and training of Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools.
In the current study the focus was on leadership skills and knowledge related to the teaching, development and management of programs in the secondary school context, using a qualitative approach to data collection. The analysis of the data collected was undertaken at both the individual and collective group level. While each of the six Literacy Coordinators and their programs were unique, the themes that emerged provide the basis for the summary and the conclusions that follow.

6.2 Summary of major findings

The major findings of this study are interpreted as characteristics of successful Literacy Coordinators which were then categorised into four key skills and knowledge areas that might comprise essential components of a professional development and training program for aspiring or practising Literacy Coordinators. The characteristics fall into four main categories: Having a theory that informs the Literacy Coordinator’s practise, having detailed and expert curriculum and pedagogical knowledge related to literacy teaching, learning and program design, the need for the Literacy Coordinator to be an exemplary, experienced and accomplished classroom practitioner and the need for the Literacy Coordinator to be proficient in leadership and management skills. Each of these categories comprises a number of sub-categories of specific skills and knowledge (See Table 25: Characteristics of successful Literacy Coordinators). Each of the main categories is separate and yet interrelated in terms of the choices, decisions and actions taken by the Literacy Coordinator in the performance of his/her duties. The
interdependence of the four categories of skills and knowledge is illustrated in Figure 12. Successful practice in any one of the skills and knowledge areas is important in itself, but also dependent on successful application of the skills and knowledge in the other key areas.

Figure 12. Diagrammatical representation of the inter-related spheres of skills and knowledge that characterise a successful Literacy Coordinator
The inter-related spheres of the diagram illustrate the concept that in order to successfully lead and manage her/his program, the Literacy Coordinator needs to be skilled and knowledgeable in all four areas. Knowing and understanding the theory about what influences learning and how students learn, has little value if that theory cannot be translated into programs, resources and good practice. A leader who is able to articulate theories, and develop and document programs will not gain the support of the students or other key stake-holders in the school if her/his own practice is not exemplary or does not fit with the theory. Even an experienced, accomplished and exemplary classroom teacher, cannot be a successful leader if she/he does not have the ability to manage her/his staff and program, represent and defend her/his program, collaborate with other stake-holders and win the support of the principal, other leaders and the classroom teachers in her/his school. Thus all four skill and knowledge areas are both inter-related and individually essential to the successful management of a literacy program in a secondary school.

A meta-analysis of the discourses of the six Literacy Coordinator participants was conducted. Table 26: summarises the common themes that emerged related to what the Literacy Coordinator participants believe are the key skills and knowledge areas essential to the successful performance of their role and which should be included in any professional development and training program for practising and aspiring Literacy Coordinators.
Table 26. Summary of the skills and knowledge that emerged through the discourses of the Literacy Coordinators in this study

- **A theory that informs practice**
  This comprises a set of beliefs held by the Literacy Coordinator about the physical, environmental and cognitive factors that impact on students’ literacy learning. These beliefs should be overtly demonstrated in the choices made by the Literacy Coordinator about content, strategies and policy related to his/her program. The Literacy Coordinator should be able to articulate these beliefs to others and to explain the relevance of these beliefs in terms of content and strategies applied in his/her program and in terms of the literacy learning outcomes for students.

- **Curriculum and pedagogical skills and knowledge related to literacy**
  The Literacy Coordinator should be able to demonstrate deep and detailed knowledge of his/her subject area and have the ability to select and design content and resources relevant to the individual needs of students and to be able to support other teachers in addressing the literacy needs of students. A grounding in and ability to apply knowledge of learning and the physical and psychological factors that influence learning should underpin the assessment of student needs and selection of program resources and strategies. This knowledge will also influence the choice of testing instruments and the manner in which the students’ learning and the program is monitored and evaluated. He/she needs the skill and knowledge to recruit, train and manage his/her team.

- **Exemplary, experienced and accomplished classroom practitioner**
  In addition to having the skills to lead the design and development of the program, the Literacy Coordinator needs to be an exemplary classroom practitioner who is able to create a positive environment that fosters student learning, trust and willingness by students to take risks and learn from their mistakes as well as their successes. She/he should be sensitive to the individual needs of students and be able to adjust his/her teaching and learning activities and resources to address classroom dynamics and the needs of students as they arise. She/he should be able to generate, evaluate and apply data about student achievement in order to monitor student learning and adapt his/her program to meet desired student outcomes.

- **Leadership and Management Skills**
  The Literacy Coordinator needs to be a role model to others and be seen to be open to extending his/her knowledge and expertise as part of his/her professional practice and to support the professional practice of other teachers. S/he should be able to articulate a vision that is attuned to the individual; social and contextual needs of students in his/her program. S/he must be able to strategise and be able to negotiate with competing forces on behalf of his/her program. S/he needs to be able to maintain the support of the Principal and other leaders and stakeholders. A successful Literacy Coordinator should have the skills to build, resource, maintain and inspire his/her team.
6.3 **Conclusions related to the major findings**

The four inter-related spheres of theory, curriculum and pedagogical knowledge, exemplary practice, and leadership and management expertise indicated by the data in this research comprise the essential skills and knowledge areas nominated by the Literacy Coordinator participants in this research as essential components in any professional development and training program for aspiring and experienced Literacy Coordinators. The findings include an internalised set of skills and knowledge such as the theories that the Literacy Coordinator holds about how literacy learning is best supported and a contextual dimension which includes skills and knowledge about programs, teaching strategies, program resources, experienced and exemplary practice and leadership strategies relevant to the school context and the particular needs of students within that school.

The following section contains a presentation of the conclusions drawn from the research. It explores examples of experiences which have highlighted for the Literacy Coordinator participants the key skills and knowledge that they believe are important to the successful performance of their role and includes recommendations for how the skills and knowledge might be shared with aspiring and experienced Literacy Coordinators, and suggestions for how the skills might be developed and communicated to others.
6.3.1 **Key skills and knowledge: The learning theory dimension**

Each of the Literacy Coordinators in this study was able to articulate a theory about how students can best be supported in their literacy learning. These theories evolved as a result of further studies, professional reading, reflection, personal experience and evaluation of what works and what does not work in their practise. Exposure to different programs and strategies over the period of time that they have undertaken the role has enabled the Literacy Coordinators in this research to develop their personal theory of what factors impact on and influence students’ literacy learning, what content and strategies best meet the learning needs of their students and the leadership and management needs of their program.

Charlotte and Sophie’s programs comprised a mixture of theoretical approaches derived from many of the major areas of literacy theory over the past three decades, they include a skills/behaviourist approach for teaching reading and decoding skills and for testing and monitoring student achievement, a Language Experience and Socio-Cultural approach to writing and structuring text, and a critical literacy approach to deconstructing text across the key learning areas. Georgina, Geraldine and Stephen adopted the Munroe (1999) approach which incorporated high reliability teaching strategies and an integrated curriculum approach to content. Geraldine was experimenting with theories based on her recent work with Munroe and she had incorporated a negotiated curriculum approach (Boomer, 1982, 1989) into her program. Jane, who is a strong believer in teaching basic
skills and decoding strategies, adopted a direct instruction approach based on the behaviourist/skills theory of learning.

In every case the Literacy Coordinator participants were able to articulate a theory and explain and justify the strategies and content applied in their programs, and they were able to explain how those strategies were relevant to the learning needs of their students. In each case the theories they hold provide a framework upon which they have built their programs. The development of their theory initially began in response to a desire to understand what impedes students’ learning and how best to overcome those barriers. For Charlotte it was a realisation that the teaching and learning approaches that are adequate to the needs of Non-Indigenous students were inadequate to the needs of Indigenous learners. For Sophie it was the realisation that Non-English-Speaking Background Students-(NESB) and students from economically and socially disadvantaged backgrounds are hindered by unfamiliarity with the English language and limited by their lack of access to and experience of the culture upon which language is based. For Stephen the need was to understand the physical and cognitive influences that impact on learning, which impede understanding and skill development.

Among the issues that emerged for all of the participants, except Stephen, was that because of lack of training in theoretical constructs about how students learn and the different approaches to teaching literacy; selection of program content and strategies was a trial and error process. Information available to them and the advice given, when it could be found, was frequently dictated by philosophies and priorities that met the
political agendas of successive governments who funded and endorsed programs; private industry providers who developed resources that frequently focus on a single theoretical approach and the prevailing educational ideologies of the time.

Jane, Georgina, Charlotte and Sophie have admitted to having adopted a trial and error process or to implementing programs because they were mandated, until they had a chance to develop their own theories of what works best for their students.

A professional development program that provides an overview of literacy learning theory and literacy continuum would enable Literacy Coordinators to select from a range of theories and strategies that make sense to them and fits the perceived needs of their students and the education environments in which they work. All of the Literacy Coordinator participants believed that training in and understanding of the various programs and strategies and the physical, cognitive and psychological factors that influence and impact on literacy learning, would assist them in making informed judgements regarding the needs of their students and deciding how those needs could best be met.

6.3.2 **Key skills and knowledge: Curriculum and pedagogical dimension**

When selecting content and pedagogy for their programs, Literacy Coordinators can be enticed into selecting programs endorsed by current government policies and priorities in order to access the time release for planning, money, staffing and professional
development tied to those programs and theoretical constructs. The current emphasis on funding based on local needs and cluster based action research, provides an opportunity for informed Literacy Coordinator practitioners to select from a wider choice of options based on what they perceive to be suited to the needs of their students. The Literacy Coordinator participants in this research have come to realise that no single program or pedagogical approach will fit the needs of every student in their program. This is evidenced in the variety of program structures and the variety of pedagogical approaches and resources within their programs. Training in a range of pedagogical approaches would enable Literacy Coordinators to make appropriate choices in line with Schwab’s (1983) matrix for curriculum development which focuses on the needs of the teacher, the student, the context of the learning and the milieu in which the program operates.

Many secondary school literacy programs currently operate on a one program meets all needs approach. Selection of content and pedagogy by the Literacy Coordinator is often based on anecdotal or short term observation of other programs in operation or training derived from professional development programs that mainly focus on pre-packaged processes, resources and limited training.

Most private industry programs are structured and sequential, they vary in style and content but usually comprise a skills based approach that incorporates the teaching and mastery of rules, repetition to consolidate learning, application through simple exercises and testing to gauge and document progress. This type of approach provides a ready
made resource that is manageable and structured. At various times these programs have been criticised as too generic in terms of the content and the language contained in the resources, too age inappropriate for secondary school students or too culturally inappropriate as many of these programs were initially designed for the American market and contain American idiom and subjects. Supporters of direct instruction programs, such as the program used by Jane, prefer them because they are structured, sequential and provide what she perceived to be manageable program content and skill development. This can sometimes become a consideration in schools, where staffing for the literacy team is allocated from among teachers who are under-allotted and so the need to train, without the opportunity to build on that training, is a regular feature of the program. Direct Instruction programs are also popular among inexperienced Literacy Coordinators who need to quickly locate a set of resources in order to establish a program.

Jane’s description of her experiences when she began researching possible resources and strategies at the time that she first set up her program is typical of the dilemma faced by many beginning Literacy Coordinators and provides a powerful argument in support of comprehensive professional development in understanding the range of pedagogical and curriculum approaches to program design. Jane describes how she sought advice from colleagues and regional literacy consultants but was unable to make an informed choice or to access useful information and support to help her to make her choice. Finally, she selected a program that seemed to make sense to her when she saw it in operation in another school, so she adopted it in the hope that it would work for her students.
The need to be able to track student achievement and evaluate the efficacy of their programs also highlighted for Charlotte, Sophie, Geraldine and Jane, the need for training of Literacy Coordinators and classroom teachers in the use of a variety of testing and assessment instruments. Literacy Coordinator participants in this research have developed their ability to use testing instruments and assessment processes that assist them to identify whether their programs were enabling students to progress in their mastery of literacy skills and to identify what aspects of the program need modification/improvement. As with other pedagogical skills and knowledge related to their programs, testing and assessment strategies used by the Literacy Coordinator participants in this research were developed in context over a period of years, but all of the Literacy Coordinators have emphasised the importance of having access to this knowledge as early as possible in their careers because the selection of testing instruments should not be left to chance. Literacy Coordinators should be knowledgeable about a range of testing and diagnostic approaches and instruments in order that they can choose those that are most appropriate for their needs and the needs of their students.

Accountability measures at program, school, regional, State and Commonwealth government levels now demand that quantifying and tracking of student outcomes are incorporated into literacy and mainstream language programs. The data which is generated by this process is used to measure the efficacy of the program, to assess how well the literacy goals and priorities in the school Strategic Plan are being addressed and to justify funding that has been allocated via the school budget or via externally funded program initiatives. Van Kraayenoord et al. (2001) have suggested that until recently,
“few of the programs in schools have been evaluated for their efficacy” (p.14). The need to train Literacy Coordinators in interpretation of testing instruments and in processing and interpretation of data is an important component in the preparation for the role. Sophie and Charlotte and Georgina for example, used a number of quantitative testing and measuring instruments but they also triangulated the data with records and anecdotal information generated by classroom teachers.

The Literacy Coordinator’s role includes leading the development, documentation and evaluation of the program, ensuring that team members and other teachers have access to information about the program, providing professional development for themselves, his/her team, and other teachers, and dissemination of ideas and strategies related to literacy development across the school in order to ensure that literacy is addressed in all areas of the curriculum. In order to do this the Literacy Coordinator not only needs to be knowledgeable about literacy theory and pedagogy, but also needs to be knowledgeable about how to provide or access professional development that meets the needs of his/her team and the wider community of teachers within the school. All of the literacy Coordinator participants in this research have demonstrated the importance of having highly developed curriculum and pedagogical knowledge which they constantly apply to their own program and to supporting the work of other teachers across the curriculum. The curriculum and pedagogical knowledge that they employ in mentoring, training and collaborating with teachers and curriculum teams across the school not only gains them credibility but also enables them to achieve their goals by facilitating cooperation and collaborating among their colleagues across the school.
6.3.3 Key Skills and knowledge: Exemplary classroom practice dimension

The level of success which students experience in literacy support programs, especially those that use a withdrawal approach can diminish when the student returns to the mainstream classroom where the pace and strategies are different. In the mainstream classroom the teacher, in consultation with teacher aides and the Literacy Coordinator, collaborate as a team to develop the program for students in need of support.

Hattie (2003) also argues that a Literacy Coordinator needs to be an exemplary, experienced classroom practitioner who is able to monitor the responses of students to the learning experience and adapt and modify her/his strategies accordingly. Experienced Literacy Coordinators like Jane, Stephen and Georgina believe that theoretical and pedagogical knowledge needs to be applied in conjunction with a close understanding of the personal, cultural and contextual factors that impact on the learner and the learning environment. Georgina highlighted this in her discourse when she explained that the relationship between the teacher and student, and the journey of learning, is as important as the teaching strategy and the program. Georgina’s beliefs also highlight the need for any training program for Literacy Coordinators to incorporate training in reflective and evaluative practices so that Literacy Coordinators are able to identify how their own behaviours and strategies influence the attitude and response of students, and the personal and psychological and socio-economic issues that students bring to the learning situation.
6.3.4 **Key skills and knowledge: Leadership and management dimension**

Given the competing demands on time, space and resources, a successful Literacy Coordinator needs to have the expertise to negotiate with other leaders, the Principal and key stakeholders in the school. Jane has described her ability to negotiate strategically on behalf of her program when she learned of possible cuts. Her strategies at that time included lobbying, writing submissions and attending meetings to promote the interests of her program and soliciting support from other teachers. Her determination to fight on behalf of her students enabled her to maintain the funding for her program in spite of mooted cuts, and to negotiate the establishment of a permanent teaching space in a new section of the school.

Van Kraayenoord et al. (2001) have found that an attractive, well-resourced classroom and a designated space help to foster a positive attitude in students toward the program. Jane, Charlotte, Georgina and Sophie also highlighted the importance of a well-resourced and permanent location as something that gives credibility to the program in the eyes of students and is conducive to promoting engagement and commitment. All this requires that the Literacy Coordinator is trained in leadership and negotiation skills in order to ensure that the needs and interests of the program are promoted and defended.

Knowledge of current policy and skills in negotiation and diplomacy are essential to the role of Literacy Coordinator. Charlotte used diplomacy and her ability to interpret
government policy and local priorities to her advantage by consulting formally and informally with stakeholders such as other program leaders and enlisting the support of the Principal and the Curriculum Coordinator by linking her initiatives to the stated goals and priorities in the school Charter (see Appendix 16).

Being knowledgeable about committee structures and process helped Sophie when initiating her programs and facilitating change. As a member of the leadership team she was in a strong position to influence decision making but she followed this up with a strong personal commitment which she demonstrated by working closely with other staff members and team leaders across learning areas to develop programs, support teacher professional development and to train and manage teams. This approach gave her both credibility and respect because she was seen as a leader who was not just a decision-maker; she was one of the team and in touch with the needs and interests of classroom teachers.

All of the Literacy Coordinators in this study have shown themselves to be a role model with a strong commitment to building the professional culture of the school. In addition to being members of the school leadership team Literacy Coordinators such as Sophie Charlotte and Geraldine teach with other teachers in their classrooms and work with them in teams to support the professional development of classroom teachers and ensure that the needs and interests of the students are the paramount concern of their operations.
In addition to being strong and clear about their vision and purpose, Literacy Coordinators like Stephen and Georgina are quite clear about their objectives and the importance of maintaining the focus of the program and they were also strongly committed to ensuring quality and selecting the appropriate people to work in their team. Stephen described how he would never place a teacher who was not committed to the aims of the program or the interests of the students in his team. He also ensured that if issues arose he counselled the teacher and collaborated with the teacher to explore ways to address the issue; thereby he became a mentor to that teacher and a trouble-shooter for his program. Training in conflict resolution and mentoring also comprise an important element of the role.

6.4 **Implications for educational practice: Sharing the skills and knowledge**

Each of the identified skills and knowledge areas, suggested by the Literacy Coordinator participants in this research have important implications for the professional development and training programs for Literacy Coordinators, therefore a number of recommendations are made. These suggestions are not only relevant to schools and government bodies that generate educational policy and funds and provide professional development for teachers, but also for tertiary institutions that are involved in both pre-service and in-service teacher education.
6.4.1 Addressing professional development and training needs at school level

Schools have an obligation to ensure that their teachers and their program leaders are adequately trained in the skills and knowledge relevant to their roles and responsibilities. The commitment to professional development has been enshrined in Department of Education, Victoria policy via the Ministerial Blueprint for Victorian Schools (Minister of Education and Training, 2003) and the Department of Education, Victoria, June 2007, Student Learning Policy Background Paper, and as part of the teacher accreditation process as described in the policy documents of the Victorian Institute of Teaching (2007). However, the range and quality of training currently available for the role of Literacy Coordinators and for classroom teachers has been demonstrated to be less than adequate for the demands of the role. This lack of adequate training has been deplored in the research literature not only in Victoria but across Australia.

As part of mandatory teacher appraisal processes in all schools, teachers are asked to identify key areas of professional development that they wish to undertake; these are documented and teachers are required to meet the objectives outlined in their appraisal statements. Schools need to be committed to ensuring that time and access to quality professional development programs are provided. In addition, physical and curriculum resources and access to an adequate budget and staffing in order to maintain the operation of the literacy program should not eroded by the demands of other budget and program considerations.
Planning and evaluation time for programs such as the literacy program is essential for the development of quality teaching and learning and for the ongoing successful operation of the program. Because of competing demands made on teachers by after school meetings, extra curricular participation by teachers in many areas of the school program and family considerations; it is essential that literacy program planning is included in the normal meeting schedule of the school. Furthermore, where possible, such programs need to be supported with planning days that enable the Literacy Coordinator and her/his team to develop and review his/her departmental strategic plan for each year and to monitor and ensure that the program is achieving its targets.

Literacy Coordinators are usually also classroom teachers and so their time allowance varies from school to school but is usually approximately the equivalent of four teaching periods per week. The need to work in collaborative situations supporting and mentoring teachers in mainstream classrooms and the need to monitor the operations of their own programs and to teach in the program should be paramount in the decision making process related to how much time is provided to Literacy Coordinators to oversee and manage their programs. The need to plan carefully, to document curriculum and assess the needs and progress of students, should be the paramount consideration in school decision making regarding the amount of time allowance given to the Literacy Coordinator, rather than providing time release that fits a pre-conceived formula or is comparable to the time provided to other program leaders.
The Literacy Coordinators participants in this research have been able to draw on experience and expertise to establish and successfully lead and manage their program. This expertise has taken time and commitment to seeking out, acquiring the program related skills and knowledge and developing the management skills that help them to understand and negotiate the power relations within their school. All agree that they would have been greatly supported in their work, if a training program had been available to them, in order to prepare them for the role.

6.4.2 **Sharing the skills and knowledge with aspiring or experienced Literacy Coordinators**

The value of learning from peers and mentors has been endorsed in the research literature related to teacher professional development. Woods (1998), Elbaz (1997) and Polkinghorn (1995), Wagner (1997) and the Literacy Coordinator participants in this study perceive co-learning partnerships to be a powerful strategy for learning new skills and evaluating practice. Time release to spend with other aspiring or experienced Literacy Coordinators planning, observing, participating, sharing experiences and collaboratively reflecting on each-other’s programs and strategies has been found to be a valuable learning tool. Co-learning is best suited to spending substantial periods of time working in programs and reflecting with peers on the outcomes of the strategies and processes used in those programs. Co-learning cannot be effectively achieved by
spending a day, or a few hours, participating in and observing other programs and strategies, participants need to work within the programs as both participant and non-participant observers and to engage with their colleagues in collaborative reflection and evaluation of the programs’ strategies and outcomes. The opportunity to exchange places with teachers in other secondary and primary schools for a sustained periods of time would better facilitate a deep understanding of the programs, develop new skills and reflect on the efficacy of those strategies and the relevance to the observer’s own program. It would also facilitate a seamless transition from primary to secondary schooling for all students and address issues of gaps in skill development and unnecessary repletion of content.

Participation by Literacy Coordinators in action research teams and Professional Learning Teams (Johnson, 1999) across clusters and networks and within the Literacy Coordinator’s own school/program allows members of those teams to share knowledge and strategies, reflect on and evaluate programs, and to share information and perspectives on students in the cohorts that they teach. This approach also provides opportunities for practical sharing of expertise, resources and providing feedback to each-other, in situations where the team processes include team teaching and collaborative appraisal.

An ongoing commitment by the school to providing training in literacy support across the curriculum to all staff members and the opportunity for teams to learn from each-other is essential to the on-going management of the Literacy Coordinators’ program and for
skilling team members, especially given that there is only a limited amount of time available in pre-service teacher programs for training in literacy provision. In order to facilitate this process, Literacy Coordinators need the time to develop their own skills and knowledge in order that they can train others.

In recent years in Victoria school clusters comprising secondary schools and their feeder primary schools have been established for the purpose of professional development and program design. In addition to providing an avenue for skills and strategy training as part of their professional development role, these networks provide an opportunity for action based research and co-learning projects for Literacy Coordinators and other teachers in similar roles across their cluster or network.

A key objective of the Victorian government, as stated in the Ministerial Blueprint for Education (Minister of Education and Training, Victoria 2003), and the Victorian Institute of Teaching (2007) and the Department of Education, Victoria, June 2007 Student learning policy, Background paper is to ensure high quality teaching and best practice in Victorian schools through an ongoing commitment to teacher professional development. At present a number of programs for supporting the ongoing professional development of teachers have been put in place. These include initiatives such as ongoing school-based teacher appraisal and access to study leave via Teacher Professional Leave (Department of Education & Training, Victoria, 2004) projects. The training of Literacy Coordinators in the skill and knowledge areas identified in this study
could be promoted through the utilisation of existing and the development of new initiatives to support teacher learning.

6.4.3 **The role of tertiary institutions**

At present Leading Teacher Accreditation (Department of Education, Victoria, 1996) which has been in operation for more than a decade does not cover the range and depth of the skills and areas identified in this study and is not role specific. Furthermore, not all Literacy Coordinators are Leading Teachers so they do not have access to the limited management training currently provided to Leading Teachers. Teacher Professional Leave provides a substantial period of up to six weeks for teachers to undertake learning and research in an area of interest and professional need; however six weeks is inadequate to meet the extent of training required by a Literacy Coordinator. Providing time release for Literacy Coordinators to undertake formal studies in a tertiary accredited program/provision of fees would enable many Literacy Coordinators whose family and financial obligations prohibit further study, to build their skills and knowledge relevant to their role.

Collaboration by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Victoria with tertiary institutions in the training of Literacy Coordinators would provide a thorough grounding in the theory, curriculum and pedagogical skills and management strategies needed to successfully undertake the duties relevant to the role of Literacy Coordinator. The key skills and knowledge areas relevant to the professional
development and training needs of Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools indicated by this study comprise a crucial area of need that should be addressed by the establishment of training programs in tertiary institutions rather than be left to chance.

A suitable training program should encompass the areas of physical and cognitive assessment, literacy theory, the use and documentation and evaluation of literacy testing instruments and classroom materials and leadership and management theory. The program might be delivered by a tertiary institution or as a collaborative project with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Victoria as modules that can be undertaken online or via local teacher professional networks and co-learning projects. This research is timely in that it has highlighted a gap in the training of Literacy Coordinators and that it fulfils an area of need identified and long sought for by Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools in Victoria and throughout Australia.

6.5 Conclusion in summary

The need for better training of classroom teachers and leaders of literacy programs including Literacy Coordinators has been highlighted as a national and international priority in the research literature for the past three decades. Evidence of research into teacher training for the teaching of literacy suggests that much needs to be done to prepare teachers for this crucial role. Lemnos (2005) Masters (1999), Rowe (2003) and others have highlighted the importance of “teacher training in the use of strategies that
have been shown to be effective, as well as to understand why they are effective” (p.15). The suggestions have included “providing teachers with a broader view of different approaches to the teaching of reading and the theoretical rationale underlying those different approaches” (p.15). Conclusions drawn from this study indicate that the role of Literacy Coordinator has multiple skills and knowledge dimensions. An effective Literacy Coordinator needs to be able to articulate his/her theoretical and pedagogical choices to other teachers, identify the specific needs of students and construct programs that meet those needs, and possess and demonstrate strong classroom and leadership skills. Any professional development and training program for Literacy Coordinators needs to include training in all four dimensions of the role. While this study has focused on the professional development and training needs of Literacy Coordinators in Victoria, Australia, the evidence suggests that need for the training of Literacy Coordinators goes beyond both state and national boundaries and that addressing this need is a national and international priority in the teaching and management of literacy programs.

6.6 Limitations of this study

In collecting this data the researcher spent many hours in the Literacy Coordinators’ classrooms observing the programs and engaging both the Literacy Coordinator participants and other key informants including classroom teachers, Principals, aides and students in discussion and reflection on their program. The discourses and the time spent in the classrooms provided an opportunity for the researcher to undertake participant and non-participant observation of the programs. By comparison, there were fewer
opportunities to observe the work of the Literacy Coordinators in other contexts related to the leadership component of their role such as team teaching with other classroom teachers, leading the deliberations of their teams and participation in the committee structures. The evidence emerging from the discourses of the Literacy Coordinator participants in this study suggests that further research needs to be undertaken into the leadership and management training of Literacy Coordinators and other program leaders in secondary schools.

Certain documents such as Achievement Improvement Monitor-AIM (Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority, 2003) data were difficult to access due to privacy issues. A comparison of the AIM data with the testing data generated from the literacy program testing instruments materials might yield further information about the efficacy of the various programs available, the testing instruments and how information from testing can facilitate the development of targeted programs that better address the individual needs of students. A longitudinal study of programs, student outcomes and the management strategies of Literacy Coordinators over a period of years might also assist in assessing the relative merits of the different programs and the theories applied within the programs.

All of the student participants in this study responded positively to questions regarding their satisfaction with the program. However, it is difficult to identify whether those responses were the result of lack of knowledge or ability to discriminate or offered in response to the close and supportive relationships established with their teachers rather
than genuine understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the program itself. It would also be a valuable exercise to follow students into the mainstream classroom and observe whether the skills that they learn in their literacy program are applied (as most student participants claimed) in the mainstream and if so, whether the learning is sustained over a period of time.

6.7 Future research

Further research in this area should focus on the management and leadership dimension of the role and the extent of training required by Literacy Coordinators in diagnostic skills and the understanding of factors that support and hinder cognition in students. Many of the Literacy Coordinator participants felt that having the opportunity to reflect and share with the researcher and to read about what other program leaders do, provided a valuable source of information regarding the choices of programs and strategies available to them. The responses of the Literacy Coordinator participants to the sharing and co-learning that occurred are a serendipitous outcome of this research. It raises the question of whether some of the professional development and training needs of Literacy Coordinators might not be facilitated by mentoring and co-learning partnerships between practising and aspiring Literacy Coordinators. Further research in this area might also focus on whether this learning would best be facilitated in context as part of a mentoring program, or a combination of further studies and on site projects in collaboration with local teacher networks and tertiary providers.
At present there are a number of professional development networks established throughout Victoria as part of the Innovations and Excellence (Department of Education and Training, Victoria, 2003b) clusters. Each network nominates their own area of focus so co-learning partnerships and action based learning teams for the purpose of sharing and developing and communicating the management and leadership issues highlighted in this study could be addressed via those networks.

The need for training in diagnostic techniques related to assessing the physical, cognitive and emotional factors that influence student literacy learning also requires that research is conducted into how this component might be incorporated into a tertiary qualification for Literacy Coordinators.

The necessity for further research into the professional development and training needs of Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools in Victoria, nationally and internationally has been highlighted not only by the Literacy Coordinator participants in this study, but also in the absence of research that specifically relates to this area. Rowe (2003, 2006) and Cook (2004) and other educational researchers in recent years have explored the lack of adequate pre-service teacher preparation for teaching literacy in secondary schools and other related areas of literacy program management such as adult literacy program provision, career-based literacy and the provision of literacy programs for recently arrived migrants. Much of the existing literature focuses on funding issues and program content. The current study is timely in that it addresses and highlights the necessity for
training of Literacy Coordinators in diagnosis of student needs, selection of appropriate content and strategies and the management and leadership skills raised in this research.

### 6.8 Concluding statement

The need for students to achieve their full literacy potential is crucial to their success in education, employment and participation as an informed and articulate member of society. Appropriately trained and informed leaders of literacy programs in secondary schools are an essential catalyst for powerful and enduring change long anticipated by government, schools, employers and families of secondary students in Victoria, Australia. Collaboration involving the diversity of agencies responsible for the training and support of Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools is paramount in achieving high quality program provision based on informed and effective strategies. Providing programs that address the literacy needs of learners in the new millennium is the responsibility of schools and the government agencies that fund and empower schools to operate. The best quality educational outcomes for secondary literacy learners can only be achieved by informed and competent Literacy Coordinators and their teams, thus training and professional development programs that encompass all areas of the role and responsibilities of practising and aspiring Literacy Coordinators is a need that must be addressed as a matter of urgency and priority.
References


Department of Education, Science and Training.


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Slade, M. (2002). *Listening to boys: issues and problems influencing school achievement and retention*. Flinders University Institute of International


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Appendix 1 Glossary

AIM
Achievement Improvement Monitor. Tests of achievement in literacy and numeracy in Years 3-9.
(Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority, 2004)

Access to Excellence Program 2001
State government funding to provide professional development and funding for programs to improve literacy.
(Department of Education and Training, Victoria. 2001a).

ACER
Australian Council for Educational Research, Victoria, Australia. Private industry designers and providers of educational, curriculum and testing materials

Advisory Groups
School based team comprising a teacher and a cohort of students for which the teacher provides pastoral care.

Bridging the Gap
Victorian government literacy program developed to support the development of spelling, reading and writing for students in primary and secondary schools. (Department of Education and Training, Victoria, 2001b)

Corrective Reading
Private industry reading program involving direct instruction in decoding strategies.
(Engelmann, Meyer, Johnson, & Carnine, 1999)

Critical incident
An incident of importance that challenges the individual and enables them to learn from that experience. (Wood, 1992)

CSF11
Curriculum and Standards Framework 11 A set of indicators of desirable skills and knowledge outcomes.
(Board of Studies, 2000)

Curriculum Committee
Body that oversees planning and implementation of student learning programs within the school.

DART,
Development Assessment Resource for Teachers tests to identify levels of skills in reading writing and comprehension.
(Forster, Masters, & Mendelovits, 1994)

DATT Tools
Direct Attention Thinking Tools developed by Edward de Bono for managing research, thinking and data. (de Bono, E. 1997)

de Bono Six Thinking Hats
Thinking and problem solving resource developed by Edward de Bono, (de Bono 1992).

de Bono
Educational theorist related to thinking skills.

DEECD, Victoria
Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Victoria

DE&T, Victoria
Department of Education and Training, Victoria

DEE&T, Victoria
Department of Education Employment & Training, Victoria

DoE, Victoria
Department of Education, Victoria

Discourses
The various roles and protocols for operating within a particular social group. (Gee, 1996)
ESL  English as a Second Language.
Frameworks Structural framework for developing student learning programs in Victorian State schools 1986 -1999
(Ministry of Education, Schools Program Division, Victoria, 1988)
Helping Students to Learn Department of Education professional development package and resources containing effective literacy teaching strategies.
(Elisson, & Stewart-Dore, 1993)
Hill and Crevola Educational theorists and researchers in the area of Middle Years teaching and program development. (Hill & Crevola, 1997)
HOD Head Of Department
ICT Information and Communications Technology
ILP Individual Learning Plan of skills and knowledge that a student may negotiate to develop as part of their learning goals.
(Department of Education, Victoria, 1999)
Information Technology Curriculum Curriculum related to the use of computer software and hardware in the mainstream classroom.
Individual Learning Tasks Negotiated tasks designed to improve skills in targeted areas.
Innovation and Excellence 2002 State government funding and programs designed to improve transition and engagement of students in the middle years.
(Department of Education and Training, Victoria, 2002)
Integration Aide Non-teacher trained support worker.
Integration Students Students who are classified as having a severe learning impairment/disorders now termed Language Disorder.
(Department of Education, Victoria, 2005).
Intensive Instruction Small group/one on one instruction.
John Munroe Developer of Restart literacy support program, (Munroe, 1999)
KLA Key Learning Area: specific discipline areas previously known as subject areas/ faculties
LBOTE Language Background Other Than English
LAT Literacy Action Team: Group of people that work with a subject discipline area.
Language Disorder See Integration students. (Department of Education, Victoria, 2005)
Learning Outcomes Skills and knowledge that can be demonstrated by a student, recently renamed Standards in VELS curriculum.
(Department of Education, Victoria, 2005)
Literacy aides/assistants Non-teacher trained support worker.
Literacy Coordinator School based manager of the whole school literacy program
Literacy Program Program designed to improve spelling, comprehension and communication skills.
Literature Circles Student/group focused literacy teaching strategy. (Dawson, & Fitzgerald, 1999)
LLAN Local Learning Area Network
| **LOTE** | Languages Other Than English. |
| **Leading Teacher** | Teachers who hold positions of responsibility that impact across the school or college |
| **Making a Difference** | Department of Education and Training program comprising intensive one-on-one instruction to improve spelling, reading and comprehension. (Crilly, 2004) |
| **MYRAD** | Middle Years Research And Development |
| **Middle Years Literacy** | Program and funding designed to improve literacy in years 5-9 of schooling. (Department of Education, 2000) |
| **Multiliteracies** | Skills and knowledge relevant to communication in a range of disciplines and technologies. (Snyder, 1996) |
| **Multiple Intelligences** | Theory developed by Gardner based on the assumption that individuals have different learning modes. (Gardner, 1983) |
| **Neale Analysis** | Graded tests for assessing reading strategies and vocabulary development. (Neale, 1988) |
| **NMIT** | Northern Metropolitan Institute of Technology: Tertiary vocational program provider in the Northern region of Melbourne, Victoria. |
| **Pastoral Care** | Program where individual teachers oversee the learning and welfare of each student in their group. |
| **P.D.** | Professional Development. |
| **PAT** | Progressive Achievement Tests: Testing strategy to assess literacy skill development. (Burton, & Mossenson, 2001) |
| **Pathways** | Curriculum course planning structure designed to facilitate entry to target tertiary and vocational education programs. (Department of Education and Training, Victoria, 1992) |
| **PLT** | Professional Learning Team: Multi-disciplinary team who work intensively with targeted groups of students, (Johnson & Scull, 2003) |
| **Reciprocal Teaching** | A teaching strategy where the teacher provides scaffolding to students to support their learning by demonstrating how the task is done. (See Crilly, R. 2004, Making a Difference) |
| **Restart** | Government funded program to provide targeted support to selected students in Years 7 in government schools. (Department of Education and Training, Victoria, 2003a) |
| **Restorative practices** | A positive relationship approach used for making amends when students have breeched discipline. |
| **Scholastic Reading Inventory** | Computer based vocabulary, spelling and word recognition testing program. (Ashton Scholastic, 1999) |
| **School cluster network** | Network that organises common professional development activities for a cluster of local secondary and primary schools |
| **School Strategic Plans** | Planning documents that describe the goals and priorities of individual state schools in Victoria. (Department of Education and Training, Victoria, 2005a) |
| **SES** | Socio-Economic Status |
| **SOSE** | Study Of Society and Environment: CSF 11 Humanities programs in Victorian state schools (Board of Studies, 2000) |
| **South Australian Spelling Test** | Inventory of words for testing student spelling and vocabulary achievement. (Westwood, 1999) |
Secondary school Post primary providers of education in Years 7-12 also called Secondary College or High School in Victoria.

Success for Boys Department of Education, Victoria funding for school based programs to support boys in danger of not completing their secondary education. (Department of Education, Victoria, 2005)

Secondary education Schooling in Years 7-12 in Victoria, Australia.

Stanine Measure of literacy skill achievement in relation to chronological age and in relation to normal curve distribution related to age. (see PAT and TORCH)

State education schools funded and operated by State Governments in Australia.

Strategic Plan Action Groups School based groups who plan for implementation of key school priorities.

TAFE Technical And Further Education: Commonwealth government funded tertiary education programs with a career focus.

THRASS Teaching Handwriting, Reading And Spelling Skills: (Mossenson, Stephanou, Forster, Masters, et al., 2003).

Program designed to develop reading and spelling through the use of phonics.


Torch Score Level of achievement related to reading ability based on the TORCH tests (see TORCH)

VCAA Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority Victorian government body responsible for VCE, AIM and VELS curriculum, previously known as the Board of Studies, Victoria.


Writing In The Subject Areas Victorian government program designed to provide resources and professional development to teachers to support the teaching of different genres of writing across the subject areas. (Baker, & McLaughlin, 1993)
Dear Ms Pollard

Thank you for your application of 10 July 2002 in which you request permission to conduct a research study in government schools titled: *The Professional Development and Training Needs of Literacy Coordinators in Secondary Schools in Victoria.*

I am pleased to advise that on the basis of the information you have provided your research proposal is approved in principle subject to the conditions detailed below.

1. Should your institution's ethics committee require changes or you decide to make changes, these changes must be submitted to the Department of Education, Employment and Training for its consideration before you proceed.

2. You obtain approval for the research to be conducted in each school directly from the principal. Details of your research, copies of this letter of approval and the letter of approval from the relevant ethics committee are to be provided to the principal. The final decision as to whether or not your research can proceed in a school rests with the principal.
3. No student is to participate in this research study unless they are willing to do so and parental permission is received. Sufficient information must be provided to enable parents to make an informed decision and their consent must be obtained in writing.

4. As a matter of courtesy, you should advise the relevant Regional Director of the schools you intend to approach. An outline of your research and a copy of this letter should be provided to the Regional Director.

5. Any extensions or variations to the research proposal, additional research involving use of the data collected, or publication of the data beyond that normally associated with academic studies will require a further research approval submission.

6. At the conclusion of your study, a copy or summary of the research findings should be forwarded to me at the above address.

I wish you well with your research study. Should you have further enquiries on this matter, please contact Louise Dressing, Senior Policy Officer, School and Community Development Division, on 9637 2349.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

Norm Dean
Manager
School Community Links & Networks

encl.
29/11/2001

Ms Anna Pollard
548 Station Street3
Carlton North
Vic 3054

Dear Anna,

Re: Higher Degrees Project Approval.

I am writing to advise you of the progress of your Higher Degree Project approval.

Your Higher Degree application for your Doctor of Philosophy by Project thesis entitled "The Professional Development and Training Needs of Literacy Coordinators in Secondary Schools in Victoria, Australia." has been approved by Faculty Board.

I wish you well in your studies. Should you have any further questions regarding your application please do not hesitate to contact me on 9925 7877.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

Heather Porter
Higher Degrees Officer
Faculty of Education, Language and Community Services

cc: Senior Supervisor: H. Fehring
Head of Department
Appendix 4  FELCS Ethics Committee Approval

19/11/2001

To Ms Anna Pollard
548 Station Street3
Carlton North
Vic 3054

Dear Anna,

Your amended Ethics application for your Doctor of Philosophy was approved by the chair of the Faculty Human Research Ethics sub-committee on 8/11/2001, and has been recommended to the Faculty Board for approval at its meeting of 29/11/2001.

This now completes the Ethics procedures.

We wish you well in your research. Should you have any further questions regarding your application please do not hesitate to contact me on 9925 7840 or email heather.fehring@rmit.edu.au.

Yours sincerely

Heather Porter
Higher Degree Officer

Dr. Heather Fehring
Chair
Faculty of Education, Language and Community Services
Human Research Ethics Sub-committee

cc: Head of Department
Dr Heather Fehring

Ethics registration number
PhDsc. 19801
Appendix 5   HREC Participant Consent Form

RMIT HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
Prescribed Consent Form For Persons Participating In Research Projects Involving
Interviews, Questionnaires or Disclosure of Personal Information

FACULTY OF
Education, Language and Community Services
DEPARTMENT OF
School and Early Childhood Education

Name of participant:

Project Title:
The Professional Development and Training Needs of Literacy Coordinators in Secondary Schools in Victoria, Australia.

Name(s) of investigators:    (1) Anna Pollard Phone: 9458 2834
(2) Phone: 94683343

1. I have received a statement explaining the interview/questionnaire involved in this project.

2. I consent to participate in the above project, the particulars of which - including details of the
interviews or questionnaires - have been explained to me.

3. I authorise the investigator or his or her assistant to interview me or administer a questionnaire.
I give permission to be audio taped.

4. I acknowledge that:
(a) Having read Plain Language Statement, I agree to the general purpose, methods and
demands of the study.
(b) I have been informed that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time and to
withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied.
(c) The project is for the purpose of research and/or teaching. It may not be of direct
benefit to me.
(d) The confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded. However should
information of a confidential nature need to be disclosed for moral, clinical or legal
reasons, I will be given an opportunity to negotiate the terms of this disclosure.
(e) The security of the research data is assured during and after completion of the study.
The data collected during the study may be published, and a report of the project
outcomes will be provided to N/A (specify as appropriate). Any information
which will identify me will not be used.

Participant’s Consent

Name: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________

(Participant)

Name: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________

(Witness to signature)

Where participant is under 18 years of age:

I consent to the participation of ___________________________ in the above
project.

Signature:    (1) ___________________________ (2) ___________________________

(Signatures of parents or guardians)

Name: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________

(Witness to signature)

Participants should be given a photocopy of this consent form after it has been signed.
Appendix 6

Parent/Student

Dear

My name is Anna Pollard. I am the Literacy Coordinator at Greensborough Secondary College.

I am writing to invite you to participate in a research project on the professional development and training needs of Literacy Coordinators in Secondary schools. I am undertaking this research as part of a Doctor of Philosophy Degree through the Department of School and Early Childhood Education in the Faculty of Education, Language and Community Studies at RMIT University, Bundamba. The title of my thesis is: The professional development and training needs of Literacy Coordinators in Secondary Schools in Victoria, Australia.

My supervisor in this research project is Associate Professor Heather Fehring who is a senior lecturer at RMIT. I am a practicing Literacy Coordinator and I have managed literacy programs in Secondary Schools in Victoria for approximately twenty years.

I plan to conduct this research in the form of case studies. This means that I would like to be able to visit your school and observe the literacy program in progress and interview the Literacy Coordinator and students in the program. I would also like to ask questions of classroom teachers about their perceptions of the program and how it has supported the literacy development of students in it. I will also be collecting samples of work, minutes of meetings and other data relevant to the program.

I envisage that I will attend approximately ten literacy lessons and spend time interviewing the Literacy Coordinator for approximately two hours before I commence participation in the program and two further hours of interviews after the completion of the series of observations. I also envisage that a short period of time might be needed between lessons in order to plan, reflect and discuss the strategies that the Literacy Coordinator uses in the management of the program and to track a current issue in relation to the management of the program as it evolves.
Students will only be asked questions relating to how they feel about the program and their perceptions about their progress. Any information collected about them will be made available to their parents or guardians for approval or veto. In order not to intrude on class time I will interview and observe students during the time I work with them in the program. Questions to the Literacy Coordinator will relate to the strategies they use in managing and resolving issues relating to their program. All aspects of participants' involvement will be voluntary.

The value and purpose of this research is to identify the key skills and knowledge relevant to effective performance of the role of Literacy Coordinator in a Secondary School for the purpose of sharing this knowledge with other practicing and aspiring Literacy Coordinators. Hopefully this body of knowledge might also be used as key component of a professional development and training program for Literacy Coordinators in the future.

I will ensure confidentiality of the information disclosed to me by the use of pseudonyms for both the participants and the school when reporting on my research. The audiotapes of the interviews will be retained in a locked cabinet at RMIT University for a period of five years after the research has been completed and then destroyed.

The results of this research may appear in publications related to literacy and education. However, no participant in this study will be identifiable.

To the best of my knowledge there are no foreseeable risks to the participants.

I have chosen the Literacy Coordinator in your school because I am aware that his/her program is effective and his/her colleagues hold him/her in high regard.

Should you need further clarification about the project, I can be contacted on 9458 2834 (H) or 9433 2666 (W) or by email clarendon@iprimus.com.au. My Senior Supervisor, Associate Professor Heather Fehring may also be contacted on Ph: 9925 7840 or heather.fehring@rmit.edu.au.

Anna Pollard
BA, B Ed., Dip Ed. M.Ed.

For any further details about completion of this form, or for additional supporting material, please contact the Secretary of the Faculty of Education, Language and Community Studies Human Research Ethics Sub Committee or the Secretary to the RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee C/o University Secretariat, (03) 9925 1745.
Appendix 7  Plain Language Statement to Literacy Coordinator participants

Appendix 7 Literacy Coordinator

Dear

My name is Anna Pollard. I am the Literacy Coordinator at Greensborough Secondary College.

I am writing to invite you to participate in a research project on the professional development and training needs of Literacy Coordinators in secondary schools. I am undertaking this research as part of a Doctor of Philosophy Degree through the Department of School and Early Childhood Education in the Faculty of Education, Language and Community Services at RMIT University, Bundoora. The title of my thesis is: The professional development and training needs of Literacy Coordinators in Secondary Schools in Victoria, Australia.

My supervisor in this research project is Associate Professor Heather Fehring who is a senior lecturer at RMIT. I am a practicing Literacy Coordinator and I have managed literacy programs in secondary schools in Victoria for approximately twenty years.

I plan to conduct this research in the form of case studies. This means that I would like to be able to visit your school and observe the program in progress and interview you, and students in your program. I would also like to ask questions of classroom teachers about their perceptions of the program and how it is managed. I will also be collecting samples of work, minutes of meetings and other data relevant to the program.

I envisage that I will attend approximately ten literacy lessons and spend time interviewing you for approximately two hours before I commence participation in the program and two further hours of interviews after the completion of the series of observations. I also envisage that a short period of time might be needed between lessons in order to plan, reflect and discuss the strategies that you use in the management of your program and to track a current issue in relation to the management of the program as it evolves.
With regard to the information I collect in interviews, I will be audiotaping the interviews and later transcribing them. I will allow the participants and the parents or guardians of the students in the case studies, to check what I have said and amend anything if they feel I have misrepresented them. Participants will be supplied with questions in advance and they may choose to veto anything that they feel that they prefer not to answer. However it is not anticipated that any questions will be of an intrusive nature.

Students will only be asked questions relating to how they feel about the program and their perceptions about their progress. Any information collected about them will be made available to their parents or guardians for approval or veto. In order not to intrude on class time I will interview and observe students during the time I work with them in the program. The questions I ask you will relate to the strategies that you use in managing the program and resolving issues relating to their program. All aspects of yours and other participants' involvement will be voluntary.

The value and purpose of this research is to identify the key skills and knowledge relevant to effective performance of the Literacy Coordinator’s management role in a Secondary School. The purpose is to share this knowledge with other practicing and aspiring Literacy Coordinators as a way of supporting their professional development.

I will ensure confidentiality of the information disclosed to me by the use of pseudonyms for both the participants and the school when reporting on my research. The audiotapes of the interviews will be retained in a locked cabinet at RMIT University for a period of five years after the research has been completed and then destroyed.

The results of this research may appear in publications related to literacy and education. However, no participant in this study will be identifiable.

To the best of my knowledge there are no foreseeable risks to the participants.

I have chosen you because I am aware that your program is effective and your colleagues hold you in high regard.

Should you need further clarification about the project, I can be contacted on 9458 2834 (H) or 9433 2666 (W) or by email clarendon@iprimus.com.au. My Senior Supervisor Associate Professor Heather Fehring may also be contacted on Ph: 9925 7840 or heather.fehring@rmit.edu.au.

Anna Pollard

BA, B Ed., Dip Ed. M. Ed

For any further details about completion of this form, or for additional supporting material, please contact the Secretary of the Faculty of Education, Language and Community Studies Human Research Ethics Sub Committee or the Secretary to the RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee Cree University Secretariat, (03) 9925 1745.
Appendix 8  Plain Language Statement to Principal participants

Appendix 8

The Principal

My name is Anna Pollard, I am the Literacy Coordinator at Greensborough Secondary College.

I am writing to seek your permission to invite your literacy Coordinator to participate in a research project on the professional development and training needs of Literacy Coordinators in Secondary schools. I am undertaking this research as part of a Doctor of Philosophy Degree through the Department of School and Early Childhood Education in the Faculty of Education, Language and Community Studies at RMIT University, Bundoora. The title of my thesis is: The professional development and training needs of Literacy Coordinators in Secondary Schools in Victoria, Australia.

My supervisor in this research project is Associate Professor Heather Fehring who is a senior lecturer at RMIT. I am a practicing Literacy Coordinator and I have managed literacy programs in Secondary Schools in Victoria for approximately twenty years.

I plan to conduct this research in the form of case studies. This means that I would like to be able to visit your school and observe the program in progress and interview the Literacy Coordinator and students in the program. I would also like to ask questions of classroom teachers about their perceptions of the program and how it has supported the literacy development of students in it. I will also be collecting samples of work, minutes of meetings and other data relevant to the program.

I envisage that I will attend approximately ten literacy lessons and spend time interviewing the Literacy Coordinator for approximately two hours before I commence participation in the program and two further hours of interviews after the completion of the series of observations. I also envisage that a short period of time might be needed between lessons in order to plan, reflect and discuss the strategies that the Literacy Coordinator uses in the management of the program and to track a current issue in relation to the management of the program as it evolves.

With regard to the information I collect in interviews, I will be audiotaping the interviews and later transcribing them. I will allow the participants and their parents or guardians in the case of students, to check what I have said and amend anything if
they feel I have miss represented them. Participants will be supplied with questions in advance and they may choose to veto anything that they feel that they prefer not to answer. However it is not anticipated that any questions will be of an intrusive nature.

Students will only be asked questions relating to how they feel about the program and their perceptions about their progress. Any information collected about them will be made available to their parents or guardians for approval or veto. In order not to intrude on class time I will interview and observe students during the time I work with them in the program. Questions to the Literacy Coordinator will relate to the strategies they use in managing and resolving issues relating to their program. All aspects of participants' involvement will be voluntary.

The value and purpose of this research is to identify the key skills and knowledge relevant to effective performance of the role of Literacy Coordinator in a Secondary School for the purpose of sharing this knowledge with other practicing and aspiring Literacy Coordinators. Hopefully this body of knowledge might also be used as a key component of a professional development and training program for Literacy Coordinators in the future.

I will ensure confidentiality of the information disclosed to me by the use of pseudonyms for both the participants and the school when reporting on my research. The audiotapes of the interviews will be retained in a locked cabinet at RMIT University for a period of five years after the research has been completed and then destroyed.

The results of this research may appear in publications related to literacy and education. However, no participant in this study will be identifiable.

To the best of my knowledge there are no foreseeable risks to the participants.

I have chosen the Literacy Coordinator in your school because I am aware that his/her program is effective and his/her colleagues hold him/her in high regard.

Should you need further clarification about the project, I can be contacted on 94582834 (H) or 94352666 (W) or by email clarendon@iprimus.com.au. My Senior Supervisor Associate Professor Heather Fehring may also be contacted on Ph: 99257840 or heather.fehring@RMIT.edu.au

Anna Pollard
BA, B Ed., Dip Ed. M.Ed.

For any further details about completion of this form, or for additional supporting material, please contact the Secretary of the Faculty of Education, Language and Community Studies Human Research Ethics Sub Committee or the Secretary to the RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee C/o University Aesthetics, (03) 9925 1745.
Appendix 9   Interview Questions: Literacy Coordinators, Student Participants, Classroom Teacher Participants

i)   Literacy Coordinator participants

1   How long have you been a teacher?
2   What teacher training have you had?
3   What preparation or training have you undertaken for the role of Literacy Coordinator?
4   What is your philosophy of teaching?
5   What philosophy informs your work as a Literacy Coordinator?
6   How would you describe the teaching and learning philosophy of this school?
7   What are the main literacy needs of students at this school?
8   How do you identify students in need of support
9   Describe the literacy program at this school.
10  Describe your ideal literacy program.
11  How is literacy supported by the administration in this school?
12  How are students with special literacy needs identified, assessed and supported in this school?
13  How and by whom is the literacy program developed managed and evaluated?
14  Describe your role and responsibilities as Literacy Coordinator.
15  How does the literacy program relate to other programs across the curriculum in this school?
16  What does a Literacy Coordinator need to be able to know and do in terms of supporting students’ literacy learning?
17  What does a Literacy Coordinator need to know and be able to do in order to successfully manage the human resources and program components of a literacy program in a secondary school?
18  Describe a critical incident in your experience as Literacy Coordinator that has helped you to understand what you need to be able to know and do in order to be a successful Literacy Coordinator.
What are the main issues related to the management of literacy programs in Secondary schools?

What are the main issues related to the management of the Literacy program in this school?

In what ways do you collaborate with other key stakeholders such as parents, classroom teachers, administration and students in the performance of your role?

Do you feel that other key stakeholders support you and the program?

How does the Literacy program support and relate to whole school priorities such as the School Charter?

How are support staff and volunteers recruited and supported in the performance of their role in the Literacy program?

How is the program evaluated?

In preparation for the second meeting with the Literacy Coordinator I would ask them to select an issue that they are currently facing in relation to the management of their program.

In the second meeting I would ask them to describe the issue and the challenges that the issue presents to them and to plan a strategy for how they will deal with the issue. I would then use this issue as a focus point of our discussions in our subsequent meetings for the purpose of exploring and documenting the knowledge, skills and strategies that the participant uses in the performance of their role and the resolution of the issue.

At various stages during my participant observation I will ask them to reflect on program and management issues that arise during the time that I am observing at the school and to reflect on the processes that the Literacy Coordinator participant uses to address the issues.

At the final meeting once the issue has been resolved, I would ask the participant to reflect on the outcome of the knowledge, skills and strategies that they have used in resolving the issues and to evaluate what they have learned about themselves at the end of the research and to evaluate how this reflects on what they believe are the key knowledge and propensities that a Literacy Coordinator needs to employ in the performance of their role.
ii) **Student Participants**

1. Do you enjoy being part of this program?

2. Has the work you do in this program helped you to improve your spelling, reading and writing skills?

3. What do you like best about this program?

4. How could this program be improved?

5. Do you think that the teachers / tutors in this program have helped you to improve your literacy skills?

6. What skills have you learned or improved?

7. How have you been able to use what you have learned in this program in other subjects?

8. Is this program interesting?

9. Is this program well organised?
   How can you tell?
iii) Classroom Teacher Participants

1. How long has this student participated in the literacy program?
2. Does the student feel that he/she is making progress in his/her literacy skill development?
3. Have you noticed improvement in your student’s literacy skills since they have been involved in the literacy program?
4. What improvements have you noticed?
5. What do you like best about the program?
6. What needs to be improved?
7. Do you feel that you are kept adequately informed about your students’ progress?
8. How have you been involved in the program?
9. Do you have adequate opportunity to discuss your students’ needs and progress with the Literacy Coordinator?
10. How has this been done?
11. Have you been adequately informed about the structure and content of the program?
12. Have you been asked to provide feedback regarding the program and its outcomes?
13. How does this program support the work you do with students?
14. How does this program support the overall aims and literacy learning needs of students in this school?
A Literacy Coordinator might be appointed from any of the last four categories dependant on the role description and other related duties.

Appendix 11 Student Questionnaire: Student Evaluation of Literacy Program

NAME…………………… School………

Year Level….. Date……..

What kind of things did you learn in this program?
…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………

How have your reading and spelling skills improved?
…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………
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Has this program helped you with other parts of your school work?
…………………………………………………………………………………………
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How would you rate your efforts in this subject?
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What did you like best?
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How could this subject be improved?
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Other comments
…………………………………………………………………………………………
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…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………

Signed………………………… Date………………

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Appendix 12

Letter to Literacy Coordinator participants asking that they check transcripts

Appendix 12

Dear

I am writing to request that you peruse the draft of the case studies that I have sent to you in order to ensure that I have not misrepresented you. Please let me know if there is anything that you think that I should change. I will be in touch within the next few weeks to get feedback or you can email me: pollard.anna.a@edumail.vic.gov.au or at my personal email address: clarendon@iprimus.com.au.

I am expecting to be on long service leave in Terms 2 and 3 and hope to come to your school to collect copies of the following, if I may:
- Literacy policy
- School Charter.
- Any policy/documentation relevant to the programs that I observed
- Samples of student work if they are willing to give it.

Most importantly, I would like if possible to interview up to 10 students in your program to ask them how they feel about the program. I am forwarding permission forms for parents for this purpose, if you don’t mind selecting the relevant students and sending the permission form home on my behalf.

Many thanks for the help you have given so far.

Anna Pollard
Careers & Recruitment

Teacher classification structure

The teacher class comprises the following classifications:

Teacher Class
- Leading Teacher
- Classroom Teacher (expert, accomplished and graduate)

Instructor Class
- Level 1
- Level 2
- Level 3

Expert Teacher

The primary focus of the expert teacher is on pedagogical excellence, engagement in ongoing professional learning, acting as a role model, mentor and coach to other teachers and facilitator of the professional learning needs of others. Expert teachers demonstrate a highly skilled level of teaching and the ability to guide and assist other teachers.

Expert teachers teach a range of students/classes and are accountable for the effective delivery of their programs. They operate with a high level of independence and provide support to other staff in the improvement of student learning outcomes and may have responsibility for the supervision and training of one or more student teachers.

Expert teachers will play a significant role in supporting the achievement of the improved education outcomes determined by the school charter and statewide priorities and contribute to the development and implementation of school policies and priorities.

An expert teacher can be required to undertake the following responsibilities provided the responsibilities are appropriate to this category of classroom teacher.

Core responsibilities include:

- analysing pedagogical practices and developing processes to assist teachers to critically reflect on their teaching and learning practices
- participating in planning, implementation and review of integrated curriculum programs
- planning and implementing a range of teaching programs or courses of study
- demonstrating a significant role in supporting the achievement of the improved education outcomes determined by government policy and school charter and statewide priorities
- modelling excellent teaching practice and mentoring other teachers in the school, and providing advice and direction on teaching and learning strategies
- monitoring, evaluating and reporting student progress in key learning areas
- planning and implementing strategies to achieve targets related to student learning outcomes
- maintaining records of class attendance and records of student progress
- maintaining a high standard of student management consistent with the school charter
- committing to ongoing professional learning that is reflected in teaching practice

Additional responsibilities may include but are not limited to:

- managing and supervising a team of teachers in the planning, implementation and review of teaching and learning programs according to the school charter goals and priorities
- leading the development of curriculum policies and programs
- managing the supervision of student teachers
- co-ordinating the development and implementation of curriculum in small schools
- managing a year level or learning area
- managing a specialist function, such as sport, careers, student welfare, excursions or camps
- developing and managing the school transition program as it relates to Pre-School to Year Prep and/or Year 6 to Year 7 transition and facilitating the associated orientation programs.
- assisting the principal, assistant principal and leading teachers with the performance of specific functions appropriate to the classification and role

**Leading Teachers**

**Overview**

Leading teachers will be outstanding classroom teachers and undertake leadership and management roles commensurate with their salary range.

The objective of leading teachers is to improve the skill, knowledge and performance of the teaching workforce in a school or group of schools and to improve the curriculum program of a school.

Leading teachers are responsible for demonstrating and modelling an outstanding level of teaching.

Leading teachers will be expected to make a significant contribution to policy development relating to teaching and learning in the school. They also manage major curriculum or student activities across the school with a high degree of independence.

A leading teacher has a direct impact and influence on the achievement of the school goals. These teachers provide professional support to teaching staff.

Leading teachers are usually responsible for the implementation of one or more priorities contained in the school charter. Typically, leading teachers are responsible for coordinating a large number of staff to achieve improvements in teaching and learning. Their focus is on the introduction of changes in methods and approaches to teaching and learning. However, they will also be responsible for the management and leadership of a significant area or function within the school to ensure the effective development, provision and evaluation of the school’s education program.

**Position responsibilities**

In recognition of the importance of leadership and management combined with exemplary teaching practice for improved student learning outcomes, the key roles of the leading teachers may include but are not limited to:

- leading and managing the implementation of whole school improvement initiatives as related to the school charter and school priorities
- leading and managing the implementation of whole-school improvement strategies related to curriculum planning and delivery
- leading and managing the provision of professional development and developing individual and team development plans for teaching staff within the priorities of the school
- leading and managing staff performance and development (review of staff)
• teaching demonstration lessons
• leading and managing the development of the school's assessment and reporting functions
• leading and managing the implementation of the school operations and policies related to student welfare and discipline
• leading the development of curriculum in a major learning area and participating in curriculum development in other areas
• responsibility for general discipline matters beyond the management of classroom teachers
• contributing to the overall leadership and management of the school
• contributing to the final form of any curriculum proposals for school council consideration
• developing and managing the school code of conduct.
Appendix 14  Overview of Victorian Essential Learning Standards

Victoria Essential Learning Standards: Overview

VICTORIAN ESSENTIAL LEARNING STANDARDS  
A WHOLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Three interwoven purposes
To equip students with capacities to:
- manage themselves and their relations with others
- understand the world and
- act effectively in that world
- to prepare them for success in education, work and life.

This is achieved through the three core, interrelated strands of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical, Personal and Social Learning</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge, skills and behaviours in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Physical Education; Personal Learning; Interpersonal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development; Civics and Citizenship</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline-based Learning</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge, skills and behaviours in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Arts; English and Languages Other Than English; The</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities; Mathematics; Science</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interdisciplinary Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge, skills and behaviours in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication; Design, Creativity and Technology; Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Communications Technology; Thinking</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

across the stages of learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years Prep to 4</th>
<th>Years 5 to 8</th>
<th>Years 9 to 10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Laying the foundations</td>
<td>Building breadth and depth</td>
<td>Developing pathways</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

underpinned by educational purposes, principles and values
to form

Victorian Essential Learning Standards
a framework for whole school curriculum planning

Schools plan their teaching and learning programs, using the three strands, to enable
their students to achieve the essential statewide learning standards.

Figure 1: Whole school curriculum plan
A new structure

Within each strand of learning, the essential knowledge, skills and behaviours are organised into domains with further divisions into dimensions. Standards are written for each dimension. The relationship between the strands, domains and dimensions is shown in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strand</th>
<th>Domains</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical, Personal and</td>
<td>Health and Physical Education</td>
<td>Movement and physical activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Learning</td>
<td>Interpersonal Development</td>
<td>Health knowledge and promotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal Learning</td>
<td>Building social relationships</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Working in teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Civics and Citizenship</td>
<td>The individual learner</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Managing personal learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline-based Learning</td>
<td>The Arts</td>
<td>Civic knowledge and understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Community engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Humanities (Economics)</td>
<td>Creating and making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Exploring and responding</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Economic knowledge and understanding</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Economic reasoning and interpretation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Humanities (Geography)</td>
<td>Geographical knowledge and understanding</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Humanities (History)</td>
<td>Geospatial skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Languages Other Than English</td>
<td>Historical knowledge and understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(LOTE)</td>
<td>Historical reasoning and interpretation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>Communicating in a LOTE</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Intercultural knowledge and language awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Number</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Space</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Measurement, chance and data</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Structure</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Working mathematically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interdisciplinary Learning</td>
<td>Science knowledge and understanding</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Science at work</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Design, Creativity and Technology</td>
<td>Listening, viewing and responding</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Presenting</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Investigating and designing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Producing</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Analysing and evaluating</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Information and Communications</td>
<td>ICT for Visualising thinking</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Technology (ICT)</td>
<td>ICT for Creating</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ICT for Communicating</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thinking</td>
<td>Reasoning, processing and Inquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Creativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reflection, evaluation and metacognition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: The structure of the essential learning strands
Table 3 provides a summary of the levels in each domain that have formal standards against which student achievement will be assessed and reported. Standards are introduced where they are central to future learning and success and where research suggests they are developmentally appropriate.

Table 3: Summary of levels with standards

Formal standards apply to those levels shaded in each domain in Table 3, while only learning focus statements are provided for the levels that are unshaded. (Learning focus statements for Economics, Geography and History at Levels 1 to 3 are included within Humanities. Levels 4 to 6 outline separate learning focus statements for Economics, Geography and History.)
Appendix 15 Definition of ‘Like’ schools

The definition of ‘Like’ schools as published on the Department of Education web site located at www.Sofweb.vic.edu.au/standards/improve/likesch.htm (downloaded 12-7-07) which is the D0E accountability web site is as follows:

‘Like’ schools were developed to enable schools to allow for the composition of their student populations in assessing performance. Victorian schools have been divided into 9 groups based on the demographic background of students. The groups are identified by the proportion of students for whom the main language spoken at home is not English (LOTE), and the proportion of students who receive the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) or Commonwealth Youth Allowance.

Like schools are categorised according to the following characteristics:

Category 1   Nil or very low proportions of LOTE speakers at home / Low proportions of EMA or Youth Allowance recipients.
Category 2   Low proportions of LOTE speakers at home / Low proportions of EMA or Youth Allowance recipients.
Category 3   Medium to high proportions of LOTE speakers at home / Low proportions of EMA or Youth Allowance recipients.
Category 4   Nil or very low proportions of LOTE speakers at home / Medium proportions of EMA or Youth Allowance recipients.
Category 5   Low proportions of LOTE speakers at home / Medium proportions of EMA or Youth Allowance recipients.
Category 6   Medium to high proportions of LOTE speakers at home / Medium proportions of EMA or Youth Allowance recipients.
Category 7   Nil or very low proportions of LOTE speakers at home / High proportions of EMA or Youth Allowance recipients.
Category 8   Low proportions of LOTE speakers at home / High proportions of EMA or Youth Allowance recipients.
Category 9   Medium to high proportions of LOTE speakers at home / High proportions of EMA or Youth Allowance recipients.

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Appendix 16  Bunjuck Secondary College Charter: Goals and Priorities
2000-2002

Bunjuck Secondary College
Charter
Goals and Priorities
2000 - 2002
## 2. College Curriculum Goals

2.1 To provide a comprehensive, inclusive and sequential Year 7-12 Curriculum within Department of Education and Training, and Board of studies and College guidelines which meets the needs of all students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus For Improvement:</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Achievement Measures – College</th>
<th>Achievement Measures – State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Year 7-12 programs which develop and maintains breadth of curriculum. | • The Curriculum Program should reflect a representation of each of the KLA's.  
• Provision of current course outlines, outcomes, assessment procedures and tasks. | A curriculum profile reflecting representation from each of the KLA's.  
A curriculum that prepares students for a broad range of tertiary studies and future employment options. | Curriculum program delivery table including a range & number of subjects/programs provided in years 7-12 | State wide benchmarks re: time allocation in each KLA in years 7-12 |
| Provision and access of a range of post-compulsory pathways to students. | • Investigate and review the current provision of alternative post-compulsory pathways.  
• Regular monitoring of student participation rates in a variety of courses including LOTE, VET, Maths/Science, Arts and Technology programs, ensuring all programs offered are inclusive.  
• Develop the range of post-compulsory pathways available to students.  
• To review timetable structures to gain maximum student access to the VCE curriculum and relevant vocational education programs.  
• Development of a strategy plan to incorporate appropriate alternative pathways in VET units and other courses on a viable and more permanent basis. | | Monitor participation rates for improvement in LOTE, VET, higher maths, physical science and ARTS programs | Year 10 course outlines incorporating VET modules | Comparison of student participation rates in post-compulsory (VET modules and part time apprenticeships) with state wide bench marks. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus For Improvement</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Achievement Measures - College</th>
<th>Achievement Measures - State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Investigate ways to offer units 1/2 units and VET modules and part time apprenticeships to year 10 students.</strong></td>
<td>Implementation of the recommendations by 2002.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Investigate and develop a plan for the expansion of technologies in the college; eg. including: Media, Textiles, Metal, Wood, Graphics, Electronics</strong></td>
<td>Recommendations accepted by the college council.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School policy and plan</td>
<td><strong>Investigate alternative structures for 'middle school'</strong>.</td>
<td><strong>Develop a middle school policy and plan</strong>.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Investigate strategies to improve the engagement of students in the 'middle school'</strong>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning Technologies within the KLA(s).</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor and analyse the use of LTs and increase where appropriate their use in each KLA.</td>
<td>Reported improved use of LTs by students and staff to enhance learning.</td>
<td>Effective LT use in KLA course outlines.</td>
<td>Comparison with statewide data regarding LT use. (If available)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigate the employment of a staff member to assist students in computer use in the library.</td>
<td>Report on costing and appropriate use of such employment.</td>
<td>Effective LT use in the Library and Computer Labs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigate the establishment of computers/laptops in each block of classrooms in order to improve student access.</td>
<td>Report on professional development undertaken.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue with staff professional development to improve their general capabilities.</td>
<td>Report on professional development undertaken.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development on planning and development of effective units of work incorporating LT resources.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus For Improvement</td>
<td>Strategies</td>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td>Achievement Measures - College</td>
<td>Achievement Measures - State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
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<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To improve student achievement in Years 7-10.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With particular reference to:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Literacy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Establish a budget sufficient to implement a literacy support program across Years 7-10.</td>
<td>Improved identification of specific learning needs of students with literacy problems.</td>
<td>Improved levels of student achievement as indicated by CSF assessment, school testing and ongoing teacher assessment.</td>
<td>Results of testing by the Literacy Co-ordinator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Appoint a Literacy Co-ordinator with responsibility for the development of a Literacy policy which encompasses a whole school approach to literacy including: the identification of students with low levels of literacy, implementation of intervention literacy strategies, implementation of a professional development strategy plan for mainstream staff, encouragement of individual staff members to undertake training in literacy programs to supplement the work of the Literacy Co-ordinator, ongoing evaluation of the program.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Increased expertise amongst classroom teachers in employing a whole-school approach to literacy.</td>
<td>Measurement against the CSF.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Continue with the Bridging the Gap Program.</td>
<td>Additional training of teaching staff members in the provision of intensive literacy support for students by 2012.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Longitudinal improvement measurements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Implementation of defined literacy support strategies in KLA course outlines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>At least two teaching staff members trained to provide intensive literacy support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Student participation rate in the program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process For Improvement</td>
<td>Achievement Measures - College</td>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Hobbies</td>
<td>Comparison to statewide benchmarks.</td>
<td>Improved motivation, higher grades for all students.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parity with &quot;like&quot; schools in CSF achievement levels.</td>
<td>Monitoring of the range of teaching strategies used in KLA course outlines.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. CSF</td>
<td>Development of clear KLA guidelines to ensure consistent CSF assessment procedures.</td>
<td>Development of clear KLA guidelines to ensure consistent CSF assessment procedures.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Mixed ability teaching.</td>
<td>Curricular Co-ordinator and ESL staff to develop strategies to ensure all students receive a range of teaching strategies that cater for a range of abilities.</td>
<td>Development of clear KLA guidelines to ensure consistent CSF assessment procedures.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. ESL students</td>
<td>Staff are encouraged to engage in professional development programs.</td>
<td>Development of clear KLA guidelines to ensure consistent CSF assessment procedures.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* KLA to investigate teaching methods and resources which will facilitate improved CSF achievement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Staff to review CSF assessment strategies and implement improved procedures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Staff to develop a curriculum that supports the development of a range of teaching strategies in order to cater for a range of abilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Improved expertise amongst non-ESL-staff in providing for the learning needs of non-English-speaking background students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Implementation of ESL program for newly arrived students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus For Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Teaching research skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Homework policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus For Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Numeracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Encouragement of student excellence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## 2. College Curriculum Goals

### 2.2 To support, challenge and extend students to improve their performance in each program they undertake.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus For Improvement</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Achievement Measures - College</th>
<th>Achievement Measures - State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Priority 2</td>
<td>Review VCE counselling procedures to encourage students to undertake more ambitious but achievable courses of study.</td>
<td>Reduction in the number of students operating at the lower end of the Statewide scale and an increase in the number of students achieving at the upper end. Maintenance of individual longitudinal course/career counselling files. Check if students are entering chosen courses. Reduction in subject changes at the end of Year 11.</td>
<td>Longitudinal measure of individual student performances as they proceed through years 10, 11 and 12. Check if students are entering chosen courses Reduction in subject changes at the end of Semester One.</td>
<td>Student achievement in comparison to the “like” schools group. Comparison with state wide “like” schools data. Compare student destination information with state and “like schools”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To improve student performance in the VCE.</td>
<td>Continued encouragement and development of the extension studies program - Year 11 students completing 3-4 units.</td>
<td>Mean College results equal or exceed the mean “like” school results in each study (particularly those with more than 10 students)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus For Improvement</td>
<td>Strategies</td>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td>Achievement Measures - College</td>
<td>Achievement Measures - State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigate strategies to improve organisational and study skills for senior and junior students.</td>
<td>A curriculum program that is appropriate and challenging for all students. Improved student access to a variety of post compulsory education and training pathways.</td>
<td>Monitor the number of student who commence year 11, then stay at the school to complete year 12. Tracking records/destination of exit students</td>
<td>State wide “like” schools data – retention rates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aim for improvement in student achievements in external examinations, articulating the maximum achievement criteria required to succeed to the higher levels of performance.</td>
<td>Maintenance of high completion/retention rates. Maintenance of current high percentages of students proceeding to further study.</td>
<td>Audit of students who select VET or alternative pathways - VET, TAFE, special circumstances. Analysis of the courses of study undertaken by students in preparation for tertiary studies.</td>
<td>State wide destination data</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### College Environment Goals

#### 3.1 To provide a safe, friendly and stimulating environment which supports the educational program and encourages academic excellence, community participation and mutual respect.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus For Improvement</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Achievement Measures - College</th>
<th>Achievement Measures - Statewide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Student Attendance    | - Promote the positive attributes of regular attendance in the college community.  
                        | - Continued development and participation in the Health Promoting Schools Project.  
                        | - Promote the acceptance of a positive work ethic through an expectation and celebration of student excellence.  
                        | - Monitor, review and analyze attendance records and implement changes to ensure that records accurately reflect student attendance.  
                        | - Provide all students with access to Student Welfare Counselling support. | Improved levels of attendance as compared with figures calculated for the 1997-1999 Triennial Review. | Comparison of annual attendance data over the cycle of the Charter. | Attendance - benchmarks |
| Co-curricula activities | - Specialist staff to co-ordinate and teach in the area of drama performance.  
                       | - Operation of Year Level and Leadership camps.  
                       | - Continued support of student council, sports, music, assemblies, etc.  
                       | - Encourage the development of co-curricular activities.  
                       | - Raise the profile of co-curricular activities. | Improved student participation in co-curricular activities. | Increase in the range of programs offered to students. | Website list of co-curricular activities |
| Recognition of student achievement | - Regular newsletter and local press acknowledgments.  
                                   | - Celebrations of achievements at College Assemblies.  
                                   | - Formal recognition of achievements from the College Council, Principal and Staff.  
                                   | - Regular informal recognition and praise within the classroom.  
                                   | - Regular exhibitions and displays of student’s work in all KLA’s.  
                                   | - Greater recognition of student involvement in community based activities | Improved attitudes towards the achievement of excellence. | Recognition of student involvement in community based activities. | Number of students recognised for their achievements.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus For Improvement</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Achievement Measures</th>
<th>Achievement Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Student Leadership                       | • Encouragement of a positive profile for the Student Council.  
  • Investigate structures that incorporate student leadership eg. Houses, School Councillors, Office bearers etc.  
  • Encourage student participation on college council subcommittees.                                                                                                                                   | Expansion of structures that support student leadership.  
  Continued development of the Student Council.                                                                                                                                                    | Number of support structures operating across the school.  
  Number of student sponsored projects.                                                                                                                                                    |                      |
| Parental participation in selected operations of the College. | • Programs to provide parents with knowledge of their children’s learning experiences and to enable parents to support their children in their learning at the College.  
  • Promotion of awareness, participation and an understanding of the roles of parents in activities such as College Council, College Subcommittees and improved accessibility to these structures.  
  • To develop the range and extent of parent participation in the life of the College.  
  • To provide programs  
  • Regular reporting to the school community by the committee structures.                                                                                                                         | Increase in committee representation by parents.  
  Improved attendance at college information sessions and forums.                                                                                                                              | Number of parents participating in College Committees.                                                                                                                                         |                      |
| Priority 3                                |                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                  |                       |                      |
| Promotion of the College in the wider community, enhancement of links with primary schools, community groups and tertiary institutions.                                                                      | • Continuation and enhancement of liaison with primary schools and provision of information regarding the College within the broader community.  
  • Continued expansion of networks with tertiary institutions  
  • Review and monitor recruitment and transition programs and patterns with a view to ensuring enrolment is maintained and increased.                                           | Increased enrolments related to enrolments of their previous Charter cycle.                                                                                       | Overall enrolments  
  Increased numbers from feeder school enrolments.                                                                                                                                            |                      |
### 3. College Environment Goals

#### 3.2 To develop, maintain and enhance the physical environment, buildings and facilities of the college.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus For Improvement</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Achievement Measures -College</th>
<th>Achievement Measures -Statewide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Buildings and Grounds.**  | - The development and implementation of a strategy plan for the progressive improvement in the physical environment of the college  
                             - Maintenance of the college grounds through a continued emphasis on care and cleanliness.  
                             - The continued development of ECA centre facility as a college & community resource.  
                             - Emphasis on student responsibility and ownership in the maintenance of College facilities and grounds.  
                             - Formulation of College Council projects to enhance the school environment in partnership with the school community. | Development and implementation of Strategy Plan.  
                                                                                     - Improved sporting facilities, grounds and garden presentation.  
                                                                                     - Garden maintenance person employed.  
                                                                                     - Less litter, recycling program expanded. | The strategy plan  
                                                                                     Parent Opinion on Environment  
                                                                                     Staff and Student Survey on Environment  
                                                                                     Expenditure on maintenance and improvements | Comparison with Parent Opinion statewide data.  
                                                                                     Comparison with Staff Opinion statewide data. |
| **Work place and student safety.**  | - The establishment, implementation and monitoring of policy detailing procedures to maintain workplace and student safety.  
                                             - To continue to support the staffing of sick pay and the attainment of first aid qualifications.  
                                             - Develop and implement an Occupational Health and Safety Plan.  
                                             - Raise the profile and accessibility of the Health and Safety Officer within the College. | The O H and S Policy.  
                                                                                     Decrease in the number of entries in the accident register.  
                                                                                     Increased number of staff qualified with current work place first aid qualification  
                                                                                     Publishing and promotion of OH & S plan  
                                                                                     OH & S Officer profile. | Number of staff that have appropriate qualifications. | Better than statewide benchmarks. |
4. College Management Goals

4.1 To provide a management structure that ensures that the College's operational structures are effective with consultative and efficient decision making processes, good communication and clear shared vision of school goals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOCUS FOR IMPROVEMENT</th>
<th>STRATEGIES</th>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
<th>ACHIEVEMENT MEASURES - COLLEGE</th>
<th>ACHIEVEMENT MEASURES - STATEWIDE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management Structure.</td>
<td>• Investigate and implement forms of management that enhance a high degree of leadership and goal achievement.</td>
<td>Review of role descriptions in light of the expanding management structure. Display and circulation of minutes of meetings and implementation of decisions.</td>
<td>Updated role descriptions published and reviewed annually.</td>
<td>Staff Survey Data – leadership support quality of work life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ensure that the management and leadership structures and processes are participatory, collaborative, inclusive and documented, including the publishing of agendas and minutes to facilitate communication.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Centrally kept register of minutes of management committee meetings.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Structure.</td>
<td>• Identify professional development programs which develop and enhance the expertise of: (i) Teacher level 2/3 staff in either substantive or higher duty positions. (ii) Teacher level 1 staff with specific interest or responsibilities.</td>
<td>Broader expertise in developing the identified management roles of the college. Discussion of issues raised by professional development participation to enhance management strategies used.</td>
<td>Participation/attendance at management meetings.</td>
<td>Staff Survey Data – leadership support quality of work life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Participation rates in professional development relating to school management.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Professional Development Plans</td>
<td>Implementation of identified charter goals, priorities and professional development policy</td>
<td>Record of PD plans submitted. Record of staff participation in identified priority areas. Record of staff expenditure on professional development.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Identify high priority areas for professional development and encourage all teaching and non-teaching staff (including NDO's) to participate using Personal Professional Development Plans, DEET College Charter goals, Priorities and leadership needs
### 4. College Management Goals

4.2 Continue the development and implementation of an Organisational Health Policy which incorporates the concepts of team building and goal congruency of members of the college community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOCUS FOR IMPROVEMENT</th>
<th>STRATEGIES</th>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
<th>ACHIEVEMENT MEASURES – COLLEGE</th>
<th>ACHIEVEMENT MEASURES – STATEWIDE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff well-being</td>
<td>• Development and implementation of an Organisational Health Plan.</td>
<td>Production of a Strategy Plan for Organisational Health.</td>
<td>Staff Opinion – Goal Congruency</td>
<td>CMIS statewide data for like schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Continue to implement strategies that incorporate the concepts of increased collaboration, team building and goal congruency of the members of the College community.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Availability of an Organisational Health Plan.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Staff Opinion Survey-environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff working environment.</td>
<td>• Investigate if a link exists between staff absence, staff morale and general organisational health.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Daily Organiser’s records</td>
<td>CMIS records &amp; statewide “like” schools data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Check CMIS data relating to staff leave to ensure that figures and calculations accurately reflect and are consistent with records of absence kept by the Daily Organizer and office administration.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Staff services committee report</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### College Resourcing Goals

5.1 Within the School Global Budget to manage the allocation of financial resources to enable the Charter goals and priorities to be achieved.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOCUS FOR IMPROVEMENT</th>
<th>STRATEGIES</th>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
<th>ACHIEVEMENT MEASURES – COLLEGE</th>
<th>ACHIEVEMENT MEASURES – STATEWIDE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staffing profile</td>
<td>• Development of a workforce plan for the period of the charter.</td>
<td>Consolidation of a substantive leadership structure within the college</td>
<td>Appointment of substantive leadership positions in line with SBG funding</td>
<td>Expenditure relative to total core allocation in School Global Budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching expertise</td>
<td>• Responsiveness to curriculum initiatives from the Curriculum Committee and DEET.</td>
<td>Extension of available student programs within the college</td>
<td>Staff teaching appointments in line with charter goal and priority areas</td>
<td>School Global Budget Management reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role descriptions for SSO’s</td>
<td>• Review of the School Support Officers roles and responsibilities</td>
<td>New role descriptions and redefining of SSO levels assigned to each role description.</td>
<td>Appointment/ reappointment of SSO staff to fulfill new role descriptions in line with SBG funding.</td>
<td>Global Budget Report</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. College Resourcing Goals

5.2 To develop and allocate physical resources and facilities in line with the school's established goals and priorities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOCUS FOR IMPROVEMENT</th>
<th>STRATEGIES</th>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
<th>ACHIEVEMENT MEASURES – COLLEGE</th>
<th>ACHIEVEMENT MEASURES – STATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Facilities             | • Maintenance of school budget which addresses the achievement of charter goals and priorities  
                         • Maintenance of decision making processes to facilitate resource allocation. | Establishment and implementation of a strategic plan of physical resource development | Expenditure relative to budget and physical resource development plan | Receipts and Payments report |
| Programs budgets       | • Analysis of annual program budgets submitted to address charter initiatives.  
                         • Analysis and reporting of budget expenditure trends over the period of the Charter. | Improved program budget plan development | Facilities committee audit of condition and use of facilities and equipment  
                                                                                     Addition to assets by goal and priority area | Program budget reports  
                                                                                     Global budget report |
RIVIERVIEW SECONDARY COLLEGE

CHARTER

Date: August 04

School No.: xxxx

Address: xxxxxxxxx

Telephone: xxxxxxxx

School Principal:

........................................

School Council President:

........................................
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Profile</td>
<td>386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Goals</td>
<td>390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priorities</td>
<td>395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Codes of Practice</td>
<td>399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Building</td>
<td>402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Code of Conduct</td>
<td>403</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**SCHOOL PROFILE**

**Vision**
The college provides a secure, caring environment:

* where achievement is valued and students experience success;
* which ensures equality of opportunity;
* which enables students to interact with a wide range of people;
* where parent and community involvement is welcomed and encouraged;
* which is a centre for district primary schools;
* which includes a teams’ structure for student management and teaching.

The college provides a comprehensive curriculum with the following features:

* significant experiences in all Learning Areas at years 7-10 leading to a wide choice of VCE studies;
* a Year 11 and 12 program which encourages students to take responsibility for their learning and promotes a range of programs leading to tertiary studies, training or directly to the workforce;
* a strong emphasis on developing skills in literacy and numeracy;
* intervention as required to overcome learning difficulties;
* careful monitoring of each student's progress, meaningful reporting and assessment, and a commitment to keeping parents informed.

The college has high expectations of its students. They are expected to:

* work consistently to complete tasks and improve their skills;
* take responsibility for their actions;
* respect other persons, other cultures and property;
* accept differences in individuals;
* operate effectively as team members.
Values

The following statements are central to the curriculum design and overall operation of Riverview Secondary College:
* The basis for our dealings with each student is that the student shall receive respect, care and concern. The College is committed to the development of each student as a unique personality.
* The College will aim to provide an environment which is safe, supportive, secure and stimulating for the student. The environment should be tidy, friendly, efficient, comfortable and aesthetically pleasing.
* The College Curriculum is comprehensive; one which seeks to develop a broad range of knowledge, skills and interests across all Key Learning Areas. The College will provide a balanced program which has the qualities of breadth and depth and which provides for the continuity and coherence of studies.
* The College recognises the need to cater for individual differences in students and to plan programs which are challenging and provide all students with the opportunity to reach their highest potential. In addition, the College will encourage student-centred learning to assist students to develop confidence and self-esteem with an increasing responsibility for his or her own learning.
* The involvement of parents, students and the community in the development of curriculum and in the broader life of the school is valued and encouraged.
* The College will aim to develop each student as a contributing member of the community and therefore should encourage respect for the rights of others, an appreciation for the cultural diversity of the community and a well-developed sense of responsibility for their behaviour.
* The College recognises that it is one member of a broader educational community and will aim to develop links with local primary schools, other secondary colleges and tertiary institutions.
* The College recognises the need for ongoing evaluation and review of its philosophy and programs.
Context

Location

Riverview Secondary College is central to the Riverview area and services the northern suburbs, in particular Riverview. The college is located on major transport routes and draws students from a wide area of the northern suburbs. It is a single campus secondary college of 950 students in new and renovated buildings at Riverview.

The college is proud of its strong relationship with a diverse and multi-cultural community and is committed to the individual development of each student from that community in a safe, supportive and stimulating environment.

During 1996 - 1998 the Riverview site underwent a program of rebuilding and refurbishment.

Demographics

Enrolment Numbers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1998</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>841</td>
<td>860</td>
<td>893</td>
<td>921</td>
<td>932</td>
<td>942</td>
<td>949</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As indicated, since the consolidation onto the Riverview site, the enrolments have shown a steady increase.

Year Level Enrolments in 2004:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Level</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is expected that the college enrolment will be in the range of 930 - 980 over the next five years. The maximum number of students in a class is 25.

Students from Non English Speaking Backgrounds (NESB)

In 2003 the percentage of homes where English is not the main language spoken is 45% and there are 41 different languages represented. The percentage of students born in overseas countries is 27%, with the following table showing the 6 predominant countries. The college is truly multicultural and celebrates its diversity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of Birth</th>
<th>No. students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macedonia</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia-Herzegovina</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The college receives many students from Language Centres. Parallel English classes are provided for those students whose second language is English. In 2003, about 12% of students received ESL assistance.

Overseas Fee Paying Students
The College has been registered to accept overseas fee paying students for more than five years; however the number attending the college has been small (less than five). Currently attempts are being made to establish relationships with particular schools in China.

Integration students
In 2003 the number of Integration students was 25. The Integration program is well supported with an Integration Teacher (0.6) and 4.2 (EFT) Integration Aides. A small classroom is provided for Integration students when they are undertaking individual work.

Koori students
There are 44 Koori students at RDSC in 2004, in 2001 the number was 26. A Heritage camp is held most years as an opportunity for these students to learn about and celebrate their culture. In addition, the significance of Koori culture is acknowledged on International Day. The college has recently joined the Dulin project which is a mentoring program for students.

Occupational Status of Families
This information is provided by parents at enrolment of a student. Category 5 is allocated to the professional occupational level with Category 1 being allocated to those in receipt of government assistance. In 2000, the percentage of parents or guardians at each employment level was:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% in 2000</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% in 2003</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2003, the percentage of families in Years 7-10 receiving the Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) or Youth Allowance was 61%.
**Curriculum Goals: Student Achievement and Curriculum Provision**

**Government Targets:**
- By 2005 – Victoria will be at or above the National Benchmark levels for reading, writing and numeracy as they apply to all primary students.
- By 2010 – 90% of young people in Victoria will complete Year 12 or its equivalent.
- By 2005 – the percentage of young people aged 15 to 19 in rural and regional Victoria engaged in education and training will increase by 6%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOAL</th>
<th>PERFORMANCE MEASURE</th>
<th>IMPROVEMENT AREAS</th>
<th>BASELINE SCHOOL PERFORMANCE</th>
<th>SCHOOL TARGETS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Curriculum Provision</strong>&lt;br&gt;To provide a comprehensive, diverse and high quality education for all students.</td>
<td>Required Measures Parent Opinion survey – quality of teaching, academic rigour and student reporting variables. Apparent Retention Rate and Real Retention Rate: Destination of students:</td>
<td>To further develop the intervention programs that support “at risk” students. To investigate and develop a grid structure that addresses the Middle Years issues at Years 9 and 10.</td>
<td>Several programs have begun with little PD support. The grid structure has been stable for six years.</td>
<td>Review current programs and provide appropriate PD. Introduce changes in to the Year 9 and 10 grid that reflect the best Middle Years practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Priority 2.</strong>&lt;br&gt;To increase the range of teaching pedagogies that encourage higher order thinking skills, independent learning and the effective use of ICT.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A survey of teaching practice will show increased use of H.O.T.S. over the three years of the charter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOAL</td>
<td>PERFORMANCE MEASURE</td>
<td>IMPROVEMENT AREAS</td>
<td>BASELINE SCHOOL PERFORMANCE</td>
<td>SCHOOL TARGETS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Achievement</strong></td>
<td><strong>Required Measures</strong>&lt;br&gt;* CSF performance in English (all strands) and Mathematics (Algebra in Chance &amp; Data) in Years 8 and 10.&lt;br&gt;* Year 7 AIM results.&lt;br&gt;* VCE performance.&lt;br&gt;* Teacher assessments of student progress for D &amp; I Students.&lt;br&gt;* Number of students in each stage of the CSF ESL companion document</td>
<td>To improve the D&amp;I processes for assessment.&lt;br&gt;To improve the support provided to students with severely disrupted schooling.&lt;br&gt;To improve the transfer of CSF data between Primary and Secondary schools.&lt;br&gt;To improve the process to monitor the accuracy of CSF data collection</td>
<td>The setting of goals is left to the classroom teacher.&lt;br&gt;No program has been developed to support these students.&lt;br&gt;The College has no process for sharing this information with Year 7 teachers.&lt;br&gt;Few annotated work samples have been developed to guide CSF judgements</td>
<td>Provision of PD to support classroom teachers setting appropriate goals.&lt;br&gt;Strategies developed to support students with disrupted schooling.&lt;br&gt;Develop internal processes to inform Year 7 teachers of Grade 6 performance and review the data provided.&lt;br&gt;Develop annotated work samples and other common processes to assist CSF judgements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Additional School Measures</strong></td>
<td><strong>Priority 1</strong>&lt;br&gt;To improve student achievement in English, Mathematics and Literacy across the KLAs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>English/Maths</strong></td>
<td>No students are reported as performing at better than expected level in English or Maths. In all reportable strands students at years 8 and 10 are performing below LSG mean performance.&lt;br&gt;Year 12 English performance is 0.9 below LSG mean.&lt;br&gt;In Year 12, Maths Methods and Further Maths are below the LSG means.&lt;br&gt;The percentage of VCE study scores of 40 or more is below LSG mean.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Literacy</strong></td>
<td>80% of students will improve by at least one level as measured by the DART over a 12 month period.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Environment Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOAL</th>
<th>PERFORMANCE MEASURE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To enhance the social competencies and connectedness of students.</td>
<td>Required Measures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Average number of absences per student for each year level
- Parent opinion of the school environment – general environment, customer responsiveness and general satisfaction variables
- Total school enrolments and total Year 7 enrolments, each trended over the last 10 years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMPROVEMENT AREAS</th>
<th>BASELINE SCHOOL PERFORMANCE</th>
<th>SCHOOL TARGETS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Priority 3 To enhance the social competencies and connectedness of students.</td>
<td>Average number of absences per student historically have been significantly above State means</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In the “Attitude to School” survey the dimensions of Connectedness to Teachers, School, Peers and Student Safety means and “means as a percentage rank” were 3.7 (83%), 3.2 (67%), 4.1 (58%) and 3.4 (58%)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To be at or below State means for absenteeism in all Year Levels.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In the Attitude to School survey all dimensions in the “feelings about your self and school” section will be above the 70% ranking of school responses.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Management Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOAL</th>
<th>PERFORMANCE MEASURE</th>
<th>IMPROVEMENT AREAS</th>
<th>BASELINE SCHOOL PERFORMANCE</th>
<th>SCHOOL TARGETS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| To provide leadership and management practices which ensure collaborative decision making, effective communication and encouragement for professional growth. | **Required Measures** Staff Opinion in the areas of:  
- staff morale  
- supportive leadership  
- goal congruence  
- professional interaction  
- professional growth  
- Frequency of teacher sick leave – certificated and non-certificated sick leave | Establish processes that include an evaluation plan for each new initiative.  
To involve staff more comprehensively in the analysis of College data, in particular CSF achievement.  
To further develop leadership skills amongst staff. |
|                                                                      |                                              |                   |                             |                |
## Resources Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOAL</th>
<th>PERFORMANCE MEASURE</th>
<th>IMPROVEMENT AREAS</th>
<th>BASELINE SCHOOL PERFORMANCE</th>
<th>SCHOOL TARGETS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| To ensure the appropriate distribution and availability of quality resources to support the curriculum and the implementation of the college goals and priorities | **Required Measures**  
Combined comparative receipts and payments statement.  
School account balances report.  
**Additional School Measures** | Continue the practice of allocating resources in line with the Charter and priorities.  
Review the staff room needs as the College expands. |                              |                             |
Priority 1  English and Mathematics performance
To improve student achievement in English, Mathematics and Literacy across the KLAs.

Current School Performance
General
No students are reported as performing at better than expected level in English or Maths in Years 8 and 10.
The percentage of VCE study scores of 40 or more is 0.3 below LSG.

English
In Reading Year 8 and Year 10 students are 0.6 and 0.12 below LSG mean performance.
In Writing Year 8 and Year 10 students are 0.59 and 0.12 below LSG mean performance.
Year 12 English performance is 0.9 below LSG mean.

Numeracy –
In C & D Year 8 and Year 10 students are 0.3 and 0.06 below LSG mean performance.
In Algebra Year 8 and Year 10 students are 0.05 and 0.01 below LSG mean performance.
In Year 12, Maths Methods and Further Maths are 1.2 and 1.3 below the LSG means

Intended Outcomes
Improved student performance in all strands of English at Years 7 to 10 and VCE.
Improved student performance in all strands of Mathematics at Years 7 to 10 and VCE.
Improve student competence in handling the literacies demanded in all KLAs.
Improved reliability of CSF judgements.
Improved student performance under test conditions.

Performance Measures
CSF teacher judgments.
Year 12 VCE performance.

School Targets
English – All Strands
5% of students will be above the expected level at Years 8 and 10 in all strands.
Student performance will be at or above LSG performance in all strands.
That VCE English results be at or above LSG means by the end of the Charter.

Numeracy –
8% of students will be above the expected level at Years 8 and 10
Student performance will be at or above LSG performance in all strands.
That all VCE Maths subject results be at or above LSG means by the end of the Charter.
**Literacy**
80% of students will improve by at least one level as measured by the DART over a 12 month period.

**Initial Implementation Strategies**

**Key Strategies**

- develop a study skills program for all Year levels with a focus on improving exam technique. A Charter Action Team using the PLT PD model will be established to develop classroom practice to enhance study skills.
- Undertaking pre and post testing in all Maths CSF strands.
- Undertaking DART literacy testing in Years 7 to 10.
- Identify writing styles central to English in Years 8 to 10 and models for teaching and assessing them.
- The establishment of PLTs and Charter Action Teams that develop effective pedagogies.
- Develop the KLA coordinators knowledge of literacy needs with their KLA.
- review current teaching practice in maths in light of exemplary practices promoted by the Middle Years Numeracy Project.
- Inform teaching staff of the aggregated student data.
Priority 2 Learning Competencies
To increase the range of teaching pedagogies that encourage higher order thinking skills, independent learning and the effective use of ICT.

Current School Performance
Real retention for Year 7 to 10 is 63.2% which is 4.9% below LSG. Parent Opinion dimensions of quality of teaching and “academic rigour” are near or above state means. The percentage of VCE study scores of 40 or more is 0.3 below LSG. The All Study mean was 0.6 below LSG All Study mean in 2002 and 0.1 above in 2003.

Intended Outcomes
To increase the range of teaching strategies used to promote Higher Order Thinking. To increase the range of teaching strategies used to promote independent student learning. To increase the range of teaching strategies used to promote the effective use of ICT in the classroom. To continue the development and use of differentiated learning materials.

Performance Measures
Parent Opinion survey – quality of teaching and academic rigour
Real Retention Rate:
VCE performance.

School Targets
That the “All Study” VCE mean be at or above LSG mean. The percentage of 40 plus scores for VCE studies will be above LSG mean. Provision of Professional Development in the areas of Higher Order Thinking, independent student learning and effective use of ICT.

Initial Implementation Strategies
Establish a position of responsibility to coordinate this priority. Develop a core group of trainers to lead PLTs and/or Charter Action Teams Establish College wide Professional Learning Teams and/or Charter Action Teams to allow teachers to practise these pedagogies and reflect on their effectiveness. Research the literature for appropriate instruments to measure progress in the identified skills. Participate in the Learning Competencies project of the Schools Innovations and Excellence program.
Priority 3  Social Competencies
To enhance the social competencies and connectedness of students

Current School Performance
Average number of absences per student in 2003 for Years 7, 8, 9 & 10 are 14.3, 18.5, 19.8, 24.3.
In the “Attitude to School” survey the dimensions of Connectedness to Teachers, School, Peers and Student Safety, Motivation to learn and Self Esteem means and “means as a percentage rank” for all students were 3.7 (83%), 3.2 (67%), 4.1 (58%) and 3.4 (58%), 4.2 (71%), 4.0 (83%)

Intended Outcomes
To develop a College wide understanding of agreed core values
To strengthen positive relationships with staff and students.
To build a culture of student optimism and responsibility throughout the College.
To have increased opportunities for all students to assume leadership roles.
Improved school attendance with a focus on both connectedness and curriculum offered

Performance Measures
Attendance rates
Attitude to school survey

School Targets
To be at State means for absenteeism in all Year Levels.
In the Attitude to School survey all dimensions in the student “feelings about your self and school” section will be above the 70% ranking of school responses.

Initial Implementation Strategies
Establish a position of responsibility to coordinate this priority.
To hold several workshops to develop a set of agreed College values and school culture.
Further develop the role of home Group Teachers within the College.
Explore the use of programs that explicitly teach values and attitudes such as Mind Matters.
Participate in the Learning Competencies project of the Schools Innovations and Excellence program.
Establish a Charter Action Team to
• develop processes and structures that emphasise positive behaviour, attitudes and school culture.
• Extend the orientation and transition program in all year levels.
• Develop structures which increase leadership opportunities for students.
School Council Code of Practice

The Council of Riverview Secondary College acknowledges that it operates within the Education Act and Regulations. Within these regulations and guidelines the Council will observe the following principles:

- the learning needs of the students will be the primary consideration in decision-making;
- school community views will be canvassed and considered on major policy decisions;
- discussions related to school council employees will be strictly confidential;
- disagreements will be resolved within the council;
- loyalty to the college, its Charter, its administration and staff will be demonstrated;
- it is the responsibility of the Council to develop policy directions to be implemented at the school level;
- members of Council will be given all possible assistance to enable them to be fully informed regarding their responsibilities, current college practices and DE&T policies and directions;
- public comment will be the joint responsibility of the college council President and Principal;
- decisions of Council will be publicly justifiable.

The College Council will use the following practices:

- the Council will meet on the third Tuesday of each month;
- meeting procedures and decision making processes will operate as detailed in Council standing orders.
- Six sub-committees will operate:
  - Education
  - Welfare
  - Finance
  - Facilities
  - Communication
  - Heidelberg Teaching Unit
- Sub-committees will have the responsibility for developing draft policy for their area.
- Sub-committees are to submit their views in written recommendations to Council.
- Sub-committees will meet as required.
- Regular reports will be received from the Student Representative Council and Parent Groups.

As executive officer of college Council, the Principal will ensure that:

- adequate advice is provided to the council on educational and other matters;
- the decisions of Council are implemented;
- adequate support and resources are provided for the conduct of Council meetings.
Principal Class Code of Practice

The college requires its principal team members to operate effectively within the Acts, Regulations, policies of the DEET, role and accountability statements and Orders of Parliament. The Principal Class has the responsibility to provide educational leadership and management in the following ways:

- effectively represent and promote the college in the educational and broader community;
- encourage and foster an environment which values success for all students;
- encourage the use of high quality teaching and learning practices;
- promote the monitoring and evaluation of the college's educational program to maximise student outcomes;
- establish effective administrative structures and procedures;
- co-ordinate the effective management of human and financial resources;
- maximise the time and resources available to staff to carry out their professional duties;
- ensure collaborative decision-making procedures are employed and consult with staff and community when making decisions;
- provide support, together with regular, constructive feedback to groups and individuals within the college;
- to receive and act on constructive feedback from the staff and the school community;
- plan collaboratively for the professional development of staff;
- create an environment which encourages professional responsibility;
- ensure a safe, healthy, cooperative and orderly environment for students and staff;
- work with the College Council to ensure that all policies are developed and implemented in the interests of the local community and within DE&T requirements;
- demonstrate and foster commitment to the implementation of the college Charter.

The principal whilst having the final responsibility for the delivery of a high quality education to our students will work with the principal class team to form a harmonious and effective management team. The college’s assistant principals will support and assist the principal in achieving the objectives outlined above.

Staff Code of Practice

All staff of Riverview Secondary College have the following entitlements:

- to receive opportunities for professional development and to be kept informed of educational developments at local, state and national levels;
- to be included in decision-making processes through participation in, or representation on committees and other forums;
- to be kept informed of issues under discussion, and decisions reached, through effective communication;
- to have appropriate mechanisms established at the college in regard to personnel management, staff selection, promotion and personnel records;
• to be provided with adequate time and resources to carry out their professional responsibilities, within the guidelines and resources provided by the DEET;
• to receive the support of, and constructive feedback from, administration and colleagues;
• to have themselves and their property treated with respect, co-operation and courtesy by students, parents and other staff;
• to work in a healthy and safe environment.

Teaching staff at Riverview Secondary College have the following responsibilities:

• to exercise an appropriate duty of care towards students;
• to show commitment to the implementation of the college Charter and college policies;
• to provide a stimulating learning environment which will allow students to develop to their full potential;
• to be well prepared and demonstrate the use of a variety of teaching strategies and assessment methods, including accurate records of student work submitted;
• to identify differences in the way students learn and prepare appropriate learning activities to enable all students to succeed;
• to implement the College Welfare and Discipline Plan, including consistent application of clear rules and consequences;
• to acknowledge the role of parents in the students' education and their right to accurate and complete information on students' progress,
• to maintain high standards of professional conduct;
• to encourage students in the development of self-esteem and responsibility for learning;
• to pursue their own professional growth and participate in DSE, College and Learning Area professional development activities;
• to work as a member of a team contributing to the development and implementation of the curriculum.

Non-Teaching staff at Riverview District Secondary College have the following responsibilities:

• to carry out the full range of designated duties and responsibilities in an effective and professional manner;
• to provide a quality service to the college community characterised by positive communication and efficiency;
• to be committed to excellence through professional development, training and informing themselves about key college issues;
• to contribute to a positive and co-operative working environment.

This code also acknowledges the Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 which supports racial and religious tolerance and prohibits vilification on the ground of race or religion.
Community

Riverview District Secondary College is conscious that it belongs to a broader community. In recognition of the partnership between the college and parents, the college encourages parents to:

- support college programs and be aware of and observe school policy;
- involve themselves in college activities;
- participate in the decision making process;
- ensure that children are suitably dressed and equipped for college;
- assist their children to participate positively in school programs;
- help the school to gain access to community resources;
- communicate with staff in a calm, respectful manner;
- keep the college informed of any information relevant to their child's schooling or welfare;
- support the school financially;
- attend parent/teacher interviews and keep informed of their child's progress;
- support parent groups and associated fundraising and social activities.

In return the college and its staff will endeavour to:

- be reasonable in requests of parents;
- respect the confidentiality of information regarding parents and students;
- make facilities available for the community;
- communicate regularly with parents via a newsletter;
- communicate with parents in a calm, respectful manner;
- be available at a reasonable time to discuss student progress or parent concerns about the college;
- seek maximum parent input into decision making;
- listen to, and follow up parent concerns and issues;
- invite and actively seek the participation of parents in special events;
- keep parents informed of their child's progress.

Community Building

Riverview Secondary College community comprises a diverse range of people that includes parents, guardians, the City of Darebin, local residents and business, local agencies and organizations.

RDSC will ensure that:

- All members of the community are treated with respect
- The rights of community members are upheld
- Appropriate protocols are established.
Riverview will keep the community informed of its achievements and activities through:

- The weekly newsletter
- The Community Newsletter
- Regular communication through media releases
- Regular meetings with parents, parent groups and College Council
- The provision of information sessions.
- Celebratory functions such as Awards Night.

Riverview will obtain the community’s views on its performance by:

- Seeking responses to initiatives
- Conducting parent opinion surveys
- Parent Group meetings

This code also acknowledges the Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 which supports racial and religious tolerance and prohibits vilification on the ground of race or religion.

**STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT**

**Student Code of Conduct**

Riverview Secondary College believes in the provision of a happy, secure and productive learning environment. It is the responsibility of the students, parents and teachers to work together so that each student is valued as an individual and does not face discrimination of any form.

The Code of Conduct is based on the following principles:

Each student has the right to:

- learn in a clean, safe and caring environment;
- learn without interference from others;
- be treated fairly and with respect;
- be free from fear;
- have access to the resources of the college;
- have personal property respected;
- have their opinions listened to and considered;

Students have the responsibility:

- to respect and follow the college rules;
- to respect other people's rights and property;
- to respect the college and its environment;
• for themselves and their actions;
• to complete all work to the best of their ability;
• not to interrupt the learning of other students;
• to notify teachers if their rights are threatened;
• to dress in accordance with the college uniform policy.

Approaches to discipline used at the college are based on the following procedures:

• Problem prevention - building a positive classroom environment. This involves the development of such things as a wide range of teaching and learning strategies, careful preparation, discussion and/or negotiation of classroom rules, and positive reinforcement of good behaviour.

• Problem solving within the classroom - Positive behaviours are reinforced
  Students are made aware of the logical consequences for breaches of classroom rules.
  Teachers implement a range of measures to deal with classroom issues.

• Conflict resolution - When persistent problems do occur clear procedures are set out in order to resolve them constructively. These procedures include:
  • Problem solving interview between student and teacher
  • negotiation and mediation between students
  • Referral to Team Leader for interview
  • Further interviews - involving parents and Team Leaders
  • Involvement of Assistant Principal and/or Principal
  A team structure has been put in place to assist with the implementation of the welfare and discipline policy of the college.

A detailed Welfare/Discipline policy and student Code of Conduct documents the rights and responsibilities of the school community, rules and consequences, the college’s approach to discipline and the support structures provided by the college. This document is published in the staff handbook and an abridged version is published in the student planner. A copy is available at the college office.

This code also acknowledges the Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 which supports racial and religious tolerance and prohibits vilification on the ground of race or religion.
School Council Motion

At the Riverview Secondary College meeting of Tuesday 14 September, 2004, the following motion was passed:

“That the Riverview Secondary College council:

1. Endorses the school charter to be effective from August 2004.

2. Empowers the Principal to make minor amendments to the wording of the School Charter that may be necessary during negotiations with the Department of Education and Training.”
Appendix 18  Sample literacy policy

Purpose
XXXXXXX Secondary College recognizes the importance of effective communication skills as the basis for success in learning and as a way of enabling students to achieve their maximum potential. The aim of the literacy program in this college is to provide support for students experiencing difficulties coping with the literacy demands of secondary schooling, and to improve the literacy levels of all students in order that they can participate fully and successfully in the range of learning experiences available to them.

Context
Provide ongoing support for students with significant difficulties via the “Literacy Extension Program” and individual tuition for targeted Year 7 students for three periods per week.
Provide individual tuition for targeted students in years 8, 9 and 10 for a minimum of three periods per week in the Learning Center. Provide support for students in year 10-12 via modification of program content and materials as required. Provide assistance via team teaching/aide support in the mainstream classroom.

Implementation.

- Heighten staff awareness of the Literacy needs of all students and of how they can be addressed across all Key Learning Areas via PD.
- Develop teacher skills and expertise to support students’ individual learning needs in the mainstream classroom.
- Implement classroom strategies and programs to address the needs of students in the mainstream classroom.
- Identify students experiencing difficulty with the Literacy demands of Secondary School education and provide support to classroom teachers to modify mainstream programs for those students.
- Provide a three period withdrawal program in Years 7 and 8 for students experiencing difficulties coping with the Literacy demands of Secondary Schooling.
- Provide literacy support to students in years 9 -12 as required.
- Collaborate with teachers of VCAL and VET programs to support the Literacy needs of students in those programs.
- Develop and maintain the resources in the Literacy Learning Center.
- Develop and maintain data banks on student’s Literacy achievement in Years 7-10, in order to track student Literacy skill development and address student needs.
- Find ways of extending students with special talents in Literacy and provide programs that will enable them to pursue their special abilities.
• Promote the enjoyment of reading and writing for pleasure and learning.
• Collaborate with Key Learning Area staff to develop curriculum resources and implement strategies for improving student literacy achievement across the curriculum.
• Incorporate Learning Technology (ITC) into the literacy program to foster literacy skill development.
• Provide budget to support program needs.
• Provide regular meetings of the Literacy Team according to the College meeting schedule to plan, review and manage program.

March 2004