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ERRATA

Page 5. The next chapter is not called Issues of Identity and ESL Teaching. It is called Language and Identity.

Page 15 line 10 **The** not **he**.

Page 49 line 5 As a result all identities are tensioned as we are **engaged** in...

Page 55 line 8 The author's name is **Adams** St Pierre.

Page 82 line 27 There is more **that** could be done ...

Page 109 line 15. The first of the key learning areas, **Language**, had, as its first requirement ...

Page 232 line 27. *They needed another English teacher.*

Page 239 line 26 schools which also **enrol** international students

Page 250 line 12. the emphasis which Mandy places **on** fun as part of ...

Teaching as an Act of Identity: the Work of ESL Teachers

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,
Faculty of Education, Monash University
April 2003

DECLARATION

This thesis contains no material which has been submitted for examination in any other course or accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Signature of the Candidate:



Date: 5/5/03

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the discursive production of English as a second language (ESL) teacher identity. It is concerned with the ways in which this work is understood, the congruence sought between various aspects of identity and the values and ways of being, both individual and group, which find expression in ESL teacher work.

ESL teachers play a significant role in the lives and academic success of many students for whom English is a second language. One in four students in Australian government schools has a home language other than English. There are also an increasing number of international students entering the system. Effective and appropriate ESL teaching is essential if the needs of these students are to be met. It is, therefore, important for ESL teachers to develop explicit understandings of the roles and identities that they take up in their work. If doing so, they are more able to critique existing practices and to participate effectively and powerfully in the shared on-going construction of ESL teacher identity. This is not easy to do, however, because like all teachers, time is taken up with everyday practice and there is little opportunity for ESL teachers to gain critical distance on their work processes and practices. This study gives voice to these understandings in analysis of shared and individual constructions of ESL teacher work and identity.

Data for the study comes from extended interviews with twenty teachers which explore motivation and practice as ESL teachers. These interviews were followed by a series of case study interviews with nine teachers conducted over a period of twelve months. Each interview took a different approach to understanding ESL teacher identity, focusing first on changes in context of work and the impact of conflict caused by these changes on teacher identity. The second interview focused on teacher construction of the self-defining student other and the last interview asked teachers to discuss coherence between present and future work and identity. Each change in focus provided a new way into understanding ESL teacher identity as constructed by individual teachers. Data was read first as representations of

reality as experienced and understood by these teachers. It was then considered again for the meaning carried by the language – an approach which treated the language of interview as both transparent and opaque, looking both through and at the language used in construction of ESL teacher identity. Attention was paid to metaphor, student descriptors, pronoun use and other aspects of language particular to each interview. Constructions of ESL teacher identity from this study were both individual and shared, with even constructions which seem to be held in common, varying in individual contextualized enactment of practice.

The study concludes that that this range of understandings of ESL teacher work and ESL teacher identity is both necessary in response to contextual difference and empowering in that work practices and teacher identity exist within a shared purpose of practice in response to student need. The combination of diversity of practice and common purpose offers ESL teachers an opportunity to articulate group identity which is accepting of diversity and affirming of that which is in common. The complexities of ESL teacher work and identities find simple expression in this notion of service to student need, a shared purpose which demands to be recognized and valued as the essential element of ESL teacher identity.

Chapter 1: Introduction

TESOL (and teacher education in TESOL) is what I do in a full-time and long-term sense. ... This is TESOL as the form in which I shall express who I am in this life, in the sense and to the extent that we do seek to find and express ourselves in the craft, trade, profession, or other form of employment that takes up so many of our waking hours. ... [W]e men and women who have taken TESOL as a hub for the wheeled universe would like it also to be understood that we are more than variegated bundles of teaching functions. Important though our classroom behaviour is, we are also parents and children, motorists and pedestrians, with our worries and dreams, our fears and our hopes. We are whole people, who teach. And because we are people-who-teach (indivisible the person from the teacher), our actions in teaching arise from the same sources as our other actions and express deeply held values. (Edge 1996:9)

This study explores English as a second language (ESL) teacher work and identity as it is constructed in the discourse of a number of teachers working in government secondary schools in the state of Victoria. It is an exploration of the ways in which this work is understood, the congruence sought between various aspects of identity and the values, both individual and group, which find expression in ESL teacher work.

The teachers in this study are all specialists in the field. They self-identify as ESL teachers and express a strong sense of shared group identity predicated on what they see to be common understandings of the nature and purpose of their work. Their varying constructions of ESL teacher identity are made explicit in extended and repeated discussion with each teacher. The focus of these discussions includes reasons for choosing to work as an ESL teacher, the impact of conflict and change on this work, the ways in which they construct their students and the future which these teachers see for themselves and their work. Each shift in focus provides a new way into understanding individual constructions of ESL teacher identity, the aspects of these constructions which are particular to that teacher and those which are part of shared group identity.

Versions of ESL teacher identity which come from these conversations with individual teachers are both shared and disparate. There are differences between

constructions of identity which seem unique to the individuals involved. There are differences related to contexts of teaching. There are differences within individuals, with apparent contradiction between one enactment of ESL teacher identity and another.

That there is variation in these constructions of ESL teacher identity is inevitable. All constructions of identity are both individual and shared, fixed and fluid. A strength of group identity is the ability to accommodate a variety of individual ways of being within a shared construct of identity. Individual differences in understanding and enactment of ESL teacher identity are within a shared values base for ESL teacher work, the purpose of which is understood to be response to ESL student need. The ways in which individual teachers interpret this shared purpose varies, but it is the underlying mantra for individual enactments of identity which provides the common element of ESL teacher identity as a group identity.

This chapter opens with a quote from Julian Edge (1996:9). The paper from which the quote is taken is a personal response to the paradoxes of ESL teacher work and to the shared values on which this work is based. This study too is deeply personal and I make no apologies for that. The study of ESL teacher identity is the result of my own past, present and future identities. I bring to this work my past twenty years as an ESL teacher, my present work as an ESL teacher-educator and my future involvement and interest in the area. My present identity is a complex mix of all these elements and many others, elements which offer both a particular interest in, and privileged access to, study of ESL teacher work and identity.

The study is also personal in its view of ESL teaching, the result of its origins in my own experiences and understandings – that is, in my own ESL teacher work and identity – and in the approach taken in which individual ESL teachers give voice to their experiences and understandings. The result is a mix of voices, my own and others, working together in a complex and often contradictory exploration of ESL teacher work and identity in ways which are both individual and shared, specific and general.

English as a Second language teaching is a recent development to the world of language teaching. It is distinct from other forms of language teaching, and from its close cousins, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching and the more recent arrival on the scene, English as an International or Global Language teaching. All variations of English language teaching are accommodated under the umbrella term TESOL – Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. Distinctions between various forms of TESOL are based on the context within which the language is taught. Students of English as a Second language are resident, and usually permanently so, in a country in which the language of government and education is English. If these students are to participate as full and active members of the society in which they are living, they must be skilled and fluent in their use of English and in their ability to work within the power structures associated with its use. Given this, ESL teachers have a key role to play in the equal access of their students to society's goods and services and in the maintenance of, or change to, existing power structures.

Formal ESL teaching is a comparative newcomer in comparison to other areas of teacher work. Although Australia has always been a multi-lingual society, it has only been in the years since the Second World War that official consideration has been given to both immigration and the particular needs of migrants whose first language is other than English. At first, English language teaching was seen as a purely adult affair with children being regarded as readily able to acquire a second language in the process of social interaction with their English speaking peers. English language teaching to children had its origins in the spectacular failure of this approach and for more than a quarter of a century now, ESL teacher work and ESL teacher identity has been part of the Australian education system.

This role of newcomer to teaching and the often marginalized nature of the work gives ESL teacher work and identity particular characteristics which are of interest to a study of work identity. It has been possible to involve teachers in this study who have been part of ESL teacher work since its inception. Such teachers have a personal understanding of the evolution of the area in terms of work and identity in ways which are not available to more traditional, and hence longer established, areas of teaching. ESL teaching started in the individual efforts of isolated teachers,

untrained and unsure of themselves and the efficacy of their actions. There was gradual development of individual understandings, sharing of these understandings with others involved in similar work and a slow shift from ESL teacher as individual to ESL teacher as group. The individual was often powerless and marginalised and, to some extent, the notion of ESL teacher as a lesser form of teacher continued as group identity developed. The story of the development of ESL teacher identity is one of gradual development of expertise and knowledge and of constant and ongoing struggle for external recognition, validation and acceptance.

ESL teacher work and the identity which comes from it are constructions built on shifting sand. Situated within constant changes to government policies on immigration and education, and the contextual changes which flow from that, ESL teaching and ESL teacher identity has had little opportunity to settle into complacency. The area is changing and dynamic, a process which strips away external trappings, forcing key elements of identity to the surface. This state of constant change, combined with the marginalised nature of the work – a minority group working with and for minority groups – means that the overlap between individual self identity and work identity, both individual and group, is available for exploration and discussion.

A better understanding of the work and identity of ESL teachers is of particular importance at this time of unremitting pressure on systems to cater for an increasingly diverse student cohort, in a context of teacher shortage, continuous funding cuts and seemingly unending reorganisation and restructure. This study aims to make available to ESL teachers more detailed understanding of their work by allowing them access to the experiences and knowledge of others who, like them, are active players in the field. It is also a starting point for the articulation of advanced teacher skills in the area, a resource for teacher educators and a contribution to the study of English language teacher work in a global context.

My approach to the study of teacher identity draws on constructivist notions of identity in which individual and group identities are both producer and product of social interactions. Identities are constructed in terms of the ways of being

available to both individuals and groups, ways of being contextualized in time and place and, as such, subject to constant change, adjustment and readjustment. Many ways of being are the result of naturalised understandings, both implicit and shared. Individual identity is an expression of self which finds security and reinforcement in the development of group identity, in the case of this study of ESL teacher identities, work identities. This group identity is based on understandings seen to be shared but given meaning in individual interpretation contextualised in different spaces of time and place.

Identity is constructed through and by language. It is through language that we bring such notions as identity into being and negotiate meaning, meaning which like identity, is contextualised in particular instances of use. Language carries with it the shared and individual meanings of past use and the particular shared and individual meanings intended in immediate interaction.

This study of ESL teacher identity is one given existence and meaning through language in conversation with teachers. It is also a study focussed on language in that the conversations are viewed first as representations of reality as experienced by these teachers. The conversations are then considered a second time for meanings carried by the language which are other than surface expression of individual reality – an approach which looks both at and through language. Understandings of self, individual and group identity and the relationships between language, identity and meaning are the focus of the next chapter – Issues of Identity and ESL Teaching.

I then move to discussion of my own ESL teacher identity, my positioning as researcher-as-insider and the implications of this dual positioning for my work. This chapter, Constructing Identity in a Room Full of Mirrors also describes the approach taken to collection and understanding of data and introduces the ESL teachers who are the main focus of the study. The work of these teachers is given a context in the chapter which follows. This chapter traces the development of ESL teaching in the government secondary system in Victoria, the setting in which these teachers are employed.

Chapter Five, Motivation and Practice, is the first of four chapters which present and discuss the data gathered in the study. This chapter examines the reasons for becoming an ESL teacher for two groups of teachers, those who chose ESL teaching as part of their initial teacher training and those who moved into ESL teaching after experience with other forms of teaching. Each of these teachers then describes the ways in which they enact ESL teacher identity. A final section of this chapter examines the metaphors these teachers use in discussion of their work.

The next chapter, Identity, Conflict and Change, discusses the impact of conflict and change on the work and identity of the nine ESL teachers involved in the case study stage of data collection. This focus draws on arguments of Fairclough (1989, 1992, 1995) that conflict and change force implicit ideologies to a level of conscious awareness, making them available for examination and possible change.

Chapter Seven, Identity and the Other, examines the part played by the self-defining other as these teachers talk about their students. The ways of being which these teachers make available for their students are also the ways of being which are available for them as teachers. Chapter Eight, ESL Teacher Identity and the Future, deals with expectations of the future as these teachers attempt to construct identities in which past, present and future ways of being are given coherence and meaning.

In the conclusion I revisit each aspect of the study and suggest ways in which the ideas which come from this work have relevance not only for those involved in ESL teaching but for others involved in similar studies of work and identity.

Chapter 2: Language and Identity

2.1 Introduction

Identity as a tool for educational research provides an effective way of understanding the ways in which people work in, and experience, schools. Gee (2000:99-100) argues that identity is "an important analytic tool ... [which can be used] for studying important issues of theory and practice in education". Many researchers have taken identity as a central focus for the study of a variety of different educational settings. Farrell (2000:18), for instance, uses identity as a way of understanding the impact of globalization and the resulting changes in work practice on "the ways in which identities are constructed and understood in work environments". Norton (1997, 2000) takes identity as a means of understanding second language acquisition (SLA) in a longitudinal study of immigrant women. She argues that notions of identity, that is "how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how that person understands possibilities for the future" (2000:5) should occupy a central place in SLA theory and research. Mitchell and Weber (1995, 1996, 1999) focus on teacher identity as key to self-study and understanding of professional practice and ways of being as teachers. Santoro (1997) uses identity as a way of understanding the constructions of teacher made available to student teachers by supervisors during practicum. Studies such as these, and many others, indicate that the notion of identity provides a powerful lens through which to view educational practice. It is the tool used in this study to explore ESL teacher work as it is understood and enacted by a number of ESL teachers working in Victorian government secondary schools.

Notions of identity are central to the way in which these ESL teachers think about themselves and their work. They talk about the importance of feeling congruence between themselves and their work, the ways in which their values are able to be activated in their work. To express this notion in concrete terms, people who feel that they are 'one who cares for others' are able to demonstrate this in their work as ESL teachers. The similarities in the ways in which ESL teachers describe their work suggest that ESL teacher identities are, at least notionally, shared group constructs.

Identity is always in the process of formation. Different elements of identity move together in a complex dance in which self, individual, role, group and other advance and retreat, separate and join within the spaces available. Understanding of these identity processes is important because a sense of congruence between self and group is related to job satisfaction, to feeling at ease with, and part of, the group. In understanding the elements which construct work identities, we are able to articulate the nature of the work itself, as it is experienced by the doers of that work. Such understandings are also important because the ways of being available to us impact on the ways of being available to others. We are all part of the on-going construction of identities, our own and others, identities intimately related to the division of societal goods and power.

The term 'identity' is contested in that it has been assigned many different meanings in the vast body of literature exploring notions of identity. It is not the purpose of this study to provide a comprehensive survey of the literature on identity. Rather I start discussion of teacher identities by outlining the understanding of various aspects of identity which are taken up in this study. I then discuss each of these in turn, the ways in which identities are called into being through language in dialogue and the ways in which these understandings are used in the exploration of ESL teacher identity.

I understand individual identity to be that complex interaction of age, gender, class, physical aspects of self and experience which constructs each of us as unique. Individual identity is an external presentation of identity in that it is both visible to, and interpreted by, others. Self identity exists within this external construction of individual identity and is the individual's sense of internal and continuing self, the person that they believe themselves to be. Drawing on the resources which constitute individual identity and the sense of self, each of us develops sets of values and beliefs which provide ideological bases for action when choices between various ways of being are available. Although an extended discussion of ideology is beyond the scope of this study, there are several issues related to ideology and identity on which I would like to comment. Identity and ideology are bound together in that identity is socially constructed in relation to others. That is, the ways we have of being which are available to us are implicated in the ways of being which are available to others.

Identity is always related to issues of status, wealth and access to social goods and services. Gee (1999:21) refers to beliefs about the ways in which these social goods should be distributed as ideologies and regards them as essential to identity – “ideologies are what construct not only human worlds but humans as well”. Fairclough (1992:87) suggests a similar view of ideology, describing it as discursive “constructions of reality ... which contribute to the production, reproduction or transformation of relations of domination”. These ‘relations of domination’ determine access to goods such as housing and services such as education and medical care. Like Gee, Fairclough sees identity construction through language as fundamental to the continuation, or change, of existing social practice. Following Gee and Fairclough, I take ideology to mean the system of values and beliefs by which individuals judge actions to be appropriate and consistent with their perception of self-identity. I do not mean to imply that ideologies are inherently ethical in that all ideologies share a concern for the well being of others, to cite a commonly espoused ethical basis for action. Ideological identity may well be based on a belief in the accumulation of personal wealth at the expense of others. It is likely that ideologies will conflict. There may be conflict in external dialogue with others when ideologies are not shared. There may also be conflict in internal dialogue between the competing voices of ideological identity when, to take one example, concern for immediate human welfare conflicts with long-term concern for the environment.

Self identities and ideological identities find expression in work identities and in the construction of shared group identities with others who are perceived to be similar. The shared ideologies which form the basis of group identity need not be explicit. The vast majority of actions, choices and ways of being are based on implicit understandings of what is right and proper in particular contexts of time and place. It is when these understandings are questioned or placed under pressure that they become available for discussion and scrutiny. Issues of agency, of seeking to construct ways of being other than those currently available, are external expression of ideological identities in conflict. Explicit expression and examination of ideological identities which form the basis for action in the world can provide both an understanding of work identities and a means of action for individuals and groups in the construction of identities as agentic. Although the extent to which agency is implied in identity is contested, the issue for this study is not whether agency exists as

an element of identity, but the extent to which the teachers involved in this study understand themselves to have agency, to be agentic. Gee (1996) argues that an individual's awareness of the ideological nature of discourse (or group identity behaviour) combined with commitment to ethical human discourse (based on avoiding harm to others and explicit and thorough examination of any theory advantageous to one group) is likely to result in change to his or her existing practice. This awareness, plus an individual's membership of a number of different discourses, can result in cross-fertilization between discourses and in the emergence of new and different ways of being. Fairclough (1992) also suggests that awareness of the political and ideological nature of practice may result in change. Most ideologies exist as naturalized understandings. Fairclough argues that, when these understandings conflict, they are likely to be forced into explicit expression and made available for examination and change. Davies (1990) suggests that the perception of self as being able to act for change is part of identity construction for particular individuals and groups who both position themselves, and are positioned by others, as agents for change. Such possibilities for agency exist through understandings of self as part of, and separate to, a number of identity groups. Construction of identity as agentic involves perception of self as able to accept or reject practices made available and both the resources to do so and the desire to accept responsibility for the consequences of one's actions. It is possible to see agency as part of ESL teacher identity construction, both in terms of group practice and in the positioning of individuals within the group. Pennycook (1990, 1994, 2001), Gee (1994) and others challenge ESL teachers to generate alternate discourses for their students. Pennycook believes that ESL teachers need "a vision of language that not only reflects but also produces and therefore can alter social relations" (2001:73). He suggests that this can be done by teachers taking on the role of 'critical educators of English' (1994:306). Teachers who take on this role understand themselves to be personally and politically committed to working with others towards a changed, and more equitable, world. It is clear that several teachers involved in this study have taken up this challenge and regard themselves as ethically obliged to act for change.

The table below outlines six ways of understanding identity which are used in this study of ESL teacher identity.

Table 1: Understanding identity

Identity	Understanding
1. Individual identities	The mixes of age, gender, class, physical aspects and life experiences which mark each of us as unique.
2. Self identities	The individual's inner sense of who they are, the private concealed self.
3. Ideological identities	The values and beliefs which provide a basis for action in the world.
4. Agentic identities	The perception that individuals and groups have of themselves as being able to act in ways other than those most readily available.
5. Work identities	The socially sanctioned positions which we occupy as part of the power structures of the society in which we live.
6. Group identities	Identities constructed on notions of sameness to others.

In the section which follows I offer examples for each of these ways of understanding identity. These examples illustrate both the specificity and the interconnectedness of each. The examples are drawn from the ESL teacher case studies which provide much of the data for this study. The names, which have been changed to protect the anonymity of participants, refer to teachers who were part of these case studies. Aspects of *individual identity* impact on understandings of ESL teacher work and the construction of ESL teacher identity. Sally was a child during the sixties when large numbers of migrant children entered government schools. There was no support offered to these children and Sally links her memories of this time with her present understanding of work as an ESL teacher. *Self identity* is also active in the construction of ESL teacher identity. Vicky describes one aspect of her self identity as "a person who just wants to help others". The desire for congruence between this

aspect of self and Vicky's work as an ESL teacher impacts on the ways in which ESL teacher identity is understood and enacted. Tom's *ideological identity* finds expression in his construction of ESL teacher identity as one who "works towards a better, more equitable, world". Connie's strong sense of *agentic identity* allows her to confront interpretations of ESL teacher identity which are other than her own and force resolution of these issues. Redefinition of Alice's *work identity* by the school administration results in structural approval of, and support, for the helping aspects of her ESL teacher identity. All these teachers see themselves as part of ESL teacher *group identity* with common understandings of what is appropriate in the interpretation of ESL teacher work. Each of these ways of understanding identity focuses attention on different aspects of ESL teacher work and offers additional insight into the construction of ESL teacher identity.

Work on identity in education is commonly interdisciplinary in nature, calling on a range of fields from sociology to literature, from philosophy and psychology to education. For my purpose, the connecting point between them is that in each I have found understandings useful to the exploration of ESL teacher identity. Goffman's notion of identity as performance (1969, 1974) provides a starting point for discussion of individual identity. Baumeister (1986, 1997) offers a structural model of identity and examines the links between self and society. McAdams (1997) discusses the use of storying to create a coherent sense of self. Gecas and Mortimer (1987) also focus on the continuity of self and the overlap between various aspects of identity. Howe (1992) draws on the development of liberalism to illustrate the importance of maintaining a sense of self. Davies (1993) discusses the complexities inherent in achieving individual identity which is both like and unlike the identities of others. Gee (1992, 1996, 1999), Fairclough (1992) and a number of other writers argue for the importance of the self as an agent in moral decision-making. These understandings of identity offer the first of several ways of viewing identity taken up by this study. This view of identity provides a micro-focus on individual teachers. I use these understandings of identity to recognize the impact of individual identity on construction of ESL teacher identity and the ways in which a sense of self is played out in these constructions.

Discussion of identity then shifts, widening out to focus on group identity. Woodward (1997) and Gilroy (1997) discuss the importance placed on the marking of group identity in times of fluidity and change. Jenkins (1996) describes the development of group identity. Simon (1997), May (1997) and Gee (1992) discuss the defining nature of group practice. This view of identity provides a macro-focus on teachers as a group which I use to discuss ways of being which are shared versions of ESL teacher identity.

Identity as individual and identity as group are both notions based on a view of others as separate and different to individual or group. Hall (1997a) outlines the role of the other in construction of identity. Bakhtin (1984) argues for the centrality of dialogue between self and other for the creation of meaning. Pennycook (1998) illustrates relationships of power in the construction of self and other. Discussion of the part played by the other in the construction of identity provides another micro-focus on identity. I use these understandings of the other to explore teacher constructions of ESL student identity, constructions which in turn define ESL teacher identity.

These various ways of understanding identity are not separate from each other. Shifts in focus throw light on different aspects of identity, but the whole remains a complex and multiple inter-related concept. The complexity of identity as a concept is taken up with reference to Hall (1996b), Gilroy (1996) and Davies (1989), arguing that the importance of identity is in its role as a tool for thinking, rather than as a concept able to be captured by clear and fixed definition.

The next section of this chapter deals with the role of language in construction of identity. I make use of the work of Hall (1997b), Gee (1992, 1996, 1999), Fairclough (1989, 1992), Halliday (1973, 1985) and a number of others to explore the discourse-embodied nature of identity. This focus on language provides both an understanding of the socially constructed nature of identity and the approach which I use for data analysis, examining the ways in which ESL teacher identities are constructed both by and through the language used by these teachers.

Discourse and construction of identity as agentic are considered next, drawing on the work of Davies (1989, 1990) and Davies and Harre (1989, 1990). A final section

discusses metaphor as an aspect of language which provides a rich source of information on identity construction and, as such, is an ideal target for discourse analysis. I use these understandings to focus on metaphors used by ESL teachers in discussion of their work.

2.2 Understandings of Identity

The *Shorter Oxford Dictionary* offers a definition of identity based on a Latin root *identitas* developed from *idem*, meaning the same. There are two ideas combined here - the notion of sameness but also of sameness constant over time. From this come two meanings relevant to this discussion - the first, identity as the quality or condition of being the same as in being *identical* to another. The second, identity as individuality, of being oneself and not another - or to reverse this thinking, sameness defined in terms of difference to another - a combination of two seemingly contradictory states, that of similarity and difference.

The notion of similarity and difference as defining elements of identity can only be meaningful in relation to others. That is, a discussion of human identity is only possible within a social context. Human identity, both individual and group, is social identity and similarity and difference the materials used in its construction. But to think of similarity and difference as building materials is a metaphor which works on only one level. It is successful, I think, in conveying a sense of identity as a creation based on what is available for use and what is necessary and reasonable within the context of construction. It fails, however, to convey the sense of endless repair, renovation and rebuilding which is part of the construction of identity. Perhaps, to continue with this metaphor, identity is a renovator's delight, a building largely dependent on existing structures and never complete, rather than a newly constructed and finished dream home. Although even this is less than successful in conveying the dynamic nature of identity, the metaphor seems to work with Hall's understandings of identity (or identification - his preferred term) as:

A construction, a process never completed - always 'in process' ...
conditional, lodged in contingency. (Hall 1996a:2-3)

This is not the way in which most of us think about our own identities. Everyday discussion of identity largely ignores the fluid socially constructed nature of identity.

Instead the focus is on identity as an individual production but even a notion of self identity predicated on difference and that which is unique to the individual can only be developed in response to comparison with others who are like or unlike oneself. Development of identity, both individual and social, is an active process of interaction between the two. We continually construct ourselves and others and are, in turn, constructed by them as we accept, reject or re-interpret the constructions they offer.

Goffman (1969) first developed this notion of the active individual. Fundamental to the notion of the active individual is the belief that people have purposes, goals which they want to achieve and that, to this end, people are concerned to guide and control the impression that others receive of them. The distinction Goffman makes between performer and character conveys both the connection between, and the separation of, the private self and the public image, and the impact of the staged nature of social life on the ways individuals express themselves. For Goffman, language is one of a number of symbolic resources used in the interactive construction and understanding of ourselves and others (Schiffrin 1994:106).

2.3 The Notion of Self

In discussion of the 'performed self', Goffman (1969:222) acknowledges the common perception of the self as "housed within the body of its possessor". Although appearing to dispute this view, Goffman later remarked on the distinction between 'self' and 'performed self' in his "three cheers for the self" (1974:294):

[It] is a basic assumption of any particular role performance that the performer has a continuing biography, a single continuing personal identity, beyond that performance, albeit one that is compatible and consistent with the role in question.

Goffman (1974:298) acknowledges and then dismisses the self as "not really the issue". For Goffman, the true nature of the self is less important than the impressions given to others of the type of self both concealed behind, and revealed through, the role currently being performed.

The notion of a concealed inner self is one that resonates with commonsense understanding of the term as the uniqueness, the 'essence' of the individual, both

more and less than the individual identity available to the scrutiny of others. It is "the individual's private experience of herself or himself" (Jenkins 1996:30).

Much discussion of identity sees the self as a purely social construct formed in time, place and available ways of being – all external to the individual. Baumeister (1986:28) offers a structural model of identity which focuses on individual identity and notions of self. Although his discussion is specifically on individual and self, the identity components he describes locate the individual within the social.

Baumeister's model consists of two defining criteria, three functional aspects, a variable number of identity components and five processes of self-definition. His defining criteria for identity are continuity - the feeling of being the same person throughout life and differentiation - the ability to see differences between self and others. The functional aspects of identity describe the purposes of identity, why the concept of identity is useful. The first of these is an individual system of values and priorities which enables choices and decisions to be made. The second is the interpersonal aspect, the way in which we interact with others. The third aspect is that of individual potentiality - a sense of future or possible self. There are an indefinite number of identity components or self-definitions, ways of answering the question 'Who am I'?

Baumeister categorises these identity components into five types. The first are those over which the individual has no control, such as family background and gender. The second are identity components related to a single event, such as giving birth. The third component is that of continual redefinition of one aspect of identity related to on-going achievement. For example, to define oneself as a successful golfer requires on-going achievement in continuing comparison with others. The fourth component involves voluntary choice. Religious and political choices, in situations where these are not compulsory, fall into this category. The fifth component of self-definition involves choice where choice between a number of options must be made. An example of this is the choice made of ways to respond to ballot papers under a system of compulsory voting. The individual metacriteria (or system of values) used to make this and other choices is an important component of identity.

Baumeister acknowledges the disjuncture which currently exists between what he calls the "inner self", the individual oneness of identity and the wider society in the modern western world (1986:246-265). He argues that rigidly structured societies, such those which existed in medieval Europe, are less problematic in terms of individual understanding of identity. Identity in such societies involves limited individual choice and therefore less sense of personal self, given that the sense of self is constructed through individual choice. In such a society the individual is defined by and within society. Baumeister suggests that many people in modern western societies agonise over their sense of identity because of the absence of common metacriteria (shared societal values such as religion) for direct choices. It is this absence of metacriteria which has lead to the importance placed on the inner self.

Baumeister (1997) proposes three elements of selfhood - reflective consciousness (the process by which we consider and question our own actions and decisions), interpersonal being (the way in which we relate to others) and the executive function (the process by which we make choices and decisions). Given the absence of commonly espoused moral values, the self is now widely regarded as the only value base on which to determine action, "one of the most intriguing experiments of modern western society" (1997:214). Although Baumeister's focus is individual identity, the structure of his argument and the importance of the social context in developing notions of identity support a social constructionist view. Even the notion of an individual self is the product of a society which values and promotes the Monty Pythonesque notion that 'Yes we are all different. No we are not the same'.

Despite the potential problems of a society primarily focused on individual needs and the internal contradictions of the notion itself, the existence of an inner self continues to be of central concern to many writers. McAdams (1997:48) acknowledges the persuasiveness of the notion of a protean self which, like the Greek god Proteus, takes on whatever form best suits the current situation. He even suggests that such a flexible sense of identity may be the best possible adaptation to the complexities of the modern world:

In that selves reflect the social world ... as the world becomes more complex, unity and coherence in self-conceptions should become rarer and rarer. In a social world that demands flexibility in self-presentation and role-playing, the most adaptive form for selfhood

may be a loose confederacy of multiple self-conceptions. (McAdams 1997:51).

Despite the seeming logic of this, McAdams argues that "multiplicity is a direct challenge to identity" (1997:61) and that a unified sense of self is a fundamental human need "without which human life in society as we know it would simply not exist" (1997:57).

He suggests that a unified sense of self is created through a process of 'selfing' (synthesizing and appropriating external experiences to make them one's own - the I becoming the me). This me is arranged to form a purposeful and unified life narrative through a process of storying which meets the needs of identity in that it creates a me that is coherent, unified, a product of past experiences, positioned to become the me of the future. Such a life story is given meaning or "jointly authored" by the culture in which it is constructed which gives different groups different narrative opportunities and constraints (1997:64). Life stories have many recognizable features in terms of structure and content, including narrative tone, imagery, theme, ideological setting, important scenes (or nuclear episodes), imagoes (different characterizations of the main character) and an ending which ties the story together. Desirable endings are regarded as those which give a sense of purpose to the life which has been lived.

Hart, Maloney and Damon (1987) acknowledge the importance of a sense of purpose but argue that there are two other basic components of a sense of self, "knowing that the self is continuous over time and that the self is unique, or distinct from others" (1987:122). Research by Gecas and Mortimer (1987) also focuses on this sense of continuity over time as an important aspect of self. They discuss three aspects of identity - role identity, character identity and existential identity. Role identity relates the individual to society through membership of groups and various social networks. Character identity describes the type of person one is via a range of moral judgements about self. There is clear connection between character identity and role identity. Gecas and Mortimer suggest that there "may also be a self-selection factor in that certain kinds of people seek out roles which have stereotypes compatible with their dispositional self-conceptions" (1987:266). That is, we select roles which allow us to be the type of people we perceive ourselves to be. Despite overlap, Gecas and

Mortimer draw a distinction between role identity and character identity in that role identity is more situationally specific than character identity.

They use the term 'existential identity' to refer to the individual's sense of uniqueness and continuity. This sense of continuity is misleading in that we continually reconstruct both past and future from the perspectives of the present. Despite this on-going retelling of personal narrative, we continue to have a strong sense of continuity of self, of being "producer as well as product" (1987:267). Our sense of self is subject to continual self-evaluation. Gecas and Mortimer suggest three aspects of self-evaluation - self-esteem (positive or negative feelings towards oneself), self-efficacy (the sense of being able to impact on one's environment, of having control over cause and effect in one's life) and authenticity (the sense that one's real self is present in the various identities which are acted out). Although change seems a natural state for self-concept via continual rewriting of past, present and future, Gecas and Mortimer present a functional argument for preservation of a stable self concept:

Stable self-conceptions enable more effective action in the world, since without a clear conception of who and what one is, action becomes confused, uncertain or even paralysed. (1987:272)

They conclude with three observations. First that people maintain a strong sense of stability of self-concept even throughout periods of change. Stability is reflected through character identity and through self-esteem and self-efficacy. They suggest that stability in a sense of identity-authenticity is linked to strong commitments to role-identity or ideology. Finally they emphasize the interaction and co-dependency of individual and environment. The individual both constructs and is constructed by society (1987:280).

Handel's studies with adults (1987) support the notion of a stable self in an examination of the individual's sense of changed self following transitions or nuclear episodes (McAdam 1997). Participants made sense of these experiences and created links with past and future identities through progressive self-narratives which compared past and future 'ideal' identities. Data from the studies suggests a strong sense of continuity over time with minimal changes to the sense of inner self. Each of these writers emphasizes the importance of continuity and consistency of self. The stories teachers tell of their work, the elements of this work which are constructed as

constant over time, the reasons given for actions and the ways in which confusion and conflict are resolved are all ways of understanding ESL teacher work and identity.

In contrast to writers who focus on continuity and consistency, Howe (1992) attempts to accommodate multiplicity and fragility of self. Accepting the difficulties, complexities and contradictions of a socially constructed self which is constructed to claim uniqueness as part of this construction, he nonetheless argues for the continued need for a sense of self. He attempts a definition:

Let us say that the self is a construct of the mind, a hypothesis of being, socially formed even as it can be quickly turned against the very social formations that have brought it into birth. (Howe 1992:249)

It is this possibility of the self "turning against the agents of its construction" which is the complexity of the socially constructed self. Howe suggests that there is not one self, but many selves, slipping in and out of being, at best providing a sense of provisional unity. Given this ever-changing nature of the self, Howe questions why we persist with such a notion and answers by saying that we do so because if we do not, we cannot think about the issues which we attempt to capture in the notion of self. Howe sees the development of a sense of self as key to the development of liberalism in the late eighteenth century and part of the social and political changes that came as part of this (1992:253). As such the notion of self served a moral and political purpose which helped to reshape societies and ways of being.

Continuity, consistency, individual integrity are all emphasized in notions of self. It seems that in order to achieve integrity of self, multiplicity must merge into an organized unity, to speak with one voice and it is this one voice which is the true self. The self is then conceived of as an autonomous being with both freedom to choose and responsibility for choices made. Initially celebrated as a liberating notion, the self teaches that we are all free from the constraints of society, free from previous ways of being, free to be who and what we want. This desire to be true to the real essential inner person is linked to notions of stability, continuity, a single-voiced self. Yet there are clear limits on acceptable ways to be an autonomous being. The self must find expression in ways acceptable to the society which has been instrumental in its construction:

To achieve full human status, children must ... achieve a sense of themselves as beings with agency, that is, as individuals who make

choices about what they do, and who accept responsibility for those choices. ... effective claims to identity require a knowledge of how to 'get it right'. At the same time, 'getting it right' does not mean behaving exactly the same as every one else behaves, but rather it means practising the culture in an identifiably individual way. This means knowing the ways in which cultural practices can be varied. (Davies 1993:9)

The dual notion of choice-making and of responsibility for the results of choices made is closely linked to development of a sense of self. As children mature, they draw on inner resources, their inner sense of what is right and wrong, in determining action. The dilemma is that they are required to be sufficiently different to present as unique, and sufficiently similar to be accepted as same, to demonstrate both independence and membership of the group.

Sidorkin (1999) suggests a way forward in thinking about the self as polyphonic, as multi rather than single-voiced. Rather than searching for internal consistency, he argues that we should cherish the differences within us because it is these differences which make us what we are. If we achieve internal sameness, it is as a result of silencing the multiple voices which make diversity of action possible:

The truth about myself needs a multitude of representations. The plurality of simultaneous representations is the condition for understanding the self. ... What I am cannot be expressed in a series of mutually consistent statements; rather it is a multitude of mutually contradicting yet addressed-to-each-other statements. (Sidorkin 1999:43)

It is this interplay between voices of the many-voiced self which makes meaningful action and moral decision-making possible:

If my internal chorus is reduced to just one voice, there is no more self, and what remains is but a sterile dogma ... Making a moral decision is ... a dialogical encounter that involves a mixture of the inner voices of myself, and the outer voices of other individuals. I need the multiplicity of strong internal voices capable of disagreeing with each other. (Sidorkin 1999:44)

I revisit the notion of the voiced self and dialogue/discourse in a later section of this chapter, but the role of the self as moral agent in decision-making is one that deserves further discussion at this point. All the writers concerned with the self emphasize its importance in determining ethical action in reference to moral values and beliefs. Gee (1992, 1996, 1999) uses the term *soul* to capture the way in which each "uniquely endowed individual" experiences the world and the way in which these experiences

shape future interactions. He suggests the term "core identity" to convey the "continuous and relatively fixed sense of self which underlies our continually shifting multiple identities" (Gee 1999:39). Fairclough (1992:167) uses the term *ethos* as a concept suggesting a point at which diverse behaviours come together in "constructing a particular view of the self". Davies (1993:34-35) describes a series of events in her childhood in which decisive and individual action positions her as "a moral person". Foucault, Derrida, Fairclough and Gee all argue the importance of ethical decisions based on "affirmation of one law above all others ... the categorical imperative that human beings should never be treated as means alone, that the foundation of right behaviour is to be sought in the idea of the universalizability of the principles according to which one acts" (Boyne 1990:2). This ethical capacity seems firmly rooted in the concept of a self able to act in other than the ways of being made available either by the groups to which the individual belongs or by more powerful external others.

Identity as the basis for moral decision-making is central to the work of many writers on identity. There are a number of components of this aspect of identity – the individual's inner sense of self as unique, the values and beliefs which are held and the perception of self as able to act on these values and beliefs. I refer to these components of identity as *self identity*, *ideological identity* and *agentic identity* and each aspect of identity provides a different slant on ESL teacher identity. Links between self and work identity, conflicts between ideological identity and ways of being available as an ESL teacher and responses to these conflicts are all ways into an understanding of ESL teacher identity.

There is obvious overlap in discussion of various aspects of identity. Self, individual, group and other aspects of identity will each in turn be foregrounded according to social context. That is, the aspect of identity which we enact will be that relevant to the context in which we find ourselves:

In other words, the relative weighting of the individual self and the collective self in a person's current self-image is a function of the relevant social context. (Simon 1997:321)

2.4 Group Identity

Individual identity, which emphasizes the sense of personal uniqueness, is socially constructed. Self is that element of individual identity which emphasizes uniqueness and continuity over time. The self also provides materials for construction of ideological identity which in turn serves as an ethical basis for action. Notions of individual identity are predicated on perceptions of difference between self and other. In contrast, group identities are based on notions of sameness, ways in which members of the group perceive themselves to be like each other (and unlike others external to the group - so difference also figures as a defining element of group identity). Issues of similarity and difference are border issues determining who is included and who excluded and the basis on which these decisions are made.

Woodward (1997) sees the notion of identity as crucial at this time of change, conflict and disruption at both global and personal level. In her view, identity is the link between person and society. She rejects any notion of identity as fixed and essential and argues that it is both fluid and contingent. Her main concern is with the marking of group identities - "the marking of 'us' and 'them'" (1997:4). Gilroy (1997) also argues for identity as a fluid construct, pointing to the dangers of seeing identity, especially ethnic or group identity as fixed, unchanging, essential. Ultra-nationalist and fascist movements have all made use of the mythic essential identity, resulting in societies which glorify one type of being and demonize all that is different through a process of 'othering'. In extreme cases, the other is so far removed from sameness as to be seen as sub-human, fit only to be removed or destroyed. In contrast to collective identity, individual identity is seen as "infinitely malleable, constantly reconstructed through the ebb and flow of consumerism and the 'play' of commodities" (Gilroy 1997:313). Gilroy suggests that, in the absence of widely accepted moral or religious approaches to understanding of self, individuals seek other ways of defining themselves through a process of identification in which "we seek some unified sense of ourselves through symbolic systems and identify with the ways in which we are seen by others" (Woodward 1997:45).

Group identity is usually a product of three inter-related factors - common situation, common behaviour and self-identification as a group. Jenkins (1996:83) describes

two ways in which groups are identified. The first is group identification, in which members of the group define themselves as belonging to the group. The second is social categorization, in which people are identified by others as belonging to a particular group. A key difference is the relationships which exist both within the group and with those outside the group. With group identification, group members recognize a relationship which exists between members. With group categorization, no such relationship exists at the time of categorization. When group members recognize relationships between members, the process towards group identification and development of group identity has begun (Jenkins 1996:86).

2.5 Negotiating the Borders - Issues of Similarity and Difference

Group identities are based on group perceptions of similarity. Obviously these perceptions of similarity as the basis for group membership also involve perceptions of difference as the basis for denial of group membership. Defining who is part of the group will always involve defining who is not. Group membership is not based on total similarity, with group members as clones of each other, but on notions of similarity in terms which are relevant to the context and interests of the group.

Simon (1997:320) suggests that the sense of collective self (being part of a group identity) is activated:

whenever a person interprets her or his own experiences, perceptions and behaviours as well as the (re)actions of other people towards her or him primarily in terms of a particular self-aspect that person shares with other, but not all other, people in the relevant social context.

Group members may be different to each other in a multiplicity of ways but these differences will be overshadowed by the similarities relevant to membership of a particular group. It is the meeting of shared understandings of individual identities which generates group identity. Once established, group identity impacts on individual identity - that is, the group identity is an on-going construct of individuals within the group but they are, in turn, constructed by this larger shared notion of who and what they are. Group identity implies being a particular sort of person, an ideal type, of being seen in a particular way both by those who are part of the group and those who are external to the group. Internal identification and external identification

act together to produce a group sense of self, but not a group sense of self which is fixed, frozen in time.

May (1997) argues that what it means to be in a community, to be part of a group, is best understood with reference to the practices of that community (1997:52). Such practices are socially and normatively governed. That is, members of the community, although they may not have an explicit ideology of practice, are able to identify right and wrong ways of engaging in practice. These practices are, by their very nature, social and lie at "the intersection of individuality and community" (May 1997:53). The practices are discursive in that they are mediated through the use of language. They are also part of a society of interacting practices, often with effects as a result of these interactions which are unintended by those involved in the practice. May suggests that it is through these practices, and through membership in communities of practice, that we understand ourselves and our world:

Individuals ... living as they do in social worlds, are largely constituted by the practices of those worlds. This constitution is not only a causal one, in which engaging in certain practices causes one to be a certain kind of individual ... most of the important parts of who I am are tied up with the practices I am engaged in. (May 1997:60)

This 'who I am is what I do' and 'what I do is who I am' is a clear part of many work identities. The practice and the person are entwined. Practice is group practice and this in turn constitutes group identity. The group identity thus becomes a thing within itself with practical consequences for the way in which individuals go about their work. It would, however, be misleading to think of group identity as more fixed and permanent than other aspects of identity. It too is a process, a construction subject to on-going definition and re-definition in response to context and external change. Individual and group identities interact in complex ways. The group has established ways of being which are accepted as norms by individual members:

What is in the heads of the members of the group is less important than the "ideal" of "normative" associations and folk theories embedded in the group practice, toward which everyone converges, more or less. This "ideal norm" is not in anyone's head, but embedded in the history and social practices of the group. (Gee 1992:105)

The group construct may be the ideal – the mythologised identity to which all group members aspire - but it too is a shifting construct given meaning within individual

contexts of practice. The group ideal identity is shaped to fit the individual context and this in turn reshapes the group identity.

One aspect of this process of constant change is the issue of border, the process of negotiating group identity in terms of people, time and place. The relationship is one of continual and mutual feedback and change, with power a key element in the process. There will be times when the group identity is strongly positioned to impact on the external construction of identity, times when group identity will be less able to resist external re-definition and even, in times of great change, fragmentation of group identity.

Group identity presupposes that members see themselves as similar in interest and need in ways relevant to the group. Membership of the group, and indeed the existence of the group as a viable entity, is dependent on the construction of a shared identity behind which, in most instances, individual difference is concealed. Group identity creates a shared rhetoric, a way of talking about who and what we are, which enables a sense of group to be maintained. This understanding of sameness persists despite individual differences in the ways in which the rhetoric is made practice in response to specific context. So group members may all 'talk the talk' as one, but will 'walk the walk' in ways particular to individual contexts.

The strength of group identity is that the shared rhetoric is able to accommodate a range of context specific meanings. The sameness is apparent rather than real. As individuals actively construct continuity of self-identity, groups too construct continuity of group identity, maintaining a symbolic construct of shared values, open to interpretation and change, while appearing to remain constant. The agreement to submerge individual difference in the maintenance of a constant group identity is an important element of power in negotiation with external forces. The contrived sense of group identity enables border negotiation to proceed without fragmentation of the group.

This study of ESL teacher work and identity is a collective case study with an interest in understanding the work and identities of individual teachers and the ways in which these individual enactments of ESL teacher identity fit within shared group

understandings. Understandings of identity as group are central to reaching an understanding of ESL teacher work and identity which is other than individual and context-specific. It is a way into the shared values and beliefs which lie at the heart of ESL teacher identity and practice.

2.6 Constructing the Other

Constructing identity for oneself through an inner sense of self, the external presentation as an individual or as a member of a group, always involves constructing the identity of the other - that which is not me or us - which by its difference allows us to understand ourselves. Hall (1997a:234-6) outlines four explanations of the role of the other in a discussion of the importance of difference. The first is that associated with Saussure, that "difference matters because it is essential to meaning; without it meaning could not exist". It is the existence of opposites which enables meaning. Black is understood because of its difference to white, rich to poor, teacher to student. It is the difference between that carries meaning for both.

The second explanation outlined by Hall is the argument that "we need 'difference' because we can only construct meaning through dialogue with the Other". This is the thinking developed by Bakhtin in his work on the construction of meaning in dialogue between speakers. For Bakhtin, difference between groups and individuals was not simply an important fact of human life, it was "the defining central condition of human existence. (He) placed the difference in the very centre. (He) also took dialogue to be the way of being in the world of irreducible, fundamental difference" (Sidorkin 1999:10). Here meaning does not exist as a contrast between, or as a construction containing both, but as a matter of interaction and interplay between speakers. Meaning is created in the meeting of difference between the participants in a dialogue. It is in the exchange between self and other and cannot exist apart from this:

In dialogue a person not only shows himself outwardly, but he becomes for the first time that which he is ... not only for others, but for himself as well. To be means to communicate dialogically. ... A single voice ends nothing and resolves nothing. Two voices is the minimum for life, the minimum for existence. (Bakhtin 1984:252)

The first two explanations of the other Hall draws from theories of language. The third comes from anthropology and the study of social groups:

Culture depends on giving things meaning by assigning them to different positions within a classificatory system. The marking of 'difference' is thus the basis of that symbolic order which we call culture. (Hall 1997a:236)

This marking of difference allows us to organise the world symbolically, to give meaning in ways which allow institutions to function smoothly. Identities position people in hierarchies of power which impact on ways of being available. 'I am the teacher. You are the student' is a statement instantly understood to carry weight in terms of ways of being available to both participants in the interaction.

The fourth explanation of difference and the role of the other is related to the development of self. I understand myself as an entity because I can see the 'other' that is 'not me':

The argument here is that the 'Other' is fundamental to the constitution of the self, to us as subjects, and to ... identity. (Hall 1997a:237)

In all these explanations, the role played by, or assigned to, the other is fundamental to understandings of identity, both group and self. Power is present in all representations of self and other, as it is always present in conditions of unequal relations, relations such as those which exist between teacher and student, teacher and administrator. The two examples which follow demonstrate the part played by the other in the construction of self, in situations where the other is actually as well as conceptually less powerful.

Hall describes the process of infantilization in relationships of power where the less powerful is reduced to the status of child:

This 'infantilization' of difference is a common representational strategy for both men and women. (Women athletes are still widely referred to as 'girls'. And it is only recently that many Southern US whites have ceased referring to grown black men as 'Boy!' while the practice still lingers in South Africa.) (1997a:262)

Pennycook (1998) uses the Robinson Crusoe/Man Friday relationship in an exploration of the construction of the other. Crusoe is the civilizing influence, constructing Friday in ways that he deems appropriate:

Eventually he [Crusoe] is able to start on his dual project of civilizing and teaching English: 'I made him know his name should be Friday ...

I likewise taught him to say master, and then let him know that was to be my name'. ... it is in the dialogues between Crusoe and Friday that we can observe the process of the construction of Self and Other. ... we can start to see the relationship not only between Self and Other as constructed by colonialism but also between these and English. Not only does Friday not get to speak his own language, but he has been given very particular, colonizing English words to express his cultural background. (Pennycook 1998:15)

In each example the other is reduced, a child in interaction with adult, a 'savage' to be created only in terms of the colonizing self and each time the other reflects back, constructing both participants in the interaction.

There are many others present in the construction of ESL teacher identity. School administrators, other teachers, politicians, parents and members of the wider society all impact on ways of being as ESL teachers. But the construction of student identity is at the heart of all constructions of teacher identity. Ways of being made available to students define ways of being available for teachers. Consideration of teacher-constructed ESL student other provides a mirror for understanding ESL teacher identity.

2.7 Identity - a Contested Space

Why is identity a concept of such complexity? Hall (1996b) argues that it is, in part at least, because the logic of any discussion of identity presupposes an understanding of identity which is able to be discussed. Identity must be 'interrupted' to make discussion possible, discussion predicated on an understanding of identity as a "kind of unsettled space ... an unresolved question in that space, between a number of intersecting discourses" (1996b:339). Gilroy (1996:48) describes identity formation as "a chaotic process that can have no end". For Davies (1989:229) identity - who one is - is "always an open question with a shifting answer". If identity is such a chaotic process, an idea 'under erasure', why is it also an idea with such power, so much part of our thinking? Hall (1996a) suggests that concepts of identity (and identification) are key to our thinking because they are ideas 'central to the question of agency and politics' (1996a:2). He argues for a replacement of the term identity, with its connotations of stability and continuity of self, with that of identification, which he believes -more successfully suggests the process of identity construction - a

process which is never complete and is always part of time and place. The role of the Other is central to this process of construction of Self:

There is no identity that is outside the dialogic relationship to the Other. The Other is not outside, but also inside the Self, the identity. So identity is a process, identity is split. Identity is not a fixed point, but an ambivalent point. (Hall 1996b:345)

Notions of identity are only meaningful in terms of representation. Identities are constructed within discourse, situated in time and place and the marking of difference and exclusion of the other is as much part of this process as is sameness and inclusion. One cannot exist without the other. Identities are the stories we tell about me and us but they are also the stories we tell about you and them – the stories that in their telling tell us. The power of identity is in the ways it enables us to think about ourselves and others and ways of being in the world:

It [an understanding of identity] is as intrinsic and as necessary to social life as the socializing tyranny of categorization. The internal and the external dance together in the unfolding of individual and collective identities. And although these identities are imagined, they are not imaginary. (Jenkins 1996:175)

2.8 The Discursive Construction of Identity

Language and identity are indivisibly linked in that notions such as identity are called into being through language in dialogue with others. Language is the way in which we create and share understandings of the world. These understandings may be 'imagined'. That is, they are created and imposed on objects which of themselves have no meaning, but they are not 'imaginary' in that they have real, practical effects on the ways we are in the world. If we accept the notion that meanings are imposed, rather than an essential and fundamental part of the object under discussion, then it must follow that meaning can never be fixed. It must, of course, be fixed to the extent that is necessary to allow us to function in the world. But with this pragmatic need for over-simplistic labeling of 'things as is', there can never be true closure to meaning – it (and all things which exist through this labeling process) is always part of an on-going production.

Hall (1997b:24-25) describes three approaches to how representation of meaning through language works. The first – the reflective approach – argues that meaning

lies within the object and language, like a mirror, reflects the 'true' meaning. The second approach – the intentional approach – argues the opposite case. Words mean what the speaker intends those words to mean. An attractive idea but the flaws are apparent in the following exchange between Humpty Dumpty (an exponent of the intentional approach to language) and Alice:

"I don't know what you mean by "glory," ' Alice said.
Humpty Dumpty smiled contemptuously. "Of course you don't – till I tell you. I meant "there's a nice knock-down argument for you!" '
'But "glory" doesn't mean "a nice knock-down argument," ' Alice objected.
'When I use a word,' Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone, 'it means just what I choose it to mean – no more nor less'. (Lewis Carroll in Through the Looking Glass 1865, 1971:274)

For language to work at any level, even in the most basic act of communication, there must be some degree of shared meaning. Alice and Humpty Dumpty have to reach a negotiated understanding of the meaning of 'glory' or their conversation will be nothing more than playing with words.

The third approach – the constructionist approach – recognises this shared social nature of language. Things of themselves, while they may exist in a material sense, do not 'mean' by themselves. We impose meaning on them as a way of making sense of the world but, unlike Humpty Dumpty, this is meaning created and shared with others. If we accept this third approach to language and meaning, then it follows that meaning must be located within contexts of time and place and, as a result, subject to change in response to changes in context. Meaning is open to 'slippage', to constant definition and redefinition. If meaning is situated in this way, then understanding must depend on a process of interpretation – on interaction between participants.

The assumption that language is a social phenomenon is basic to all thinking about language and identity. In Schiffrin's words:

language and context co-constitute one another: language contextualizes and is contextualized, such that language does not just function "in" context, language also forms and provides context. One particular function is social interaction. Language, culture, and society are grounded in interaction: they stand in a reflexive relationship with the self, the other, and the self-other relationship, and it is out of these mutually constitutive relationships that discourse is created. (Schiffrin 1994:134.

Bakhtin, Halliday, Fairclough, Gee and many others have explored the relationships between language, meaning and identity. But before moving into discussion of their work and the way in which it illuminates this study of ESL teacher identity, it is first necessary to clarify the terms 'language' and 'discourse'.

Mercer (1995) offers two definitions of discourse. Discourse is "language as it is used to carry out the social and intellectual life of a community" (1995:79) and "forms of language which are generated by the language practices of a group of people with shared interests and purposes" (1995:81). Language is contained within, and part of, discourse. It is the means by which discourse operates in the social practices of a community.

Gee (1999:131) defines discourse in the following terms:

A Discourse is a socially accepted association among ways of using language, other symbolic expressions and 'artifacts', of thinking, feeling, believing, valuing and acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or 'social network', or to signal (that one is playing) a socially meaningful 'role'.

In Gee's definition, language is inseparable from Discourse but it is only one element of Discourse. He uses small 'd' discourse to focus attention on the language-in-use aspects of big 'D' Discourse, which is the all-encompassing definition given above.

Fairclough (1992:3-4) acknowledges the difficulty of discourse as a concept because, like identity, there are "so many conflicting and overlapping definitions formulated from various theoretical and disciplinary standpoints". In an attempt to draw together the two main strands of these conflicting viewpoints, language analysis and social theory, Fairclough has developed a three dimensional concept of discourse. Discourse is simultaneously a piece of text (in the linguistic sense of being any product of language use, spoken or written), an instance of discursive practice (the text and the interaction which resulted in the text) and an instance of social practice (the institutional and organizational practices of which the discursive event was a part). Again, any thinking about language is only meaningful in terms of language as discourse but the larger umbrella concept of discourse emphasizes the way language is used in the power structures of society.

Sidorkin (1999:141) argues for a move beyond discourse (which he sees in a limited sense as 'a form of communication') into dialogue (which, like Bakhtin, he sees as an essential component of humanity, in that a person can only exist in dialogue with another). Sidorkin proposes a framework for learning which helps to clarify the distinction made between dialogue and discourse. This framework includes three stages of classroom discourse. First is the authoritative discourse which establishes a common text and vocabulary. Next is the dialogical discourse in which students "break the common text down, retell parts of it in their own words, and add subjective meanings to it in the context of the present classroom event". Diffused discourse follows in which students' unstructured chatter 'stores the knowledge away for future use' (1999:142). Dialogue then is that part of discourse in which students 'own' the discourse. The discourse has become part of the resources available to the students, resources on which they draw in identity construction.

Ivanic (1998:37) suggests another definition of discourse which is both distinction and integration. 'Discourse' is the broader term signaling sociological aspects of language use and identity construction. 'Language', like Gee's small 'd' discourse, is used to foreground linguistic elements of discourse and identity construction. Both terms refer to 'language-in-its-social-context'.

According to Dentith (1995) this situated nature of meaning is also one of Bakhtin's basic principles. Meaning is only possible through dialogue with another:

Communicative acts only have meaning, only take on their specific force and weight, in particular situations or contexts; this is an account of the utterance, of the actual communicative interaction in its real situation. (Dentith 1995:3)

Concern with the nature of discourse is the unifying theme of all Bakhtin's work. Discourse is inherently dialogic – utterances are always in response to other utterances and contain within them traces of other voices. Words have always been used before and the meanings of others imprinted on them (Bakhtin: 1981). Discourse is always socially and historically situated:

The living utterance, having taken meaning and shape at a particular historical moment in a socially specific environment, cannot fail to brush up against thousands of living dialogic threads, woven by socio-ideological consciousness around the given object of an utterance, it

cannot fail to become an active participant in social dialogue. (Bakhtin 1981:76)

Discourse is also the site of struggle. There is struggle between the various imposed meanings which inhabit every word. There is struggle with the 'authoritative word' which rejects any meaning other than its own. There is struggle to find one's own place in the discourse through an 'internally persuasive voice' in which the discourse is retold in one's own words to reach a shared meaning – part our own and part belonging to another:

The importance of struggling with another's discourse, its influence in the history of an individual's coming to ideological consciousness, is enormous. One's own discourse and one's own voice, although born of another or dynamically stimulated by another, will sooner or later begin to liberate themselves from the authority of the other's discourse. This process is made more complex by the fact that a variety of alien voices enter into the struggle for influence within an individual's consciousness (just as they struggle with one another in surrounding social reality). (Bakhtin 1981:79)

Struggle against the 'authoritative voice' and 'alien' others in the construction of 'one's own discourse', a discourse only possible in dialogue with others, is a powerful way to think about the construction of identity. Given that, in Bakhtinian terms, we exist only in dialogue with others, it is through this struggle to make meaning that any form of identity is possible.

There are a number of approaches to the study of discourse and it is necessary to clarify those most relevant to my work. Schiffrin (1994:20) defines discourse in two ways. The first is as a unit of language (which is more than a sentence) and the second is with a focus on language use. The different focus offered by these two definitions mirrors the difference between formalist and functionalist discourse paradigms. Formalists see language primarily as a mental phenomenon to be studied as an autonomous system. Functionalists regard it as a social phenomenon to be studied in relation to its social functions. My interest is in identity which is clearly a social phenomenon. Therefore it follows that my interest in discourse will be discourse in terms of social practice.

Halliday takes the functional approach to the study of language as social behaviour described by Schiffrin. This means both the investigation of how language is used and how language has been shaped by use (Halliday 1973, 1985). Language is part of

a symbolic system of meaning which constructs our world. It is part of reality, in that it is a known part of our experienced world. It is an account of reality, in that it is how we tell the world to ourselves and it is an image of reality, in that it gives us metaphors for different dimensions of the world (Halliday 1973:98).

Language is meaning potential with a variety of options or alternatives within a 'context of culture' and a 'context of situation'. The 'context of culture' is the total set of behavioural options available in terms of the socially-constructed functions of language and patterns of behaviour, that is the potential choice. The 'context of situation' is the immediate particular environment (or situation) within which decisions about meaning and the language choice that is meaning are made (Halliday 1973:49).

There are two levels of meaning making in relation to identity. The first is in the 'context of culture', the shared set of total options articulated as part of, and informed by, common experience and understanding and the ways in which these shared options are expressed. The second is in the 'context of situation', the ways in which choices are made (and re-made) from the options as a total set, in ways which are particular to specific and individual circumstances of situation. That is, the ways in which individuals make context specific choices of meaning in relation to identity.

Halliday also describes three principles of functional organization or 'macro-functions' of language. These are:

- the ideational - the content, the ideas, the expression of understandings based on experiences of the world
- the interpersonal - the speaker's role, personal commitment and interaction with others
- the textual - the creation of meaning through the relationship between the parts, the whole and the setting of the text (Halliday 1973:99).

These macro-functions are the meaning potential for all uses of language.

Using Halliday's model, Ivanic (1997:40) makes explicit links with the development of social identity. She suggests that ideational meaning conveys ideas, values and beliefs based on the way in which we see the world, that is ideas that are part of our social identity. Interpersonal meanings are made with reference to identity in that

they are part of our sense of who we are in relation to others and to how we want others to perceive us. Finally a person's 'orientation to language use' and the way in which 'they construct their message' (or textual meaning) is also a component of identity:

The ideational, interpersonal and "textual" meanings conveyed by language all contribute towards constructing the participants' identities. (Ivanic 1997:40)

Halliday describes language as a symbolic construction of meaning and positions language use within both a broad 'context of culture' and a more specific 'context of situation'. Fairclough (1989,1992) explores this social construction of language in an examination of language as social practice, social practice intimately connected with the power structures within society. In Fairclough's view language and society are indivisible – an "internal and dialectic relationship" exists between the two in which language, as social practice, both shapes and is shaped by this practice. It follows then that to "analyse language as a system independent of social practice would be meaningless" (Schiffrin 1994:31).

Discourse, that is, the social practice of language, (and like Fairclough, I do not find it useful to think of language as other than social practice) involves social conditions of production and interpretation. These conditions in turn relate to three different levels of social organization, the social situation (or 'context of situation'), the social institution and the third level, that is society as a whole (Fairclough 1989:22-25). The social structures determine the discourse which in turn 'scripts' the social role. In the process of occupying the position, the subject reproduces the position. This cycle of production and reproduction suggests a passive subject. This is not Fairclough's intention. His use of the word 'subject' is deliberate. The word embodies Derridean notions of absence and presence. It at once suggests the sense of being controlled, subjected to another and the subject of a sentence, the active doer, the one responsible for the action taken (1989:39). So individuals, in accepting, rejecting, reshaping the subject position available to them, are themselves part of the process of power. Fairclough (1992:59) uses the example of counselling to illustrate the ambivalence of the relationship to power in the so-called 'helping professions':

Counselling is ... used to bring the insides of people's heads into the domain of power/knowledge, but it is also a technique for asserting the

value and individuality of people in a society which increasingly treats them ... as ciphers.

People select from and interpret the discourse options available in the light of their member resources, that is, their past experiences, understandings of the world, values, beliefs and assumptions, which act as an unexamined ideological (or naturalized) framework for everyday practice. Social conditions shape what people bring to discourse production and interpretation, which in turn shapes the way in which texts are produced and interpreted. The power relationships between various levels of social organization both produce, and are the product of, discourse. In the same way in which discourse works to reproduce existing power structures, any discourse act can also be a struggle against all three levels of social organization. Dependent on their member resources (which exist as both individual and shared group resources), individuals can act to either replicate existing structures, struggle to change them or – the more likely scenario – act in ways which vary according to context.

Fairclough (1992:64) distinguishes between three aspects of the constructive effects of discourse – the construction of social identities (remembering that this is not a passive event – participants both construct and are constructed by discourse), the construction of social relationships between people and the construction of systems of knowledge and belief. These three effects correspond to three functions of language – identity, relational and ideational. Fairclough has split Halliday's interpersonal function of language (Halliday 1973) into two – identity and relational. Fairclough's identity function of language has to do with the ways in which social identities are manifested in, and constructed / reconstructed by, discourse.

Discourse practices, that is, the ways in which participants engage in discourse, are shaped by the resources which participants bring to the interaction. Practice is also shaped by social structures and power relations. Ideology is implicit in both member resources and social structures. People are, for the most part, unaware of the ways in which their actions are 'politically and ideologically invested' and of the wider outcomes of practice in either reproducing or challenging existing power structures (1992:72). Fairclough defines ideology in the following terms:

I shall understand ideology to be significations/constructions of reality (the physical world, social relations, social identities), which are built into various dimensions of the forms/meanings of discursive practices,

and which contribute to the production, reproduction or transformation of relations of domination. (Fairclough 1992:87)

These ideologies are most powerful when they are naturalized, when they have moved from conscious guidelines for practice to unexamined common sense or self evident justification for action. Kress (1985) describes this process as one of discourse colonization. The danger of this process is in the limitations which it places on other ways of being in the discourse:

The effect is that the areas accounted for within one discourse offer no spaces for analysis, everything is of one piece, a seamless fabric of tightly interwoven strands. The accounts provided within one discourse become not only unchallenged, but unchallengeable, as 'common sense'. If the domination of a particular area by a discourse is successful it provides an integrated and plausible account of that area, which allows no room for thought; the social will have turned into the natural. (Kress 1985:10)

Individual discourses may find themselves in conflict with group discourses and minority group discourses may find themselves in conflict with more powerful majority (or dominant) discourses. Fairclough argues that, in conditions of conflict such as this, ideology is likely to lose its naturalized status and become explicit, bringing the underlying ideological conflict to the surface with the possibility of change occurring:

When subjection is contradictory – when a person operating in a single institutional framework and set of practices is interpellated from various positions and pulled in different directions, as it were – naturalization is difficult to sustain. Contradictory interpellation is likely to be manifested experientially in a sense of confusion or uncertainty, and a problematization of conventions. These are the conditions under which awareness, as well as a transformatory practice is most likely to develop. (Fairclough 1992:90)

Fairclough (1992:168) sees identity construction through language as fundamental to social organization, with power structures created and maintained through the categorization (or identity construction) of the members of that society. He suggests a hegemonic model of discourse. Hegemony is defined as a combination of leadership and domination of all aspects of society by one 'economically-defined class'. This leadership/domination is achieved by a process of integration, alliance and consent but "it is never achieved more than partially and temporarily, as an 'unstable alliance'" (1992:92). These shifting patterns of power, integral to a hegemonic view of society, offer a way to consider discourse in terms of social practices of production and discursive response to practices. That is, because power is never total, other ways

of being are always possible. Resistance, challenge and change are all available as options for action:

The concept of hegemony helps us to do this, providing for discourse both a matrix – a way of analysing the social practice within which the discourse belongs in terms of power relations, in terms of whether they reproduce, restructure or challenge existing hegemonies – and a model – a way of analysing discourse practice itself as a model of hegemonic struggle, reproducing, restructuring or challenging existing orders of discourse. (1992:95)

Like Fairclough, Gee (1992,1996,1999) emphasizes the ideological nature of discourse and the importance of discourse awareness in ethical practice. He argues that each of us has a moral obligation to:

gain meta-knowledge about [our] Discourses and Discourses in general. Such knowledge is power, because it can protect all of us from harming others and from being harmed, and because it is the very foundation of resistance and growth ...it is a moral matter and can change the world. (Gee 1996:191)

Language, ideology and discourse are inseparable and our identities are embodied in membership of discourses which act as:

a sort of identity kit which comes with the appropriate costume and instructions on how to act, talk, and often write, so as to take on a particular social role that others will recognize. (Gee 1999:127)

The image of discourse as identity kit is useful in conveying the various bits and pieces that go together in making identity but it fails to convey both the number of identity kits with which we operate and the power of the individual to shape the discourse, to alter the identity kit. To use Gee's example, we are not only Sherlock Holmes. We are also Doctor Watson, Moriarty and even, on bad days, the Hound of the Baskervilles. And we are all of these things together in a mixture uniquely our own.

Each discourse has taken for granted ways of being normal within the discourse. These ways of being normal are the result of theories which inform language use which is given meaning only in so far as it conveys a who and a what. By who, Gee (1999:13) means a socially situated identity and by what, a socially situated activity or practice. Access to membership of discourse communities is always bound up with issues of status, wealth and other social goods. These are inequitably distributed throughout society and so too is access to dominant (or powerful) discourses. The powerful discourses are, naturally enough, those that control distribution of social

goods. Theories about the way in which these goods should be distributed, which Gee, like Fairclough, calls ideologies, are implicit in every discursive action. These ideologies are important because:

Since theories ground beliefs, and beliefs lead to actions, and actions create social world ('reality'), ideologies simultaneously explain, often exonerate, and always partially create, in interaction with history and the material bases of society, the distribution of goods. And since everything that makes us human ... the ability to freely think, believe, desire, feel and create with others in the material world whose resources we share – are 'goods' ... then ideologies are what construct not only human worlds, but humans. (Gee 1999:21)

Discourse-embodied identities and actions are never free from impact on others and it is only through awareness of the ideologies which govern our discourse that we are able to engage in ethical human discourse. Gee argues that two principles are the foundation of such discourse. The first principle is that causing harm to another is always a good reason to refrain from action; the second that there is an ethical obligation to make explicit and to examine any theory which advantages oneself or one's group over another. The combination of these two principles will result in ethical behaviour.

Discourses are both ideologically powerful and resistant to criticism. Internal criticism is only acceptable if it poses no serious threat to the group. More serious criticism is rejected in that any person capable of making such criticism is obviously no longer a member of the group. Discourses exist in opposition to other discourses. An important characteristic of a discourse is the way in which it normalizes ways of being which are part of its discourse and marginalizes ways of being which are part of other discourses. Criticism from a marginalized discourse will have limited impact on a dominant discourse because the ways of being which inform the criticism are ways of being which are aberrant to the dominant discourse.

How then can the awarenesses which both Gee and Fairclough argue for lead to changed (perhaps more consciously ethical) behaviour? Gee suggests that, because we are all the product of many interacting discourses, there is room for "individual style and human agency" in which, virus-like, "people and their Discourses infect each other all the time" (1999:167). It is through cross-discourse membership, and

recognition as a 'full' member of a number of discourses, that we are able to impact on ways of being.

2.9 Possibilities for Agency

Given the fragile and contradictory nature of the self and the strength of dominant discourses, I have suggested that possibilities for opposition and change can only exist when implicit ideologies are forced into awareness. But clearly this is not all that is needed. What is it that constructs identity as agentic and makes it possible for choices to be made that are other than current practice, choices which may bring the individual into conflict with the group discourse or with other more dominant discourses?

Davies (1989,1990) and Davies and Harre (1989,1990) argue that the strength of the post structuralist paradigm is the dual recognition of the force of discourse in determining practice and the ability of people to make choices in regard to practice. In making choices, people are involved in a complex balancing of what is available in the discourses to which they belong, the emotional attachments to the choices available, the fit with the life story they are telling and the moral system which justifies the choice being made (Davies 1989:230). The sort of person one takes oneself to be, the story which is being told and the possibilities available are all implicated in the choices made. This way of thinking of discourse as an interactive construction helps to explain the way in which discursive practices act to both control and liberate those involved in them. So while people do select from the ways of being available to them, they are not "passive recipients of an identity stamped upon them" (Davies & Harre 1989:245).

Choices in opposition to the norm are possible and these choices are made at the point when one discourse conflicts with another. There is also the possibility of creating new choices, new ways of being, other than those currently made available. The discursive practice of active positioning as agency is explored by Davies (1990) in the study of a primary school classroom in which the teacher is explicitly working to position his students as agentic. The theoretical dilemma of agency is in

understanding how it is possible for a socially constructed being to make choices which are other than those available.

Davies suggests that the key to this dilemma is to be found in two ideas. The first is that some discourses actually construct some members as agents for change. Their designated role in the discourse is to find ways to be other. The second is that awareness of the implications of practice (Fairclough 1992, Gee 1996) allows the possibility of creating other ways of being. Davies (1990:360) concludes her study by listing the resources needed to achieve agency. The individual needs a discursive construction of self as group member but also as separate to the group in ways which allow for critical response to group discourse and the construction of alternative ways of being. That is, the individual needs a sense of identity as agentic, as able to act effectively in ways other than those most readily available.

2.10 Metaphor as a Window on Identity

If we accept that language is the way in which we construct the world and our identities within it, it follows that a way of understanding these constructions is to pay close attention to language. The question is then which aspects of language provide most reward for this attention. Maasen and Weingart (2000:4) suggest that metaphors "as omnipresent elements of any type of discourse [are] ideal targets of discourse analysis".

They are not alone in their interest in metaphor. Black (1993:20) refers to a bibliography by Shibbes (1971) which lists approximately four thousand titles on metaphor. Ortony (1993:3) signals a "growing interest in metaphor in a number of other [than literary theory] disciplines". These disciplines include linguistics, psychology, philosophy and education – all of them adding ways of thinking about the nature and function of metaphor.

Ortony (1993:11) outlines three traditional theories of metaphor. The first, the substitution view, comes from a view of language as a literal representation of the world and suggests that metaphor replaces a set of literal sentences, preserving the original meaning. As such, metaphor is to be viewed with suspicion given that its use

may obscure the 'true' meaning. The second, the comparison view, is associated with Aristotle who believed that metaphors acted as implicit comparisons between one aspect of reality and another. Here the interest is in the ways in which 'this is like that'. The third, the interaction view, was developed by Black (1993:38) who argues that the meaning of metaphor is to be found in the interaction between the two subjects in which each is understood in terms of the other. That is, the ways in which 'this is like that' and 'that is like this'. It is this interaction between the two which creates meaning, a process by which "some metaphors enable us to see aspects of reality that the metaphor's production helps to constitute".

The idea that metaphor can offer alternative ways of seeing and being in the world is taken up by Schon (1993) in discussion of the impact of 'generative metaphors' on social policy. In this discussion metaphor is seen as "central to the task of accounting for our perspectives in the world; how we think about things, make sense of reality, and set the problems we later try to solve"(1993:137). For Schon metaphor is both a way of understanding, a 'frame', and a process with potential to generate new connections between one area of experience and another. These new connections can produce new understandings, new ways of being. To take the example used by Schon, a slum can be seen as an unsightly and diseased blight or as a community in distress. The 'naming' and the 'framing' result in particular ways of responding to the situation, consequences which are drawn from powerfully entrenched cultural values and therefore produce obvious 'solutions' to the named 'problems'. A blight should be removed; a community in need should be supported. The impact of these framing metaphors can be either positive or negative in the outcomes for those involved and Schon argues the need for critical awareness of the generative metaphors which impact on the ways in which we construct the world:

We need to be aware of, and focus attention upon, the generative metaphors which underlie our problem-solving stories. However, this is not as easy as it sounds, for generative metaphors are ordinarily tacit. Often we are unaware of the metaphors that shape our perception and understanding of social situations. ... In order to bring generative metaphors to reflective and critical awareness, we must construct them ... [and] it is through storytelling that we can best discover our frames and the generative metaphors implicit in our frames. (Schon 1993:148-9)

This critical focus can lead to 'frame restructuring', to seeing new aspects of situations, to creating new metaphors and new ways of being in the world.

The work of Lakoff and Johnson (1980a, 1980b) also argues that metaphor is central to the ways in which we think and act in the world:

Metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language, but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature. ... Our concepts structure what we perceive, how we get around in the world, and how we relate to other people. Our conceptual system thus plays a central role in defining our everyday realities. If we are right in suggesting that our conceptual system is largely metaphorical, then the way we think, what we experience and what we do every day is very much a matter of metaphor. ... One way to find out [about this conceptual system] is by looking at language. Since communication is based on the same conceptual system in terms of which we think and act, language is an important source of evidence for what that system is like. (Lakoff & Johnson 1980a:454)

Metaphor is far more than a literary flourish, a playing with words. It is a powerful force in constructing and constraining our world. When metaphors of war are used in the language of argument they structure the ways of being possible for us. They impact both on the ways we see the situation and the ways in which we behave:

The essence of metaphor is in understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another. (Lakoff & Johnson 1980a:455)

These metaphorical concepts - Argument is War, Time is Money, Love is a Journey - are so deeply entrenched, so much part of conventional ways of thinking, that it is difficult to comprehend that other ways of understanding and being are possible. Reddy (1993) describes his struggles to achieve cognitive shift from the Language as Conduit metaphor and to construct another story for human communication. His alternative, what he describes as the 'toolmaker paradigm', relocates the human element at the heart of all knowledge construction:

In the toolmakers paradigm ... humanists themselves are the repositories, and the only real repositories of ideas. In the simplest of terms, the conduit metaphor lets human ideas slip out of human brains, so that, once you have recording technologies, you do not need humans any more. (Reddy 1993:188).

The characteristic of metaphor to both constrain and generate ways of being is the focus of a number of studies. Gibbs (1994:8) argues that:

our basic metaphorical conceptualizations of experience constrain how we think creatively and express our ideas in both everyday and literary discourses.

Although Gibbs acknowledges the possibility of new creative and insightful uses of metaphor which are the "products of highly divergent, flexible thinking", he believes that their existence is:

motivated by underlying metaphorical schemes of thought that constrain, even define, the ways we think, reason and imagine. (1994:9)

That is, although new ways of seeing and being in the world are possible, the 'new' ways are only possible through shared understandings of existing metaphors. Schon's (1993) notion of framing may explain the determining metaphors brought into play as referents for understanding. This is not to suggest that, for the most part, these understandings are conscious:

On the contrary, those things that are most alive and most deeply entrenched, efficient and powerful are so automatic as to be unconscious and effortless. (Gibbs 1994:22)

The discussion of metaphor by Maasen and Weingart (2000:33) shifts the focus from this sub-discursive conceptual level to "metaphors on the surface of discourses. Right on the surface-level of discourse [where] ... knowledge dynamics unfold". In language that echoes Bakhtin, these writers argue that it is the 'nomadic' nature of metaphors which makes them the ideal focus for study:

... each word resonates with past occurrences. Hence, past occurrences, actual meanings, and future possibilities all converge on one term. Stabilization of meanings is effectuated by the contexts, the discourses that is, in which these terms appear". (Maasen & Weingart 2000:16)

Metaphors carry the meanings of other discourses with them into the importing discourse. At the same time as they bring meaning in, they are context-specific in the realization of that meaning. Meanings external to the discourse become particular in contexts of use:

... different discourses process the same metaphor in discourse-specific ways. By doing so, new (shades of) meanings, if not new knowledge, are produced. Metaphors are thus not only inevitable and intricate elements of discourse but they are also innovative ... Discourses changed by metaphor reorganize reality. In this way, within the order of discourse, metaphors are effective elements in the interplay of power/knowledge. (Maasen & Weingart 2000:20-21)

The view of metaphor taken by Maasen and Weingart sits well with the constructivist paradigm within which this study of identity is located:

A constructivist perspective towards discourse and metaphors, in particular, does imply that on the level of social communication we refer to things – natural and cultural – as discursively ordered, the assumption being that we have no direct access to the world but only via discourses and practices that accomplish the world for us. ... Discourse analysis ... is about the structural analysis of social communication, that is, about the organization and channeling of discourses in the world, as well as about individual instantiations of discourses, that is, about the ways in which individuals or texts employ the discourses and practices at hand, thereby accomplishing a world. By implication, this holds true for metaphors being basic entities of discourse as well. (Maasen & Weingart 2000:34)

This work raises a series of interesting questions with regard to, among other things, the impetus for, and the impact of, metaphor migration. Why are particular metaphors taken up by one discourse from another at particular points in time and place? What is the impact of these migratory metaphors on the importing discourse? What are the context-specific realizations of these metaphors? Which aspects of metaphor are accepted, which rejected? Which metaphors are displaced by the new arrivals?

Maasen and Weingart focus on the dynamics of knowledge construction and metaphor shift from one area of knowledge to another, the ways in which metaphors act as a means of mapping 'the landscape of knowledge'. There have been several studies of metaphor in relation to the mapping of teacher knowledge (Berliner 1990, Block 1992, Collins & Green 1990, De Guerrero & Villamil 2000, Munby 1986, 1987, Munby & Russell 1990, Nattinger 1984, Tobin 1990, 1995). These studies explore the ways in which metaphors construct, access, evaluate and change teacher understandings of their work.

Munby (1986, 1987, Munby & Russell 1990) focuses on metaphor as a powerful means of understanding the ways in which teachers construct their work. Data drawn from an extensive series of interviews with teachers was analyzed and the dominant metaphors identified as a means of gaining insight into how these teachers "constructed their professional worlds"(1990:117). Munby concludes that focus on

metaphor is both an appropriate research method for exploration of teacher knowledge and an effective means for teachers to reflect on their own practice.

The power of metaphor to shape practice is the focus of Tobin's work. Tobin was initially "interested to see if teachers could use metaphors as a basis for reconceptualizing their teaching roles and to improve the quality of the learning environment for students" (1995:226). Tobin argues that metaphors for teacher work act as a "master switch" for a series of beliefs associated with the current metaphor of practice:

If the switch is thrown (i.e. the metaphor is changed) a host of changes follow (i.e. as new beliefs are deemed relevant to the role). Reconceptualizing a role in terms of a new metaphor appeared to switch an entirely different set of beliefs into operation. (1990:126)

Berliner (1990) discusses two common metaphors for teaching, "mother earth" and "information giver". He suggests that neither of these metaphors adequately capture the complexity and importance of teacher work and that, in fact, both have negative consequences on the ways in which teacher work is understood and enacted. Given the power of metaphor to condition the ways we think about ourselves and others, Berliner argues the need to reconceptualize 'teacher as executive', a move he believes would more accurately represent current teacher work and "may provide a way for teachers to be accorded higher prestige and awarded greater remuneration"(1990:92).

Three studies (Block 1992, De Guerrero & Villamil 2000, Nattinger 1984) explore metaphors for ESL teacher work. Block documents the similarity of metaphors used by teachers and applied linguists in discussion of ESL teacher work. He also points to some discrepancies between these metaphors and those used by students. Given that "we not only think, but also act according to underlying metaphors" (1992:54), Block suggests that metaphor provides a means of understanding the cultures of 'teaching/learning communities' and the roles assigned to both teachers and students within them.

The study by De Guerrero and Villamil (2000) differs from the previous studies in that ESL teachers were asked to produce 'original' metaphors for their work. (The other studies focused on metaphor occurring naturally within teacher discourse.) Although the study provides some insight into the complexities of ESL teacher work,

the artificial nature of the data generating task may have blocked expression of commonly held, and perhaps more influential, metaphors.

Nattinger (1984) explores the metaphors associated with various approaches to language teaching and suggests that teachers struggle to reach clear consensus with regard to Communicative Language Teaching because this approach "has moved away from the metaphors commonly used to describe language teaching but has not as yet fastened onto one of its own" (1984:391). Implicit in this is a belief in the power of metaphor to both express and shape practice.

These studies deal with a range of teacher work and employ a variety of approaches to the study of metaphor. The connection between all of them is the conviction that attention to metaphor is a productive means of understanding the ways in which teachers construct their work:

The concept of metaphor that underlies studies of this type holds an intriguing promise for understanding the ways in which people construct their realities. One can assume that the speech used by teachers, or by other professionals when they talk about their work, represents something to them. If the speech is metaphorical, then it is reasonable to believe that the metaphors used reflect something of how the speaker sees or constructs professional reality. If the metaphors are used persistently, then the case for their representing a construction of reality becomes more compelling. (Munby 1987:379-380)

2.11 The Discursive Construction of ESL Teacher Identity

The focus of this study is work identity, the work identity of ESL teachers. By this I mean the ways in which ESL teachers understand the nature and purpose of their work and their perceptions of the ways in which these understandings become practice. The discussion of identity in this chapter is by no means comprehensive. I have focused on those aspects of the literature which I have found most relevant to my study – notions of self, the construction of individual, group, ideological and agentic identity and the part played by the other in these constructions. It is these understandings which frame the study of ESL teacher identity.

The ways in which we understand ourselves and our world are constructed through discourse. Identity is one of these ways of understanding, but it is an understanding which is ambiguous and fundamentally contradictory. We are positioned to think of ourselves as having a self identity separate from the social world yet only given meaning in relation to others. As a result all identities are tensioned as we are engaged in multiple and often conflicting discourses. There is a complex interweaving of ways of being available to us, our orientation towards these ways of being (orientation based on past experiences and perceptions of self we bring to them) and our desire to tell coherent stories about ourselves. Language, practice and identity move and shift together, each shaping and shaped by the other. The dancer and the dance are inseparable.

Our actions, practices, ways of being, choices made, stories told, are all informed by ideologies – the values and beliefs developed from the resources available to us. When confronted by contradictory choices, ideologies underpinning practice are likely to be forced to the surface, to become explicit, available for evaluation and change. That is, we position ourselves as ESL teachers and participate in the practices we see to be associated with that positioning. In doing so, we are involved in the interactive and on-going construction of ESL teacher identities based on ideologies which, while they inform daily practice, will only be apparent under pressure. Individual identities – the unique combinations of experiences and member resources which we bring to social practices and the sense of self - find expression in ideological identities through commitment to particular ways of being in the world as part of a coherent and unified life story. These valued ways of being attract people to work and group identities in which they feel congruence between self and group. One's 'correct' choices are reinforced as group 'correct' choices. Personal ideologies are enacted in practice and reinforced, change and are changed by group practice leading to the development of commonly held group ideologies and group identities.

This study is about the ways in which ESL teachers imagine themselves and their work, the ways in which they construct their teacher identities. It sees their work as acts of identity in which they make choices between possible ways of being as teachers and are active in defining and redefining the who, what and why of their work in relation to contexts of time, place and power and ways of being possible to

them in particular instances of their work. Identity is made meaningful by ways of being and doing in the world. Identity is located in the discourse of teachers and teaching – in the ways teachers see themselves and others. Issues of language and identity are central to the work of ESL teachers. Their primary task is the teaching of language and of new ways of being within that language. As such these teachers are well placed to develop explicit awareness of the process of identity construction through language for both themselves and their students.

The next chapter will outline my research journey, discuss issues of methodology and introduce a number of key players – the teachers whose understandings of themselves and their work are the focus of this study into ESL teacher work and identity. The chapter will also explore my own positioning as ESL teacher and researcher, as insider-outsider, and the impact of that positioning on this study.

Chapter 3: Constructing Identity in a Room Full of Mirrors

3.1 Mapping the Journey

This chapter provides a record of my research journey. It begins with consideration of my positioning as researcher-as-insider before moving on to discussion of the research paradigm within which this study is located. The process of data collection is described. The teachers participating in the case studies are introduced. The focus of each of the case study conversations is discussed and the approach taken to writing about the data outlined. I then give my own teacher-story which makes my teacher-researcher positioning explicit and serves as a worked example of the ways in which I understand my data. The final section of this chapter discusses a number of ethical issues particular to this study and the ways in which I have attempted to resolve these issues.

3.2 Teacher as Researcher – Researcher as Teacher

The focus of my research is teacher identity as it is understood and enacted by English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers working in government secondary schools in the state of Victoria. My interest in this area comes from both my past work as an ESL teacher in this system and my present work at the tertiary level as an ESL teacher educator. The understandings which inform my work as teacher educator are largely drawn from personal experience, that is, in my own enactment of ESL teacher identity. Extending and challenging these personal understandings through exploration of the understandings of others has potential benefit, not only for my own work, but also for that of others involved at all levels in the teaching of English as a second language (TESL).

The close connection which exists between past and present identities is both a strength and complexity of this study. As a recognized member of the ESL teacher community in Melbourne, I have been given access to the thinking of ESL teachers at a level of intimacy which would not, I think, be available to other researchers. The willingness of ESL teachers to share understandings of their work is largely

based on their perception of me as one of them, as a person who understands the realities of teacher work and the development of ESL teacher identity in ways in which others who have not been part of this process may not. This recognition, and the confidences which come from it, are a strength of my research. It is also an area of complexity in that my own ESL teacher identities are the lens through which I view the ESL teacher identities of others. I recognize and understand most readily those enactments of identity which are like my own. Attempts to resist this mirroring of myself in others may result in over-correction, causing me to reject that with which I feel most comfortable and focus on elements which are at odds with my own image. An added complexity of my position of researcher-as-insider is the possibility that those ESL teachers to whom I talk reshape their identities to meet what they perceive to be my expectations. That is, they create themselves as they believe I wish them to be.

3.3 Ways of Knowing – Qualitative Research

Discussions of qualitative research are much like discussions of identity. Both are concepts which embrace a wide range of interest groups and are diverse, complex, contradictory and shifting. In the words of Denzin and Lincoln (2000:xi), the 'field' of qualitative research is:

defined primarily by a series of essential tensions, contradictions and hesitations. These tensions ... work back and forth between competing definitions and conceptions of the field [Any attempt at clarification is] in the face of paradigmatic differences, inherent contradictions among styles and types of research, and over the barriers of disciplinary, national, racial, cultural and gender differences.

Despite these complexities, there is one connecting element of all research which positions itself as qualitative. It is "the avowed humanistic commitment to study the social world from the perspective of the interacting individual" (Denzin & Lincoln 2000:xvi). It is this single point that is held in common by all who shelter under the large umbrella of qualitative research. It is the point of connection between feminist research, queer theory, race and cultural studies and a myriad of others, including my own study of ESL teacher identity. The philosophical stance behind this commitment is one based on a view of the world in which the 'realities' available for study are largely constructed by "community consensus regarding

what is 'real', what is useful and what has meaning" (Lincoln & Guba 2000:167). If the social world is one largely constructed by those within it, it seems sensible that their perceptions and understandings should be the primary focus of research which seeks to first make these understandings explicit and then to bring some version of them into a wider arena in the form of 'knowledge' designed to extend shared understandings of the world.

If the central concern of qualitative research is to study the world from the viewpoint of those within it, is it possible to identify other characteristics? Miles and Huberman (1994:6-7) list several such elements including:

- intense and prolonged contact with the area under study
- interest in the everyday life of individuals and groups
- attempts to capture a holistic view which remains true to the perceptions of participants
- focus on patterns and themes within the data which should also retain its original form
- researcher as main instrument of data collection
- analysis through words.

These defining characteristics are echoed by Denzin and Lincoln (2000:3-4). Qualitative research is situated in the world as "qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them". These attempts involve a range of research methods including "case study; personal experience; introspection; life story [and] interview". A range of approaches, or interpretive practices, are used in data analysis in the "hope of getting a better understanding of the subject matter".

Flick (1998:5-6) identifies several similar defining features of qualitative research. The first is that the area of study determines the approaches taken, the second that the diversity of participant understandings is acknowledged, the third that the researcher is made an 'explicit part of knowledge production' and finally, that discussion and practice utilizes a variety of theoretical approaches and methods.

Where then does my study of ESL teacher identity fit in the field of qualitative research as described by these writers? The study is explicitly committed to an understanding of ESL teacher identity as it is experienced by the participants in the study. It is participant understandings of identity which are most meaningful for all

those involved in their enactment. The study aims to make the understandings of the teachers involved explicit and available for discussion as a means of increasing knowledge of the area and informing practice. Data collection took place over a period of two years with repeated contact with participants. The interest of the study is in the 'everyday' work of ESL teachers, my role as researcher written into the study as explicitly as I am able and a range of approaches are taken to data collection. Teacher identities are presented, as far as is possible, in the ways in which participants represent them. It is only after this initial presentation that patterns and themes are identified and discussed using a variety of interpretive frames. The complexities inherent in "the construction of reality" (Flick 1998:37) through research are acknowledged. The 'realities' presented by this study are multiply constructed and interpreted – by participants as events and understandings are given form in text, by the researcher as text becomes interpreted data and by the reader as meaning is taken from the text.

This is a view of knowledge, and ways of being in the world, as socially constructed through discourse, constructions both created and imposed, subjective and dynamic. What is available as conscious 'knowledge' are the understandings which we construct dialogically with others, and language is the primary tool of this dialogic process of construction. Language signals meaning which is at once particular to our own individual understanding and read by others in ways both individual and shared. Language can never be neutral – it is always overpopulated, peopled with the meanings and intentions of others, as well as those particular meanings which we impose upon it in each instance of use. These meanings, both past and most immediate, leave echoes behind to mark their presence but they are also transient, there and yet not there. Even as experiences and understandings slip and shift in changing kaleidoscopes of time and space, meanings captured in language also change, stories re-written each time they are revisited.

The conversations which I had with teachers are particular to contexts of time and place, to moments of perception and interpretation of experience. Meanings slip between the margins of that which is specific to time and place and that which is transferable to another context. Another time with altered components of being – physical, emotional and immediate experiential – would have resulted in a different

story being told – a story the same and yet not the same. In the same way, each time I return to the transcripts of these conversations, the possibility exists for another and different reading:

Both the researcher and the research are on-going constructions that produce each other and are produced within a myriad of possible relationships. Each real and imagined encounter with another, each real and anticipated audience, not only reconstructs the researcher but also reconstructs the research. (Adam St Pierre 1998:2)

3.4 Qualitative Research as Process – Study Design

Qualitative research uses a wide variety of research methodologies. Choice of method is dependent on the nature of the research, rather than on the paradigm within which that research is situated. Given that my research interest is in ESL teacher identities as these are understood by ESL teachers, the most appropriate research methods are those which allow participants to share these understandings in depth, in detail and at length. A case study approach seemed well positioned to offer access to, and expression of, these understandings. It is also an approach compatible with the understandings of knowledge as experiential, socially constructed and context specific on which this study is based.

3.4.1 Case Study

The term 'case study' is one widely used in discussion of research yet, like most terms encountered in this study, there seems no one clear definition of meaning. 'Case study' is "used by many people in many different ways to mean many different things" (Merriam 1988:xiv). As with the term 'qualitative research' discussed earlier, the connecting point between various interpretations of case study is the purpose of this approach. Case study aims to understand the 'case' in depth, recognizing both the complexity of the individual case and the context within which that case operates in the natural world:

... case studies are the preferred strategy [for doing social science research] when 'how' or 'why' questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context. (Yin 1984:13)

A case can be many different things. It can be a single person, a group of people or an incident such as the introduction of a new school program. The case is a "bounded system" (Adelman, Jenkins & Kemmis 1980:49), the nature of which is determined by researcher interest:

Thus a case study could be a holistic, intensive, rich description and analysis of an individual student's experience, a computer-based instructional program or the program itself. Each of these units constitutes a *bounded system* (Merriam 1988:45).

Stake (2000:437) describes three types of case study. An *intrinsic* case study is one in which the researcher seeks understanding of one particular case. An *instrumental* case study is one in which the main interest of the researcher is other than the individual case. The case is used to give insight into an issue or theory external to the case. A *collective* case study is an extension of this form of case study in which a number of cases are studied to learn more about the phenomenon under investigation. Cases are chosen because "it is believed that understanding them will lead to better understanding ... about a still larger collection of cases" (Stake 2000:437).

Adelman, Jenkins and Kemmis (1980:49) distinguish between two types of case study. The first is similar to Stake's instrumental/collective categories in that an issue is the focus and the "bounded system", that is the case, is "an instance drawn from a class". The second, Stake's intrinsic case study, is where "a bounded system (the case) is given, within which issues are indicated, discovered or studied so that a tolerably full understanding of the case is possible". An example of the first is the exploration of issues facing a religious movement (the class) through the understandings of a group within that class (the instance drawn from the class). An example of the second is the study of an individual religious leader or disciple.

The neat division between types of case study suggested above is often more apparent than real (Stake 2000:438, Adelman, Jenkins & Kemmis 1980:51). Boundaries become blurred as the members of the 'collective' become more unique and the connections between individual and context more obvious. In practice it is the purpose which is different, rather than the approach.

My research is best understood as a collective case study with a focus on ESL teacher identities as they are represented by a number of ESL teachers (or cases), rather than a full exploration of individual cases. This distinction between individual and group was clear in the early stages of data collection but repeated contact with a small number of teachers in the later stages made the distinction between intrinsic and collective case study less clear.

If distinction between types of case study is problematic, consideration of characteristics held in common may be useful. Merriam (1988:11) suggests four characteristics of qualitative case study. Qualitative case study is *particularistic* in that it focuses on "a particular situation, event, program or phenomenon". It is *descriptive* in that the final case study report is a "rich, 'thick' description of the phenomenon under study". It is *heuristic* in that it "extends the reader's experience of what is known". Finally it is *inductive* in that understandings are "grounded in the context itself".

My use of case study meets these requirements for case study research. It is focused on ESL teacher identities. It provides rich description and, by allowing access to the experiences and understandings of others, it "extends ... what is known". Understandings are, as far as I can manage, drawn from the data, rather than being imposed on it.

A common concern expressed in discussion of case study research is the extent to which the understandings gained are transferable, the extent to which we are able to move from the particular to the general. This is especially so in the type of collective case study used in my study of ESL teacher identity in which the primary interest of the research is other than the individual case. How far is it possible to move from discussions of ESL teacher identities as they are understood by these teachers to ESL teacher identities as they apply to others involved in ESL teacher work? It is necessary to consider these questions carefully, given that generalizable understandings are so often seen as the end product of all research.

Stake (2000:442) suggests that the answer to this dilemma lies in the nature of learning made possible through case study research. He describes this learning as

"naturalistic generalization". That is, the reader is able to learn from the reported experiences of others as if the experiences had been personal:

The reader comes to know some things told, as if he or she had experienced it. Enduring meanings come from encounter, and are modified and reinforced by repeated encounter.

In life itself, this occurs seldom to the individual alone but in the presence of others. ... We come to know what has happened partly in terms of what others reveal as their experience. ... Knowledge is socially constructed, so we constructionists believe, and, in their experiential and contextual accounts, case study researchers assist readers in the construction of knowledge. (Stake 2000:442)

Haas Dyson (1997) echoes these understandings of knowledge in discussion of case study as an approach to the study of children's literacy. She argues that the detailed richness of "singular experiences" offers opportunities to consider the complexities inherent in teaching and learning in ways that may be obscured in studies focused on mass, rather than individual, understandings:

In its careful grounding of important abstractions in mundane particulars, case study research offers diverse professionals a means for identifying and talking about the dimensions and dynamics of living and learning in classrooms (and other settings as well). (Haas Dyson 1997:177-178)

It is the combination of varied individual experiences and shared interests which makes the development of meaningful understandings possible:

Crossing conceptual boundaries is thus linked to crossing human ones: when we, with our diverse experiences and our common concerns, converse, we push each other out of bounds, we help each other to attend to the world a bit differently. (Haas Dyson 1997:179)

3.4.2 Triangulation

Given the nature of knowledge construction possible through case study research it is important to provide the reader with as many sources of experiential understanding as possible. There is also researcher concern to ensure that the experiences made available are regarded as believable and trustworthy. This is not to suggest the existence of an objective reality which can be separated from those involved in its construction. Rather it is an attempt to support the credibility of the observations and conclusions of the researcher, particularly with regard to "any claim of regularity, discrepancy, or other pattern constellation" (Pitman & Maxwell 1992:763).

In qualitative research these attempts to 'get it right' are through the uses of multiple perceptions, a process called triangulation (Denzin & Lincoln 1998, Flick 1998, Merriam 1988, Pitman & Maxwell 1992, Stake 2000, Sturman 1999, Taft 1992). Triangulation is not to be regarded as a "strategy of validation, but an alternative to validation" (Denzin & Lincoln 1998:4). It is part of the qualitative researcher's attempt to reach detailed understanding of the area under study. Triangulation can be done in a variety of ways:

[Triangulation is] a procedure in which multiple sources are used to obtain evidence on the same phenomenon. Thus, the observations may be supplemented by interviews, feedback to the members of the group for their comment, and documentary evidence such as school notices, correspondence, minutes and other archives. (Taft 1999:117)

My research draws on a wide variety of data sources including documentary evidence, an initial questionnaire, a single large scale unstructured interview and a series of interviews with a smaller number of participants, each interview with a different focus.

Participant input and checking of researcher understandings plays an important part in triangulation. Stake (2000:450) argues that this is "one of the most needed forms of validation of qualitative research" and describes the process as follows:

In long use of member checking I typically get little back from the actor – not very satisfying but entirely necessary. I often do not have my facts straight and I need help. I impose upon the actor to do some of my work. The most frequent response of the actors to whom I have sent drafts is not to acknowledge that I have sent anything. Often, the account is routine, apparently not deserving a response. But sometimes I get a thorough reading, a mutually respectful argument and suggestions for improvement. I think I can say that all my reports have been improved by member checking.

I found this description of member checking reassuring. All participants were provided with interview transcripts. Those involved in the later stages of data collection were sent drafts of the work as it developed. Like Stake, the "most frequent response ... [was] not to acknowledge that I [had] sent anything". Despite this I felt the sharing process was essential for accuracy and understanding and also in terms of honesty to participants. I did not want to say anything which participants did not know was being said.

If triangulation is understood to be a version of traditional approaches to validity, then the concept is problematic when positioned within a constructivist paradigm. If, however, it is seen as a strategy to extend and enrich understandings, a way to explore alternative interpretations and perspectives, it fits neatly with notions of a multiple constructed world, providing the reader with a rich variety of representations. Certainly I feel this study has been enriched by the range of data which has been used:

Triangulation is the display of multiple, refracted realities simultaneously. ... Readers and audiences are then invited to explore competing versions of the text, to become immersed in and merge with new realities to comprehend. (Denzin & Lincoln 2000:6)

If triangulation is understood in these terms, it is a valuable tool in qualitative research and one which "can only contribute greatly to persuading a consumer of its meaningfulness" (Guba & Lincoln 1999:148).

3.4.3 Selection of Cases

Case study researchers undertaking a collective case study, in which a number of cases are studied to learn more about the phenomenon under investigation, may be concerned to select cases which are representative of others. Merriam (1988:48) suggests that this is best done through 'non probabilistic purposive sampling'. This can be done either on the basis of researcher developed criteria for selection or it can be more haphazard. However it is done the purpose is to "discover, understand, gain insight; therefore one needs to select a sample from which one can learn the most" (Merriam 1988:48). Although Stake (1995:5) agrees that researchers involved in collective case study may be more concerned with the representative nature of the cases under study, he rejects sampling as an approach to the selection of cases. He argues that case study research "is not sampling research" and that the basis for selection of cases "should be to maximize what we can learn". This rejection of sampling is modified slightly in a more recent work (Stake 2000) in which he agrees selection may involve consideration of the nature of the larger group but even with collective case studies "selection by sampling of attributes should not be the highest priority. Balance and variety are important; opportunity to learn is of primary importance" (Stake 2000:447).

Selection of cases for this study was problematic. Sixty-eight teachers volunteered to be interviewed and I was keen to talk to them all. Fortunately sanity, in the form of my supervisor, prevailed and I acknowledged what was possible within the constraints of time and other resources. Twenty teachers were selected, a process guided by the nature of the larger cohort, a desire to cover as many contexts and types of ESL teaching as possible and, most importantly, the opportunity to learn.

3.5 Interviews

The aim of all qualitative research is to understand the area under study from the perspective of those involved and interviewing is one of the most powerful ways of gaining access to these understandings. It is "the main road to multiple realities" (Stake 1995:64). Interviewing can take several forms, ranging from tightly structured standardized interviews to open-ended unstructured interviews. Fontana and Frey (2000:652) suggest that unstructured interviewing "can provide a greater breadth of data than other types, given its qualitative nature". They argue that "to learn about people we must treat them as people, and they will work with us to create accounts of their lives (2000:668).

There are focus questions provided for the unstructured interview. Indeed May (2001:124) uses the term 'focus interview' as an alternative to 'unstructured interview'. These questions provide a starting point for discussion with the participant free to respond in ways meaningful for them. Other questions throughout the interview emerge from the developing text and will often be requests for elaboration or clarification. In that those involved are positioned as equals with shared interests, the unstructured interview has many of the characteristics of conversation, an approach which due to "the underlying trust ... may end up probing more deeply than aggressive questioning techniques" (Connelly & Clandinin 1999:137).

Interviews used in this study were all unstructured. An initial focus question was provided after which the direction of the interview was in the hands of the participant. My position, as both ESL teacher and researcher, combined with pre-existing relationships with the participants meant that these interviews were

conversations between colleagues, conversations between friends. The result of this closeness was both a richness of data and a series of ethical dilemmas which are discussed later in this chapter.

The text created by the unstructured interview is a source of data, often the main source, for the study. This text and the uses made of it are not a mirror of experience (Flick 1998:37). They are constructions of reality by all those involved: participant, researcher and reader, a process of making meaning by transforming the outer world into forms which have sense for individual inner worlds. Participants transform experiences to narrative. Texts based on these narratives are constructed and interpreted by the researcher and the reader again interprets this researcher text. My response to this dilemma has been to make my researcher presence explicit and to remind the reader of the constructed nature of the text.

3.6 Collecting the Data

I am aware that the text now changes in tone. Clear reporting of process is necessary but one difficult to express as other than a series of steps, a list of 'I did' and 'then I did'.

There were a number of stages to data collection. The first step was to gain an overall impression of ESL teachers as a total group. Information on factual aspects of identity (such as sex, age, language background and teaching qualifications) was gathered via a questionnaire distributed to all Victorian government secondary schools with ESL staff. This stage of data collection was completed by April 1998. The next stage was a series of lengthy (on average between one and two hours) unstructured interviews with teachers who had expressed interest in talking to me about themselves and their work. The interviews were completed by the end of 1998. These interviews were followed by a series of shorter interviews with a small number of teachers. There were nine teachers involved in this stage and I met with each teacher three times throughout 1999.

3.6.1 The Questionnaire

My starting point for an exploration of ESL teacher identity was to gain an understanding of the nature of the cohort as a whole. I already had an intuitive impression of the group (older, female, English-speaking background – in short, people very much like me) but wanted to check whether this impression was accurate. The questionnaire (Appendix One) asked for information on age, sex, country of birth, qualifications to teach ESL, other teaching area (all Victorian secondary teachers must be qualified to teach two subjects) and teaching experience.

Identifying government secondary schools with ESL teachers was made possible by reference to ESL staffing information available from the Victorian Department of Education. Each year information is collected on the number and type of students from non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB) in all government (or state) schools. The information is used to determine targeted ESL funding which is provided as part of the school's total budget. This targeted funding is in the form of a staffing allowance which is to be used to meet the needs of the school's NESB students. Information on the use of this funding is collected by a survey of all schools which receive targeted ESL funding. The information I used is taken from *The ESL Report – Department of Education 1996*. This was the most recent information available at the time.

The report identified 132 government secondary schools and 11 intensive settings (specialist English language schools and centres) which received targeted ESL funding. Five hundred and sixty-two ESL teachers were employed in these schools in 1996 (Appendix Two). Although these figures are the most reliable available, they may not be accurate. The Report notes that a number of schools which received a staffing allocation as part of the total school budget did not indicate how the money was used (ESL Report 1996:24). There were also 99 ESL teachers employed in intensive English language schools and centres (ESL Report 1996:17). This is more likely to be an accurate figure given the closer relationship which exists between these specialist settings and the relevant staff in the Department of Education.

Multiple copies of the questionnaire were sent to the 132 schools and 11 specialist English language schools and centres. No information was available on the number of ESL teachers in individual schools. Where schools required more questionnaires I asked them to make copies. In response I received 215 completed questionnaires, approximately one third of the total group as indicated by the ESL Survey. The teachers who completed the questionnaires self-identified as ESL teachers and were prepared to spend the few minutes required to complete the form. Of the 215 responses, 68 teachers volunteered to be involved in the next stage of the study, the extended interview.

The results of the questionnaire were analyzed using SPSS, a data processing program – *Statistical Processing for Social Sciences*. These results are given in Appendix Three. Based on this information, the 'typical' ESL teacher is a woman aged in her forties, born in Australia of English-speaking background. She has an under graduate degree followed by one year of pre-service teacher training with teaching methods in English and ESL and has between six and ten years teaching experience. These results guided my choice of participants for the next stage of data collection in that the teachers involved broadly reflected the composition of the cohort as a whole.

3.6.2 The First Interviews

The next step involved selecting a manageable number of teachers from the 68 who had volunteered to be further involved. All teachers who completed the questionnaire had identified themselves as ESL teachers. Those who were willing to be part of this next stage of the research were making another, and stronger, statement of their ESL teacher identity. In many cases they signaled their recognition of our shared identity in the form of personal notes on the bottom of the questionnaire. There were best wishes, greetings from friends and 'you probably don't remember me but...' notes. I was being recognized and claimed as one of the group in a process of co-construction of identity.

3.6.3 Selection of Participants

I selected twenty participants for Stage Two who were, if not representative of the total group, at least not dissimilar. Given that I have worked as an ESL teacher for

twenty years and have a high profile in the area, it was not possible for me to avoid friends, teachers with whom I had worked, people I knew, people to whom I was known. I did, however, exclude any of my ex-students. Including people whom I had taught to be ESL teachers would, I thought, be inappropriate, given the nature of the past relationship. Selection was based on variety and breadth, in that I was keen to make the data as rich as possible. I started the process by sorting possible participants into type (male/female, less and more experienced and so on). After this, selection was more or less a lucky dip.

The group consisted of fifteen women and five men. Fifteen were born in Australia, four of them in homes where Greek was spoken as the first language. All four started primary school in Australia unable to speak English. Three others in this group had migrant parents with varying levels of ability in English.

Of the five participants who were born outside Australia, three had come to Australia as children, two as adults. Only one of these five was from an English-speaking country. The others were from Germany, Croatia, Italy and China. The three children had arrived in Australia speaking no English with parents who were also unable to speak English. The adult, from China, had learned English as a child and had lived in a number of English speaking countries before coming to Australia.

Ten participants had a Diploma of Education with a teaching method in ESL. Four had a Bachelor of Education with a teaching method in ESL. Three had a specialist post-graduate Diploma in TESL and one a Master of Education (TESL). Two had no specialist qualifications though they had both attended a variety of different inservices and, in one case, completed several subjects towards an ESL teaching qualification.

Ten were qualified to teach English, six to teach a language other than English (French, German, Greek, Spanish and Chinese). There were two History teachers and one Geography teacher. The remaining teacher was the unusual combination of ESL, Maths and Science. Most of the participants were experienced ESL teachers. Seventeen had been working in ESL for more than ten years and four had more than twenty years experience. Two were relative beginners with just two years

experience. One had limited experience as an ESL teacher in Australia but had taught English for a number of years in Hong Kong.

Sixteen teachers were working in secondary schools, four in specialist English language schools. They were all teaching ESL at the time of the interview. A small number were also teaching their other subject. The secondary schools were in different suburbs and covered a variety of socio-economic and ethnic groups, ranging from schools in lower socio-economic areas with large numbers of recently arrived refugees to schools in the wealthier eastern suburbs with small numbers of ESL students, mainly the children of business migrants from China and Hong Kong.

3.6.4 The Interviews

I met with each of these teachers once for an extended unstructured interview about their work as ESL teachers. These interviews followed a similar format to that in which I participated as ESL teacher and which is given as a worked example in a later section of this chapter. The interviews were audiotaped. I started each interview by asking how the teacher became involved in ESL teaching. After this opening question, the conversation went wherever the teacher took it and lasted until the teacher ran out of things she or he wanted to say – usually about an hour. I expressed interest, asked for clarification or more detail and occasionally signaled my own ESL teacher identity by commenting on a common experience. These sessions took place in a wide variety of venues – wherever was most convenient for the teacher concerned. We met at schools, cafes, pubs, teachers' homes and, in two cases, my office at university. The choice of setting added an extra dimension to the discourse (Gee 1999) and to the way in which the conversation positioned us as participants. In the schools I felt welcomed as a colleague – a fellow ESL teacher. In the social settings we were meeting as friends. (This issue of existing relationships of friendship and the complexity of the overlay of friend, fellow-teacher and researcher is discussed elsewhere). In my office, a location chosen by the two participants, I felt myself to have been positioned as 'researcher', rather than teacher, a reaction perhaps due to my own sense of conflicting identity. One of the teachers had approached her principal for special permission to leave school to assist with 'university research'. The other teacher may have been signaling our shared identity as students – she was going to use the library.

After the interviews, two copies of the transcript were sent to each participant with a letter of thanks and an invitation to return one copy if there was anything they wanted to change or add. Fourteen teachers added to the transcripts and returned them. Most of these additions were corrections of grammar, though in several cases, additional information was given to clarify something that had been said. These additions form part of the text which I analyzed. In one case a section of the interview had been deleted and I do not make any use of this part of the transcript. One teacher wrote several pages of additional thoughts, contacted me to continue the discussion and then went on to write an article for a professional journal based on our conversation.

3.6.5 The Case Studies

The next stage of the data collection involved repeated interviews with a small number of teachers over an extended period of time. Selection of participants for this stage of the data collection was again a difficult process. Almost all of the teachers involved in Stage Two were willing to continue their involvement. (The two exceptions were not to be teaching in the year in which I planned this stage of the research – one had been accepted into a Teacher Release to Industry Program (TRIP) and the other was to be on long service leave). Again selection was on the basis of variety, breadth and the desire to learn. The experience of the first interview was also a consideration in that I needed participants who were able to talk easily about their work and who would, I felt, be available and remain interested for the extended period of time needed for this stage of data collection.

In the end eight teachers were involved. They were joined by one more when the teacher who had been on long service leave returned to work in a refugee camp set up for Kosovar refugees and contacted me to indicate that he was now available. There are brief descriptions of each of these teachers offered in Appendix Four. I am aware of the injustice I am doing the teachers in these descriptions. They are all much more than I can say in these simplistic and static portraits, based on information drawn from interviews and from my own understandings of them. There is, after all, "no way to stuff a real-live person between the two covers of a text" (Denzin 1989a:83). In almost every case some form of prior relationship

exists which impacts on the ways in which I describe these teachers. I have attempted to clarify the nature of the relationship. In accordance with ethics requirements, pseudonyms have been used for teachers and schools.

3.6.5.1 Case Study Interviews

These nine teachers had already been part of the Stage two data collection in which they had talked at length about their reasons for being ESL teachers, the ESL teacher role and their story so far. In this next series of interviews I wanted to move to a closer focus on three aspects of ESL teacher identity. The first was a focus on conflict and change. Fairclough (1992) suggests that, in conditions of change and conflict, naturalized ideologies, which are a fundamental part of identity maybe placed under pressure, causing them to be made explicit. This conflict may be an internal conflict between competing ideologies which are part of an individual value system. The conflict may also be external, with conflict between the individual and others. I hoped that, by asking teachers to focus on change and possible conflict arising from change, underlying ideologies informing their ESL teacher practice would be made an explicit part of the conversation.

The second focus was on the students. If identity is largely defined with reference to the 'other' (Hall 1997a), then the identities which these teachers construct for their students would also be the identities which construct them. Issues of power, in both the teacher-student relationship and in the work being done with these students, were also central to notions of identity and the other.

The third focus for discussion was on the future. Where did these teachers expect to be, want to be, in the coming year? A driving force in identity construction seems to be desire for coherence between past, present and future self (McAdams 1997, Gecas & Mortimer 1987). Whether such coherence is reality or illusion is not the issue here:

Rather, what must be established is how individuals give coherence to their lives when they write or talk self-autobiographies. The sources of this coherence, the narratives that lie behind them, and the larger ideologies that structure them must be uncovered. (Denzin 1989a:62)

I hoped that, in talking about the future, these teachers would make aspects of their continuing ESL teacher identity explicit in discussion of ways in which the future would either reinforce or require change of existing identities.

The first interview, which focused on change, took place early in the first term of 1999. Again transcripts were returned to participants. This time I included my own thinking about the issues raised in the conversation. I hoped that, in doing this, I would make my own developing understandings available for discussion and critique but the approach seemed to stifle rather than encourage discussion and I discontinued the practice with future transcripts. The second interview took place in the middle of 1999 and focused on the students with whom the teacher was working. The final interview took place at the end of the year and focused on the teacher's plans for the following year. Contact with May, one of the participants, was postponed until January 2000, as she was overseas. The interview with Vicky was repeated in February 2000 because of equipment failure. An additional interview was held with both Tom and Gary as their plans for the future changed.

A pattern was established with responses to the transcripts which was to continue throughout this period of data collection. Tom returned a heavily annotated transcript. Vicky and Alice corrected grammar. Mandy added a few comments on my interpretation of the data, sometimes agreeing, sometimes correcting and giving additional information. A cheery note of best wishes always accompanied these comments. The others did not return the transcripts. Instead they expressed guilt over their failure to do so each time we met. In the light of this reaction, I emphasized that the return of the transcript was a matter of personal choice.

A check on the approach which I had taken for data collection was in the final conversation with teachers. In the closing moments of each conversation I asked for some feedback on the process, that is the focus question for each session, the resulting conversation and the return of the transcripts for comment. In each case the request for feedback was framed in terms of the participant's reaction to the process.

In every case the response was positive:

- I found the whole experience very enjoyable – Mandy.
- I am at ease when I am talking to you every time – May.
- I've been perfectly happy with what I've said and it's made me think – Sally.
- You're a friend so it's been fine – Gary.
- It's been fantastic – Connie.
- I do feel like I've been quite confident ... it's an effective way of collecting data – Vicky.
- ESL teachers generally work well when we get together – Alice.
- The thing is that we're friends. Like you know when you're asking me about things ... you're just the person I want to discuss it with ... just like a conversation – Stefan.
- It's been fine. [The process of reading and commenting on the transcripts] has allowed me to reflect on what I've said and to add important things that I omitted – Tom.

For each I am trusted colleague and friend. The implications (and responsibilities) resulting from this sort of researcher-participant relationship are discussed in the final section of this chapter where I grapple with issues of trust and betrayal.

The last section has described the procedure followed for data collection. The next section will focus on the approach taken in writing about the data.

3.7 Analysis

The sources of information available in this exploration of ESL teacher identity and work are the dialogue between ESL teachers and researcher, who is also ESL teacher, the internal dialogue between researcher as researcher and researcher as ESL teacher, the dialogue between researcher and reader, each of them located in wider contexts of time, place and relationships of power. In this multi-voiced research world, my role as most privileged player in the representation and reconstruction of others could result in my voice speaking over, as well as for, others.

The quandary facing researchers giving voice to others is how best to deal with the shifting kaleidoscope of meanings to capture the patterns of understandings which those teachers involved in the study give to themselves and their experiences, how best to "reveal the interpreted world of interacting individuals" (Denzin 1989a:30) in ways which ring true both for those involved and for those who read the

discussion of these 'interpreted worlds'. Even as we acknowledge the transient and partially comprehended nature of meanings constructed through language, we are also aware of the 'unreal reality' which these meanings assume in the daily lives of all of us.

The approach taken is to contextualise these conversations both within the wider historical context of ESL teacher work in Victoria and within the specific biographical and teaching context of individual teachers. I also make my own teacher story explicit and then seek to allow the voices of others to speak freely. The complexities of multi-layered meanings are approached through a two-pronged analysis of discourse. There is first a focus on explicit understandings of ESL teacher work and identity, followed by consideration of implicit understandings embodied in representational uses of language - an approach which views language as first transparent and then as opaque (Beavis 1997). This is not to suggest that one version is more 'true' than another. It is an attempt to combine recognition of teacher realities with an exploration of the richness of implicit meanings expressed at other levels of language use. The teachers involved continue to own their stories through a careful process of sharing of transcripts and draft materials. Their responses to my understandings are included as views which confirm, extend or offer alternate ways of understanding the material.

3.7.1 Language as Transparent - Language as Opaque

Any attempt to sort and classify the interview transcripts is one which ignores much of the richness of the data. Selection of some comments for quotation ignores others; any story told is another story untold. After reading and re-reading the transcripts over the course of the data collection, I felt that I knew my data well and yet each time I revisited it, I found new ways of seeing it, new connections to be made. Faced with the challenge to find a way to share understandings of my data which would acknowledge the richness and complexities of what was being said, I chose to follow an approach suggested by Freeman (1994) and taken by Beavis (1997).

Freeman (1994) describes an approach to language data in which he distinguishes between 'representational' and 'presentational' understandings of such data. In a

representational approach, language is treated as intentional, that is, it means what the teachers intend that it should mean. The "teacher's reasons are taken as given in her words" (Freeman 1994:89). In a presentational approach the "teacher's words are taken for what they are as well as for what they say" (Freeman 1994:83). This second approach recognizes the complexities and multi-voiced nature of meaning making. Freeman argues that these two dimensions of language - that it is both substance and vehicle of meaning - are so intertwined that any analysis of language data must deal with both:

By looking at, rather than simply through, language data, researchers who study teachers' knowledge can document development and change in teachers' 'mental lives' and hence build a fuller and more complex view of what teachers know (Freeman 1994:90).

Beavis (1997) uses the approach described by Freeman in her analysis of language data drawn from a series of teacher interviews. She deals with her data in two ways. The first sees the language of the interview text as "effectively decontextualized and transparent". In Freeman's terms, she is looking *through* the language. That is, questions are asked and answers given in ways which are "unproblematic, as a source of information that can be relied upon". If I refuse to accept what teachers say as an expression of reality, then I am ignoring the understandings which are the focus of my study. So, on this level of analysis, I accept the teachers' descriptions of themselves and their work as descriptions of reality. I look for patterns of shared realities across the interviews and construct a picture of ESL teacher identities and practices which seem to have meaning for those involved. I report on surface level meanings and look for patterns within and between individual participants' responses. The patterns of meanings often focus on reasons for actions taken, descriptions of people and practice and explicitly expressed attitudes and values.

The second approach taken by Beavis looks *at* the language and treats:

interviews as opaque ... [exploring ways in which] teachers seemed to be influenced and positioned by the discourses which seemed to dominate their practice ... and their thinking about the subject and themselves ... particular features of language use: metaphors, images used to describe themselves and their students, their choice of verbs, recurrent phrases (Beavis 1997:64).

When I approach language as presentational or opaque, I focus on ways of being as an ESL teacher which I see implicitly and systematically within the language of the conversation. The patterns of meaning which come from this level of analysis are often those associated with times of change, issues of conflict and agency expressed through particular features such as the use of metaphor, the creation of a coherent life story and the self-reflecting description of significant others. I also explore the operation of causality in relation to issues of power and powerlessness and the use of modality as an expression of commitment or reservation.

My way into the data then is to use a multi-layered approach to discourse which explores both explicit and implicit elements of ESL teacher identities which are both specific and meaningful as expression of shared experiences and understandings.

3.8 Writing Myself

The majority of my working life has been as an ESL teacher in the Victorian government secondary school system and my identity as an ESL teacher is part of the story I tell about myself. It is not possible for me to dismiss my ESL teacher past and nor would I wish to do so. This past and present, my connections with the area and the relationships I have with ESL teachers has given me entry into the lives of the ESL teachers involved and made this study possible.

The teachers involved in my study also have an investment in the construction of an ESL teacher identity that is 'right' in the eyes of the wider ESL teacher community. It is possible, even likely, that the constructions of ESL teacher identity which I have been given are ones shaped to meet with my perceived expectations. We all mould ourselves to fit socially acceptable scripts. How we present ourselves to others "depends on the available storylines we have to make sense of the ebb and flow of being-in-the-world along with the legitimacy and status accorded to those storylines by the others with whom we make up our lives at any one point in time" (Davies 1993:41). My public relationship with the wider ESL teacher community and the way in which these teachers understand me to be as a result of that

involvement has the potential to reshape their stories as they tell them to achieve 'legitimacy and status' in the ESL teacher community.

Rather than assuming shared ideologies and understandings, this study is an attempt to 'disturb the familiar' even though, given my own ESL teacher identity, this is work done in 'a room full of mirrors' (Sullivan 1996). It is through this focus on what it means to be an ESL teacher that I have disrupted existing relationships and set myself apart. By acknowledging the relationships and making them explicit, by indicating as far as possible the discursal constructions of my own identities within the research, I hope to provide a guide to the reading of this work.

3.8.1 Jill's Teacher Story – One

Here then is my teacher story – or at least one version of a small part of it as I reconstruct the past at this point in time in this context – Jill the researcher retells Jill the teacher. I have written a brief contextualising paragraph for each of the case study teachers. I offer the same for myself:

After completing my undergraduate degree in 1972, I worked as a welfare officer for two years with the Brotherhood of Saint Lawrence, a large charitable organization with an interest in both research and social justice. Here I organized basic education programs for adults and a school support program for children. After two years I returned to university to complete a Diploma of Education with teaching methods in English and ESL. My first appointment was to a girls' school in the inner suburbs of Melbourne. I taught English and ESL and coordinated the ESL program for seven years before transferring to a large coed school also in the inner suburbs. (At this time, the inner suburbs were among the poorer areas of Melbourne with many students living in public housing.) After eight years I shifted to an English Language School in the more prosperous eastern suburbs of Melbourne. I taught here for three years before resigning to work as a teacher-educator in the Faculty of Education of a large university where I am currently employed. I have been involved in many ESL committees and working parties and was State Examiner and Chief Assessor for the Victorian Certificate of Education subject English-ESL for a number of years. I assisted in the production of key curriculum documents and ministerial papers relating to ESL teaching. I have also been active in running professional development sessions for the ESL teacher professional association.

3.8.2 Jill's Teacher Story – Two

The next section is designed to serve two purposes. The first is to elaborate on my own positionings and values as an ESL teacher as represented in data drawn from interview. The second is to exemplify the ways in which I understand and represent the data from conversation with ESL teachers, their understandings of themselves and their work and the ways in which these understandings are realized through language. The data comes from an interview in which I am the ESL teacher participant. A fellow post-graduate student who is also an experienced ESL teacher conducted the interview. This interview was unstructured, focusing on the same broad areas of discussion as the first interviews in this study. The starting point for discussion was a general question asking my reasons for becoming an ESL teacher. Interviewer comments were, on the whole, confined to single words of agreement and requests for clarification.

3.8.3 Analysing Jill's Story

In analysis of this data the first areas discussed are those explored explicitly in the data, that is where language is viewed as transparent. The second areas discussed are those which are regarded as implicit in the language of the interview, that is where language is understood as opaque.

The Decision To Be An ESL Teacher

In response to the focus question – *So tell me how you got involved in ESL teaching* – I respond with four reasons. The first is pragmatic.

I was sharing a house with a woman who worked as an ESL teacher and she said why don't you do teaching and if you do ESL you only have small classes.

The other reasons are less self-serving but it is important to acknowledge the part played by reasons such as this in career choice. Not all decisions are ideologically pure and the pragmatic factors of life outside the classroom also impact on choices which are made. (It is also a salutary reminder to me in my response to reasons given for career choice by other teachers – my own starting point was a perception of ESL teaching as a soft option).

The experience as a welfare worker with the Brotherhood of Saint Lawrence was when I first became aware of the role played by language in inequitable distribution of power in society. This awareness was also a factor in my decision to become an ESL teacher:

I really became aware at that time of how powerful language was and also how inarticulate people were trapped and powerless within the system and they weren't able to communicate their needs and feelings to other people who had more ability with language than they did. ... The adolescents in particular couldn't express their feelings verbally and so they got involved in fights and vandalism. They had this incredible anger and frustration.

I also talk about my own experiences as a failed language learner and the anger and humiliation felt in university Spanish classes where I was unable to cope with the aggressive approach taken by the Spanish tutor:

I was terrified and [as a result] I've always been able to understand those poor kids who just look at you blank.

The final reason relates to my own secondary schooling:

In the sixties there was no effort made to teach [migrant students] English at all so they just sat at the back.

So my reasons for becoming an ESL teacher are a combination of the pragmatic and the idealistic. The classes are smaller than the norm for other areas of teaching and my perception at this stage is that ESL teaching is less demanding than other forms of teaching. Past experiences in terms of my own schooling and experiences as an unsuccessful language learner have given me some understanding of the needs of ESL students. Finally my work as a welfare worker resulted in recognition of the relationship between language and power and an awareness of issues of social justice.

The Work of the ESL Teacher

In description of my work in different schools, I list a wide variety of different activities which I see to be part of ESL teacher work. These fall into roughly three areas. There is the work done with the students, the work done with other staff members and the work done in the wider community.

In the description of my work with ESL students, I am explicit with regard to the purpose of these activities:

There are two things – we want the students to be empowered to do whatever they want to do in their life but you also want the contexts in which the students are working to recognise what it is they are doing and to value it for what it is. ... You give them support and you give them the skills that they need but you've got to give them the skills and courage and independence to act for themselves.

I refer repeatedly to the importance of a close relationship with my students. It is from this secure relationship with the ESL teacher that students develop the confidence and skills needed for independent language use:

It's the relationship between the teacher and the students that determines the success of what you do. ... There has to be a very close and trusting relationship but it can't be a dependent relationship because that works against what you're trying to achieve.

Establishing this sort of relationship is not always easy. I talk about my first school which was 'caring, nurturing and cosy – we really looked after our girls'. There were parties, national days and sharing of skills. The introduction of language centres to cater for recently arrived students went some way to changing this close student-teacher relationship as did a change in schools from the small girls' school to the larger coed school:

There was more distance between staff and students that was coming from both sides – from staff who seemed to be distancing students and students who seemed to be distancing staff.

This changed again with the shift to the intensive English language school. My students were now beginning language learners who spent most of their time with one or two teachers. Despite this, the short period of time which these students spent in the language school – six months – meant that I was unable to maintain a relationship which saw students progress from initial dependence to independent and powerful language users. I felt able, however, as a result of my school experience, to prepare students for successful transition to mainstream schools:

I think I was far more aware of the need to prepare the students to move into school than the other teachers there. But that was only because of my school experience.

This focus on student need and economic use of class time is a strong element of my work as an ESL teacher:

ESL students don't have time to waste – they can't afford to be mucked about.

The version of ESL teacher identity in relation to students which is being constructed in this text requires a teacher to be supportive, caring and nurturing. At the same time the ESL teacher must also be a thoughtful and effective classroom teacher, able to equip the students with the skills needed for both immediate survival and future success.

I also see the ability to work closely with other staff members as an essential part of ESL teacher identity. Perhaps because of my long term role as ESL coordinator, there is a strong sense of responsibility for the work of other ESL teachers. I emphasise the importance of working as a team and my role in trying, at times unsuccessfully, to create a cooperative working relationship with other members of staff:

It's much easier and more exciting to work with people who are interested in what they're doing and want to talk about it and work together.

Other elements of ESL teacher identity demonstrated in this aspect of my work are the notion of ESL teacher as part of the staff group, a team player. The ESL teacher also has a key role to play in curriculum development, guiding the development of appropriate materials and teaching strategies – a process which depends on sensitivity and awareness of the feelings of other teachers.

In terms of my work in the wider community, I am clear on ESL teacher responsibility:

ESL teachers have to be incredibly pro-active both in the school and in the wider community. ... I worked out really early that it was my role to go along to as many meetings as possible, to be on all the committees and working parties ... because, as a minority group, if somebody didn't do that, then their needs weren't considered.

Language as Opaque

A second analysis of the data from this interview treats the language as opaque or presentational, looking not *through* the language, but *at* the language itself. I will focus on three implicit ways of being as an ESL teacher which find expression in descriptions of ideological conflict, the use of pronouns to convey positioning and the use of metaphor in description of others.

Conflict and Ideology

Ideology is central to discussion of ESL teacher identities. It is our beliefs and understandings about the way in which the world *should* be, that is our ideologies, which dictate our actions. In Gee's words (1996:21) "ideologies are what construct not only human worlds but humans". The difficulty in attempting to discuss ESL teacher ideologies is that much of this is implicit. As an extract from the interview puts it – 'most of us teachers don't think about what we do; we just do it'. Fairclough (1992) argues that it is in times of conflict that these naturalized ideologies are made explicit. It was after conflict with the principal of the language school over appropriate action in the case of a Vietnamese girl who had been badly beaten in a family dispute that I resigned from the Education Department to work in the tertiary sector:

She arrived at school with a black eye and a split eyebrow, very upset and afraid to go home. She asked me for help. ... The principal arrived. She said it was nothing to do with the school and that the student should go to the police if she had a problem. [We had an argument]. I helped the student shift [to live with another family] and two weeks later I was declared in excess [The principal told the Education Department that I was no longer required in the school].

There is clear conflict in ways of being as an ESL teacher operating in this incident. One ideology, that of the principal, sees limits on school responsibility to students, shifting responsibility for action in this case to the student and the wider community. My position was that, as primary contact in the English-speaking Australian community, there was an ethical responsibility to first support the student in accessing community resources and then to offer practical assistance.¹ When my actions were questioned by the principal, implicit understandings of the role of the ESL teacher were forced to become explicit in defence of my actions and their underlying ideologies.

Issues of Ownership

There is constant shift between first person singular and first person plural – from 'I' to 'we'. Use of first person singular seems to signal two things. The first is a sense of empowerment, of achievement, ownership of, and pride in, actions which have been taken. At times this is altered as I seem to acknowledge that I am not

¹ This incident was prior to mandatory reporting which would now require the Principal to take action.

personally responsible for all achievements in the ESL teaching world and there is inclusion of others – a statement of shared achievement and ESL teacher group identity:

Because I was part of that process, not just me but because other people were part of that process as well, ... I think they [the Board of Studies] pretty much did everything that we [the ESL teachers] wanted them to do in terms of ESL provision [in the final exam].

I take the use of third person to signal both the group on whose behalf these actions are being taken and the wider community who, ignorant in the needs of ESL students, have to be 'told what to do' by the collective ESL teacher voice. At other times the use of first person singular is less positive, signaling isolation and frustration as I describe my attempts to change the atmosphere in a school where staff 'were deeply unhappy' and create shared ESL teacher identities:

I took on the responsibility for a lot of things that would normally have been shared across a team, if you had a team of people. ... I tried very hard to get a group cohesion thing going but there were people who were very much 'I'll come in and teach my classes and that's all I'll do'.

Use of third person is often in criticism – a positioning of 'we' – the ESL teacher group – against 'them' – the uncaring wider community. I also use third person in description of ESL teachers who fail to fit into my construction of ESL teacher identity. There are teachers who 'don't want to be bothered', they 'just want to keep doing what they've always done', they 'don't understand schools because they've never taught anywhere else'. It is clear that this type of non-committed behaviour is not what I expect of ESL teachers:

It also happened at [the school] where teacher aides were treated incredibly disrespectfully by members of the teaching staff in a way that you wouldn't expect of ESL teachers. You would expect them to be the people in the school who would be most considerate in responding to their needs.

An aspect of ESL teacher identity coming through here is a view of ESL teachers as responsible, individually and collectively, for the well-being of all the ESL members of the school community, students and others, such as multicultural teacher-aides. This responsibility is carried over into the public arena in terms of action on behalf of ESL students and others. The notion of ESL teachers as a group is also enforced with an emphasis on the need to work together – ESL teacher identity as a shared group construct.

Metaphor

We all of us, grave or light, get our thoughts entangled in metaphors and act ... on the strength of them. (G.Eliot, *Middlemarch* quoted in Kress 1985:70)

Metaphor, that is the way in which we understand and experience one thing in terms of another, is all-pervasive in the way in which we understand and structure our world. When we use one metaphor rather than another, we make profound statements about the way in which we understand the world to be and we act on these understandings. Common sense understanding of metaphor is in terms of literary description – 'The road was a ribbon of moonlight, the moon was a ghostly galleon'. But use of metaphor is so much part of everyday language that we find it difficult to first identify it and then to think of other ways of understanding the world. Lakoff and Johnson (1980a:5) unpack the use of metaphors of war in discussion of the concept of argument. These metaphors are so much part of the conventional way of talking about argument we find it almost impossible to construct alternative metaphors to discuss the concept. It is perhaps more accessible when 'new' metaphors are imposed on an existing discourse. An example of this felt by every academic is the invasion of the metaphors of commerce into the discourse of academia -- we now have, or are expected to have, courses 'responsive to market demand packaged to attract consumers'.

In an attempt to illustrate the impact of metaphor, I analyze sections of interview data in which I talk about my students. At my first school, the metaphors are one of ownership of ESL students as objects both valuable and cared for. Note that this 'student-as-possession' results in one girl being portrayed as almost doll-like:

- We really looked after our girls.
- The ESL students were really valued people.
- There was the most beautiful little Turkish girl – really tiny but very sweet.

These metaphors disappear as I move to the next school. Here students have become 'discouraged ... a challenge to teach'. Rather than being owned and valued, many of these students have been rejected and are lost, with needs that the ESL staff are unable to meet:

I think they needed more than we could give them but it's hard to know what else we could have done at that time. We lost so many and I think they had already been lost before they got to us.

The use of first person plural suggests that responsibility for these students has become shared rather than personal. In stark contrast to the caring atmosphere of the girls' school, there is a sense of helplessness, of isolation and loss and eventually, for some students at least, prison:

I know that students that I taught ended up involved with drugs and drug dealing and at least two went to gaol ... they were very isolated young people.

There is no sense of ownership of these students. They are not 'our girls'. Rather they have become 'students I taught', 'young people' rather than 'delightful little girls' and the other diminutives used to describe students in my first school. This sense of distance from students continues in discussion of students at the language school. Students are described in terms of group, rather than as individuals - the business migrants, the Bosnians. Here the focus continually slips from students to curriculum. The interviewer asks about the students and I respond with a discussion of the curriculum that was developed.

I suggest that, as I become less able to meet increasingly complex student needs in the ways that I believe they should be met, I protect myself from a sense of personal failure by moving back from these students. The blame is not mine. Students are 'already lost'. In the language school, students are there for a short period of time. The most powerful impact is to be made through curriculum change so this is where the attention is placed. It is also interesting that, given the argument made earlier for a close ESL teacher student relationship, analysis of the data suggests that these relationships only existed in my first school.

There is more than could be done with this interview but comprehensive analysis was not the aim of this section. Rather I intend that it should serve two functions - first a demonstration of looking both at and through language, as I discuss responses as expressions of realities of experience and then look more closely for other elements implicit within the language. This section was also a way of introducing myself and at least one version of my ESL teacher story and identity. I now move

from centre stage and return to issues more directly concerning the teachers whose stories and ways of being as ESL teachers are at the heart of this study.

3.9 Writing the Other

"Miracles or no miracles", quoth Sancho, "people should take heed of what they say and write of other folk, and not set anything down that comes uppermost". (Cervantes - *The Adventures of Don Quixote* quoted in Newkirk (1996:3)

Writing about the teachers involved in this study has followed the usual procedures of negotiation common to case study research, interview transcripts distributed for comment, revision and addition, draft chapters shared with participants. The process has, to some extent at least, been a collaborative one. I have attempted to "allow others to speak in and through [the text] with their own powers of recognition, representation and persuasion intact" (Sullivan 1996:106). Despite these efforts I am conscious that, through selection of data, through identification of what I perceive to be key themes, relevant quotes and ways of being that echo my own understandings of ESL teacher identity, I am constructing rather than representing these teachers. Perhaps this is inescapable. Stronarch & MacLure (1997) warn of the difficulties in writing the other. The paradox is that, as researchers, we know any story to be only one of the many that are possible and in its telling to silence others. We know that each time we revisit data, we see it differently - that we can never 'get it right'. Despite this, as both researchers and as readers, we accept accounts as unproblematic. Accounts which are unambivalent, coherent and which reach a point of closure, a state of 'happy ever after', are comfortable as text. The danger in such texts is that, in representing particular ways of being, we both reinforce these and deny others. A goal for research which 'transforms people into portraits' must be to produce accounts which:

deny the reader that comfort of a shared ground with the author, foreground ambivalence and undermine the authority of their own assertions. (Stronarch & MacLure 1997:57)

3.9.1 Interviews as Conversation

Interviews, like all other forms of language use, are social practice, discursive sites of power and struggle. Mishler (1986) reminds us of the dialogic nature of interviews:

The essence of interviewing [is] that it is an occasion of two persons speaking to each other ... a form of discourse ... a joint product of what interviewees and interviewer talk about together and how they talk to each other (1986:vii).

My approach was to create a space which would allow teachers to talk freely about themselves and their work in all its ambiguities and complexities. Any analysis of conversation shows the ways in which speakers work together to share understandings, to clarify and make meaning of the topic under discussion. Ambiguity and complexity are part of the richness of multiple and overlapping discourses and identities and are clarified through conversation rather than by artificial attempts to limit responses through a tightly structured interview schedule.

Interviewing was a process of 'collaborative discussion' (Gee 1999:123), open-ended and unstructured, an approach to data collection in line with understandings of language and meaning at the heart of the study. After an initial focus question, the interviews followed the fluid interactive ebb and flow of conversation. My researcher authority was also a thing of ebb and flow. While, as researcher, I was responsible for organizing the interview and, at times, initiating discussion, the direction of each conversation was largely determined by the teacher involved. A general starting point was provided but after this my role was that of interested listener, a role at which I became more proficient as the study proceeded.

More structured interviews, with clearly outlined parameters for discussion, may protect participants in so far as they define borders but in this case they would also limit discussion to what the researcher has seen to be possible. As researchers we have an obligation to "protect those who have shared with us" (Denzin 1989a:83) but participants in research are not "fearful victims who open their lives and souls because they are told or asked to. People have boundaries and strategies to protect themselves in research situations" (Antikainen 1996:3). Although I accept this view of research participants I am also aware that, in the writing, it is my hand that holds the pen (or operates the keyboard) and there is power in the textual constructions of

others which is difficult to resist once these constructions are in place. Stronarch and MacLure (1997:54) describe this process of 'transformation of persons into portraits':

The issue of control and who 'has' it – researcher or subject – is a complex one. There were interesting political switches in the relationship between the researcher and subject at different points in the research process. ... These are the neglected disjunctions in the politics of the research process, and one way of interpreting them is as a covert struggle: the authors conciliatory in face-to-face encounters, but implacable in the construction of their texts. (Stronarch & MacLure 1997:54)

3.9.2 Bad News

Newkirk (1996:3) quotes the passage from Cervantes which I used to open this section in his discussion of ethical issues in qualitative research, specifically the issue of what he calls 'bad news'. He describes the process by which those being studied are first seduced and then betrayed. The explanation of the research, the consent form which is signed, the supportive, interested and encouraging interviewer all work together to create conditions in which the participants share themselves with the openness and honesty usually reserved for exchanges between friends. The ethical dilemma for the researcher is that friends accept the obligation of not telling anyone things that will hurt them, while researchers rarely alert participants to the possibility that "our rendering of them may be partially or wholly negative" (Newkirk 1996:3). Newkirk reminds us, very forcefully, that "the most direct benefits come to the researcher and the most direct harms often to the subject" (1996:8). We therefore have an ethical responsibility to share 'bad news' before publication and to offer the opportunity for an alternative dissenting voice to be included in the final text.

The close relationships between researcher and those who are the object of the research make this dilemma a very real issue for me. It is also an issue most relevant for those teachers with whom a relationship of friendship already exists. It is these teachers who were most likely to share private aspects of their teaching (and who have most right to call upon the obligations of friendship as protection). Williams (1996) suggests that 'bad news' should only be published with the consent of the participant. I find myself unwilling to hand over authorial control to this

extent but bad news does exist in my reading of the data. I have constructed some teachers in some sections of the data in ways other than the ways they perceive themselves to be. In each case the teacher concerned has read my understanding of the data and there has been discussion of this. The opportunity has been given for additional comments in the form of 'dissenting voice', a strategy suggested by Newkirk. Some teachers responded by offering written comments and these have been included. Other teachers have not done this, several because they see that aspect of their teaching identity as one belonging to past time and place. To quote Gary, "That's how it was then. It's not how I am as a teacher but it's how it was then". One other teacher who expressed concern at my understanding of her ESL teacher identity has not offered an alternate voice. Although she is willing for her story to remain as part of the study, she is unhappy about the way in which she has been portrayed. I am aware of her distress and realize that for her at least this process has indeed been one of 'seduction and betrayal'.

3.9.3 Use of Pseudonyms and Issues of Anonymity

In accordance with ethics requirements, pseudonyms are used for teachers and schools. Teacher reaction to this issue of anonymity varied. Several teachers were anxious not to be identified; others were keen to have their views openly acknowledged as their own. There are two conflicting areas of concern for me here. The first is that the ESL teacher community in Melbourne is quite small. I know that teachers involved in my study have talked to others about their involvement. It is also possible that some participants, because of the nature of their involvement in the area, will be identified despite the use of pseudonyms. The second area of concern is that the need for confidentiality prevents participants receiving public recognition for their work:

We must find better ways to honor those people who make our 'tales of the field' possible. (Williams 1996:42-43)

The next chapter will provide a brief history of the development of ESL teaching in Victoria. This is intended to provide a context within which to understand the work of the teachers involved in this study.

Chapter 4: The Development of TESL in Government Secondary Schools in Victoria

4.1 Introduction

Martin (1975:63) describes the development of English as a second language teaching in Australia as a process of "abortive beginnings and forgotten insights". The ESL teachers whose understandings of work and identity are the central concern of this study are situated within this process. Understandings of work identity need to be within an understanding of "the ways in which we exist as historical beings, how the words we use and the interactions we engage in are historically located" (Pennycook 2001:68). The understandings on which we draw, and the metaphors in which these understandings are expressed, are historically embedded, often as self-evident justifications of ways of being. The past can assume the potency of a golden age with ways of being established as eternal truths, rather than as accidents of historical incident. Awareness of the past and the contributions of this past to present understandings of ESL teacher identities is necessary for examination and critique of these understandings. An understanding of the past is also necessary to enable change in response to changes in context and student need.

This chapter is not a complete history of immigration and the development of ESL teaching in Victoria. Such a task is beyond the scope of this study. Rather it charts the main developments in the field over the past thirty years and provides a context within which to place the understandings of ESL teacher identities and work which are the main focus of this study. In recognition of the multiply experienced nature of events I include excerpts in italics from teacher interviews in which ESL teachers who are themselves part of this history comment on events as they experienced them. Karl, Tom, Stefan, Cathy, Sally, Anne, Gary and Alice all lend their voices as commentary to this narrative of TESL development in Victoria.

4.2 The Post-War Years

A program of mass immigration was introduced in 1945 by the Chifley Labor Government. The Labor Party and the union movement had, in the past, been opposed to large scale immigration, arguing that the resulting cheap labour was a threat to the working conditions of their supporters. After the Second World War, Arthur Calwell, Australia's first Minister for Immigration, was able to argue a successful case for massively increased and publicly funded immigration on a number of counts. Fears of invasion had been given a new and frightening reality by the war with Japan and 'Populate or Perish' proved an effective catchcry for the pro-immigration lobby. Australia was heavily reliant on primary industry and that this made the economy vulnerable to shifts in the world economy had been made clear by the Great Depression of the 1930s. There was pressure to industrialise both to protect the economy and to meet the increased postwar demand for consumer goods. The Labor government had a number of large scale public works planned, among them the Snowy Mountains hydro-electric scheme. None of this was possible without an adequate workforce. However a reduction in the national birthrate during the 1930s meant that the birthrate had fallen below replacement level (Jordens 1997:8, Jupp 1991:70-71). A rapid increase in the population, especially in the number of workers available, was the only way to ensure the large-scale social reconstruction envisaged and Calwell was able to persuade the government of the day that immigration was the answer.

The public expectation was that the majority of the migrants would be British – one 'alien' for every ten British migrants was the figure quoted by Calwell in November 1946 (Jordens 1997:10). However Britain, possibly also concerned by a declining population, was unwilling to enter into the extensive immigration agreement envisaged by Calwell. While in Britain, Calwell became aware of the large number of displaced persons in camps in Europe. These people had been made homeless by Hitler's policy of shifting people around Europe and, by the end of the war, approximately six million people had been displaced from their homelands. Many from Eastern Europe were reluctant to return to countries now part of the Soviet Union (Appleyard 1972:18).

4.3 The First Wave

Rather than return to Australia with an immigration program that had failed before it began, Calwell visited the camps and personally supervised selection of a trial shipment of non-British immigrants. In his own words:

There had been some doubt about the quality of these displaced persons who had the blood of a number of races in their veins. Many were red-headed and blue-eyed. There were also a number of natural platinum blondes of both sexes. The men were handsome and the women beautiful. It was not hard to sell immigration to the Australian people once the press published photographs of that group. (Calwell 1972:103)

These first 'good-looking' migrants arrived at a time of acute labour shortage and were welcomed by most Australians. Heartened by this success, Calwell increased the numbers and by the time the initial resettlement scheme ended in 1954, more than 170,000 displaced persons (or refugees) had migrated to Australia (Jordens 1997:10). The new migrants were bound by a two-year work contract and many of the men, nearly all of them classified as 'labourers' regardless of former occupation and qualifications, were sent to work on construction sites such as the Snowy Mountains hydro-electric scheme (Jupp 1991:73).

The official government policy was one of assimilation. These 'New Australians' (Calwell's term) had been chosen to look 'Australian' and the expectation was that they would learn English, the Australian way of life and fit into the existing society with a minimum of impact.

4.3.1 The Education of Migrant Children

Despite the influx of non English speaking migrants in the immediate post war years and the importance placed on learning and using English as an essential part of the assimilation process, little was done to cater for the language learning needs of school age children. The focus was exclusively on the provision of English language classes for adults. That the teachers of migrant children were aware of their language difficulties is clear in an exchange of letters between the Victorian Teachers' Union and the Education Department. The issue was seen as a

combination of disruption to classes, difficulties for teachers and the needs of these recently arrived migrant children:

I have been requested to ask that the department appoint special teachers in schools where needed to give instruction in English to New Australian children.

The increasing number of New Australian children in certain schools is making a very grave problem for class teachers. The normal class teaching is affected by the inability of the New Australian children to speak, write and understand English to a satisfactory standard. It is impossible for teachers to give the necessary time to these children when they have large classes.

The problem is particularly acute in some areas and schools and we would suggest that the appointment of specialist teachers for the purpose asked would not only be of benefit to the New Australian children but would also enable normal instruction to proceed with the other children – VTU, Schubert to Secretary, Education Department, 15.10.54 (Martin 1975:15).

The response from the Department was not helpful. Based on what has become known as the 'Sit them next to Nelly' approach to language teaching, it argued that there was little need for special instruction for migrant children:

In general, it has been found that migrant children acquire a working knowledge of English in a comparatively short time and, if these children are given some attention by the class teacher, they create no serious problem. It is considered unwise to segregate migrant children from Australian children as contact with the latter hastens the acquisition of ability to speak English.

A special class for migrant children was established in one of our larger schools but was later abandoned as experience proved that it was unnecessary. In any case, **the present acute shortage of teaching staff** [my emphasis] prevents the appointment of special teachers for this purpose – Secretary, Education Department to General Secretary VTU, 25.10.54 (Martin 1975:16).

The teacher shortage referred to above was very real. Cahill (1996:7) uses the term 'education explosion' to sum up this aspect of the immediate post-war period. Between 1950 and 1960 the student population in Australia rose by 57% to 2.1 million. This rapid and dramatic increase was the result of the post-war baby boom, increased retention rates and the influx of migrant children. Added to this was an acute teacher shortage, part of the overall labour shortage resulting from the low birth rate of the depression years, made more difficult by the large number of marriages (and forced resignation of women teachers) following the end of the war.

So there were both pragmatic and philosophical reasons for the official reluctance to acknowledge the needs of migrant children. The Director-General of Education in New South Wales, Dr Wyndham, gave the official view of the time in his much-quoted statement:

We deliberately refrain from collecting any statistics in regard to school pupils from overseas. Once they are enrolled in school, they are, from our point of view, Australian children. (Commonwealth Department of Immigration, Australian Citizenship Convention, Digest, 1963:21, cited in Cahill 1996:8)

Early attempts to cater for the needs of migrant children were blocked by officialdom. The earliest recorded provision of English language classes for children in the Victorian government education system was in 1947 with the formation of a special migrant class at St Kilda Park School. This was seen as counter to current policies of assimilation under which all children should be treated equally, that is, as if their needs were the same, and the class was closed after twelve months. The reason - "the Department felt that the migrant children were not mixing with the other pupils in the school and therefore integration would not occur" (Blake 1973:1114).

A report into 'progress and assimilation' (1960) provided evidence to support current government policy. This report found that:

Good progress is being made by most migrants in Australian schools. ... In scholastic performance, migrants as a group, surpass Australians. They differ little in social activities. There is mutual acceptance, and few instances of national segregation. In leadership, however, migrants tend to lag behind Australians. The children of refugee parents are outstanding in scholarship, leadership, social activities and sporting ability. Problem cases are relatively few. In most cases, family background - particularly parents' failure to speak English in the home - is an important contributing factor. (First Report on the Progress and Assimilation of Migrant Children in Australia 1960:12.)

An interesting aspect of this quote is the distinction made between 'migrants' who lack leadership skills and 'the children of refugee parents' who are outstanding in all areas valued by the report. This distinction signals the beginnings of a shift in ways of seeing migrants from the success stories of Calwell's hand-picked 'displaced persons' to the factory fodder of later immigration. Note too that the lack of success of these children is the fault of parental 'failure to speak English in

the home' – rather than the fault of government policy. Despite criticism of the 1960 report quoted above (Martin 1975), it played an important part in buoying up official confidence in existing policy. In Martin's words, "orthodoxy had it that the experience of neither migrant children nor their teachers was any different from anyone else's" (Martin 1975:63).

Government perception of the ease with which migrant children learned English and settled into the Australian community was reinforced by a number of factors. There is some evidence (Kunz 1975) to suggest that many migrants who came to Australia as displaced persons (or refugees) in the first wave of postwar immigration were better educated than the general Australian population. Martin, herself an active critic of government neglect of the educational needs of migrant children, is able to see reasons why the problems of migrant children were not more visible during the 50s and early 60s:

In Victoria at the 1961 Census, German, Dutch and eastern European children outnumbered those from Yugoslavia, Malta, Greece and Italy. Whether because of the relatively high educational standards of the families, the relative speed with which their parents learnt English, or strongly developed achievement needs, many of these children apparently were – and were seen to be – above average in drive and school performance. On the basis of *their* unusual motivation and ability there developed a highly favourable perception of the school experience of migrant children in general. (Martin 1981:37)

Public perception was one thing, the individual experience of the migrant child another. Karl, now an ESL teacher working in a language centre with recently arrived migrant children, was one of the blue-eyed blonde migrant children of the 50s:

It was all immersion. There were no ESL programs, no ESL teachers – you just went in and you sank or you swam.

Karl 'swam' but for many others the situation was very different. Children were routinely placed in classes below their age level. Comparatively few completed secondary education before leaving school. There were no materials available for language teaching. Migrant education (if it existed at all) consisted of basic English. Large numbers of migrant children were concentrated in particular schools which were unable to cope with the steadily increasing numbers of Southern European children (Martin 1975:62). Cahill's study of Italian immigrants who

attended Australian schools in the 1950s shows the almost total failure of the school system to meet their needs. Most left school for factory work or other unskilled or semi-skilled labouring positions (Cahill 1986 quoted in Cahill 1996:9).

4.4 The Second Wave

There was to be little change in government policy with regard to the education of migrant children until the late sixties. By this time there had been a marked change in the composition of the migrant intake. Migrants from northern and eastern Europe were now largely being replaced by migrants from southern Europe. Many of the southern European migrants were from rural areas with limited education (Martin 1981:36). The Australian population planners saw these relatively unskilled rural workers as a potential urban workforce – factory fodder for an expanding manufacturing industry (Jupp 1991:75). For many of these migrants problems of language and resettlement in a new country also became problems of poverty.

The Henderson Inquiry into Poverty (McCaughey 1966) found that while all recent migrants had a higher proportion of poverty than the population as a whole, southern European migrants were over-represented. Martin (1976) found that this disparity continued, with migrants from northern and eastern Europe able to improve their financial position over time, while for migrants from Greece, Italy and Yugoslavia:

Migrants' disadvantages often persist well past the initial settlement period. Especially in Melbourne and Sydney, there are many migrants, long resident in the country, whose welfare is cause for community concern and action. (Martin 1976:128)

It would be naive to see the newly discovered migrant 'problem' as being one primarily related to origin – northern Europe as opposed to southern Europe. The issues are far more complex than this. Factory workers are more vulnerable to fluctuations in the economy than other workers. Collins (1974) argues that the creation of a new underclass – a 'proletariat of the proletariat' – was a deliberate move in the development of Australia's manufacturing industries. Unskilled migrants with limited English were to "provide a reserve army of unemployed, a

buffer to economic activity that can be hired or fired according the economy” (Collins 1974:7).

Public perception at this time was also changing in a way that allowed migrants to be other than successfully assimilated into the Australian community. Realities of migration were being recognized rather than denied as they had been in the past.

4.4.1 The Migrant Child as Problem

Schools were now faced with large numbers of migrant children from lower socio-economic backgrounds and a focus on migrant student success became a focus on migrant student failure. In 1967 a voluntary organisation, the Victorian Council of School Organisations (VICCOS), surveyed 68 inner-suburban schools in Melbourne and found that:

More than one third of the pupils were migrants, with two schools having an enrolment of more than 70% of migrant children, 1,170 of whom were unable to speak English adequately. (Goding 1973:67)

Public awareness was growing and, at the same time, several forces came into play to produce a changed response to the education of migrant children. Migrant families began to realise that their children were struggling in schools that were unsympathetic to their needs. One of the main reasons for immigration to Australia was the hope of improved educational opportunities for their children (Goldman 1978, Brotherhood of St Laurence 1971). As it became increasingly clear that this was not the case, ethnic pressure groups formed. There was also a change in educational philosophy at this time, with a shift from a teacher-centred to a child-centred approach to learning. With this change in educational thinking, the needs of the migrant child were likely to be seen as having greater priority (Goldman 1978, Martin 1978, Cahill 1996).

Another change came in official government immigration policy when, in 1964, the Department of Immigration replaced ‘assimilation’ with ‘integration’ in all its official documents (Jordens 1997:152). A policy of integration accepted:

the principle of cultural diversity and ... acknowledged that the entry of migrants into Australian society necessarily involved adjustments in that society as well as in the culture and outlook of the migrants themselves. (Australian Population and Immigration Council 1977:53)

This new policy of integration recognised that many migrants needed assistance to adapt to life in Australia. The way was open for changes in the education of migrant children and Victoria led the way in many early developments.

4.5 Early Efforts in Victoria

In 1965, Fitzroy High school, an inner-city school with a large number of non English speaking background students, appointed a teacher to work full-time with students who needed to learn English. By 1967 a special twelve week course catering for students from surrounding schools was in operation (Martin 1975:23). In November 1967 Allen Humphries was seconded from the primary teaching service to take up the position of Co-ordinator of Migrant Education in Victorian Schools – the first such appointment anywhere in Australia. His task was to “develop and co-ordinate plans for the teaching of English to migrant pupils of all ages in primary, secondary and technical schools” (McLellan 1967-1968:24). (At this time secondary education in Victoria was divided into ‘high’ schools which provided an academic education and ‘technical’ schools which provided vocational education). An ‘expert committee’ with representatives from all three divisions (primary, secondary and technical) was set up to assist him in this work. A four-day in-service training course for migrant education teachers started in the same year (Blake 1973:1119). Research was conducted into the needs of migrant students “including the emotional aspects” (McLellan 1968-1969:27).

By 1969 twenty teachers, fifteen in high schools and five in technical schools, were teaching English to migrants. Six advisory teachers were visiting schools to offer assistance with programs and the ‘expert committee’, now known as the Migrant English Committee, met regularly to oversee work in the area (McLellan 1969-1970:35).

4.6 The Commonwealth Child Migrant Education Program

Education in Australia has traditionally been a State government responsibility. Despite pressure from the States from the early 1960s onwards, arguing that the

problems related to the education of migrant children were a direct result of Commonwealth immigration programs, the Commonwealth had until this time been reluctant to accept any responsibility. The general crisis in schools – the overcrowding, chronic teacher shortage and large class sizes exacerbated by the addition of large numbers of migrant children – made education a key issue in Federal elections from 1963 onwards. The Commonwealth's willingness to accept a new role in education was signaled by an agreement to provide direct aid to schools in the form of science laboratories and school libraries. This shift in position combined with constant pressure from the States and growing public concern with 'the migrant problem' resulted in a meeting between the States and the Commonwealth in January 1970, a meeting requested by the Commonwealth to develop a Commonwealth-funded program for migrant children.

The administrative structures supporting migrant education already in place in Victoria meant that the State was well prepared. The Victorian representative at the meeting was able to report on teacher and student numbers, in-service training and to table a "costed and carefully prepared statement of needs" (Martin 1976:33). As a result of this meeting and further consultations, the Commonwealth agreed to fund the salary costs and training of teachers of English to migrant children, to provide capital equipment, such as language laboratories, and to develop and supply curriculum materials (McLellan 1969-1970:35). This was a major shift in Commonwealth policy which was to have significant impact.

4.6.1 Commonwealth Materials for Teaching English

As a result of the new funding agreement between the States and the Commonwealth, the four day in-service training course for migrant English teachers started in Victoria in 1967 was extended to four weeks and schools were supplied with copies of *Situational English* (the Commonwealth course developed for adult migrants). This was to be an interim measure pending the development of more child-appropriate materials. *Situational English for Newcomers to Australia* (Department of Education and Science 1965) used an aural/oral approach to learning English in which new material was heard and spoken by students before they were exposed to the written form. Grammatical structures were carefully graded and controlled. Drilling was part of every lesson and teachers were advised

against stopping this practice "too soon before students were thoroughly competent at handling the new pattern" (Department of Education and Science 1965:10). In a wonderful touch of absurdity, Unit 3 of *Situational English Book 1* is titled '*I'm Australian. You're Tired*'.

Boxes of the text were sent out to all schools and most ESL teachers used it:

Situational English consisted of a series of sentences that kids had to learn off parrot fashion. We had to say each sentence nine times, holding the book with one hand and conducting with the other. I still remember 'this is a cup', 'this is a table' and so on (Cathy).

4.7 Developments in Victoria – The 1970s

The 1970s were a time of rapid development and change in migrant education and in education in general. It was an era of contradictions in that changes and development were combined with a process of marginalization and powerlessness. The 1970-1971 Department of Education Annual Report applauded the extension of services for migrant children made possible by the newly introduced Commonwealth funding but also acknowledged continuing need in the area:

Compared to what should be done, this is a limited achievement; compared to what occurred in the past, it can be regarded as one of the major accomplishments of the year under review. (Department of Education Annual Report 1970-1971:30).

In 1972 the Commonwealth agreed to fund a child migrant centre in Melbourne. Despite the name this was not a place for migrant children. It was to act as a resource room for teachers and as a place for conferences and in-service activities. The number of teachers involved in migrant education continued to grow with 443 teachers employed across the primary, secondary and technical divisions by 1973. Although teacher numbers had grown, the job was generally seen as low status with little opportunity for career advancement.

4.7.1 Migrant Education – The Teacher Nobody Else Wants

The success with which the CMEP (*Child Migrant Education Program – the Commonwealth funded program*) teachers have been incorporated into the state educational system varies from one state to another, but the one common over-riding factor appears to be the low priority given to the appointment of special migrant teachers when

teachers in general are in low supply. This means in effect that, in a situation of shortage, the only teachers left over for migrant education are those whom, as one administrator put it, 'nobody else wants'. (Martin 1976:40).

Many ESL teachers comment on this perception of ESL teaching as an appropriate use of incompetent teachers with reference to both past and present experiences. Stefan, to take one example, has always felt the need to involve himself in all aspects of school life as a reaction against this image of ESL teaching:

A lot of refugees from the classroom were going into ESL teaching [and] it had the image of being a soft option. It really was important to prove to people that it was a professional and skilled job. You not only had to do your job well, you had to show them that you could do the sort of job that they were doing equally as well. (Stefan)

It is interesting that, although Stefan positions himself as a skilled professional, he acknowledges truth in the perception of some ESL teachers as 'classroom refugees'.

In May 1973, the Victorian Education Department established a process of promotion for migrant teachers. Sixty 'positions of responsibility' were advertised. Teachers appointed to these positions were expected to show leadership at school level and their work included:

co-ordinating the work of migrant English teachers, maintaining liaison with other staff members, developing general education programs for migrant children, designing and implementing English programs incorporating reading and expression, carrying out pastoral work with migrant children, establishing effective liaison with parent and community groups and the migrant education committee. (Department of Education Annual Report 1972-1973:9)

Although this was recognition of the role of teachers working in migrant education, TESL continued to be seen in many quarters as a dead end in terms of career advancement.

4.7.2 Teaching in the Broom Cupboard

Lack of accommodation continued to be a problem with many schools unable to provide appropriate rooms for migrant English classes. Classes were taught in laundries, corridors and even broom-cupboards (Jones 1978:158). Teacher experiences at this time resulted in a shared reference which is a continuing part of ESL teacher talk, a reference used both by those of us who were teaching at this time and those more recently part of the profession. 'Teaching in the broom

cupboard' has achieved mythic status and those of us who have 'taught in the broom cupboard' are able to signal our membership of the old guard through use of the term. I have myself taught in laundries (the ironing board makes a useful teacher's desk), corridors and the art room but never a 'real' broom-cupboard. Tom's experience is similar to that of many other ESL teachers:

The first year I was allowed a corner of a table in the library [but] the library said that we were too noisy – because we tried to speak English, we put a lot of time into oral communication. There was an old shed...which was the Year 11 common room at recess and lunchtime and the Special English room during class time. There was a folding snooker table (which) we worked around and ...inevitably twenty minutes into the lesson the folding legs would give way and our 'desk' would collapse (Tom).

The Commonwealth agreed to assist and the following year provided the first of a series of demountable classrooms to be used as Migrant English rooms. Although these rooms were luxurious in comparison to other classrooms, they were not a permanent part of the school building and their location, usually in the far corner of the playground, was a physical reminder of the separateness of ESL teaching. It took a number of years before Tom's school was given a Commonwealth demountable and he was able to move out of the shed:

It took five years before we got our Commonwealth portable. ... It was officially called the Language Centre but behind our back it was re-named Wog City by the staff (Tom).

4.8 Multi-Lingual and Other Teaching Materials

The mid 1970s also saw a new emphasis on bi-lingual education and the appointment of Commonwealth funded multi-lingual teacher aides to assist in communication with the migrant communities. By 1974, one hundred and ten teachers were working full-time as migrant English teachers in secondary schools and child migrant education was seen, at least by the Department, as a whole school responsibility. Multi-lingual programs had been introduced in several schools to enable students to continue their education as they were learning English (Department of Education Annual Report 1973-1974:23).

1974 also saw the arrival of the long-awaited Commonwealth materials for English language teaching. This was a series called *Learning English in Australia*

(Commonwealth Department of Education 1973) and consisted of workbooks and readers aimed at 8 to 12 year olds. A second series catering for older students came later. The materials were a production of the Language Teaching Branch in Canberra. They had taken three years to reach schools and had been written by 'language experts' working in isolation from schools and 'who, for the most part, had no experience in teaching English to migrant children' (Martin 1978:115). Not surprisingly *Learning English in Australia* was received with little enthusiasm. Martin quotes one unidentified Victorian teacher:

It is, he says, highly structured, teacher dominated, assumes sequential development of language, does not allow for spontaneous use of language, stresses structures which are quite remote from actual language used by children. It is dangerous in the hands of the untrained and only reinforces an approach now being seriously questioned as desirable in the hands of the trained. It is 'suitable' (their term) only for beginners and this represents a small proportion of 'migrant' students desperately in need of appropriate class materials. (Martin 1976:41)

Despite this lack of gratitude the Commonwealth Government continued to supply ESL teachers with materials, usually in quantities vastly in excess of need even if the materials were appropriate. In the mid 1970s large numbers of Oxford Graded Readers appeared in schools. These were mainly simplified versions of European fairy stories and while *Cinderella* and *Snow White and Rose Red* were quite successful with junior students in my all girls' school, Tom was less enthusiastic about this material:

It was useless – a total waste of money. I had boys and only one text was any use at all. Our state rep went off to a Commonwealth meeting and I said tell them to stop sending us stuff without asking what we want. Years later I met (a representative from the Commonwealth Government) and he said you Victorians were always a bolshie lot (Tom).

Lack of consultation between the Commonwealth and ESL teachers was to be a continuing feature of the years to come.

The 1970s also saw a shift in the focus of migrant education with attempts to make English language teaching part of a total educational response to the changes in Australian society. In 1975 the Commonwealth Department of Education published the report of an *Inquiry into Schools of High Migrant Density 1974*. This inquiry surveyed 29 schools in New South Wales and Victoria and documented the

difficulties of migrant children. While acknowledging the efforts of a small number of 'special English' teachers, the report was concerned by the limited impact of withdrawal classes and emphasised the importance of seeing the teaching of English as a second language as a responsibility of all members of staff:

Language learning must go on throughout the entire school day and should not be regarded as a separate activity completely divorced from the ordinary teacher's area of responsibility. The active involvement of all teachers is essential to the effective education of migrant children. (Australian Department of Education 1975:22)

The report also argued for a changed understanding of migrant education, one predicated on a view of Australia as a multi-cultural society. In schools with large numbers of migrant children, the curriculum should recognise the cultural heritage of these students:

Initially, this provision could most readily be reflected in the content of the social studies topics and in the extent to which traditional features of ethnic cultures as portrayed in dance, art, folklore, craft or music are fostered and encouraged. (Australian Department of Education 1975:19)

Migrant education had grown like Topsy to be much more than teaching English. It was now to involve bi-lingual education, the teaching of community languages, multicultural education for all children and funding for ethnic schools to maintain the language and culture of migrant groups. Martin (1978:125) is enthusiastic in her support for these new directions, disparaging "ESL 'traditionalists' who want to keep ESL teaching as the central core of the enterprise". The view that multiculturalism was best expressed through 'dance, art, folklore, craft (and) music' was to remain for some time.

4.9 Multiculturalism as Government Policy

The Whitlam Labor Government was elected in late 1972 with multiculturalism as a key policy. It espoused the belief that:

The presence of ethnic communities enriched Australia and that special measures were warranted to remove the disadvantages suffered by all Australians, irrespective of their origins. (Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs 1986:31)

The government embarked on an extensive process of consultation with ethnic communities resulting in first the formation of the Ethnic Communities Councils

(formed in Victoria in 1974) and later a national body – the Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia (formed in 1980). These organisations acted as powerful political pressure groups and were to play an important role in the development of multicultural policy which was accepted as policy by all major political parties – at least until the 1990s.

4.9.1 Multiculturalism in Victoria

In Victoria the development of multicultural programs in schools with large numbers of migrant students was seen as an important achievement in 1975. These multi-cultural programs consisted of reading materials in ethnic languages in school libraries, increased involvement of migrant parents and 'increased awareness of the needs of migrant children' by teachers (Department of Education Annual Report 1974-1975:9). Multicultural programs were often limited to festivals and special multicultural days but even these could have a positive impact. Cathy remembers feeling like a real part of the school for the first time as a result of a multicultural program which she organized:

We had a really big multicultural week which I organised with a big concert and [it] was really successful ... it really got a lot of people thinking (Cathy).

Not everyone had such a positive view of multiculturalism. Stefan, at that time working as a consultant with Child Migrant Education Services, was aware of a less attractive side to the picture:

I never felt comfortable with the way we explained the theory and we sold the theory and the way we got this version of political correctness going... the Greek community and the Italian community were the two powerful lobby groups at the time. ... At first they needed to work together ... [but] as soon as some power to be had, a cake that had to be divided, they would just splinter. ... It worked on accentuating the differences rather than the similarities.

The version of multiculturalism, which saw culture as 'other' and static with an emphasis on difference, rather than as dynamic with changes brought about by time and place, developing shared values and new ways of being (Taylor et al 1997:143), was to continue for some time.

Despite the continuing difficulties experienced by many migrant children, progress had been made. Advances made in migrant education in Victoria were cause for Ministerial self-congratulation in 1976. A joint statement by the Minister of

Education, Lindsay Thompson, and the Minister of Special Education, Alan Scanlon, included these remarks in their contribution to that year's report:

The language difficulties being encountered by young migrants have been given increasing attention and recognition. While a decade ago there were no special teachers of migrant English in Victoria, there are now 1164 full-time and part-time teachers with specialist training giving special assistance to migrant children in the mastery of what must appear to these children to be a strange language. (Department of Education Annual Report 1975-1976:6).

We had come some way from the 'sit them next to Nelly' approach to teaching migrant children.

4.10 An End to Withdrawal Classes

The late seventies also saw a change in approach to migrant English classes. In the earlier years migrant English teaching had been dominated by the withdrawal of children from mainstream classes. These children worked in small groups, or in some cases on a one-to-one basis, with the migrant English teacher until their language skills were sufficiently advanced to allow them to return to class. This clearly identified the language needs of these children as the responsibility of the migrant English teacher and removed any responsibility from the classroom teacher. It also freed the migrant English teacher from the pressures of classroom teaching. Now there had been a "shift in emphasis from teaching in withdrawal groups to team-teaching with classroom teachers" (Department of Education Annual Report 1975-1976:15). This met with mixed reactions. Some ESL teachers saw team-teaching as a powerful way of achieving change at a whole school level. Sally was appointed as Migrant English coordinator to a school with a tradition of withdrawal English language classes and fought hard to get team-teaching accepted by both mainstream and Migrant English teachers:

ESL staff separated themselves (from other staff)... and I came in and said that we should be team-teaching and transferring some of our skills ... we need to help other teachers be aware that they are language teachers too... by team teaching I mean team teaching - I don't mean sitting up the back. It's half preparation, half delivery, half marking (Sally).

Other teachers were less enthusiastic about team-teaching, seeing the likelihood of their specialist input being interpreted as criticism of the class teacher. Anne has

had experience of team or support teaching but feels tentative about offering advice, preferring to wait for an approach by the class teacher:

You feel a bit strange when you're with a very experienced teacher.
You have to be very diplomatic or just shut up or give them a handout.
You have to be very tactful (Anne).

Another innovation at this time was the appointment of a number of school-based consultant teachers (in addition to the consultants centrally employed by CMES). These 'expert' migrant English teachers were given time release from teaching duties to offer guidance to schools in their local area (Department of Education Annual Report 1975-1976:15).

4.11 Changes in Government Policy

The 1970s also saw an explicit end to the White Australia Policy which had been a firmly entrenched part of Australia's immigration program for many years. Although governments had always denied its existence, migrants of the 1950s had been carefully selected for their perceived ability to blend unobtrusively into a white Anglo-Celtic Australia. Exclusion of 'non-Europeans' was largely done by administrative means (such as the infamous dictation test in a European language chosen to ensure that the applicant would fail). After 1958 the task of exclusion was the responsibility of immigration officers who screened applicants. If an applicant appeared to be less than 75% European, he or she was rejected. Any exceptions – usually in the case of well-qualified Asians – were at the discretion of the Minister for Immigration (Jordens 1997:209).

Minor modifications to this process had been taking place during the 1960s as increased wealth in South East Asia made closer relations with our 'non-European' neighbours more attractive. However it was not until early 1973 that there was official declaration of a universal intake policy "ignoring race, ethnicity, religion or cultural background" (Jupp 1991:84). This change had little immediate impact on immigration as it came at a time of reduced migrant intake. The first significant group of non-Europeans to arrive after this policy change were Timorese refugees (most of them Chinese-Timorese) who arrived in Darwin after the Indonesian invasion of East Timor in 1975. The first Vietnamese 'boat people' arrived in 1976

and by mid 1979 approximately 22,000 South East Asian refugees, mainly from Vietnam and Cambodia, had been accepted into Australia (Cox 1979:17). 1977 saw the first entry into Victorian schools of refugees from South East Asia. Records on each student were compiled and CMES staff supported schools in developing programs to meet their needs (Department of Education Annual Report 1976-1977:13).

In 1978 there were two other changes, each significant in their own way. The first was the establishment of four language centres to cater for refugee students. This was to lead the way for the development of separate intensive ESL centres as the most effective way of meeting the needs of recently arrived students. The second was the use of the term TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language) to replace the term 'migrant English' (Department of Education Annual Report 1977-1978:28). This name change was official acknowledgment both of the place of English in a child's language repertoire and of the importance of the first language.

4.12 English Language Centres

Approximately 30% of refugees from Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia who arrived in Australia between 1978 and 1980 were of school age. Approximately 9,000 of these children entered the Victorian school system (Spearritt & Coleman 1983:3). A Contingency Program for Refugee Children gave targeted Commonwealth funding to provide appropriate support for newly arrived refugee students. (This program operated until the end of 1981 when funding became part of the New Arrivals element of Commonwealth ESL funding). Organisation of the Contingency Program was left to individual states and Victoria chose to set up a small number of intensive language centres that were to be attended only by refugee students. A co-ordinator was appointed to administer the program with the assistance of two consultants. Teachers-in-charge at each centre were responsible for administration as well as some teaching duties. Teachers working in the centres were on limited tenure and were only able to become permanent if they applied for advertised vacancies elsewhere in the Department of Education (Spearritt & Coleman 1983:174).

Staffing in language centres was an issue of conflict from the start. Allen Humphries, co-ordinator of CMES and with a background in primary education, was determined to staff language centres with primary teachers. He argued that, even if these teachers were dealing with secondary age students, their expertise in teaching reading and writing was what was needed. (He may also have been motivated by the fact that there were a number of primary teachers returning from family leave at this time. It would obviously be more cost-effective to place these teachers in language centres than to appoint additional staff). Secondary school teachers with qualifications and experience in ESL were outraged. A series of meetings took place and the decision was made that there would be both primary and secondary language centres, both staffed by appropriately qualified teachers (Helen Lunt, personal communication 9/6/00).

The role of language centres is described in the 1979 Department of Education Annual Report. Students were to attend these centres for six months after arrival in Australia prior to placement in mainstream schools. Programs offered by language centres were designed to:

provide intensive English language tuition, an orientation to the Australian school system and community, and to allow sufficient time to overcome the effects of traumatic experiences (Department of Education Annual Report 1979-1980:38).

In 1981 the language centres were expanded to cater for other new arrivals and students who still required special assistance even though they may have been in Australia for a more extended period of time (Department of Education Annual Report 1980-1981:37). This extension coupled with an increase in the number of refugees entering Australia saw much larger numbers of students completing courses in language centres in 1982. Most new arrivals now went to language centres before moving into mainstream schools.

Gary was a new teacher working in a language centre at this time and he was very aware of the special needs of refugee students and the impact of this on their ability to learn English:

The Vietnamese were very different because they were from refugee camps and their needs were completely different ... I saw the need for teaching English but also their welfare needs became apparent

because their ability to learn English will depend on how they're feeling. (Gary)

Working in language centres was by no means easy. Patricia Reid, then President of the Victorian Secondary Teachers Association (VSTA) Language Centre Branch, describes the difficulties she faced in her attempts to be appointed as a permanent member of staff:

The undertaking, in 1982, of the Minister of Education ... meant that all Language Centre teachers with ongoing appointments were eligible for permanency. Most, as I did, filled out the forms, had a report written, and considered that that was the end of the matter. However, after applying in November 1982, I received a letter for the Director of Personnel and Industrial Relations in March 1983, stating that a decision could not be made on my application until I had been 'placed in a normal school situation for no less than one term' and that I would have to apply to Secondary Staffing for a transfer". (Reid 1984:25)

In other words, working as an ESL teacher in a specialist ESL centre did not count as 'real' teaching. It took another twelve months, union pressure and a change in Departmental policy before the situation was resolved and Patricia, and others like her, became permanent.

Language centres were also used as a dumping ground for 'excess' teachers – that is, teachers who had permanent appointments with the Department of Education but who, for a variety of reasons, were not needed in the schools to which they had been appointed. When 'excess' teachers arrived in language centres, they were used to replace teachers on limited tenure. Excess teachers rarely had ESL qualifications. ESL teachers appointed to language centres on limited tenure were always either experienced or qualified – usually both.

Administration was centrally located resulting in delays in decision-making at the local level, funding was inadequate (a once only payment of \$862 per student was to cover all costs including teacher salaries) and accommodation ranged from "the inappropriate to the undesirable" (Reid 1984:25).

Three years later, in 1988, the VSTA News described the accommodation at one language centre:

The old building needs vast amounts of money spent on it. Students and teachers work in a tangible atmosphere of dankness and decay: wallpaper is peeling, lights unaccountably go on and off because of bad wiring, walls are streaked with rising (and falling) damp, and the students' outdoor recreation area is limited to a dismal thirty metre square concrete yard (VSTA News Jun 1 1988).

Another issue causing problems for language centres was the attitude of many schools. A Ministerial Advisory Committee on Multicultural and Migrant Education (MACME) Issues Paper (October 1984) found that:

Often commented on is the willingness of schools to refer students to Language Centres, rather than developing ESL programs to cater for the students. Many schools refer students to intensive programs because there is no ESL program in the school, or because the student does not fit into the program that is available. As well, teachers-in-charge in language centres report that they have great difficulty in placing exit students from the New Arrivals program in schools (MACME 1984:8).

Language centres had become dumping grounds with schools keen to refer students and reluctant to accept them back at the end of their allotted time in the language centre.

An agreement between the Education Department and the Teachers Federation of Victoria in February 1985, on behalf of both primary and secondary teacher unions, resolved some issues of conditions and staffing. But it was not until December 1988, when larger language centres were granted school status and smaller language centres were annexed to existing schools, that language centres were entitled to the benefits given to other schools as a normal part of their operation. Teachers in language centres now had a career structure (in so far as any ESL teacher had a career structure) and a small number were able to be appointed as principals and deputy principals (Department of Education Memorandum of Understanding, 21 December 1988). Limited tenure however has returned to language centres and to many schools. The addition of classes to cater for international full-fee paying students has meant that an increasing number of ESL teachers are again offered employment on a term-by-term basis.

4.13 Access and Success - Ministerial Paper 6

The publication of *Ministerial Paper 6 Curriculum Development and Planning in Victoria* released by the then Minister of Education, Labor's Robert Fordham, in 1984 with its emphasis on 'access and success' was the focus of much discussion of "ways in which cultural understanding may be better developed and unwarranted assumptions challenged" (Department of Education Annual Report 1984-1985:84).

Ministerial Paper 6 was part of an on-going process of giving more independence to government schools. Amendments to the Education Act of 1958 had made school councils responsible for school policy within guidelines issued by the Minister for Education (Ministerial Paper 6:7). *Ministerial Paper 6* set out guidelines for curriculum with the two principles of access and success underpinning all curriculum development. *Ministerial Paper 6* also set out a number of key learning areas, listing a range of studies and activities. It was the responsibility of school councils to ensure that the school program offered was such that all students were able to experience access and success in these areas (Atkinson 1986). The first of the key learning areas, Language and Mathematics, had, as its first requirement, that all students should progressively develop the ability to:

Listen and talk appropriately in a variety of situations and to read and write effectively in standard English as it is used in Australia (Ministerial Paper Number 6 1984:17).

This clear statement of the need for, and value of, English language teaching was to prove a useful tool for many ESL teachers arguing for appropriate ESL provision in their schools.

4.14 The Role of the ESL Teacher

A booklet, *The Teaching of English as a Second Language (ESL) - Guidelines for Primary and Postprimary Schools*, was prepared by the State TESL Curriculum Committee in 1986 and published the following year with the help of the Multicultural Education Service. The booklet was the first in a set of three documents (*First and Second Language Development* and *English as a Second Language Program Development in Schools*). The documents were linked to *Ministerial Paper 6* and gave a detailed outline of the role of the ESL teacher and a clear statement of school accountability (Department of Education Annual Report

1986-1987:94). This description of the role of the ESL teacher is an important stage in the development of ESL teacher identity in that it was the first time that an explicit statement had been made as to the nature of ESL teacher work. It remains the only such statement to date. The role of the ESL teacher as described in this document has two parts – specific and general. The specific role of the ESL teacher includes:

- The identification of all NESB students in the school
- Placement of these students in appropriate year levels and classes
- Selection of students to be taught in ESL classes
- Record-keeping
- Development of an ESL syllabus
- Organisation of the ESL program within the school timetable
- Implementation and evaluation of the ESL program.

The general role of the ESL teacher is more far-reaching. The following was seen as desirable activity on the part of the ESL teacher:

- Direct involvement in decision making bodies within the school
- Direct links with administrators and resource personal within the school
- Development of a school language policy
- Assistance in selecting appropriate teaching materials across all subject areas
- Encouraging the employment of ethnic teacher aides
- In-servicing of other staff in the needs of ESL students
- Building links between home and school (Ministry of Education 1987:13-15).

In short, the ESL teacher was to be both teacher and administrator in the ESL area and politically active as advocate for ESL at the whole school level.

4.15 Professional Associations

1989 was an important year for professional associations and TESL in Victoria. For a number of years there had been two professional associations – the Victorian Association for Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (VATESOL) and the Victorian Association of Multicultural Education (VAME). Membership of VATESOL was largely drawn from teachers of adult students while VAME seemed to attract more teachers of school-aged students. A small number of ESL teachers were members of both. VAME started as an ESL-specific organisation in 1970. At this stage VAME stood for Victorian Association of Migrant Education. The name change to Victorian Association of Multicultural Education came in 1974 with:

the growing realisation among its members that ESL teaching cannot be considered in isolation, that to be effective it needs to take into account the learners' broader social context (VAME/VATESOL Newsletter March 1988:8).

VAME's newly articulated awareness of multiculturalism was at the same time as multiculturalism became government policy. VATESOL was established in 1982 in response to a perceived need among adult ESL teachers for a professional association which represented their particular interests (VATME Newsletter March 1989:4).

Discussion of a merger between the two associations began as early as 1984 when the VAME President's Annual Report argued that the interests of ESL teachers in Victoria would be best served by a single organisation. At the 1987 Annual General Meeting of both VAME and VATESOL a motion was passed empowering a committee to work towards amalgamation. Formal amalgamation of the two associations was ratified in the Annual General Meeting of the following year with a new name – the Victorian Association of TESOL and Multicultural Education (VATME).

The constitution for this new association listed four objectives:

- To further the development of the teaching of English to speakers of other languages.
- To further the development of the teaching of languages other than English.
- To foster Education for a Multicultural Society.
- To initiate, promote and support teacher training and professional development for those concerned with teaching English to speakers of other languages, languages other than English and with Education for Multicultural Society (VATME Newsletter March 1989:14).

In 1991 a .2 position of Extension Education Officer was funded by the Education Department. An ESL teacher was seconded from school for one day a week to work for VATME. In 1997 this .2 position was increased to .3 and in 1999 VATME was funded to set up a web site and to run a series of professional development activities for teachers, in addition to those run as a regular part of VATME's activities. By 1999 there were two paid positions (.3 time fraction each) for professional development in schools and for the adult and community sector. VATME's current brochure describes the association as:

A professional body committed to promoting excellence in teaching English to speakers of other languages and to fostering and supporting cultural and linguistic diversity. VATME provides support and services to individual TESOL teachers in schools and pre-schools, ELICOS, adult, community and industry settings. Its members also include managers, students, teacher educators, policy makers and academics.

This diversity of membership has always been a powerful feature of VATME and many of the key figures within the Department of Education LOTE, ESL and Multicultural Branch of the Schools Program Division have been (and continue to be) VATME members.

4.16 Materials Development in Victoria

The 1980s saw rapid development of ESL teaching materials in Victoria, most of them the result of teacher-consultant collaboration, many published by the Education Department. Martin (1976:42) describes the rejection of the earlier Commonwealth materials by Victorian teachers, suggesting that:

It seems likely that Victorian teachers, accustomed to more autonomy in the areas of curriculum would react against the standardised approach (of these materials). It also seems likely that more fundamental criticism of the learning theory underlying the course might have come from Victoria, where serious attention was already being paid to the theory of second language acquisition.

A special feature of the early 1980s was a series of materials development workshops organised through CMES. Eighteen papers were published as a result of these workshops, including a wide range of topics associated with teaching English as second language, teaching of community languages, bilingual education, the cultural backgrounds of students and education for a multicultural society (Department of Education Annual Report 1981-1982:47).

1984 saw the first commercial publication of the ESL Topic books (Cleland & Evans 1984), a series written by two language centre teachers designed to teach English through topics drawn from the secondary school curriculum.

Materials development continued with a range of curriculum materials, the common feature of which was the input of practising ESL teachers. In the foreword to one of

these publications, *ESL Literacy Links*, Geoff Spring, then Director of School Education, comments on the many participants in the writing of the text:

These materials have been developed by teachers, consultants and ESL project officers in the Directorate of School Education. (Meally-Barnera, Rawson & Large 1993)

The most recent and substantial curriculum document, the *ESL Companion Document to the English Curriculum and Standards Framework* was published in 1996 (a revised version in 2000). This document – the result of years of combined effort by ESL consultants and writers and ESL teachers – was to provide a common structure for program planning and documenting ESL student progress. The first stage of the *ESL Course Advice*, a supporting document – offering detailed units of work for beginner ESL students in middle to upper primary level – was published in 1996. The second stage, units of work for secondary ESL students, was published in 1997. (In the year 2000 all this material was made available on CD). An ESL study guide, *Text Response - Literature*, for senior ESL students, jointly authored by an ESL teacher and an ESL teacher-educator, also published in the 1990s, offered a combination of theories of language acquisition and practical ideas for teaching literature at years 11 and 12 (Department of Education Annual Report 1995-1996:83).

4.17 A Year 12 ESL Subject

There were also structural changes in the curriculum to cater for ESL students. A special Year 12 English subject had been available in Victoria for many years. Originally designed to meet the needs of Colombo Plan students, it was gradually made available to a wider cohort of ESL students. Due to its origins as a subject for students who had been carefully selected for tertiary study in Australia it had always been seen as the equivalent of other Year 12 subjects for purposes of tertiary entry. This subject is now one of a small group of core English subjects in the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), the certificate for the final two years of secondary education. Restricted to students who have been educated in English for not more than seven years prior to Year Twelve, it is written and assessed by ESL teachers.

4.18 Changes in Funding

Funding has always been a major problem for ESL provision. The initial agreement with the Commonwealth in 1970 was seen, at least by the Commonwealth, as a short-term solution. That there was need for continuing support rapidly became clear but the level of support and the degree of responsibility has remained a source of contention between State and Commonwealth. Martin (1978:123) believes the Commonwealth Child Migrant Education Program's time as an active player in ESL ended in 1975. This year saw the publication of a Commonwealth Schools Commission Report recommending that the Child Migrant Education Program be discontinued and that funds should be provided to the States as part of a General Support program for education. Rather than being tagged to fund ESL teaching these funds were to be used at the discretion of the States for 'Migrant and Multicultural Education'. The Commonwealth as watchdog to protect the needs of ESL students was gone but other sources of funding were available. Many schools of high migrant density were able to apply for additional funding through the Commonwealth Schools Commission Disadvantaged Schools Program and the Participation and Equity Program (PEP) which replaced it. (The wide-ranging nature of PEP meant that it became known as the Pay Everything Program). Neither of these programs is still in existence. The Contingency Program for Refugees was also replaced by a New Arrivals element in the General Support Program. Since these changes, levels of funding have been in a constant state of flux, with varying amounts contributed by Commonwealth and State according to a complex and ever-changing set of formula. The 1992 Commonwealth Auditor-General's efficiency audit of the ESL Program (cited in Cahill 1996:18) made it clear that:

Although the Commonwealth provides a significant source of funds for ESL education, "it does not have responsibility for ESL provision in schools", which "reflects the States' and Territories' constitutional responsibility for primary and secondary schooling".

Although Victoria has always supported ESL education with additional funding to compensate for cuts at the Commonwealth level, two major events of the 1990s have impacted on ESL teaching in this state. The first was a series of school closures, many in areas of high migrant density, and a large number of forced teacher redundancies. A change in government in 1992 brought a change in

education policy, a policy heavily influenced by the free market ideology adopted in New Zealand and Britain. By "the end of its first term in office in April 1996, it (the new government) had closed 350 schools, abolished 7000 teaching positions, introduced self-management to state schools and introduced a year 3 and 5 student testing program" *The Age* Sept 10, 1999:10). The primary aim of education policy under the new Liberal Government was to cut the education budget by \$300 million. The driving force was a policy called *Schools of the Future* which:

Introduced many market principles in the administration of schools, transforming the role school principals were expected to play. They were now expected to administer schools as managers of an enterprise, in competition with other schools, raise private sponsorship to supplement school budgets and run their schools as fiscal units. (Taylor et al 1997:8)

Funding for ESL education, provided by the Commonwealth and supplemented by the Victorian government, was now provided to schools as an element of the School Global Budget. Principals were given 'increased flexibility' in the use of this funding to 'meet the learning needs of each NESB student' and the new method of funding "subsumed the former allocation of special needs ESL teacher positions to mainstream primary and secondary colleges" (Department of Education Annual Report 1994-1995:67). This 'increased flexibility' led to a blurring of the distinction between literacy and ESL, with many ESL programs disappearing into a general literacy program.

4.19 International Students

1995 saw yet another change to the ESL scene. School-aged international full fee-paying students began to enter the government school system. In the past these students had been the sole property of the independent school system but in August 1995 legislation was changed to allow Victorian government schools to enrol international full fee paying students. In October 1995 the first international students entered government schools. By 1999 there were 973 of these students with 175 schools accredited to take overseas students with tuition fees of up to \$8370 for years 11 and 12, an amount which covers only basic tuition. Estimates are that the total cost per student including accommodation is in the region of

\$20,000 per year. International students were to be a mixed blessing for many ESL teachers, a combination of increased workload and useful bargaining tool:

ESL was not very important (in the school) and I can remember an absolute horror year. I had 22 students in a year 11 ESL class (class sizes had been a maximum of 12 in the past) and I started kicking up a fuss. I remember saying to someone who had some power 'You cannot attract international students if you're going to put them in ESL classes of 22' so things started to change...as far as ESL goes (the international students) have been fantastic for us (Alice).

There are a number of differences between international students entering the tertiary system in Australia and those entering the secondary system. Tertiary students have achieved some level of past success educationally. This is not true of at least some international students entering the secondary system. There are students who have been sent to Australia because of difficulties of various kinds in their home country. Cathy describes her experiences with international students:

You see these Japanese boys with coloured hair and rings everywhere – ear, nose, lip and tongue – and you think – I know why you're here. They just want to watch videos and play Nintendo all night. Homework is a big no-no. Nine o'clock in the morning and already they're tired. They spend their time in class asleep. [Most of them] have never been any good at schoolwork (Cathy).

4.20 Changes in Patterns of Immigration

Changes in the number and pattern of the immigration program (Table 1) have direct impact on ESL teachers. Although many ESL teachers give this ever-changing student cohort as one of the most richly rewarding aspects of their work, there can be little doubt that the constantly changing student group is a challenge.

Table 2. Settler arrivals, top ten source countries of birth, 1964-65, 1974-75, 1984-85, 1994-95

1964-65			1974-75		
Country of birth	No.	%	Country of birth	No.	%
UK and Ireland	74 754	53.3	UK and Ireland	37 647	42.2
Italy	16 991	12.1	Yugoslavia	3 931	4.4
Greece	10 309	7.4	USA	3 130	3.5
Malta	5 864	4.2	New Zealand	2 652	3.0
Yugoslavia	5 278	3.8	Greece	2 399	2.7
Germany	3 485	2.5	Italy	2 389	2.7
Netherlands	2 106	1.5	Lebanon	2 271	2.5
New Zealand	2 021	1.4	Uruguay	2 117	2.4
USA	1 713	1.2	India	2 048	2.3
UAR Egypt	1 479	1.1	Chile	2 002	2.2
Subtotal	124 000	88.5	Subtotal	60 586	68.0
Other	16 152	11.5	Other	28 561	32.0
Total	140 152	100	Total	89 147	100

1984-85			1994-95		
Country of birth	No.	%	Country of birth	No.	%
UK	11 674	14.9	UK	10 689	12.2
New Zealand	9 075	11.6	New Zealand	10 498	12.0
Vietnam	8 494	10.9	Former Yugoslavia	6 665	7.6
Hong Kong	3 296	4.2	Vietnam	5 097	5.8
Philippines	3 282	4.2	Hong Kong	4 135	4.7
China	3 163	4.1	Philippines	4 116	4.7
Malaysia	2 436	3.1	India	3 908	4.5
Lebanon	2 399	3.1	China	3 708	4.2
Sri Lanka	2 324	3.0	South Africa	2 792	3.2
India	1 965	2.5	Iraq	2 539	2.9
Subtotal	48 108	61.6	Subtotal	54 147	61.9
Other	29 979	38.4	Other	33 281	38.1
Total	78 087	100	Total	87 428	100

Source: BIMPR. *Immigration Update*, June Quarter 1995 cited in Cahill 1996:54.

4.21 The ESL Report

1995 saw a new source of information on ESL in Victoria – *The ESL Report*. This was a report written and published by the LOTE, ESL and Multicultural Branch of the Schools Programs Division of the Department of Education. The report provided an overview of NESB data gathered through the annual census of NESB students in all government schools, information on ESL provision for newly arrived

students in intensive programs and on ESL provision in mainstream schools. The 1995-1996 Annual report gave a summary of the advisory groups with input into policy development for programs to support students with language backgrounds other than English (Department of Education Annual Report 1995-1996:81). The term 'Language Background Other than English' or LBOTE was used for the first time as a replacement for the previous 'Non English Speaking Background' or NESB which was felt to convey a deficit view of these students.

Three groups had input into policy development. The Ministerial Advisory Council on LOTE and ESL offered advice to ministers. The Statewide ESL Planning Group provided a forum for discussion and planning on ESL issues within schools and the Joint Education Systems and Tertiary Institutions ESL Forum acted as a venue for the discussion of ESL issues across all sectors of education. All three groups acted as a meeting point for Education Department personnel involved with ESL and ESL teachers. Martin (1976:63) had, many years earlier, spoken of the structural changes needed to make other changes possible:

The necessary communication networks, data base, expertise, forms of organisation and funding for implementing more complex and comprehensive approaches now exist in every education authority, at least in embryo. There are clearly possibilities for the laggard response of the past to be speeded up and for policies sensitive to the reality of schools and migrant children to be developed. (Martin 1976:65)

The groups described above are well placed to do so.

The 1998-1999 Annual Report – the most recent at the time of writing – listed five key elements of the ESL program:

- The provision of intensive ESL programs or targeted support for newly arrived students
- ESL funding in the school global budgets of primary and secondary schools to provide ongoing support to ESL learners
- The development of curriculum materials for teachers of ESL learners
- Professional development for teachers of ESL learners
- The provision of interpreting and translating services to schools (Department of Education Annual Report 1998-1999:34)

The report also notes the provision of:

Education programs for school-aged students in the Victorian Safe Havens for Kosovar refugees at Bandiana, Portsea and Puckapunyal. (Department of Education Annual Report 1998-1999:35)

The Safe Havens closed in early 2000 with forced repatriation of the majority of the remaining Kosovars and education has no place in the current detention centres for 'illegal refugees'.

4.22 Conclusion

Twenty years ago a Review of Multicultural and Migrant Education (Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs Sept 1980) saw Victoria leading the way in ESL education but noted that:

There is clearly a long way to go before practice matches policy in government schools. Despite commitment in all States and Territories to the principles of multicultural and migrant education, progress has been limited. As the trend towards greater school autonomy continues, the introduction of systemic change becomes more difficult.

A survey of ESL teaching in Victorian schools conducted by the Victorian Secondary Teachers' Association in November of the same year found that:

The 'best migrant education program in Australia' has a long way to go in providing even English for those who need it. Positive discrimination in favour of disadvantaged ethnic languages and cultures, the only way to really work towards genuine equality, seems to be beyond its ken. Left to themselves, the Victorian Government and Victorian Education Department will never institute either. (Marginson 1980:26)

Twenty years on, Tom feels that many of the achievements of the past have been surface changes at best and that:

We now have more curriculum support, more curriculum documents and resources, more pre-service and in-service training, our professional association and more institutional backing but in a sense the policy and government infrastructure are fragile and vulnerable. There are always cuts to funding and resources and ESL and multicultural education are constantly threatened and damaged by economic rationalism and the changes in ideological fashions in politics and the bureaucracy. ESL and multicultural education are still afterthoughts included because of pressure by active ESL and multicultural education advocates among teachers and some key individuals in the bureaucracy. Mainstream policy makers, planners

and curriculum framework initiators never include ESL and multicultural education needs and issues in their basic thinking and planning. It is never part of the initial brief. It is never an integral part of the design. Mainstream thinking invariably ignores them.

ESL education in the 1950s and 60s was described as a process of 'abortive beginnings and forgotten insights' (Martin 1975:63). Tragically, if Tom is right, little has changed and this is a description that could apply equally well to ESL teaching and child migrant education at the close of the century.

There is a connecting thread of disturbing cynicism in the positioning of migrant as commodity in Government policy. The 1950s and the first days of postwar immigration saw migrant as physical resource, both as breeding stock to increase the dwindling population and as labour for large scale development such as the Snowy Mountains Hydro-electric scheme. Next came migrant as factory fodder in the 1960s as manufacturing industry in Australia expanded with migrant as both resource and problem. The 1970s and the 'humanitarian' refugee program assisted Australia's entry into the global scene – an entry previously denied by the racism of the White Australia Policy. The influx of international students in the 1990s again positions migrant as commodity with a focus on students as economic resource and education in general, and ESL teaching in particular, as a money-generating growth industry.

It is obvious that this has not been a total picture of the development of ESL teaching in the state of Victoria. This remains a task for someone else. My intention was to trace what I see to have been the main stages in the development of the 'who' and 'what' of ESL teaching, to give a sense of the richness, complexity and spiral nature of this development and to give voice to some of the people involved at different stages.

The next chapter explores the ways in which twenty teachers understand their ESL teacher identities, their reasons for working in the area and the metaphors they use for their work.

Chapter 5: Motivation and Practice

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a discussion of data collected in the interviews conducted with twenty teachers selected from those who responded to the questionnaire. An outline of the composition of this group and the process by which they were selected is to be found in an earlier chapter. Teachers were asked to comment on their initial decision to work in the area of ESL teaching, the work they do, goals for their students and reasons for continuing in this work. This focus for discussion comes from the work of Baumeister (1986, 1997), Gecas and Mortimer (1987), May (1997) and McAdams (1997).

5.2 Identity Understood, Identity Enacted

The identities we construct for ourselves are a complex amalgam of motivation, purpose and practice within the constraints of ways of being available. Initial selection of ESL teacher identity, the implementation of this identity through practice and the decision to remain as part of this identity are all ways into an understanding of ESL teacher identities. The focus on initial motivation explores perceptions of ESL teacher identity prior to group membership. These external perceptions offer insight into group identity in that group identity both constructs and is constructed by group members. Initial perceptions act in the nature of self-fulfilling prophecy "at the intersection of individuality and practice" (May 1997:53). We select a role which we believe will allow us to be the type of person we perceive ourselves to be (Gecas & Mortimer 1987). If we believe ourselves to be 'helpers', we select a role which will allow us to 'help' (and by doing so we maintain the role as a 'helping' one). The search for coherence between work identity and an individual system of values and priorities influences both initial and continuing choices which are made in enactment of identity (Baumeister 1986). If these individual values and priorities are shared by

others involved in similar work, these values are both reinforced as individual aspects of identity and shared as elements of group identity. Individual storying of life in terms of commitment to others (McAdams 1997) becomes shared storying of ESL teacher identities.

Data analysis takes two forms, the first 'language as transparent' in which answers given are accepted as factual representations of the teacher's world. The second, 'language as opaque', concerns itself with the metaphors which these teachers use to describe their work. If metaphor is "a basic entity of discourse" (Maasen & Weingart 2000:34), the metaphors these teachers use to describe their work provide a window of understanding into ways of being as ESL teachers. (A more extensive discussion of metaphor is to be found in Chapter 2).

5.3 ESL Teaching as First Choice

Thirteen teachers within the group of twenty selected ESL as a teaching method in their pre-service teacher training. Seven teachers within this group are from a migrant background. Sue Ellen, Nick, Connie and Vicky were born in Australia with Greek parents. Each started school in Australia unable to speak English and are aware of the problems their parents experienced in their struggles to learn English. For Vicky, her decision to work as an ESL teacher was '*a natural progression*' from her background. She is aware of her mother's difficulties with English – '*My mother took it [learning English] up later in life and it was very frustrating for her. I was aware of that ... so it was just a natural progression for me*'.

Sue Ellen's parents were also unable to speak English and relied on her to communicate with the English-speaking community. She started school speaking no English and, although she learned quickly, she realised that other students had more difficulty:

I went to school with no English at all - it was difficult for me and I was very frustrated. ... As kids we were used as interpreters a lot of the time. I could always see the difficulties and frustration that my

parents had when they wanted to go and do things and they didn't have the language to do so.

Connie chose ESL because she wanted to travel overseas and thought it would be a useful qualification in terms of employment. But, like Vicky and Sue Ellen, Connie started school unable to speak English and as she reflects on her decision, the reasons for career choice become more complex:

I ended up in school with no English and no one there to help me. There was no teacher there to teach me or to help me. I couldn't understand a word ... I was a Prep at four years old with no English, with no one there to support or help me.

Connie managed to get through to Year 11 with "*English all sort of picked up*", but "*I did two years, Year 11, because I just couldn't cope with that sort of stress and that sort of study. It all just fell in a heap*". She is also aware of the problems experienced by her parents and grandparents, especially her grandmother who taught herself to read and write in both Greek and English.

Nick always wanted to be a teacher and for him, his experiences "*all just sort of tied up. That ambition of the little kid teaching his cousins and his teddy bears and everything else all sort of interlinked and tied up*". For Nick, one aspect of 'everything else' was starting school unable to speak English – "*not understanding my teacher, not knowing anything and still remembering what it was like to feel inadequate*". His mother spoke no English, so in Grade One, Nick was "*helping Mum read so she was learning with me at the same time*".

Another aspect of 'everything else' was Nick's experience of reverse migration. He enjoyed school in Australia and was doing well until, when he was sixteen, his parents decided to return to Greece:

[I was] completely uprooted from all family, friends, relatives, everything I knew, people that I had grown up with and trusted and loved and cared for. All this to end up in Greece and be told these are your new cousins, these are your grandparents, this is your new school and these are going to be your new friends. Here's your life. Now deal with it.

Nick feels that this experience of being an Australian teenager in Greece played an important part in his decision to become an ESL teacher and in his ability to understand the older adolescents with whom he works:

I can see where the problems are for students making a big transition like that. ... I just wanted to help kids who had been through the same sort of thing that I had.

Stefan was born in Italy and came to Australia when he was seven years old. Although Stefan spoke no English, it is the cultural difficulties that he remembers most clearly from his early years of school in Australia, having the 'wrong' lunch, playing the 'wrong' type of football:

I became acutely aware that I was different and that this mattered to some people. There were things that I had to do to assimilate, play football, eat meatpies. Not difficult tasks in themselves but I knew that I had to do them.

Language was not an issue for Stefan until, like Connie, he reached senior levels – "*at Year 10, 11, first year uni, I can remember having problems with the language. It's impacted on how I teach. I'm always conscious of where my students will be in the future and what their needs will be*". Stefan's career choice was always between law and teaching. His decision to move into teaching was based on ethical considerations, rather than as an explicit result of his own migrant experience:

I didn't think the law was me. I didn't think it would suit my character. It wouldn't suit my morals or something like that. ... One of the reasons that I love [ESL] teaching is that it allows me to be the sort of human being that I want to be.

Sally's father is from the former Yugoslavia. Although English was always spoken at home and Sally is "*blonde enough to pass for a Skip*" (a slang term for an Anglo-Australian), she was aware of differences in her family background and of her father's efforts to fit into the English speaking community. School also made her aware of the needs of ESL students:

ESL kids always seemed to be separate, not part of the group. ... It was back in the wog days. I would have been viewed as one of the Aussies but I could identify with the kids that were seen as wogs.

Trish, Bronwen and Mandy all slipped into ESL by accident rather than design. Trish "*just wanted to be an English teacher and chose TESL method [as] an extra but ESL*

took over". The teacher training institution to which Bronwen applied offered her a combination of History and ESL and "*without really knowing what ESL was*" she accepted. Mandy completed an Arts degree and "*thought what the hell am I going to do with it ... OK - teaching*". She selected her two teaching methods solely on the basis of her tertiary studies - "*Linguistics converted to ESL so I ended up with ESL and Geography*".

Gary and Mary both selected ESL as a teaching method because of their own love of languages. They saw ESL as '*just another sort of language teaching, like French or Spanish*'. Mary also feels that she has a gift for languages. For her, the decision to work as an ESL teacher was a combination of her own enjoyment of language learning, her experiences living and studying overseas and an initial experience of teaching English in Spain.

Like Nick, Gary spent his childhood teaching his teddybears. He enjoyed learning French at his country secondary school despite being forced to study by correspondence in his senior years. This method of learning a language proved a stumbling block when he arrived at university and found that his French "*wasn't crash hot*". Lack of confidence in his ability to speak French was a reason for choosing ESL as a teaching method:

I just didn't feel as though I had a lot of credibility [as a French teacher].
So that's when I decided to do ESL. ... I think that the main reason was
I thought English is my language, I can teach it.

Gary was also keen to stay in the city. The offer of a job teaching French in a country high school in "*a dust bowl in the Mallee*" (a wheat growing area in the far north of Victoria) increased his determination to work as an ESL teacher:

I was certainly not considering the clientele. I was looking at my own
career, my own choice of job. ... When I was given that appointment
[as French teacher in the country] I said I would prefer to teach ESL ...
So I chose the job based on location.

Alice's experiences as receptionist for a doctor in the 1960s gave her an understanding of the difficulties faced by migrant patients, an awareness behind her decision to train as an ESL teacher:

The doctor I worked for was Maltese and he also spoke Italian and we had a Greek person on staff as well. ... a lot of migrants travelled right across Melbourne to him. ... So I was aware of it ... I used to fill in their census forms and things like that for them. Some of them were illiterate.... Some of them were on pensions and couldn't even sign their names. Also you'd have the young children coming in to interpret for parents which was very difficult for them.

Tess began training to teach History and English but, after her first teaching practicum, she began to question the relevance of teaching History to students unable to speak English. The decision to change to ESL:

I think most people go into teaching because of the desire to help people and I just felt that I would be of more use to people in ESL.

There are a variety of reasons given for the initial decision to train as an ESL teacher. Factors such as chance, lack of other options and location of teaching positions were clearly influential. It is also true that these are experienced ESL teachers looking back on earlier decisions, decisions now interpreted in the light of their present ESL teacher identities. Despite this, some shared understandings of ESL teacher identity begin to emerge. The role of an ESL teacher is to help migrants to overcome problems caused by language, to accept, support and help ESL students generally. More specifically this help is to enable students to make the transition from one country to another, from one culture to another and to prepare students for the future. The ESL teacher is the contact point within the school for ESL students. There are also more personal aspects of the ESL teacher role. An ESL teacher is 'useful', a 'good person', 'the type of person I want to be'. These teachers see ESL teaching as offering them a role identity compatible with character identity (Gecas & Mortimer 1987). These perceptions of ESL teaching construct a group identity which becomes a thing in itself, both reinforcing the individual sense of role identity and perpetuating the identity created by the shared construct by establishing norms of group behaviour.

5.4 ESL Teaching as a Later Choice

Seven teachers moved into ESL teaching after experience in other areas of teaching. Two of the teachers in this group migrated to Australia as adults, having already

worked as English language teachers. Nancy taught in Zambia for a number of years. She had no teacher training at this stage and although she was employed to teach English:

All my students were second or even third language learners. ...
usually they were black Zambian students.

When Nancy migrated to Australia she wanted to continue her work as an English language teacher. She completed a teaching qualification but lacked the prerequisites which would allow her entry into TESL method. She is one of the two teachers in this study who are not formally qualified to work as ESL teachers.

May completed her teacher training in Hong Kong and it was there that "*I realized that teaching a language is really beautiful*". When she migrated to Australia, May found work teaching Chinese:

They didn't have many classes in Chinese [so] they've got to fill me up with ESL. That's how I got started".

Although May has completed a number of different courses, she also lacks formal ESL qualifications.

Karl and Anna both migrated to Australia as children. Anna spoke no English and her family was the only migrant family in a white middle class area. Although Anna believes she has "*a number of [unresolved] identity issues that ... came from being a migrant*", these "*had nothing to do with my interest in getting into ESL*". Anna trained to teach mathematics and science and taught for one year "*at a terrible school*". After this she decided that she would never teach again. She completed further study and worked in a variety of "*helping type jobs*". Following the advice of a friend who "*does ESL teaching and raves about her job all the time.*", Anna returned to study, planning to teach English to adults:

I especially wanted to work with women ... in factories ... empowering women through literacy, that sort of thing.

A teaching practicum in a secondary English language school restored Anna's confidence as a teacher and changed her mind about working with adults:

I loved it. I absolutely loved. They were secondary kids and I thought I can do this. I really really enjoyed it (Anna).

For Karl, the move into ESL teaching was "*pure accident*". He started teaching German and French. After a trip overseas, he returned to find that:

the ESL teacher had left and so they plonked me into there [and] I decided that as a job I was more useful in ESL than in language teaching. I found ESL very congenial, the students very willing (Karl).

This perception of ESL students as willing learners was also a factor in Jane's decision to make a career change. After fourteen years teaching "*every possible version of history*", she felt the need for a new direction. She enjoyed working closely with students, had travelled extensively throughout Asia and "*felt that I could relate to those students*".

Cathy taught English for a number of years before going to live in Italy:

I got jobs over there teaching English [and on returning to Australia] wanted part time work. This was mid seventies and there was lots of part time work in ESL and because I'd had that experience I was snapped up (Cathy).

Unlike many of the other teachers in this group, Tom's move into ESL teaching was the result of a deliberate decision. A French and History teacher, Tom was working in the crisis years of the 1960s – a time of large classes and teacher shortage - in a school close to a migrant hostel. Classes were large – "*up to fifty*" in some classes – and almost half of the students were newly arrived migrants unable to speak English:

In 1970 a planeload of French people arrived in the hostel and two of the families came to enrol in the school. I was called in and told to interpret. ... I got an insight into their predicament and their needs and so on (Tom).

Tom joined the newly formed Child Migrant Education Service, seeing this as "*a more useful way of using [his] skills*".

There are a variety of different factors affecting the decision to move into ESL teaching for these teachers. The availability of part time work, the administrative practice of allocating ESL classes to any teacher available and negative experiences with mainstream classes all play a part but again understandings of ESL teacher

identities begin to emerge. ESL teacher work is seen to be more useful than other types of teaching. It is enjoyable because the students are keen to learn and close relationships are possible between teachers and students. There are borders drawn between ESL teaching and 'other' forms of teaching. The process of constructing ESL teacher identity also constructs identities for other teachers who, by their difference, mark that which is particular to ESL teachers. ESL students are also part of this process. They are separated from other students and positioned in ways which reinforce teacher constructions of ESL teacher identity.

5.5 Rewards

At the time of this interview, all of the twenty teachers were working as ESL teachers within the Victorian government secondary school system. Five of them – Connie, Gary, Karl, Mary and Tess – were working in specialist English language schools with recently arrived ESL students. Anna was employed by a large secondary school to work in a special introductory program for international students. The others were working in ESL programs within secondary schools. Eight of them – Sally, Mandy, Tom, Nancy, Cathy, Nick, Sue Ellen and Jane – were teaching only ESL classes. Vicky, Alice, Stefan and Trish were also teaching English classes. Bronwen was teaching History classes and May had responsibility for the school's Chinese program. Mandy was the only one of these teachers to express any reservation about her commitment to ESL teaching. The others saw it as the main focus of their work. They spoke of their love of ESL teaching and their love of their ESL students. In Alice's words – *"I like teaching English. I love teaching ESL"*.

ESL students are central to most discussion of ESL teacher work. The students are seen to be appreciative and respectful in a way that other, non-ESL, students are not. The students are also regarded as admirable people. ESL teaching is seen to be more rewarding than other forms of teaching in that there is greater freedom to develop student-appropriate teaching materials. It also offers an escape from the pressures of mainstream teaching.

5.5.1 The Relationship with the ESL Students

The other is central to the construction of identity at both individual and group level. It is through difference to the other that the nature of the individual and group is established. The ways in which others are constructed makes possible the constructions of self. A person who constructs their own identity as helper needs others to be in need of help. A profession which positions itself as a caring, helping profession needs to construct others as in need and accepting of care and help. It is the student other, as constructed by these teachers, which makes possible their understandings of themselves and their work. The ESL student is constructed, at least in abstract, in universally positive ways. The student other who is not an ESL student is, either explicitly or by implication, constructed in negative terms. This positive/negative dichotomy is also an implicit part of the border drawn between ESL teacher work and the work of teachers who are other than ESL. (Further discussion of the role of the other in identity construction is to be found in Chapter 2. Teacher construction of ESL student other is the main focus of Chapter 7).

A 'special' relationship with students is a powerful aspect of the ESL teacher identities described by these teachers. They all comment on the special relationship that exists between ESL teachers and their students, repeatedly using the word 'love' to describe their feelings towards their students. The teacher-student relationship was described as "*an on-going bond*", a "*real friendship*", a "*special rapport*", seen to be quite different to the relationship with mainstream students. The relationship appears to be based on a connection between student attitude to teachers and learning and the teacher response to this. In Tess's words:

Most teachers love to teach. ... [ESL students] want to learn so you want to teach them. You just build up this really strong relationship of wanting to help them, to do as much for them as you can. It comes rolling back. That's what I think it's all about (Tess).

ESL students are seen to arrive at school with a respect for teachers that other students do not have – "*the kids come from places that teach them respect*" (Nick). This respect for teachers is combined with an appreciation of the importance of the subject

matter – *“the ESL students see that they must have a good foundation in English”* (May). This results in a willingness to work hard – *“anything you ask them to do, they’ll do it”* (Sue Ellen). The students are *“so eager to learn. They’re just so happy that you put in the time and effort to teach them”* (Anna). Teachers are motivated by this attitude of respect and enthusiasm for learning and *“you just do as much as you can”* (Jane).

ESL students seem openly appreciative of their teachers’ efforts. Both Tom and Vicky describe their ESL students thanking them at the end of each class and the feeling that their work is appreciated means a great deal to these teachers. It is also a marked contrast to other classes where *“kids knock you down trying to get out of the door”* (Vicky).

5.5.2 The ESL Students as Special People

Many of the positive aspects of ESL teaching are related to teacher perception of ESL students’ attitudes to teachers and to learning. The ESL teachers also speak highly of other qualities of their students less clearly related to a traditional student-teacher relationship. Many students stay in touch with their ESL teachers long after they have left school. Tom has *“been invited to many weddings, to christenings, to coming of age celebrations, to parents’ birthdays, to house blessings and first communions, to family reunions and memorial services”*. This type of on-going contact with, and regard for, their ESL teacher is mentioned by most of the teachers interviewed. Teachers also describe the willingness of students to explore cross-cultural issues and how privileged they feel to be part of this – *“maybe the cultural difference is the thing I love best and the conversations and the willingness to share and discuss and explore”* (Trish). Past experiences related to migration are seen to have resulted in ESL students having a maturity lacking in other students. They are also keen to establish relationships with adults:

There’s a kind of neediness about them. They’ve had their old lives messed up and destroyed and they’re looking for security and they’re looking for friendship and they’re looking for relationships that they can build with adults (Tess).

This 'neediness' is a compelling aspect of ESL teacher work and identities. ESL teachers express the desire to be useful, to be needed. Their students are seen to be needy of them in ways that other students are not. At least some needs can be met and the desire to be needed fulfilled as student and teacher work together in a mutually rewarding relationship.

ESL students also offer their teachers vicarious access to a rich variety of world views and experiences and Sally sees this as one of the most rewarding aspects of ESL teaching:

My students say to me why do you teach? And I say so I can meet people like you, people that have had the vast experiences that you've had.

5.5.3 Contrast with Mainstream Teaching

The contrast between ESL students and other students, between ESL teaching and other forms of teaching, especially other forms of language teaching, is also a matter of comment. Karl describes ESL teaching as an *"escape from the harshness and rigour of mainstream teaching ... ESL teaching is much more intense but it doesn't have the discipline problems that we have to cope with in mainstream classes"*. Tom was initially motivated to move into ESL teaching because he was *"sick of the useless struggles in the French classroom"*. Mary loves languages and misses the intellectual challenge of working with senior level French students but will never go back to this form of teaching. The joy of teaching Year 12 is not worth the pain of teaching French to junior classes:

In high school languages are not important and it was a hell of a lot of hard work for little or no satisfaction because most of the kids do not want to learn a language.

It is not only in language classes that students seem reluctant to learn. Vicky describes her English class of *"25 kids who don't want to hand in work, don't care about achieving and it's just a struggle"*. For these teachers, ESL teaching is rewarding in ways that even the best mainstream teaching is not. In part this is because of the obvious progress which ESL students are able to make, especially in the early stages of language learning:

I'm so passionate about ESL because it's so rewarding ...you can really see what your [ESL] students come in like at the beginning of the year and what they're achieving by the end and that's very distinct. ... Refugee students who come under really traumatic circumstances and you see how passionate they are about learning and how well they do. You feel – I was there. I was part of that (Sue Ellen).

5.5.4 Program Development

ESL teachers also see themselves as being free of many of the restrictions of the mainstream curriculum. Possibly because ESL is not regarded as central to the academic program in many schools, curriculum development is less restricted by the need to 'get through' the syllabus and teachers are able develop programs which are more clearly related to student interest and need:

I really enjoy the amount of freedom that you have as an ESL teacher. You're making your own syllabus based on the needs of the students. You've got so much freedom to be creative and tune into what they need. You never get bored in ESL. You're always looking for something new that your kids will enjoy (Jane).

5.5.5 Useful Work

The satisfaction of being able to achieve, to see results for teaching, is an important aspect of ESL teacher work with several teachers explicit about this sense of purpose being the most meaningful reward for their work:

It's feeling that you've got something to offer, that there is something you can do that will help make a difference that will broaden their horizons and give them more opportunities (Stefan).

Clearly the reasons for becoming an ESL teacher given in the previous section have been expressed in the light of the experiences which came after this decision was made. It does seem, however, that for many of these teachers their expectations have been met. They see themselves as being able to work closely with students who respond positively to their teaching. The close teacher-student contact means that they are able to develop appropriate strategies and materials for teaching and these, combined with the students' willingness to work hard, results in success for both students and teachers. These ESL teachers feel useful, needed and appreciated.

5.6 Ambitions

The rewards for the ESL teacher are clear but what do these teachers want for their students? They want their students to be confident and optimistic, to achieve academic success, to develop appropriate behaviours to fit into the Australian education system and to be active participants in the wider Australian society.

Many teachers cited student confidence as key to future success. Although each teacher used the word 'confidence', what was meant by it varied. For some teachers, confidence was related to language use. For others, confidence was linked to more personal attributes such as self-esteem. For Sally confidence is both of these:

I want to give them confidence to use the language that they've got - to show them that they're special in a positive way and what they can contribute and what they do contribute.

For May and Karl confidence is directly related to successful language learning in that confident students are more willing to engage in language interaction with others. For Karl his first aim is to enable students to participate successfully in social situations:

[I want] to get students to the stage where they can be involved in dialogue, where they can understand by listening and they can make themselves understood - that is the crux of the matter ... they will only find their own voice if they are doing things and then getting feedback.

May feels that her success as a teacher is directly related to her ability to create confidence in her students:

The most important thing is that they feel confident and they can really communicate. I think that's the most important thing. If they feel that they are not coping ... I think I'm failing.

Confidence to make mistakes and take risks with language is seen as being fundamental to the ability to participate by both Bronwen and Mandy. Bronwen believes that this is the most important thing that she can do for her students:

I think giving them confidence ... allowing them to make mistakes and saying that's OK, making sure that they're not criticised, that their confidence isn't taken away from them so that they feel that they can speak up and they can do the activities and have access to everything.

Tess, Jane and Nancy all see confidence as related to the development of sufficient English for students to function as independent learners in the belief that their opinions are valued. Alice also believes developing students' confidence in their own ideas is her main aim as an ESL teacher:

To really feel that they can express themselves is what you're aiming at ... if you give them permission to be themselves, they revel in it.

Connie, Stefan and Vicky see confidence as less closely connected with language development. Connie is explicit in her view that direct language teaching is less important than the caring atmosphere in specialist language centres and the growth in student confidence that comes as a result:

It's this gain in confidence and self esteem that we nurture and that we give the kids. I think that it is so important because they can go into a school, in a classroom of 28 and [feel] 'I'm going to be OK'.

Vicky and Stefan want their students to develop confidence in themselves as people who are able to achieve. For Stefan:

the most important thing that I do for my students is that I give them confidence that they can do it, that they can give it a go.

For Vicky:

I want them to have confidence in their abilities. I don't want them to feel limited. I want them to have all the options open to them and believe in themselves.

Trish sees confidence in terms of her students' ability to participate in Australian society. Her goal is for her students to be active and confident participants in the wider society and the starting point is for them to develop as active and confident students, willing to argue an individual point of view in discussion or express a personal response to a text being studied:

I really want them to have the confidence to have a voice in Australian society. Sounds silly but I think you've got to have an ideal and that's what you've got to aim for and all the little things that you do on the way are all to do with your final goal.

The ability to participate in Australian society is mentioned by several other teachers. There are a number of ways in which students are seen as being able to participate. One is that students are taught 'appropriate behaviours' for participation. That is, they are taught how things are done in Australian schools and Australian society so that

they can change their behaviour. Another way of preparing students for participation is to equip them with the skills that they will need. The difference between the two is subtle but important. It is the second type of participation described by Trish, participation in which students are seen as having an important contribution to make to their new society.

Like Trish, Tess and Gary see teaching Australian culture and behaviour as an important part of their work in intensive English language centres but their understanding of the term is one which emphasizes changes in student behaviour. Gary sees 'helping them fit in' as being of equal importance to teaching language skills:

They're starting a new life in a new country ... I feel as an Australian, it's my role to make it a bit easier for them. ... I'm mindful of what's going to be expected of them ... what is correct behaviour, what is inappropriate behaviour ... there's curriculum issues but also the social issues.

Gary emphasises the importance of learning skills such as folder organisation but the main focus of the discussion at this point is on student behaviour with regard to chewing gum and wearing caps in class. Tess also sees the teaching of 'correct behaviour' as an important part of the work of language centres:

You also hope that they will pick up the social mores and niceties that they need to exist here.

Anna describes the process by which she assists students develop the skills needed for successful participation in the Australian school system:

The most important thing is giving them an Australian experience in the classroom. ... The loose structure of the Australian classroom where we do an enormous amount of talking ... lots and lots of talking, lots of discussion, expressing opinions.

Anna also wants her students to 'fit in' but her focus is on giving them the skills required to do so, rather than on teaching 'correct' behaviours.

Sue Ellen and Alice are both aware of the pressure for their students to achieve academic success and see helping them to do this as one of their main teaching goals. Sue Ellen compares her own experiences with those of her students. She knows from

first hand experience the high expectations of many migrant parents and the sacrifices which have been made:

I want them to be successful because I realize how important it is to them and their families. A lot of what they tell me I relate to – the expectations of the family. Some of the parents have given up a lot to come here and they don't want their kids to be factory fodder. They [the students] don't want to let their families down.

Alice is also aware of parental pressure to succeed. Many of her students are international students whose parents have invested large sums of money in their education. For some, the financial well-being of the family is dependent on their academic success:

I teach to the exams ... getting them through with the best possible marks ... and I make no bones about that ... the expectations of some parents are very very high.

Nick, Tom and Tess all discuss the importance of helping their students feel part of Australian society. Gary also sees this as one of the main aims of his teaching but for Gary, participating successfully in Australian society is dependent on students learning 'appropriate' behaviour. Nick and Tom see the process rather differently.

Nick is aware of the need to introduce students to "*our Aussie culture*". Unlike Gary who sees himself as owning this culture – "*I am Australian ... it's my country*" –, Nick is aware that his is only a partial view and that there are many ways of being within Australian society. His view is "*the way I know it*". For Nick it is equally important that his students have "*an appreciation of each other and understand each other's cultures so they can be part of this multicultural society*". Nick sees Australian society as benefiting from the differences which his students bring and, rather than the students changing to fit society, society is seen as dynamic, a system which both accommodates and is changed by difference:

I want them to appreciate whatever it is that is happening around them, to be part of it. ... [to realize that] you can bring your own differences to the community and make it different. Not to stand back and be isolated but to get involved.

Tom also sees his students as having much to offer. His main aim as an ESL teacher is to equip his students with the skills and confidence to participate in Australian society in a relationship of mutual benefit:

To allow them to develop their knowledge and skills and their communicative repertoire so that they can participate equally in whatever fields of Australian society they choose. That they [are] able to contribute what they have to the whole of Australian society so that what they bring isn't wasted. They don't lose it and their lives and potential don't go to waste. And also so Australian society doesn't lose it.

Tess talks about this interaction between ESL students and the wider Australian society. She is aware of the negative experiences of many of her students and aims to instil a '*spirit of optimism*' to help them cope resiliently with the world outside the language centre:

What I want for them, and what I can't give them, is acceptance in this society and not to be discriminated against and not have people make rude comments on trams. I can't give them that [but] if I promote a spirit of friendliness ... I think you can give them a spirit of optimism ... that they will be able to form good relationships with other people.

The aims of these ESL teachers add another dimension to their teacher identity. Their work and interaction with their students is directed towards the goals described in this section. In Trish's words - "*all the little things that you do on the way are all to do with your final goal*". They want their students to be confident and optimistic, academically successful and active participants in Australian society and their work is directed to these ends.

The ESL student other as constructed by these teachers is a work in progress. Their aim is to develop the ESL student as a particular type - confident, independent, a risk-taker, able to argue a point of view and take a stand. At the same time this student is to be sensitive to the mores of the new culture, treading a fine line between 'appropriate' behaviour and individuality. The ways in which these characteristics may conflict with the student's own sense of self and established behaviours is unexamined. So too is the contradiction between the neediness of the student (which in its construction makes possible the role of ESL teacher as helper) and the independence of the finished product.

5.7 ESL Teacher Work

The description of ESL teacher work given by these teachers is, like the work of all teachers, far more complex than the role description offered by the 1987 Ministerial document. (This document is discussed in Chapter 4.) ESL teacher work is affected by a myriad of complexities, stresses and competing demands absent from the context free description of the role of the ESL teacher in this document. Many of these teachers are aware of negative perceptions of their work. ESL teacher work is "cushy", an escape from the harsh realities of mainstream teaching. ESL teachers are not 'real' teachers. Other external perceptions of ESL teacher work are less condemnatory of ESL teachers, but they offer a severely limited and limiting construction of the role of the ESL teacher. ESL students are 'a problem'. They are to be removed from the mainstream class and 'fixed' by the ESL teacher and then returned. These external constructions of their work impact on the ways of being available to ESL teachers. Some ESL teachers work to change these perceptions through endless demonstrations of 'real teacher' competence and involvement. In Stefan's words – *"You not only had to do your own job well you had to show them [the other teachers] that you could do the sort of job that they were doing equally as well"*.

There is also overlap between ESL teacher work and student welfare with many of these teachers assuming responsibility, either formally or informally, for student welfare as a natural extension of their work as ESL teachers. General staff development in the area of ESL student need is another area given great importance. The majority of these ESL teachers emphasise their role in providing information, organising professional development activities and working to encourage subject teacher understanding of the particular needs of ESL students. Many ESL teachers describe their efforts in first developing their own understandings and then bringing this new knowledge back to share with other staff members. The constantly changing nature of the ESL student population makes this an on-going responsibility as ESL

teachers seek to understand the cultural, learning and welfare needs of each new group of students.

Working with other teachers in subject classrooms is also seen as part of ESL teacher work. Several teachers regard participation in mainstream teaching as the most important aspect of their work. Sally and Trish argue that, unless changes are made in mainstream teaching, work in the ESL classroom has little impact on student learning, with students unable to transfer skills from a supportive small group setting to the larger subject classroom. Despite apparent agreement on the importance of this aspect of ESL teacher work, constructions of the role of 'team' or 'support' teacher vary. Some teachers see the role as involving equal responsibility with the class teacher for all students in the class. Others confine their attention to the ESL students. Some teachers sit quietly at the back of the room, dependent on the class teacher for lesson content and materials. Others position themselves at the front as active participants in all aspects of the lesson.

Differences in role construction seem dependent on the primary purpose of the ESL teacher involved. If the role is 'fixing the ESL problem', the ESL teacher is more likely to accept the status of teacher aide and concentrate her efforts on helping the ESL students with their work. If the role is seen as one of sharing ESL-appropriate strategies and developing class teacher expertise in working with ESL students, the ESL teacher is likely to take a more active approach. For some teachers, like Sally, this is made clear from the beginning. Other teachers, like Connie and Bronwen, take a more gentle approach, often starting in a 'helping' role which is less threatening to the class teacher and only gradually assuming greater responsibility and control.

The political nature of ESL teacher work is also part of these descriptions. This can be through formal involvement in administrative committees in the school, through becoming a 'power player'. It can also be through the development of friendship networks as ESL teachers seek to establish a less formal power base for their work.

There seem no boundaries to ESL teacher work with many of these teachers willingly taking on the role of parent, rather than teacher. Tess invites students home for Christmas dinner and has two homeless students living with her for almost a year. Tom acts as godfather, best man and guarantor for loans. Anna takes her students for holidays at her parents' beach house. Sue Ellen takes students to the dentist and negotiates payment at a reduced rate. Sally helps her students in applications for refugee status. The list of responsibilities accepted as part of ESL teacher work seems endless.

There are many shared understandings of ESL teacher work but there are also differences in the ways in which this work is actualised. Differences in context – in the workplace landscape (Reynolds 1996) – explain some differences in the construction of ESL teacher work. Vicky, as the only ESL teacher in a school with a small number of ESL students, has fewer options available to her than a teacher like Sue Ellen who is one of many ESL teachers in a school with a large number of ESL students. Other differences relate to the ways individual ESL teachers understand their role. Sally's understanding of her role as ESL teacher as agent for change, Trish's political interpretation of her role, are very different to the less powerful ways in which Alice sees her role. There are also inconsistencies and contradictions in all the role descriptions, contextualized as they are in the realities of time, place and personalities. Nancy sees herself as being responsible for the well being of her ESL students, but her efforts are largely confined to moderating their behaviour to avoid offending other members of staff. Circumstances may be such that understandings may not be enacted in practice. Tom has a detailed and fully explicated understanding of the complexities and responsibilities of the work of the ESL teacher, especially the importance of being an active part of administrative structures in the school, but his efforts seem largely confined to his own classroom. (Tom disagrees with this view. He believes that he has shifted focus and his efforts on behalf of ESL students are now made in the wider context through the professional association, rather than the individual school setting.)

The mix of shared and disparate context-dependent understandings and enactments of ESL teacher work and identity are indicative of the complexities inherent in teacher work. Group understandings may be shared but individual enactment of these understandings varies.

5.8 Metaphors for ESL Teacher Work

The first discussion of ESL teacher identity has taken a representational approach to language with comments accepted as reality as experienced and understood by these teachers. A second discussion of the same data looks more closely at the language in which these understandings are expressed with a focus on the dominant metaphors which teachers use to construct themselves as ESL teachers and to describe their work, to enact this construction. The identification and exploration of these metaphors will provide:

a window for the taken-for-granted assumptions that characterize a context and that drive action ... their analysis [will provide a means] for getting a handle on the interaction of self and context, which is the complex and contradictory process of role negotiation. (Bullough & Gitlin 1995:51)

5.8.1 ESL Teacher as Warrior

- [ESL teaching is] an on-going battle. You're continually fighting. (Tom)
- You've got to keep fighting. You have to sort of make a place for yourself and then try to fight with all the ammunition you've got. (Vicky)
- It's a constant battle. (Anna)
- There was a lot of conflict. (Sally)

Metaphors of war proliferate in discussion with these four teachers. ESL teaching is seen as a battle against hostile forces composed of other teachers, the school administration and the wider society. Achievements are only after extended conflict with these opposing forces and are easily lost if teacher/warrior vigilance is relaxed. These teachers experience a constant sense of being embattled and act accordingly with the 'other' positioned as enemy. These metaphors mean that, in their work as

ESL teachers, their "perceptions and actions correspond in part to the perceptions and actions of a party engaged in war". (Lakoff & Johnson 1980b:79)

Although several teachers use the warrior metaphor, it is used to describe quite different battles. Vicky, Tom and Anna are warriors battling the administration on behalf of their students. Sally's battle is with other ESL teachers in her school over approaches to ESL teaching. Sally wants ESL to become an issue for all teachers, rather than a separatist domain owned by specialist teachers. *"I can't stand that 'them and us' mentality ... ESL staff were specialists but they didn't own it. They couldn't fix all the problems. We had to do it all together"*.

There are a number of problems with the metaphor of ESL teacher as warrior. Metaphors define not only those who use them. They also define others who come in contact with them. (Discussion of the impact of metaphor in 'framing' a situation is to be found in Chapter 2.) Metaphors can be empowering but they can also limit the ways of being available. If the warrior metaphor is deep rooted, it can be difficult to negotiate peace and any overtures from the enemy camp are regarded with suspicion. ESL students are also caught up in this metaphor. They are in need of protection from the hostile forces, those who need battle done on their behalf. Other teachers and the school administration cannot be other than the enemy force. Changes, because they are imposed in battle rather than achieved as changes in understanding, are temporary. The warrior metaphor is also a difficult one for the ESL teacher to sustain. It can be isolating. Anna describes herself as *"just a single person on my own with nobody"*. The ESL teacher/warrior must inevitably fall victim to battle fatigue as Tom has done. Neither is it a metaphor accepted by all ESL teachers. Bronwen explicitly rejects the notion of ESL teacher/warrior – *"I don't think you have to be out there bashing people over the head"*.

Teachers using the warrior metaphor acknowledge its place as a defining feature of their work. To quote Vicky, *"it's all about fighting for your kids"*. Both Sally and Tom responded at length to draft discussion of this metaphor, examining their

reactions to the metaphor being made explicit, the implications of it and the reasons for its power as a way of understanding their work. Tom is uncomfortable with the role of 'ESL warrior':

Although I do use the terms 'battle' and 'fighting', I did not treat administrators literally as enemies in my interactions with them. I did not have explicit fights with them. I did not attack them. In fact my usual approach was negotiation and trying to work out principled solutions that we could all live with. In my case I felt the battle was political and diplomatic, rather than all-out war. ... The battle language was private or restricted to conversations with ESL colleagues. I guess it was my way of venting feelings of frustration and anger with a system and people that so often made it difficult or impossible to do the job fully.

Toms' reaction to my reading of the conversation with him is interesting in a number of ways. First, although he is clearly uneasy about being positioned as being 'in battle', he continues to use the term as he describes himself as negotiator, rather than warrior. Diplomacy is a more effective weapon than outright combat. Secondly, I am being positioned as 'colleague', privy to a 'private' conversation. This is the way in which 'we' talk about 'them' together. It is not a discussion or a way of being as ESL teachers we share with the world.

Sally is accepting of the warrior metaphor, although she rejects the notion of other teachers as members of 'an enemy camp'. This reaction is a logical one, given that Sally's battles are to overcome staff divisions and work together to meet the needs of ESL students:

I wholeheartedly agree that ESL teachers 'fall victim to battle fatigue' because I think this is happening to me. I had another battle this week – so many of the battles are unnecessary. I think your comments about the 'enemy camp' are a bit severe. Am I being defensive? Personally I am at the stage where I would like to relocate to another ESL school and battle again for team teaching and other programs. I've been thinking about this metaphor over the past week – the battles stem from a commitment and it's also frustrating that many staff support battles but don't enlist!

Sally was also told recently that her nickname among the ESL students is 'Soldier' – an example of student construction of teacher which mirrors her own understanding of ESL teacher work.

5.8.2 ESL Teacher as Mother

- My personality wants to do mothering. I'm very maternal. That's why I have five children and I can mother the children [the ESL students]. We get very personal ... I always tell them about my life and my children and they've come to my home for dinner ... They rely on you for emotional support. (Anna)
- We've always made them part of our family. They come on holiday with us. They come home for Christmas dinner. We have parties for them. (Tess)
- I just love them. They're like my own children. (May)

Many ESL teachers use metaphors of parenting as they discuss their work. Anna, Tess and May make explicit reference to themselves in the role of ESL teacher/mother. Others imply this relationship as they speak of the ESL students as belonging to them. Every teacher interviewed described the ESL students as "*my kids*", a pattern of language used by many teachers, but the following exchange between Vicky and a subject teacher illustrates the closeness of this ESL teacher/student – mother/child relationship. The exchange reported by Vicky contrasts her relationship to a student with that which exists with another teacher:

I often brag about my ESL kids – they're so beautiful. I just love my kids. [A subject teacher] said to me 'You know that girl you've got in ESL. She's not doing too well in my class'. I said 'Why not? She's great. She's brilliant. She's fantastic. I just love her'.

The pronouns establish Vicky's ownership of the student. The subject teacher's ownership is of the subject – 'my class'. The failure of the student to achieve in the subject class is implicitly the result of the negative reaction of the subject teacher – 'she's not doing too well'. Vicky's protective and intensely positive construction of the student leaves no place for criticism or discussion of her learning needs.

The power of the mothering metaphor can be seen in its extension to the ESL classroom as home – a warm, supportive, nurturing space for students:

- I want them to feel at home ... ESL is a comfort zone. (Vicky)
- ESL is a place where they can feel safe. (Jane)
- ESL is about giving the students a safe space ... A lot of us are touchy feely people and I think that's really important, just putting your arm around them. (Connie)

The mother metaphor is a powerful one for teachers. It is a metaphor consistent with what many ESL teachers see to be their primary goal - protecting, nurturing and guiding their students. The mother metaphor has much to offer in terms of creating an appropriate environment for successful language learning and successful transition to a new society and culture. The mother metaphor can also encompass notions of supporting students as they move to independence and this is clearly part of Tom's understanding of this aspect of his role:

I saw my ESL role partly as a nurturing one. The 'father/godfather' metaphor for my role was initiated by students, particularly those whose parents were still overseas or who had become detached from family and particularly some of the young adult learners. It came largely from my role in supporting their efforts to get financial entitlements, accommodation and playing an advocacy role. ... Rather than allowing students to become dependent, I tried to teach them the skills to do things independently, such as teaching them the discourse structure and English to make important phone calls rather than making the call for them.

Teaching at the primary level has long been a largely female occupation. While this division is not so marked at the secondary level, certain areas of teaching, such as ESL, are regarded as more appropriately female than others. By 'appropriately female', I mean that they are seen as areas of teaching dependent on the nurturing skills traditionally regarded as part of the female domain. The mother metaphor serves to reinforce this view of ESL teaching as 'women's work'. As 'women's work' it is undervalued, under-resourced and denied a clear career path.

The mother metaphor also positions students as 'children' in need of a mother's care. The positioning of student as dependent child may be problematic in a number of ways. Mothers are supposed to love all their children. The ESL teachers interviewed describe their students in glowing terms but 'real students' in 'real classrooms', even ESL students in ESL classrooms - are not all lovable. In a later interview Gary describes a student picking his nose and flicking the contents at other students. This is not a student easy to love. Feeling compelled to love the unlovable can be the source of inner turmoil for an ESL teacher attempting to enact a mothering metaphor for his or her work.

The ESL teacher/mother may also be trapped in situations where aspects of the teacher role may conflict with that of mother. A teacher may be unable to respond appropriately to a child/mother demand or may be forced to play disciplinarian in ways which conflict with the closeness of the mother/child relationship.

ESL students may also resist the metaphor. Many of these students are young adults, likely to resent the dependency and reduction in status inherent in the ESL teacher as mother metaphor. Students who do accept the role of child to ESL mother may become emotionally dependent in ways which threaten their development as independent learners and language users.

Sally and Gary are both critical of ESL teachers as mothers. They believe that there are too many ESL teachers who enact their role in this way and that this is to the detriment of the students:

- The mother metaphor annoys me – there are too many mothers in my school – in more ways than one! (Sally)
- Playing mother hen is not doing a service to the students. It is mollycoddling them too much. (Gary)

ESL teacher as nurturing parent also has implications for the roles made available to other teachers. These teachers are encouraged to hand issues related to the care of ESL students to the ESL teacher, reinforcing both the closeness of the ESL teacher/student bond and the more distant relationship between subject teacher and ESL students. Teachers other than ESL are denied the opportunity to respond to student need, a process which also locks the ESL teacher into the role of caring parent.

5.8.3 ESL Teacher as Border Dweller

Metaphors associated with ESL teacher as border dweller are deeply complex. These metaphors position the ESL teacher as the go-between, the point of contact between the ESL students and the host society. There are a number of variations of this metaphor but all of them suggest the role of interpreter, working to ensure understanding between two alien groups:

- I suppose you're a sort of friendly guide to the new country. (Tess)
- The most important thing is giving them that Australian experience in the classroom. (Anna)
- I act as barrier breaker for the students. (Nick)
- ESL teachers are a pivot ... an intermediary and interpreter in a cultural and practical sense between ESL students and their families and the Australian society, a society which is frequently hostile to the newcomers ... we help them connect and communicate. We are intermediaries between the host society and the alien others. We inhabit the margins. (Tom)
- As ESL teacher, you're the point of contact when kids are in trouble. They'll come to you for help and advice. (Sally)
- You have to tell them about Australia. One boy was telling us about his uncle who had seven wives. We [the ESL class] thought it was quite amazing, worrying about the grocery bill and things like that. [I also said] in Australia it's illegal to have more than one wife and we talked about that. (Trish)

The position of border dweller is a difficult space to occupy, but it is also one encompassing much of the work of the ESL teacher. To quote Sally, "*the Border Dweller is a difficult one and probably most specific to ESL teachers – the conflicts that this metaphor imposes are huge*". The role of border dweller implies knowledge of the territory and inhabitants on both sides of the border and the ability to move back and forth across the border, facilitating communication between different groups. ESL teacher as border dweller also acts as guide, leading students across the border, equipping them with the skills and cultural knowledge needed for survival on the other side. It means interpreting the new society for them, training them in the behaviours needed to pass in this society. For Nick, it means going first, smashing down barriers that prevent effective communication and connecting students with the services that are available.

This work as border dweller, guide, cultural interpreter and point of contact is an essential part of ESL teacher work. As intermediary between ESL student and host society it is also work that should operate in two directions. ESL students need guidance in ways of being in the new society. The new society also needs guidance in ways of being as it accepts, accommodates and is changed by the alien other. It is clear from earlier descriptions of ESL teacher work, that this role of information-

bringer to the host society is one which ESL teachers take very seriously. Tom sees this aspect of his work as a contribution to *"building an Australian and global society that we hope will gradually become fairer, more humane, more livable"*.

Zeldin (1994:155) supports Tom's understanding of his work as ESL teacher/border dweller. He describes border dwellers, or 'intermediaries', as having potential to act as catalysts for great change, despite their individual lack of power:

As catalysts ... they can create new situations and transform people's lives by bringing them together ... To be a catalyst is the ambition most appropriate for those who see the world as being in constant change and who, without thinking that they can control it, wish to influence its direction. (Zeldin 1994:155)

The border dweller metaphor places many demands on the ESL teacher attempting to enact it as a metaphor for teaching. As border dweller, the ESL teacher is part of neither the host society nor the incoming other. Knowledge of both groups is, at best, partial. The difficulties experienced by ESL teachers in being accepted by others in the profession as 'real' teachers have already been noted, but Tom makes a direct link between the positioning of ESL teacher as border dweller and the 'undervaluing' of ESL teacher work:

I wonder if it [being regarded as a border dweller] isn't part of the undervaluing of ESL and ESL teaching by others. ESL teachers are in close contact daily with the Other. ESL teachers may give away Our secrets and treasonously represent the interest of the Other in our midst. In 70s parlance, we are 'Wog Lovers'.

ESL teachers may be seen as siding with students instead of colleagues; they may also be seen as siding with other staff and ignoring the interests of their students. In Tom's words, *"angry ESL students in conflict with an ESL teacher may perceive them as 'racist' and use the charge as a weapon in conflict"*.

The ESL teacher as border dweller is often placed in a position where loyalties conflict. Vicky mixes metaphors of war and border dwelling as she outlines her struggle to accommodate loyalty to fellow teachers and loyalty to her students:

It's a double-edged sword. I don't want to be critical of another teacher [but] I don't want to be seen to be siding with my colleagues and forgetting about ESL things.

Conflicting loyalty is one difficulty for the ESL teacher as border-dweller. Another is the complexity of the task involved in acting as cultural interpreter. ESL students are not one group. Cultural interpretation involves not only cultural interpretation of the host society, but also interpretation of the varied, and often conflicting, cultures to be found in the ESL classroom.

The role of cultural interpreter of the host society is also a difficult one. Australian society, as it is presented to the ESL students, is Australian society as experienced by the ESL teacher, with the norms of behaviour being the norms of behaviour of that teacher. Some ESL teachers are aware of the partial nature of their understanding. Others seem less aware of their own positioning. Gary signals awareness of the link between language and culture but seems unaware of the complexities and dynamic nature of this link. Language and culture in Australia are language and culture as experienced and owned by Gary:

English is my language. I know how it works. ... I introduce them to the things that I know they need to know for living in Australia.

ESL teacher as border dweller, ESL student as in-coming alien other and other teachers as host society can also be connected to a view of ESL students as an invasion which threatens the host society. Sally is told "*ESL is killing this school ... Australians won't send their kids to this school*" and warned to "*play down*" the ESL program at an information night for primary school parents. Tom's first appointment as an ESL teacher is to a school described as being "*swamped with Turks*". He arrived to find five ESL students.

5.8.4 ESL Teacher as Cleaner

This metaphor for ESL teacher work is one connected with the spaces made available for ESL teaching. It is a metaphor resisted by ESL teachers but it is one with powerful shared meaning when these teachers talk about their work, meaning drawn from shared histories of working in whatever leftover space was available:

- I was stuck in a tiny room like a broom cupboard. (Cathy)
- I want to avoid that feeling of going off into the broom closet type of thing. (Trish)
- At least we weren't stuck in a broom cupboard somewhere. (Tess)

The problems with this as a metaphor for ESL teaching are only too clear. Space and power are linked. A large permanent teaching space is recognition of an area playing an important part in the program of the whole school. A "*little niche ... where [she] can hang on*", as Anna has, a feeling of being "*pushed into a corner*" (Trish), are powerful indications of the value placed on the ESL program and the work of the ESL teacher.

Extending the metaphor of ESL teacher as occupant of the broom cupboard and hence as either cleaner or broom, defines ESL students, the focus of the ESL teacher's work, as dirt which is to be neatly brushed away out of sight. This view of ESL students is reinforced as Vicky describes an incident involving her students and another member of staff:

It [the students' complaints about the subject teacher] was all sort of swept under the carpet.

Tom links the cleaner metaphor with that of border dweller, positioning the ESL teacher as quarantine officer, and extending this metaphor beyond the ESL classroom, suggests that whole areas of Melbourne act as "*larger-scale broom cupboards*":

Certain schools or areas with high NESB enrolments are positioned as larger-scale broom cupboards, so the advantaged social classes are not affected by their presence and problems.

5.8.5 ESL Teacher as Refugee

Like the cleaner metaphor, this metaphor is not one which ESL teachers assign to their own work. However they are aware of it as an externally imposed metaphor for ESL teacher work. It is also one which at least some of them are willing to use in description of other ESL teachers:

- I suppose you could be seen as a refugee from mainstream. (Karl)
- There's one teacher [at the language school] who's been sent there because she's not competent to work anywhere else. ... I know some teachers are sent there because of poor classroom management skills. (Anna)

- A lot of refugees from the classroom were going into ESL teaching.
(Stefan)

The ESL teacher/refugee metaphor is negative in its depiction of the mainstream classroom as a war zone. It is also negative in its depiction of the ESL teacher as dislocated refugee fleeing the battlefield to seek peace and safety in the security of the ESL classroom. The connotations of desertion in the face of the student-enemy go some way to explaining the lack of status accorded to ESL teaching by at least some class teachers. It may also provide a point of connection with ESL students, many of whom are refugees in fact rather than metaphor.

5.8.6 ESL Teacher as Professional

A final metaphor for ESL teacher work is one used by Stefan:

[ESL teaching] was quite a professional and skilled job. ... If they thought you were a reasonable person you know and a reasonable professional, when you said 'Well as ESL teachers we think whatever', they might listen to you. Sometimes you did things because you wanted to show them that you were a good team player. (Stefan)

This metaphor for ESL teacher as "*skilled professional*" and "*team player*" positions the ESL teacher both as a specialist who is the equal of any teacher and as a part of the teaching profession as a whole. It also makes demands on the ways in which these 'professional' ESL teachers will conduct themselves. They will be "*reasonable*", "*responsible*", "*aware of the problems and issues*" facing other teachers. Such teachers will also have high expectations of their students and will be cautious and thoughtful in the development and implementation of curriculum – "*wary of experimenting with other people's kids*".

The success of this metaphor in Stefan's own work is given testimony by the proliferation of expressions of enjoyment as he describes his years of work as an ESL teacher. His first job as an isolated ESL teacher struggling to establish a viable program was "*a good learning experience ... a terrific learning experience*". He works with "*supportive people [who are] always ready to help*". The principals of his schools are "*good men*". Stefan's work as an ESL consultant with Child Migrant Education Services was "*not just fun – it was great, terrific*". Even battling with his

Year Nine English class, a class taken to demonstrate his competence as a class teacher and his willingness to share the more difficult work within the school, is "*enjoyable. Of course it is*".

It seems clear that Stefan has found the metaphor of ESL teacher/professional an empowering one within which to enact his role of ESL teacher. It is one free from "conflict with others" in ways that many of the metaphors used for ESL teacher work are not. It also seems to sit comfortably with Stefan's preferred way of being, his "myth of self" (Bullough & Gitlin 1995:67).

However even this seemingly positive and empowering metaphor is not without its problems. The notion of teacher as professional is by no means a dominant view of teaching. Teachers themselves react to this construction of their work with a degree of ambivalence. Sally talks about her return to study as being motivated by a desire to "*make a professional difference to these [ESL] kids*". Nick describes himself as '*a professional*'. Tom, on the other hand, speaks for many in his reaction to Stefan's use of the term:

[Stefan's] metaphor is very positive and empowering for him and many other ESL teachers and that's great. It [the ESL teacher as professional metaphor] could also develop some ambiguous aspects. More and more occupational groups, including teachers generally, have claimed professional status as part of a push for improved social status in a competitive society. For outsiders ... the word 'professional' can be the locus of deep mistrust and cynicism. ... Claims to professionalism can be interpreted by outsiders as being purely self-seeking.

Hargreaves and Goodson (1996:4) draw attention to a distinction between 'professionalism' and 'professionalization' which provides clarification of the very different interpretations of 'teacher as professional' offered by Stefan and Tom:

[There is] an important distinction between *professionalization* as a social and political project or mission designed to enhance the interests of an occupational group, and *professionalism* as something which defines and articulates the quality and character of people's actions within that group (Hargreaves & Goodson 1996:4).

Clearly Stefan's understanding of himself as a professional locates him within 'professionalism', rather than 'professionalization'. The principles of post-modern

professionalism (Hargreaves & Goodson 1996:21) include opportunities for discretionary judgement, engagement with the moral and social purposes of teacher work, collaboration with colleagues and others in the wider community, a commitment to active care for students, a search for continuous learning and recognition of high task complexity. These principles echo the early Ministerial document outlining the role of the ESL teacher (Ministry of Education 1987) and many aspects of the ESL teacher role and identity as defined by participants in this study. Teachers spoke of the importance they place on being free to create materials which cater for the particular needs of their students, of being free to exercise 'discretionary judgment' in their work. Many spoke at length regarding the 'moral and social' importance of their work and all emphasised their 'active care' for students. Sally and Stefan argue the importance of establishing 'collaborative cultures' in which all teachers work together for the benefit of all students. Tom describes his efforts to establish 'occupational heteronomy' for the profession through his involvement at school, local, state and national level. All of the teachers have been involved in professional development associated with their work and many of them have gone on to post-graduate study in the area. Gary has completed a Master of Education in TESOL; Sally is currently enrolled in a Masters of Education by Research, the focus of her thesis the particular learning needs of refugee ESL students. Mandy and Nick believe that the gathering and sharing of specialist information is one of the central aspects of their work as ESL teachers. The view of teacher as professional envisaged in these principles of post-modern professionalism is an empowering one for all teachers, but in welcoming 'professionalism' we must be alert to the dangers inherent in 'professionalization', a process rarely in the best interests of teachers or their students.

Similar metaphors used persistently in ESL teacher discourse act as representations of shared understandings of teacher identity which both 'name' and 'frame' ESL teacher work (Schon 1993). These metaphors play a powerful part in both constraining and generating ways of being. Much of the power of metaphor is in its role as sub-text, with the impact on identity at the level of tacit, and therefore unquestioned, understanding. If ESL teachers are to examine and critique existing identities and

practice, these metaphors for ESL teacher work must be made explicit, available for examination and possible change. New metaphors offer opportunities for new ways of being. The continued use of existing metaphors becomes a statement of intent, rather than unexamined practice. The metaphors of battle and nurture which have been taken up so strongly by ESL teacher discourse may be supplanted, or at least extended, by the new generative metaphors of 'skilled professional' and 'team player' suggested by Stefan. Changes in metaphor result in changes in thinking and practice (Berliner 1990). With changes in context for many of these teachers, it may also be time for changes in metaphor.

This chapter has discussed ESL teacher motivation and practice as depicted in conversations with twenty ESL teachers, among them the nine teachers who participated in the next part of the study. The next chapter focuses on the first in a series of three conversations with these nine teachers. During this first conversation teachers were asked to reflect on changes and conflict which they felt had impacted on their work as ESL teachers.

Chapter 6: Identity, Conflict and Change

6.1 Introduction

The focus of this study is ESL teacher identity as it is understood and enacted by ESL teachers. This section deals with data collected in the first of three case study interviews. Nine teachers participated in this stage of data collection and were asked to comment on changes which they felt had impacted on their work as ESL teachers. The focus on conflict and change as a way of understanding identity calls on the work of Fairclough (1989, 1992, 1995) on discourse, ideology, conflict and change.

6.2 Ideological Identity and Change

Fairclough argues that language and ideology are indivisibly linked and that, in the ongoing hegemonic struggle which constitutes power structures in society, discourse analysis is a powerful way of understanding the ideological positionings of participants. Much of ideology exists as naturalized 'common sense' notions of the world. There are times when these implicit ideologies will be placed in conflict with other contradictory ideologies, either our own or those of the context within which we work. When ideologies conflict they may be forced into consciousness and become available for examination. This process of awareness and critique of both self and others opens the way for change in existing ideologies:

Ideology works ... by disguising its ideological nature. It becomes naturalised, automatized.... [but] when contradictory positions overlap they provide a basis for awareness and reflexivity, just as they lead to problematization and change. ... From awareness and critique arise possibilities of empowerment and change. (Fairclough 1995: 82-83)

Ideology and identity are intimately connected. In construction of ideological identity, the self draws on the resources available to develop a set of values and beliefs which provide a basis for action when choice between different ways of being is available. These ideological identities find expression in work identities and the construction of

shared group identities with others who are seen to share similar ideologies. These ideologies of work identity need not be explicit. Most action in the world is the result of implicit understandings of context specific appropriate action and behaviours. When external forces challenge ideological identities or when aspects of ideological identity are in conflict, these underlying ideologies may become explicit, available for discussion and critique. (Further discussion of ideology and identity is to be found in Chapter 2.)

Each of these teachers had experienced recent change with the potential to impact on available ways of being as ESL teachers. With ideological conflict often the result of disruption caused by change and the potential for existing ESL teacher identities to be placed under pressure by this conflict, the possibility existed for explicit expression of these identities when teachers discussed their perceptions of change and its impact on their work.

The starting point for analysis of this section of the study outlines the changes which each of these teachers feel have impacted on their work. The discussion then focuses on ideologies underpinning both former and changed ways of being and the impact of conflict between past and present on practice and identity.

6.2.1 Tom

Tom believes that the increasing general institutionalization of ESL is a major change which has had both positive and negative effects on the work of ESL teachers. The shift in ownership from ESL as the province of a small number of ESL teachers working as separatist specialists, as they were when Tom first started work as an ESL teacher, to ESL as part of the organizational structure of the education system as a whole has been a gradual process. Tom believes that there have been some benefits for ESL teachers and students as a result of this shift:

[ESL teaching] has become more institutionalized which, in some ways, is a good thing. ... We've got some degree of institutional support. We've got a place in the organizational structure. We've got a range of curriculum documents. We've got assessment materials and procedures. You have got resources in terms of access to interpreting and translation

services. I guess to a limited extent there is more of an understanding in the system. Some of our colleagues have some of our concerns and the language that we use to talk about them.

Despite these benefits, Tom is critical of many aspects of this change in ownership:

Although it has been institutionalized to some extent it's still very fragile. [The curriculum materials] I regard as working hypothesis. [The resources that are available] are being sort of stripped away and privatized and outsourced and very hard to keep up with. Understanding is often very superficial and tokenistic.

The current political climate, which Tom defines as "*the hegemony of economic rationalist thinking*", has contributed to ESL teaching becoming part of the general 'business of education'. Tom believes that this approach to education has had only negative impact on his work:

You feel embattled because of the hegemony of economic rationalist thinking and the management approach which is basically an ideology that we have to fit into ... with all the emphasis on outcomes and performance plans but no guarantee that you'll have the resources for the input.

Centralized control of ESL has also led to a merging of ESL and literacy. Tom sees this changed view of ESL teaching as a reversion to the early days of the profession when ESL and 'remedial' English were regarded as similar areas:

In recent years we've had to cope with the muddying of the waters [with] the push for ESL to be subsumed under literacy. The political and bureaucratic view of language [is one] where language is a subset of literacy, rather than literacy being a subset of language which, in turn, is a subset of communication. In many ways we've gone back to the old days where people couldn't distinguish between English as a second language and programs for the variously disabled.

These are changes in the wider community which impact on Tom and his work as an ESL teacher. There have also been changes at the school level with the retirement of the principal. His replacement "*doesn't have a good record in ESL*". Tom is also facing a major change at a personal level:

Another source of uncertainty is my own future. I have to consider seriously resigning from the Education Department before the end of April 2000. If I don't, I will be significantly disadvantaged in financial terms because of the way superannuation and tax work - I'd be working the next five years for nothing. I could apply for a short-term contract,

but I don't know whether the school would give me one. I'm sure they'd all feel more relaxed and comfortable without me.

Tom is caught in a complex context of conflicting ideologies associated with his work and identity as an ESL teacher. His past work as an activist with the teacher unions and the ESL teacher professional association has resulted in greater public awareness and recognition of ESL teaching. With this awareness has come increased centralized control of the area. ESL teaching has been woven into the fabric of education in Victoria and Tom has, in part, been responsible for this. He is in favour of this development but also resents the "*loss of [personal] control and autonomy*" which comes with increased administrative control. He sees the process as one of loss of ownership of ESL and loss of control of his own teaching. The negative image of the 'old days' in which literacy and ESL were confused is replaced by nostalgia for a lost golden age as Tom looks back on the early days of ESL teaching:

You were carving out the territory. You could carve out a kind of program or approach for yourself. I was in charge of the Migrant Centre. ... We made up our own timetable. We decided what ESL teachers taught which group and so on.

Tom's ESL teacher identity is part of this process. ESL teacher as pioneer 'carving out the territory', free from the restraints which apply to other teachers, is clearly an important part of who Tom is as ESL teacher. He was both leader – "*I was in charge*" – and part of a small but powerful group. This is an identity which Tom struggles to retain but ESL teaching is no longer unexplored territory.

The introduction of the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) for all schools in Victoria caused significant change in Tom's school. The VCE provides a separate subject for ESL students which dictates what must be taught at Years 11 and 12. Schools also compete in their range of VCE subject offerings, trying to attract senior students with a wide range of subjects. These changes have impacted directly on the ESL program and the space available for enactment of Tom's ESL teacher identity:

We lost control of the timetable. The main school timetablers took that over completely. They timetabled us. First of all for VCE and then the Middle school classes and then ESL. ... They gave ESL a very low priority in making decisions.

There seems total separation between VCE (and ESL teaching as part of VCE) and Tom's understanding of 'real' ESL teacher work which is separate from these main school activities. The move to global budgeting and school-based decision making with regard to ESL funding has also been part of this shift in ownership of ESL. Again Tom sees the impact on ESL teaching in his school as negative. The territory carved out by Tom has been invaded and is now in the control of the 'main school timetablers' with ESL teaching time given to a marketing exercise:

We received a budget for ESL staffing and twelve [ESL] periods were not allocated. They were given to other areas in a marketing exercise [with] people timetabled to spend two periods a week in a primary school to get the students to come to [our school].

Tom feels that much of value has been lost in terms of local development of curriculum and individual determination of the ESL teacher role in the context of immediate student need. *"[In the past] we had an ability to sort of respond to the priorities and needs as they arose locally"*. He believes that this has been lost with ESL teachers increasingly being seen as generalist teachers, rather than as ESL specialists, used to meet the priorities of the school, rather than the needs of ESL students. There is no suggestion that ESL teaching is part of the whole school program or that the priorities of the school may include the needs of ESL students. Rather, separation between ESL teacher work and the work of other teachers, between the needs of ESL students and the needs of other students, is seen as the only way in which enactment of Tom's ESL teacher identity is possible. ESL teacher as separate and specialist provides a context in which the work of ESL teacher as pioneer can continue.

However ESL teaching has changed. Both content and approach have been brought within centrally devised curriculum guidelines. These developments at the Departmental level could have positive impact on ESL students and ESL teaching, but again Tom sees this as negated at school level - *"Schools make other priorities for the limited resources which have been cut many times or re-prioritized to other areas"*. Again there is no suggestion that the priorities of the school may include the needs of ESL students.

Tom has not been empowered by awareness of ideological conflict. His language is one of constant battle and loss. Resources for ESL teaching are *"stripped away"*. Attempts to accommodate conflicting ideologies find him *"jumping through hoops"*. ESL is *"subsumed"* by Literacy. *"Attempts to claw back"* control of ESL are in vain. ESL teachers are *"embattled"* and isolated with many losing sight of the needs of their students. Battles are constantly fought at both school and State level, but *"politicians and education bureaucrats in general have short commitment spans, so provision never lasts long enough or has time to develop fully"*. The way in which ESL is depicted in debate over funding is one that does not fit with Tom's understanding of ESL teacher identity:

Groups which got support in the past are considered to have got more than their 'fair share' at the expense of the 'battler'. ESL is characterized at the Federal level as being just another illegitimate special interest group that is somehow corrupt, a vested interest that is, by definition, not worthy of being listened to by those in power.

Tom's ESL teacher identity positions him on the side of the 'battlers' in the fight for a more equitable society. Accusations of corruption and vested interest are wounding to an identity largely predicated on notions of fairness and social justice.

The dilemma facing Tom is challenging. His ESL teacher identity, with its explicit concern for social justice, is an enactment of ideological self which brings him in conflict with other ideologies, external to his understanding of ESL teacher identity. There is financial pressure to take early retirement. His record of conflict with the school administration makes it unlikely that he will be offered continuing employment on contract (as are many other teachers in his position). Tom is not prepared to compromise on his ESL teacher identity in a belated attempt to placate other members of staff, but the loss of his ESL teacher work is also the loss of context for the enactment of ideological identity. The challenge for Tom is to find a future that will allow him to operate with minimal ideological conflict while remaining true to his interpretation of ESL teacher identity.

For Tom change and conflict is at the wider societal level with changed attitudes towards the ownership of ESL teaching. It is also at a school level with a diminished

status awarded to ESL teaching and at a personal level as Tom is forced to consider changes to his future as an ESL teacher. Tom is explicit in his recognition and critique of the ideological conflicts resulting from these changes. At the wider societal level ESL teaching, and Tom as an ESL teacher, may be regarded as empowered by the wider public recognition and increased institutionalization of the area. Although this empowerment is clearly limited, ESL teaching is now recognized as part of the structure of education. For Tom, the 'success' of past struggles for public recognition at the State and Federal level has resulted in private loss of territory and power at a school and personal level.

6.2.2 Stefan

A major change for Stefan has been his recent appointment as VCE coordinator. The VCE is the Victorian Certificate of Education, the course of study for the final two years of secondary education in Victoria. This is a highly responsible position and Stefan's appointment is an indication of the regard in which he is held by the school administration.

Stefan is not finding the extra administrative work associated with this position easy but he is enjoying the challenge of other aspects of the job:

I'm VCE Coordinator. That's new this year. It's quite hard. A lot of administrative stuff is not my kettle of fish but you have to do it. ... That part has been difficult because it's not what I like doing and it's not what I'm good at. The challenge to improve the performance of the VCE kids at our school is good, thinking about that, and thinking of things to improve their performance. That part I really enjoy.

The focus on improved VCE results is in response to what Stefan sees to be a major weakness of his school, and of many other schools like his which have large numbers of ESL students and other students from lower socio-economic backgrounds:

A lot of the students that we get in Year Seven are not naturally talented kids at school things. I don't think we add a lot of value to those kids. We're a good school in a lot of ways ... I'm quite proud of this school. We've got a lovely atmosphere [but] in terms of having high expectations of our students, I don't think we do it well at all. ... We don't add a lot in terms of the skills that they need, especially at Year Twelve. They struggle in a lot of subjects.

Despite the prestige and the additional work associated with his new position, Stefan's priorities as a teacher have not changed:

What I do in the classroom [is] still my number one priority. Something I'm very proud of is I always have my lessons prepared and I do that first. ... I plan my classes and then I do all the other stuff and it's the thing I'm most proud of about my habits, my professionalism.

Despite the high priority Stefan gives to his class teaching, there is one consequence of the extra work associated with the position of VCE coordinator which is causing him concern – *"I can't get to class on time and it's really stressing me out"*.

The heavy administrative workload associated with the new position and the conflicting demands of class teaching and *"this added burden, VCE administrivia"* have led Stefan to reassess his priorities, a process which clarifies his teacher identity. Although Stefan does not see administration as one of his strengths, he accepted the role of VCE coordinator because the role offers more than this. The principal is concerned to improve *"the performance of VCE kids at our school"*. That Stefan was keen to be part of this is signaled by shared ownership – *"our school"* and the repeated use of 'we' in discussion of school activities. This positioning of ESL teacher as part of the whole school with commitment to all students is in marked contrast to Tom's ESL teacher as separate specialist. The notion of equipping students with the skills needed for academic success is also one which sits well with Stefan's teaching ideology.

Despite Stefan's enthusiasm for his new position and the potential it offers to impact positively on the achievements of all students, his first commitment is to his work as a class teacher, a commitment reinforced by the demands of VCE coordination. *"What I do in the classroom – it's still my number one priority"*. This affirmation of priorities has not been achieved without struggle. Although lesson planning always comes before administrative work, Stefan is *"stressed"* by the difficulty he has arriving at class on time. This stress, the result of the conflicting demands of his dual roles as administrator and teacher, has reinforced the importance he places on face-to-face teaching:

I really think that if we [the 'leaders' in the school] just did concentrate a bit more on the core jobs like getting to class on time and doing a bit of teaching, some of the other problems would go away.

Classroom teaching is the 'core job' and ESL teaching remains at the centre of Stefan's teacher identity – *"my great love is ESL ... that's my great love and the thing I enjoy. It gives me my satisfaction"*. This is ESL teaching as vocation, but a vocation which positions the ESL teacher as a team player, part of the whole school with shared responsibility for the performance of the school as a whole.

The increased pressure of the changed context of his work has clarified this aspect of Stefan's ideological positioning as an ESL teacher, that is, his commitment to all students. Stefan is concerned to improve academic performance at Years Eleven and Twelve but the subtext of his comments on students and student achievement is that this must be done in ways which acknowledge and value the strengths of all students. Stefan describes the Year Seven students at his school as *"not naturally talented kids at school things like reading and writing"*. His criticism of their talents is limited to *"school things"*, the implication being both that there are other areas in which these students are talented and that skill in *"school things"* needs to be taught, rather than assumed as a 'natural' talent. This attitude of responding positively to students' strengths, rather than focusing on weaknesses is clear, when Stefan discusses the Tongan students, a recently arrived group who are generally regarded as 'problem' students:

They have qualities you can use positively. They have a very strong identity. They really stick up for each other. They're quite proud of their culture. ... They need someone just to make them feel comfortable and proud. ... We've got a school rugby team and we have got music and they excel in those things.

Stefan's focus as a teacher is *"not just on the bright kids ... not just on the good kids. I think every group needs attention"*.

The language of education as business has become part of teacher talk at Stefan's school. Many teachers respond negatively as Tom has done to this recasting of their role in the language of finance. Stefan has not done this. Rather than rejecting the

terms of business, Stefan has made them his own. The problem he sees at his school is expressed in the language of business and again there is the positioning of Stefan the ESL teacher as part of the 'we' which is the school as a whole:

We don't add a lot of value to a lot of these kids ... we don't add a lot in terms of the skills that they need. We don't add a lot in terms of making them independent learners. ... There's a whole lot of kids where we could add some value.

The concept of teaching as adding value to the student is one fundamental to Stefan's ideology. Implicit in this is the accountability of the teacher for failure to do so:

I like it [the concept of value added teaching]. I mean you've got to add. If you don't, if you're not adding something, what the hell are you doing? If you're not making a bit of a difference, if you're not moving them on, what are you doing?

In contrast to Tom and his experience of ideological struggle in the public arena, Stefan's ideological struggle has been an internal one between overlapping aspects of teacher identity. The contradictory demands of the administration associated with his new role of VCE coordinator and his on-going duties as class teacher have resulted in personal conflict, examination and assessment of priorities in terms of existing ideologies. This process has resulted in the affirmation of existing teacher identity and the resolution of conflict. Stefan has been empowered by this conflict in that his existing ideological identity has been reinforced. He has also acted to influence other administrators to accept these ideologies in an attempt to impact on ways of being for teachers and administrators at a whole school level.

6.2.3 Alice

A significant change for Alice in recent years has been a change in the ESL student population in her school from largely immigrant ESL students, many of them the children of business migrants, to an increasing number of international full fee paying students. This has been a gradual change over a number of years but it has resulted in a changed school view of the value of the ESL program and Alice's work as an ESL teacher.

The education of international students in government secondary schools in Victoria is part of the changed approach to education which concerns Tom. Education has become a business and schools are required to make money:

The private schools have been doing it [enrolling international students] for years. It's a great moneymaker with schools of the future and self-funding. ... It's a matter of marketing.

Alice is critical of some schools which have become involved in the education of international students:

I heard of a school that had no ESL program setting up an ESL program to take in international students. I must say that is wrong.

This has not happened in her school. Their ESL program is well established. They have had past experience with a small number of "*overseas international students*" and the Deputy principal, who played an active part in establishing their international student program, has "*a real understanding of this [area] apart from the money that it brings in*". They have experienced ESL teachers, excellent bi-lingual teacher aides, a good relationship with the local intensive English language school and a supportive community. Alice believes the school is able to offer "*a good setup*" for their international students.

Approximately half of the students in the ESL program are now full fee-paying international students and changes in the administration of the ESL program have given Alice a new role. As 'Assistant International Learning Coordinator', she has responsibility for the welfare of the international students. Alice has always felt responsible for the well being of her ESL students and seen this as part of her ESL teacher role. The official recognition associated with her new position has publicly validated this aspect of her work:

I've got more time to do it and I've got a licence to do it if you like. It's part of my job description. ... I can do that now without people saying 'Well what right has Alice got to do that?'

The language of business has also become part of the language of ESL teacher work and this is not a language with which Alice feels at ease. Although she is aware that her status in the school has improved as a result of this change to the nature of the ESL

student population, Alice is unhappy about seeing her work as an ESL teacher valued primarily as a moneymaking exercise. She is critical of other schools which she sees to be solely motivated by profit:

This sounds awful ... an awful thing to say but in some schools, not in our school, but in some schools, it [enrolling international students] was done purely to make money.

Although Alice's criticism of other schools suggests that profit was not the prime motive for her school's move into the international education market – "*not in our school*" – it is clear that money played an important part in the decision:

It's a great moneymaker ... it's a matter of marketing and this does happen and it did happen in our school.

The recruitment and enrollment of international students caused conflict with a number of staff at the school:

A lot of people were very resistant and they still are... Some members of the ESL faculty felt that it would not be a good thing. In fact I would say at first most [ESL teachers] resisted.

Alice has no difficulty articulating the reasons for this resistance. The ESL teachers who opposed the change were concerned for the welfare of secondary school age children being sent to live and study in another country and the problems which might come from inappropriate accommodation and supervision. Despite her awareness of these issues and the feelings of responsibility for students she expresses as part of her ESL teacher ideology, Alice seems ambivalent in her stance with regard to the conflict. Her use of pronouns shifts from the inclusive 'we' to the distancing 'they' in discussion of these confrontations:

Feeling cynical about the way education was going and what are we going to bring upon ourselves if we're just becoming a commercial sort of business and trying to get more money and so on for the school. I think that a lot of them also felt that they wanted to know where the money was going and who was going to control how it was spent and whether in fact there'd be any flow on to enhance ESL and ESL status and ESL resources.

Although Alice's status has been improved by the influx of international students, it is clear that she feels less than powerful in the decision-making processes in the school:

It [the international student program] was going to happen anyway because certainly classroom teachers are powerless really. Depending on who you are in the school, you keep very quiet.

Alice is not describing herself as powerless, choosing to use the less direct 'you'. The use of 'I' might threaten her position of viewing the conflict from a distance but earlier comments have positioned her as a 'classroom teacher' and by implication 'powerless'.

With the international student program a fait accompli, Alice has chosen not to examine the reasons for its establishment. Instead she focuses on the service which she is able to provide for these students, a service which accommodates her existing ESL teacher ideology. The international students are reshaped in the traditional image of needy ESL students escaping conflict in their country of origin and struggling to establish themselves financially in Australia – *"We had students from Indonesia ... There were very good reasons [race riots] for getting them out and sending them here"*. Alice disputes the stereotyping of international students as being from the more privileged classes:

They're definitely not [all rich]. Many of them work ... The pressure [to succeed] is there. There's pressure of another kind on these kids. They're not all wealthy. Some of them have to work. Some of them have to get their own pocket money.

'Many' students are forced to work. 'Some' students have to work. The motive for this work is 'pocket money'. Despite Alice's concern to position these students as financially needy, the shifts in language suggest some uncertainty in this construction of student identity. If Alice is able to construct an ESL student other as needy, she is able to continue her enactment of existing ESL teacher identity in meeting student need. If, on the other hand, these new ESL students are seen to be well educated, wealthy and not in need of emotional support, elements of Alice's existing ESL teacher identity will be placed under pressure. If what students need from her is restricted to instruction in English language, she may be forced to find new ways to be as an ESL teacher or to find another context which will allow her to continue with her existing ESL teacher identity unchanged.

However, faced with the possibility of ideological conflict, Alice has interpreted the changed context of her work in ways which accommodate existing ideologies. By doing so she is able to continue in her ESL teacher role without being forced to examine the competing and conflicting ideologies at play in the changed context of her work.

In one sense Alice has been empowered by the conflict about her. She has been promoted to a position of increased responsibility and given greater recognition for her work. The change in her context of work as an ESL teacher has been the subject of ideological conflict and the site of resistance by other ESL teachers. Alice has been aware of this conflict but she has distanced herself, positioning herself as powerless to resist. Instead she has interpreted the changed context in ways which allow her to maintain her existing ESL teacher identity with minimal ideological conflict. Her tacit consent to change has also resulted in the reinforcement of existing unequal power structures and decision making processes in the school which deny Alice any real voice in decisions directly impacting on her work. The ESL program has become a financially profitable part of the school and Alice is part of this profitable package. Alice and her work as an ESL teacher is now more visible but she still has no place in the power structures controlling these changes. There is no place for 'power player' in Alice's ESL teacher identity. Rather than either resisting change, or becoming an active and more powerful part of the process of change, Alice has reshaped the student group to accommodate existing ESL teacher self.

6.2.4 Vicky

Changes in the student population in Vicky's school have also impacted on her work as an ESL teacher. The number of ESL students in the school is decreasing – *"this year we've only had just two new kids to the school from an ESL background"*. This is partly the result of external changes with the surrounding area becoming increasingly middle-class and English-speaking. A number of neighbouring schools offer more extensive ESL programs, attracting the majority of ESL students who live locally. The

drop in ESL student enrollments has also been the result of deliberate school policy with recent marketing designed to attract a different type of student:

There's a push to accept more accelerated learners, high achieving kids into the school.

Vicky applied for the position of Head of English at the end of last year, arguing in her interview that the school "*should push ESL*". Her application was unsuccessful because, in the opinion of the interview panel, she "*lacked the bigger picture of English in the school and how it was placed and where it was going*".

Vicky's position in the school is tenuous. Her contract expires at the end of the year. She has one ESL class at Year Twelve. There are some Year Eleven students in this class so she may have a small group of Year Twelve students for the following year. There are no other ESL classes in the school although there are a few ESL students in junior classes. Vicky's attempts to distinguish ESL from literacy have been unsuccessful and these students continue to be taught in 'English Skills' classes:

[These classes are] an attempt to serve kids with literacy needs, more than ESL needs. Many people at this school are of the opinion that it's the same thing and, if you're an English teacher, you can teach ESL.

In contrast to Alice's ambivalent attitude to the international marketing of ESL programs, Vicky is keen for her school to extend the ESL program to attract international students:

First I'd like to advertise that we're a school that offers ESL. Having overseas students would be a great angle because that brings in money as well. ... Schools today need to have their own sources of funding so that's a big bonus. ... I would try and market it that way, advertise overseas.

Although Vicky positions herself as the teacher with primary responsibility for ESL students, she has attempted to share this with the school as a whole:

In the interview [her unsuccessful attempt to be appointed as English coordinator] I do specifically remember saying we need to push ESL.

The shift in pronoun from 'I' to 'we' indicates her attempt to share responsibility. Vicky continues to use 'we' in discussion of the ESL students in the school:

We didn't have many... We had a few entering. ... We've only got two new kids [in the ESL program]. We're a small school.

The first person plural shifts from 'we' as the ESL program (an ESL program solely staffed by Vicky) to 'we' as a whole school. Decisions which affect ESL students adversely are distanced from her. They belong to 'other people':

It's unfortunate that there's a lot of people of that opinion and there are a lot of people backing up the administration who believe this way. ... It's very difficult to shift current thinking especially when people are set in their direction at the moment and they're working towards a certain goal. I think computers have just taken over. It seems like the major priority on everybody's agenda and on everybody's documents and policies and what have you.

As Vicky contemplates her struggles on behalf of ESL students, the numbers in opposition increase from 'a lot of people' to 'everybody'. By this stage Vicky is no longer part of the inclusive 'we' of the school:

Sometimes I say to myself what can one person do? I need support from others.

The importance of space as an indication of the value placed on a program is demonstrated as Vicky describes her attempts to find a location for a "*Literacy Centre, a Literacy/ESL Centre where kids could come and ask for help*". Vicky foregrounds the word 'literacy', a label the school applies to the ESL program which she usually resists. This foregrounding, with ESL discretely concealed, is an attempt to make her proposal more attractive. The idea "*was approved funnily enough but nothing ever happened*":

It's amazing how difficult it is for people to give up certain areas that aren't even being used. It came down to finding a spot. I suggested a few spots around the school, just storerooms. People aren't willing to give up that space for some reason [even though] it was approved by everybody at the meeting.

Control of space is a power issue associated with the recognition and valuing of programs within the school. In Alice's school, the new value placed on the ESL program has resulted in much improved accommodation and equipment – "*carpets and computers*". In Vicky's school even a disused storeroom remains the property of other teachers. There is literally no space made available for Vicky to enact her version of ESL teacher identity.

Vicky is employed on contract and feels that her outspokenness on behalf of ESL students may have threatened her future at the school:

I've found that in order to survive, I have to keep quiet sometimes. ... But I'm really worried about the year after that and the year after that and the year after that. If they take away the VCE ESL, they say there's no need or whatever, I doubt that I'll get ESL further down. So I'll have to reinvent myself I guess as some other form of teacher. ... [If the school offered a teaching position without ESL] I'm afraid I'd have to probably take it. I'd have to compromise myself that way.

Vicky's ESL teacher identity is an invention but one which allows her ways of being which accommodate valued aspects of ideological identity. Changes in context result in changes in identity, in 're-invented' identities but, in Vicky's case, these re-inventions may compromise the values underpinning existing ESL teacher identity.

Vicky's ideological struggle is explicit. What she wants to do as an ESL teacher, what she feels is appropriate in terms of catering for the ESL students in the school, is not possible. She feels isolated and under threat as a result of her actions and is now forced to consider an ideological 'compromise' if this will allow for continued employment. Her ideological positioning as an ESL teacher is in contradiction to the ways of being available to her at a school level and her efforts to create new ways of being have not met with success. Vicky is aware of the ideological conflict implicit in her struggles. She is critical of the ways of being as an ESL teacher which are offered by the school and she has worked within the existing decision making structures to effect change. However Vicky is an unequal player in terms of power. Awareness and struggle have not been enough to effect change and, at this stage, she has been forced to accept what is offered, even though it is in contradiction to ideological aspects of her ESL teacher identity.

6.2.5 Sally

Sally's school shares a site with an intensive English language centre for recently arrived students. Links with the language centre mean that Sally's school has always had a large number of ESL students. It also means that the composition of the student population in the school reflects both recent trends in immigration and settlement

patterns after these groups arrive in Melbourne. The Ministry of Housing flats and the comparatively cheap private rental accommodation in the area attracts low-income families. Many of the more recent arrivals are refugees from the Horn of Africa. The majority of these students have had limited education prior to arrival in Australia and many are struggling with the language and learning demands of secondary schooling.

The boys among the African students are of most obvious concern – *"there's a lot of aggression and there's a lot of fighting"*. The most urgent problem facing these students, and those who, like Sally, work with them, is the level of racism and violence in the local community. The male students in particular feel that the police discriminate against them and the level of violence involving students is increasing:

Some boys were attacked on the bus by kids who had machetes in their hands. It was obvious that they had weapons and the bus driver let them on. ... There's some Asians in that other gang, but they're basically second generation whites. It's a black/white issue definitely.

The violence is also shifting from episodes involving individual students to gang warfare. The school itself is no longer a safe place for these students, with thirty boys from a rival gang invading the school after 'payback' put a gang member in hospital.

Sally feels that the situation is out of control. As Year Eleven coordinator and as ESL teacher, she is closely involved with many of these students. She feels that all her energies are directed towards crisis management rather than teaching – *"the nature of the job has changed"*.

The school has developed an alternative VCE program at Years Eleven and Twelve in response to the educational needs of these students. The program was intended to offer students a general education course with an emphasis on language and literacy, leading to courses at a local TAFE (Technical and Further Education) College. In Sally's view, the course has been a failure, becoming a *"dumping ground"* for less able students, rather than a viable alternative educational pathway. Although the program was a whole school initiative, the number of ESL students enrolled in it meant that it has

become an extension of the existing ESL program, with both the program and the students the property and responsibility of the ESL staff, the 'we' of the passage below:

It's like the school doesn't own it. We keep trying and we're not achieving much. ... Even though ESL has a high profile, it's kind of 'oh good. There's a program. Piss 'em off. I don't have to deal with them any more'. ... It's a real out of sight, out of mind.

Attempts to share ownership of the program and responsibility for these students with other members of staff are rejected and the students are rejected as well with Sally using 'I' to voice her perception of the attitudes of other staff members – *"Piss 'em off ...I don't have to deal with them"*.

Perhaps because of this attitude, many of the students for whom the alternative program was intended have refused to consider it as an alternative to traditional VCE subjects. Sally has several of these students in her Year Eleven VCE ESL class. Despite her efforts at *"modifying the work"*, the students have been unable to complete the requirements of the course – *"they can't do the work ... they have not got the skill"*. Sally has decided that it would be unethical for her to award them a passing grade in a subject for which they have been unable to do the work:

It distresses me because they shouldn't be in Year Eleven in the first place - really nice kids that try so hard. The teachers [of the other subjects in which these students are enrolled] are going to give them the unit. It's me, their ESL teacher, the one who's not going to give them the unit. So I'm going to be the big, bad wolf and I'm going to be the one picking on them. They can't do the work, so I'm modifying the work for them, but they have not got the skill. I say to the other staff here, 'We're not doing them a favour by giving them the unit because we don't want to upset them'.

Sally's decision to fail these students has isolated her from the other staff who teach them – *"the teachers are going to give them a unit"*. Note that the unit is depicted as a gift, not as something the students have earned. Sally is alone in her stance and her relationship with her students – *"me, their ESL teacher"* - the teacher who belongs to the students, the one on whom the students have most claim for consideration, intensifies her feelings of guilt in being the one who will fail them. Sally is aware of student perception of her actions. She depicts herself as the monster, the *"big bad wolf"*

... *picking on*" the ESL students – a dramatic change in role for a caring, concerned ESL teacher, a role usually more grandmother than wolf.

Sally's reasons for this stance are part of her ideological positioning as an ESL teacher – "*My line is ESL. That's the barrow I have to push on a philosophical level*". Her struggle is an attempt to resolve conflict between what have become contradictory aspects of her ESL teacher identity – ESL teacher as 'nurturer' and ESL teacher as 'caterer for student need'. If she agrees to 'give' the students a pass in Year Eleven ESL, Sally will have joined the other members of staff in pretending that student needs are being met. This pretense would be at odds with her construction of ESL teacher identity. The conflict has forced Sally to reassess her ideological stance in relation to student need and has reinforced her existing belief that, as an ESL teacher, "*I want to try and cater for these kids – not just pretend they're all right*".

Somebody's got to be able to tell those kids that they have to look at alternatives. Somebody's got to be honest and try and do it in such a way that they're not going to think – what if a kid turns around and thinks I'm being racist? ... I don't want to put it in the too hard basket. I want to try and cater for these kids, not just pretend they're all right. ... So I've sort of ganged up with the ESL teachers. I think we have to make a stand. It's ESL teachers that the kids see as the nurturers and the fact that they know them. I think that if we make a stand then other people will follow. So we just have to do it.

The language Sally uses to describe her dilemma emphasizes her struggle. "*Somebody*" has to tell the students that they have failed. "*Somebody*" has to be "*honest*". With a shift to the first person pronoun, the "*somebody*" who must do these things has become Sally. She has "*ganged up*" the ESL teachers. This unpleasant image of ESL teacher as schoolyard bully echoes her earlier fears of being seen as someone "*picking on*" the ESL students. The contrast between this new role and the traditional construction of ESL teacher identity – "*it's the ESL teachers that the kids see as the nurturers*" – is a contradiction with which Sally struggles. Her difficulty in connecting with this aspect of her work is suggested by the retreat from the personal pronoun in a final return to 'somebody':

It's going to be hard to do ... [but] somebody's got to do it.

Like the other ESL teachers in this study, Sally too has struggled in response to ideological conflict. Like Stefan, her struggle has been to resolve internal conflict between contradictory aspects of her ESL teacher identity. Sally's concerns to first acknowledge and then attempt to meet the needs of her ESL students have been dominant over her desire to nurture and protect individual students. This decision has been the result of a lengthy process of awareness, internal struggle and now resolution. Changes in ways of being for Sally as an ESL teacher in response to this ideological conflict may also result in a power shift and new ways of being at a whole school level if Sally's stance is successful in forcing staff recognition of the needs of these ESL students.

6.2.6 Mandy

Mandy applied for the TRIP (Teacher Release to Industry) Program which would have given her a year away from teaching. Although she has no desire to leave teaching permanently, she felt the need to try something new. Her application was unsuccessful and Mandy returned to the position of school timetabler, a position she has held for several years. It is unusual for an ESL teacher to be given responsibility for the whole school timetable. In most schools this is regarded as a prestigious and powerful position, usually reserved for a senior teacher. That this has not been so in Mandy's school may explain her appointment. Mandy's position, the combination of school timetabler and ESL teacher, is an effective way of ensuring that ESL student needs are met. Unlike many other schools where the timetable determines what is possible for these students, in Mandy's school, *"everything else fits around the ESL students."*

Mandy's school has an integration unit catering for hearing-impaired students. The combination of ESL program and integration unit means that hearing-impaired ESL students are referred to the school. Mandy works closely with the teacher in charge of the integration unit to ensure that these students are catered for and part of this is matching the students with a sympathetic class teacher:

I'm being a bit political here. ... When we're behind closed doors, 'Should I put them in? You know you don't want him or her teaching lots of them'. The head of [the integration unit] is aware that I do a lot of

behind the scenes work and she asks me who's teaching. 'Oh no, no, no, they can't be in that class. What about this? Oh that's too full.' So working together you can just say 'Don't worry. I'll just stick them in there. Don't worry'. ... That's one bonus of being small. Knowing that this kid can't work with that teacher, therefore don't put them together.

Mandy describes herself as "*very patient and safe*", a teacher who spends time with her students in addition to class time. Other staff are seen to be less accepting of special needs ESL students. There is a quick shift from the tentative criticism of other colleagues who "*may not necessarily be as patient*" (as Mandy) to definite rejection of students in the response which Mandy assigns to these teachers – "*No I don't want them in my class*". This issue of student rejection and staff competence is not dealt with openly. Mandy sees it as a 'political' issue by which she seems to mean 'with the potential for causing conflict'. Conflict is avoided by discussions "*behind closed doors*", work being done "*behind the scenes*". The teacher in charge of the integration unit and Mandy, "*working together*", assess the ability and the willingness of the class teacher to cater for the ESL students and this determines where students are placed. There seems no attempt to work openly with other teachers in developing appropriate teaching strategies. On the contrary, the onus for establishing a productive relationship is placed on the students, rather than the teacher – "*knowing that this kid can't work with this teacher, therefore don't put them together*".

Mandy's concern for the ESL students, especially those who are part of the integration unit, is evident in her manipulation of the timetable on their behalf. However, implicit in this clandestine manipulation, is the understanding shared by Mandy and the teacher in charge of the integration unit that some of their colleagues are unsuitable teachers for these students. By keeping this understanding, and the judgment of teacher competence on which the understanding is based, "*behind closed doors*", Mandy is denying herself and other staff members the opportunity to examine the ways in which the school caters for the special needs students. Such an explicit examination of school ideology may enable other teachers to develop shared understandings and to accept shared responsibility for meeting the needs of these students. In her desire to avoid conflict with other staff members, Mandy is both protecting her own specialist knowledge base and keeping this knowledge implicit. The reasons for rejecting some

teachers and accepting others need only be made explicit if it is to be shared with someone who does not possess the knowledge on which these assessments are based. Mandy and the teacher in charge both 'know', so there is no need for them to say.

Sally is working to force staff recognition of ideological conflict. Mandy's efforts are to conceal and minimize conflict while, at the same time, resolving this hidden conflict in ways which meet the needs of ESL students. Mandy is aware of, but not explicit about, ideological conflict within her school. These understandings are shared, but not discussed, with the teacher in charge of the integration unit. Together they work to resolve the issues in ways which accommodate individual student need. Although Mandy's position as timetable coordinator empowers her to resolve these issues of conflict on an individual level, the decision to do so without public recognition and discussion of conflicting ideologies means that these ideologies remain naturalized and are therefore unavailable for change.

Mandy is reluctant to accept this interpretation of her work. She argues that her actions are based on prior experience:

I've tried talking to them [other teachers] about the ESL kids and it just doesn't work. They just get their backs up. They think you're having a go at them. It's better to do it this way. They're never going to change anyway.

6.2.7 May

Like Vicky, May is employed on contract, but Vicky's contract was for two years. May has been employed term by term and *"a few times I haven't got my holiday pay"*. Her future at the school is uncertain and she has an ever-increasing teaching load -- *"whatever they give you, we [contract teachers] teach. Whatever level, whatever class, whatever subject"*. May is now teaching Chinese at three levels -- Year Seven, Eight and Nine -- and Music to Year Seven. Next term, if she is still employed, she will have Year Eight Music classes in addition to her current teaching load.

It is May's Year Eleven ESL class which causes her most concern. There are twenty-two students in this class, a larger than normal number for an ESL class. Many of the students have recently left the intensive English language centre annexed to the school. They have been in Australia for less than one year and are still in the beginning stages of learning English. These students are enrolled in Year Eleven, the first year of VCE (the Victorian Certificate of Education), and the majority of them are unable to cope – *"so many of them, they do not have the skills in the language, not at all"*.

May feels that the successful progress of these students is her responsibility. She believes that, if she were a more experienced ESL teacher, she would be better able to meet their needs and to enable them to achieve success with their Year Eleven studies:

Whatever I do, it's not enough. ... I just feel that I'm inadequate. I just feel that I won't be doing a good job. Maybe it's not impossible if it's with someone who's very very experienced and who can devote far much more time for them. ... They are behind so much and the gap is so big.

Although May expresses concern about these students and about her ability to teach them, she does not feel able to seek assistance or to share her concerns with other members of staff. Her reluctance to do so may be explained by the precarious nature of her employment. If she admits to problems with her teaching or complains about the conditions of her work, her contract may not be renewed:

Sometimes I get this feeling – it's a bit depressing – that if you've got the class, then they're your responsibility. ... You feel you're quite alone in the struggle.

The number of hours, students and subjects May is required to teach have all increased and the lack of security associated with contract teaching means that she feels powerless to complain about her workload – *"whatever they give you, whatever they dish you on a plate, you take it"*.

Unable to raise her concerns with the school administration, May has constructed the conflict between the demands of the VCE course and the language learning needs of her students in terms of her own lack of experience and expertise. The problem is not seen as the result of a mismatch between what the school offers and what the students need. It is May's ability to teach the students appropriately which is at fault. That this

is seen as a personal failure is evidenced by the repeated use of the first person pronoun as May recounts her failings as an ESL teacher:

I don't feel comfortable. I just don't feel – whatever I do, it is not enough. I just feel it that way. ... I just feel I'm inadequate. I just feel I won't be doing a good job. ... I must be inadequate too. I admit I do. ... I feel I can't take it. Sometimes I feel exhausted. ... If I'm more experienced I would feel better. I'm just very aware of the fact that I'm too inexperienced. I'm just very aware that I might not have guided them in the right directions.

The ideal ESL teacher identity suggested here is one so talented that he or she is able to teach a group of students with beginner language skills in such a way that they are able to succeed in the final years of secondary schooling. That May is not able to do this seems not to lessen her belief in this ideal ESL teacher identity. Rather the failure is hers because she is not able to live up to this mythical ideal.

In the construction of ideal ESL teacher identity, May is able to avoid confrontation but she is also accepting in advance responsibility for what is the almost certain failure of her students. Blame is not placed on the school administration. Nor is it placed on the students. Although May is aware of a certain lack of commitment, her criticism is softened by an understanding of the demands being placed on these students:

Unfortunately I can't see a lot of commitment yet. ... If you give them any sort of task, they are very slack – part of it is that they've very busy. They have a sizable amount of homework from other subjects too I can imagine. A lot of it – part of it – is that their skills are not good enough. So that they feel like they are not ready for it or they keep pushing it to the last minute.

The students are described as 'slack', lacking in 'commitment'. But, at the same time as May criticizes them, she offers excuses, imagining the students' feelings of inadequacy as they are confronted by an overwhelming workload. May does not know this to be the case – she *"can imagine"* that it is so.

May reserves this understanding response for her ESL students. Students in her mainstream Chinese and Music classes are regarded less sympathetically. These students are repeatedly described as *"horrible"*. They are *"horrible, horrible Year Eights"*. They *"turn so wild' ... they become horrible animals"*. Teaching these

students is *"battling every day in the zoo"*. May does not see herself as alone in this response to the students – *"Every teacher's scared of the Eights. ... Every teacher dreads the Year Eight classes"*. Failure to teach these students successfully is not an issue. May is included in the group response of *"every teacher"*, rather than isolated by the personal responsibility of the repeated 'I' as she is in relation to her Year Eleven ESL class.

May's perception of powerlessness in her school has resulted in acceptance and internalization of an external ideological conflict. The needs of May's ESL students and the program offered by the school are in contradiction. May's tenuous position in the school is such that she is unable to recognize this contradiction in terms critical of the school. In her efforts to cope with ideological conflict in ways which do not position her in opposition to the school administration and threaten her survival as a teacher, May has reinterpreted the conflict in terms of her own inability to meet student need. This response to conflict reinforces existing unequal power structures and positions May as a less than competent teacher, further undermining her work in the school. It also constructs two very different versions of ESL teacher identity – the ideal able to take on impossible teaching tasks and ensure student success and that which May constructs for herself – isolated, totally responsible for, and yet unable to meet, student need.

6.2.8 Connie

This year has seen Connie faced with a number of conflicts related to her work as an ESL teacher. At the end of last year she was placed 'in excess' at the intensive English language centre where she had worked for a number of years. A declining number of students meant that, according to the staffing formula used by the Education Department, there were too many teachers at the language centre. The principal of the school to which the language centre is annexed had been required to name teachers 'in excess of need'. Connie was one of those named.

Connie applied for an advertised vacancy in a large secondary college, a vacancy which was a combination of student welfare coordination and ESL teaching. Connie has specialist qualifications and extensive experience in both areas:

I thought 'Made for me'. ... I did all the right things. I thought the interview went brilliantly. ... [but] I got a letter saying no. ... Their concern was being able to transfer my skills as a Student Welfare coordinator at a language centre to a big secondary college.

Connie appealed this decision and took her case to the Merit and Equity Board of the Education Department which ruled in her favour. (She was perhaps fortunate in that the chairperson of the Merit and Equity Board was the person originally responsible for the establishment of language centres.) The school was not pleased by the Board's decision and Connie had a demanding first term.

Connie has experienced little difficulty with the students in her new school and feels that her language centre skills in both welfare and ESL have transferred successfully to the larger school. However the process by which this relocation took place suggests differing, and conflicting, constructions of ESL teacher identity. She believes that she was selected to be named 'in excess' because the principal of the language centre *"named competent people because she knew that they'd all get jobs [in other schools]"*. In this construction it seems that 'competence' is not a necessary part of ESL teacher identity. Connie is selected to be removed from ESL teacher work because of her competence. Presumably other teachers are to remain at the language centre, engaged in ESL teacher work, because their competence is seen to be less than that possessed by Connie. 'Competence' appears to mean the perceived ability to cope with the pressures of teaching in a larger mainstream school. Despite this perception of Connie's competence, her application for a position in a school was blocked because her experience at a language centre was not regarded as relevant to work in a large mainstream school – *"they [the administration of the school] thought I couldn't cope"*. This view of ESL teaching as 'less than' is oddly reminiscent of the reasoning of the principal in the school which Connie left. The ESL teacher identity, which Connie reports as being constructed for her by others, is that of ESL teacher lacking in the skills possessed by other teachers. It is Connie's rejection of ESL teacher identity as

less than other forms of teaching which was behind her appeal to the Department of Education Merit and Equity Board. The result of her victory was a difficult start in her new school:

Anyway I won it. So coming here with that behind me was very interesting. They were going to really try to give me a hard time when I arrived. And the staff, the whole staff, were supporting him [the principal] ... they were going to do things like give me the worst Year Eight in the school and give me all the bad kids - all that silliness. ... The second week or third week I was here, they gave me the worst class they could as extras. I got 8F and then I got 9F the following week, the two worst classes in the school.

Connie's victory isolated her and she brought with her a reminder of the principal's defeat- "*coming here with all that behind me*". That the other teachers are united against her is emphasized by the repetition of the phrase "*the staff, the whole staff*" and by the continued use of 'they'. Being given the 'worst classes' as extra lessons to cover staff absences is not the work of the timetable coordinator or the Daily Organizer whose responsibility it is to allocate teachers to these classes. There are no individual others here - it is the work of 'they', the other staff as a group united in their opposition to Connie. The process by which an individual is given or denied membership of a group is an important part of identity construction. Connie believes that her ESL teacher identity is one which has a place within the mainstream teacher group identity. The group appears to believe that this is not so and initially Connie's membership of the group is blocked and she is forced to prove that she has skills similar to those of other group members.

The strength of this initial opposition, and Connie's isolation in the face of it, is conveyed as Connie compares her teaching conditions in Term One and Term Two:

I've had lots of tests. ... They've actually backed off me [now]. It was this constant 'What are you doing? Where are you? Who are you seeing?' Now it's 'We know you can do it. We know you know what you're doing. Do it'. And it's just given me a bit of space, a lot less pressure.

The aggression of the constant interrogation has the power of physical force. If now "*they've backed off me*", then before this they were invading her space, on top of her. Having passed the 'tests', Connie has been rewarded by "*a bit of space, a lot less*

pressure", but she is still not one of the staff group though the distance between them has diminished. 'They' have become 'we' but this is not yet an inclusive 'we'. Connie is still the 'you' in this sentence and in her position in the school. Connie's separateness is also apparent in her criticism of the norms of behaviour, the ways in which things are done in this new context:

The program needs work. They're [the ESL teachers] are doing all this little piddley support things and withdrawing students ... [while] in Year Seven and Eight ESL is limited to two periods per week.

Although Connie is keen to be regarded as equal in terms of teaching skills, she is not willing to pay for group membership by uncritical acceptance of existing ways of being. Her position remains that of critical outsider. Despite all this, Connie is happy with her move:

I just think that sensitivity, that caring, all those sorts of ESL teacher traits that we possess, they are transferable to this. ... in terms of welfare, it's all part and parcel.

Connie has experienced some success in the resolution of ideological conflict. Her victory at the Merit and Equity Board forced public acknowledgment and acceptance of her ESL teacher identity. Her actions at the school level forced private acknowledgment and acceptance as she worked to demonstrate her competence to an initially hostile staff. Connie was aware of ideological conflict in varying interpretations of ESL teacher identity. She used existing power structures to force recognition of the conflict and to effect change. Critical of the ways of being as an ESL teacher offered by her new school, Connie is now working to develop a power base and plans to work towards change once this is secure.

6.2.9 Gary

Gary has also experienced major change in the context of his work as an ESL teacher. After twelve years in a specialist language school, with this his only experience of teaching, Gary felt ready for something different. He was granted long service leave but before his period of leave started he successfully applied to work in a Safe Haven in country Victoria. (The Safe Havens were set up by the Australian Federal Government to offer a temporary place of safety to refugees fleeing the war in Kosovar. Several

hundred refugees were airlifted to Australia and given accommodation in 'Safe Havens'. Each Safe Haven was to offer English classes for the adults and a general education program including English lessons for school aged children).

Gary is excited by the prospect of being part of this new development. He feels that he has valuable skills to offer and he also feels that this is an excellent opportunity to develop new areas of expertise as an ESL teacher, specialist expertise which may offer a way out of the language school in which he is currently employed.

Gary has made two choices resulting in disruption to the normal patterns of his work. The first, his decision to take long service leave from the specialist language school, was motivated by a desire to escape "*internal politics*". The second, the decision to work with the Kosovar refugees, is more complex in terms of motivation.

Gary discusses his decision to take long service leave:

ESL is still my focus and always will be during my teaching career. I feel that that's where my abilities lie as a teacher, my strengths regarding my knowledge of English language and being able to transfer that knowledge. So I was considering long service leave, just to leave the present working environment for a period of time and see the real world. ... Yet I was talking to a teacher from AMES [Adult Migrant Education Services] and we were both saying (she's actually been teaching for twenty-one years I think she said), we both agreed that we haven't tired of what we do. We're not bored with what we do and we felt that this was because of the different changeover. In a language school there's a constant change over every term. You've got your refugees. You've got your business migrants. You've got your family reunion migrants and over the years there's been that constant change.

Gary's sense of ownership of ESL teaching dominates this passage, conveyed through repeated use of possessive pronouns. This is first seen in Gary's individual ownership of the area – "*my focus*", "*my teaching career*", "*my abilities*", "*my strengths*", "*my knowledge of the English language*". Ownership of ESL teaching is then shared with another teacher. Her credentials are established – "*teaching for twenty-one years*". This length of time is clearly important. Gary's own time teaching has already been emphasized – "*It's been twelve years in the language school. Twelve years in one*

setting is a long time". In reported discussion with the other teacher the ownership of ESL teaching is shared – *"we both agreed"*. Students have become part of the language of ownership. They are regarded as joint property – *"your refugees"*, *"your business migrants"*, *"your family reunion migrants"*. Students exist only in relation to ESL teacher work. They are the other constructed in ways relevant to ESL teacher identity.

Gary's *"present working environment"*, the language school, is compared to *"the real world"*, a world located outside the language school. This may be the 'real world' of mainstream schools or the 'real world' of the wider society. Whatever the intended meaning, the contrast between the language school and the more real other positions the language school as 'unreal'. By implication the work of teachers in such a setting is also unreal.

Another passage also deals with Gary's decision to take long service leave:

My motivation for long service leave is just for a break from that particular setting. I don't want a break from actually teaching students. That's where my abilities are. That's where the satisfaction is, helping students learn English. The reason for taking leave is, within a small teaching unit, internal politics becomes an issue. It can't be avoided unfortunately. I think after a period of time you get very tired of that and you need a break from that.

There is a change in distance in this passage from the closeness of first person to the more removed second person. The first reinforces Gary's ownership and expertise – *"my abilities"*. The second distances Gary from conflict with other teachers in the language school, teachers who are absent from the passage. Their presence is suggested in the *"internal politics"* but it is not stated. The internal politics have attained an existence of their own which is other than the people involved. It is *"an issue"*, an issue distanced from Gary but one which *"can't be avoided"*. That these internal politics are the source of conflict and stress is implied by Gary's reaction to the situation, although this is a reaction which he does not own directly, – *"you get very tired of that [the internal politics] and you need a break from that"*. Although ideological conflict with and between other teachers is never mentioned, it is an issue

implicit in the negative connotations of "*internal politics*", politics contained within the language school which is itself removed from the 'real world'.

The centrality of ESL teaching to Gary's life is vividly expressed as he imagines his reactions to an extended period of long service leave, a time without teaching:

Things have changed drastically for the better. The one thing concerning me leaving the school was that I would have withdrawal symptoms. You're doing intensive teaching. Then you're not. It might be fine for the first two weeks, maybe the first month. Then you begin to twiddle your thumbs. You know – 'What can we do? What do I do?' I can't spend the whole six months traveling. So I need something else to occupy my time.

Teaching has become Gary's drug of addiction. Without his work as an ESL teacher, Gary will suffer "*withdrawal symptoms*". These symptoms will be expressed physically – "*you begin to twiddle your thumbs*".

The solution to the 'problem' of an extended period without work is offered in the form of employment in the Safe Haven – "*things have changed drastically for the better*". This is a reaction to the war in Kosovo and the plight of the Kosovar refugees firmly centred on Gary and his perception of his needs. The Safe Haven offers "*something else to occupy [his] time*", an alternative to "*six months traveling*". Involvement in the Safe Haven program is seen as an opportunity to extend and evaluate his skills as an ESL teacher:

Not that I've got this sense of heroism but I want to be there first – that's part of the experience. Actually starting a program, trial and error, seeing what works, seeing what doesn't work, experiencing the difficulties myself. ... I see this program as being a test of my skills and also another learning experience for me.

His reactions to working with refugees from an immediate and on-going conflict will determine future plans:

The war won't be over in three months. ... [but] after three months of that sort of teaching I don't know how I will be emotionally. ... I might need time out. I am sure I will have suffered burn out and I may need time out.

Employment in the Safe Haven offers Gary both an escape from the ideological conflict of the language school and an opportunity to develop his skills as an ESL teacher. His projected construction of ESL teacher identity in this new setting is reminiscent of Tom's ESL teacher as pioneer. Ideological issues associated with the conflict in Kosovo, the motivation behind the creation of the Australian Safe Havens and the purpose and impact of his work in this setting are unexamined. Gary is aware of ideological conflict at a school level but chose to remove himself. His decision to take long service leave and to seek employment at a Safe Haven has meant that issues of ideological conflict at the school level remain unexamined and unresolved. It has also meant that Gary's own ideological positioning remains naturalized, unavailable for critique and possible change. Unaware and uncritical of his own ideologies, Gary is equally uncritical of those of the creators of the Safe Havens. The potential for ideological conflict in his changed context of work as an ESL teacher may force a new awareness upon him, resulting in changes to his ESL teacher identity.

6.3 Discussion

Concepts of ideology and identity are so closely linked that discussion of one implies discussion of the other. Ideologies, that is beliefs, values and ways of seeing the world provide the basis for action or ways of being in the world. Identities are both ways of being able to be and ways of believing oneself to be. In enacting identity we are also accepting and enacting ideology. Actions are identity realized with an ideological base contextualized in relations of power. The ideological base for most action exists in a naturalized or common sense form. Change may result in conflict in these naturalized ideologies which may, in turn, result in changes to ways of being. Fairclough (1995:82-3) argues that an overlap of contradictory positioning, that is a situation of ideological conflict, "provides a basis for awareness and reflexivity ... problematization and change. ... From awareness and critique arise possibilities of empowerment and change".

Ideological conflict or contradictory positioning may be external, between different players in the power structures of society. If we accept that the power structures in a democratic capitalist society are, in the main, hegemonic in nature, these conflicts must be resolved through persuasion and the tacit consent of all players. Awareness of issues of power in situations of conflicting ideology is paramount, given that unequal distribution of power is effective in determining 'consent' in favour of maintenance of the position of the dominant player and existing power structures.

Ideological conflict may also be internal. We are none of us a single identity. We exist as a changing, multi-faced amalgam of identities, each with associated ideologies which both reinforce and conflict with each other. We seem able to avoid identity conflict by a process of compartmentalizing these various aspects of identity with reference to contexts of time and place – now the mother, now the daughter, now the teacher. Overlap results in a pull of identities and ideologies, a pull resolved in terms of the relative power of competing identities in particular instances of time and place. The teacher for whom mother aspects of identity dominate leaves the staff meeting early to collect children. The teacher for whom professional aspects of identity dominate remains and both are the site of ideological struggle and conflict.

Changes in context may upset this precarious balance of competing ideologies resulting in conflict. Reactions to conflict will vary. Conflict may result in ideological awareness, critique, empowerment and change. It may also result in denial, avoidance, compliance and reinforcement of existing structures. It is the factors which contribute to the shape and outcome of ideological conflict and the construction of ESL teacher identity which are the focus of discussion. All the teachers involved in this study have experienced change and some degree of conflict in their context of work as ESL teachers. That this should happen is not unexpected. Change is a constant in the work of all teachers. Indeed it is a constant in the work of all those in contact with people. Although change is a predictable constant for these teachers, the type and result of change varies.

This consideration of change and conflict in relation to the work of individual ESL teachers illustrates a number of responses. Teachers may refuse to acknowledge that ideological conflict exists. They may work to resolve conflict without explicit recognition of its existence. They may recognize ideological conflict but feel powerless to act in response. They may recognize conflict, act publicly to effect change but be unsuccessful in their attempts to do so. They may recognize conflict, work through an explicit and critical examination of competing ideologies and then act to resolve the situation. Stefan, Sally and Connie seem able to offer productive ways of being as ESL teachers in contexts of change and ideological conflict. These teachers are all operating from secure positions of power, in Connie's case, a position of power based on her sense of identity as ESL teacher. The experiences of other teachers would suggest that, without these constructions of self as agentic, their struggles may well have been in vain.

This chapter has discussed the ideological impact of change and conflict on nine ESL teachers and the ways in which their reactions are revealing of ESL teacher identity. The next chapter will focus on the second conversation with these teachers, in which they discuss their students and the ways in which teacher construction of student identity impacts on construction of ESL teacher identity.

Chapter 7: Identity and the Other

7.1 Introduction

This section of the study of ESL teacher identity deals with data collected in the second case study interview. The focus for this conversation was on the students taught by each teacher. The discussion of ESL student as self-defining other in construction of ESL teacher identity calls on the work of Bakhtin (1984), Hall (1997a) and Pennycook (1998).

7.2 ESL Student as Self-Defining Other

Bakhtin argues that all meaning is constructed through the dialogic meeting between self and other. Identity is not something which exists outside dialogue and is revealed to the world through interaction with the other. It is brought into being through dialogue and can only exist in this process of interaction with other speaking beings:

It [dialogue] is not a means for revealing, bringing to the surface the already-made character of a person; no, in dialogue a person not only shows himself [sic] outwardly, he becomes for the first time that which he is -- and we repeat, not only for others, but for himself as well. ... Two voices is the minimum for life, the minimum for existence (Bakhtin 1984:252)

This dialogue may be internal, between varying aspects of self, or between self and imagined other, but it is the dialogic interaction between two voices which, Bakhtin argues, creates identity. In this way, ESL teacher identity is called into being in dialogue, either real or imagined, with those who are part of this construction.

Hall (1997a) also explores the role of the other in identity construction and relationships of power. He suggests that it is the positioning assigned to the other which establishes the positioning of the self. In creating the other in particular ways of being we also create ourselves. The process by which students are assigned possibilities for being is a dual process of identity construction. Student

ways of being also define teacher ways of being. Pennycook (1998) uses the Robinson Crusoe/Man Friday relationship in an exploration of the construction of civilized man and savage other, a construction which allows the other existence only in terms of deficit. Man Friday brings nothing to the relationship. He is a blank page, reliant on Crusoe for appropriate ways of being.

In the same way that Robinson Crusoe and Man Friday are co-constructions, ESL teachers both construct and are constructed by a multiplicity of others – teachers, administrators, students and the wider society. ESL students are fundamental to this construction of ESL teacher identity. It is not possible to conceive of teacher in the absence of the defining other, the student. The construction of ESL student identities impact on ESL teacher identities in that the ways teachers imagine their students to be influence the ways of being available to them as teachers. Interaction between student and teacher ways of being may be complementary in that student identity may enable an enactment of teacher identity which is a preferred identity. However there may be mismatch between teacher construction of ESL teacher identity and that made available by students. The enactment of ESL teacher as caring parent requires the ESL student to be compliant in the role of needy child. If this role is rejected, mismatch between teacher identity and teacher-constructed student identity may force teacher behaviour at odds with preferred teacher identity and cause conflict in the teacher-student relationship. (Further discussion of the role of the other in identity construction is to be found in Chapter Two).

The data in this section of the study is first treated as transparent as these teachers describe their students. Then the focus shifts to the language used in construction of the student other and the implications of these constructions for teacher identity. This analysis of language as opaque includes the use of student descriptors, the language of teacher-student interaction as reported by these teachers, self-descriptors and shifts in pronoun use. In each instance the focus is determined by patterns of language use particular to that conversation.

7.2.1 Tom

Tom discusses a small group of year Nine students, six Vietnamese boys and one Samoan boy. Tom chooses to discuss these students because he sees them as typical of an increasing number of students in schools of high migrant density. The majority of these boys have been resident in Australia for an extended period of time and most have been part of the Australian education system since the beginning of primary school. Attempts to trace their educational history met with limited success but Tom has been able to establish a pattern of disruption – “*they had a string of seven ESL teachers last year*” and a shared primary school.

Despite the length of time these boys have been in Australia Tom believes that they have made limited progress with learning English:

They speak lexicalised speech and pay very little attention to form. Yawning chasms in their vocabulary. ... They are literate at a very basic level. But they're not interested in reading or writing anything at any length. ... They speak Vietnamese non-stop and when they speak English it's with an accent. ... When they don't know a word they just don't worry about it. They go for gist. If there are vocabulary items that are beyond them, [they] take a guess and then don't worry.

He suggests that this lack of progress in language learning is not seen as an issue by other teachers who are more concerned with behaviour and class control:

Apart from the fact they speak L1 [Vietnamese] the whole time in all classes, they're probably less of a problem than other kids acting out. ... They [other teachers] don't seem to worry much.

Tom has had little success in motivating these students. Attempts to engage them in active learning through increased use of multi-media have been largely unsuccessful:

They were happy to do that [but] I gave them a progress test after two or three weeks break ... and even the brightest one had by that time forgotten. ... I think their attention is on their social life.

There is little that is positive in the student descriptors in this discussion of Tom's students. The few individual descriptors focus on student weakness. One student is “*incredibly slow*”. Another “*seems OK on a conversational level*”, positive assessment of oral language ability qualified by the use of “*seems*”. One student's ability to function in the wider society is seen as “*street cunning*”. This individual descriptor is extended to become a group descriptor which threatens the

educational success of these students – *"it's that kind of street cunning that undermines their high level stuff all the way through"*. A student regarded as sufficiently advanced to return to mainstream English *"has a kind of street level adulthood about him, sort of straight talking in a way"*. Again the positive descriptor is modified. The 'adulthood' is 'street level'. The 'straight talking' is 'sort of ... in a way'. Despite these modifiers, this student is positively positioned in contrast to another who has also returned to mainstream English:

I said to the English teacher don't let him sit next to another Vietnamese student who conned his way into the ESL class for a few weeks and yapped his head off in Vietnamese.

Group descriptors are equally negative with similar modification of positive descriptors. The Vietnamese students operate as a supportive friendship group:

They are very tight socially ... extremely close, which is nice to see but I think it has negative effects on their attitude to developing their skills in English.

Tom later commented that he did not regard 'street cunning' as negative. He saw it as an essential survival skill for these students and admired their ability to negotiate their way through the complexities of an unsympathetic and unsupportive host society.

The students *"talk Vietnamese non-stop"*. Their English is *"accented and it's as if they're signaling their identification"*. The validity of this 'identification' which Tom positions as 'identification as Vietnamese' is called into question in an extended discussion of the cultural alienation seemingly experienced by one student on a return trip to Vietnam:

Given their strong identification it's interesting the gaps in their knowledge and experience of their own culture ... the student was deeply shocked [by the difference between Australia and Vietnam]. He seemed to have very limited experience of his own customs. ... He was deeply alienated ... couldn't cope with that at all.

The students' English language skills – *"they speak fairly fluently"* – are survival skills – *"they've found a way to survive through that lexicalised speech"*. Their ability to operate socially is based on their physical appeal, an appeal to which Tom is immune – *"they're cute in other people's eyes"*. Students are *"friendly in an off hand way"* but Tom is blocked from any significant role as a group member:

I often comment on the running conversations of the Vietnamese. They just look blank at me and I said to them once 'there are two people in this room who don't speak that language. You are cutting them out of the group'. The answer was 'we are the group'. So the Samoan guy [the only non-Vietnamese student in the class] doesn't exist.

Neither does Tom but this is a statement not made.

Verbs used to describe first language use change in the course of conversation. Initially verbs are neutral, even if the modifying adverb is not – students "*talk Vietnamese non stop*". As the conversation progresses, this phrase becomes gradually more negative. First it is "*chatter in Vietnamese non stop*", then "*yapping away in Vietnamese*", student conversation reduced to the level of animal noise. (Tom rejects this as a 'too literal interpretation' of his words, words spoken at the end of a long and tiring day.)

The only other student in the class, a Samoan boy from New Zealand, is depicted in similarly negative terms:

He's just incredibly laid back. I mean you have to find a legitimate reason for him to walk every now and again, especially when you have a double period, because it's [the classroom] a bit like a cage.

The language of teacher interaction with this group is one of struggle, limited success and frustration. Tom "*had to drag it [information] out of him*". Tom is "*trying to separate students, trying to get [them] to work independently*". Attempts to contact parents are unsuccessful – "*I wanted to – wanted to But ...*". Tom has "*several goes at*" one student for not having a library card. This was clearly unsuccessful – "*why hasn't he got a library card?*" Class work is a gamble in which Tom holds the losing hand – "*no matter how much I up the ante, it doesn't really make a difference*". But despite this lack of success Tom persists – "*I wonder [why]. I mean they're there. You've got to do something with them*".

The ESL teacher identity available to Tom in interaction with these students:

Monster ... stark staring mad and totally unreasonable ... One of them said 'How come you're the only teacher who corrects our English? How come you're the only one who ever comments on meaning?'

This role as the teacher who 'corrects English' and 'comments on meaning' is fundamental to Tom's ESL teacher identity. Much of the discussion concerns the students' English language and Tom's attempts to push them to improve and extend their existing language skills. He constructs the desired student other as 'learner'. This construction of student as learner has implications for student behaviors which are expected. Tom's criticisms of these students for what he sees to be inappropriate behavior suggest what is expected in Tom's construction of the student other. These students "*pay no attention to form*" and have no interest in "*reading or writing anything at length*". They seem not to worry about their limited skills and are unwilling to use English. The opposite of this unwelcome student behavior is the desired student other – keen to learn, attentive to form, concerned to do well and willing to use the target language. This student other as learner allows enactment of Tom's desired ESL identity, that of pedagogue. He is able to be the knowing other, instructing and skilling the eager learner in what, for Tom at least, is the core business of ESL teacher work – the teaching and learning of English.

7.2.2 Stefan

Stefan has a Year Nine class of thirteen students and a Year Twelve class of nine. The Year Nine class has ten Vietnamese students and three Somali students. Stefan is concerned about the rate of progress of these students. He believes that, given the majority of them have been in Australia for "*about four years*", their English language skills should be more advanced:

They haven't really got a good enough base to do well academically because of their English. I think it's a combination of themselves and their community and the school where expectations are not high enough, where it's easy not to speak English. And it's maybe just not enough tight teaching. These are gorgeous kids but they still don't know their tenses. And they should after four or five years in Australia.

Despite these concerns, Stefan is pleased by the willingness of these students to accept responsibility for their learning and their readiness to develop explicit learning skills. He is less optimistic about his Year Twelve students, concerned by their inadequate preparation for Year Twelve and their lack of independent learning skills:

They're a good bunch of people but they don't come with a culture that says there's parts that I [the student] have to take responsibility for. Even the best student didn't get the best possible mark because she didn't do enough work.

Stefan acknowledges the complex factors affecting successful learning – the impact of self-image, the influence of the peer group and the family background – but in his view it is the clear responsibility of ESL teachers to teach effectively and to ensure student progress. If progress is not made, teachers should be held accountable:

You think if someone had done their job properly at some stage in terms of language teaching that [lack of progress] wouldn't be the case. I'd only say it in private. Actually I think a problem I have with some of my ESL colleagues, is that maybe my manner does say that and it doesn't help with my relationship [and] my ability to change what's happening. It just intimidates people but I feel like saying 'what the bloody hell have you been doing?' I mean something should have happened by now.

There is no shortage of positive descriptors in Stefan's depiction of his ESL students. The students in the Year Nine ESL class are all *"gorgeous kids"*. Praise of students as people is qualified in discussion of their student identity. As people, they are 'gorgeous'. As students, they are *"reasonably intelligent"*, *"reasonably bright"*. Reasons for past lack of progress in learning English are identified as a combination of failures – student, community and school – *"where expectations are not high enough, where it's easy not to speak English"*.

Stefan outlines his plan for remedying this, a plan involving responsibility shared between teacher and student. The importance of student understanding of teacher purpose is emphasized in the repetition of 'they understand/they understood' in the following passage:

They understand why I want them to speak English in class, they understand the importance of learning grammar ... they understand the importance of applying it once they've learnt it. So we've just finished doing a bit of narrative and description. They understood that after doing exercises we'd done, they had to sort of put it into practice. ... Most of them understood why they were doing it and most of them did it and did it reasonably well.

The shifting pronouns signals the movement from explicit teacher purpose – 'I want' – to the development of skills through shared activities with the use of 'we' to student ownership of skills with the use of 'they'. Student understanding of

purpose and ownership of skills is an explicit goal for Stefan as teacher – *"that's what I've been working on ... I thought they hadn't been taught how to learn"*.

Stefan is pleased with the progress of this class – *"most of them are going to do all right"*. He is less pleased with his Year Twelve ESL class. Again comments are divided between positive reaction to students as people – *"they're a good bunch of people"* – and criticism of them as students, criticism focused on their lack of willingness to accept responsibility for their own learning.

Stefan is working to develop a different learning culture with his Year Nine class but *"it's too late [to do this] at Year Twelve ... all you can do is patch up and get them through"*. He is caught in a situation where he feels compelled to accept primary, rather than shared, responsibility for student learning, to 'push' students to complete school assessed work requirements:

Because you have the child, the student, there in front of you and you know that if you do certain things it will really improve their mark. But if you don't they won't get the TER [Tertiary Entrance Ranking] that they need, but that's an unfair pressure on the teacher.

This is a pressure which forces Stefan to behave in ways which are other than his construction of ESL teacher, to operate as 'spoon feeder', rather than 'skill giver'. Student dependence is signaled in the diminutive construction of student as 'child' – the only time that Stefan uses this term to describe his students.

Criticism of individual students is consistently framed in an appreciation of them as people:

They're good human beings ... they're not people that deliberately set out to become poor learners. They're good people just like anybody else. They've got dreams and expectations and that. And yet they're so poorly prepared.

Responsibility for lack of progress is seen as the result of 'poor preparation' in previous teaching which has resulted in impoverished students. They are '*poor learners*', '*poorly skilled*', '*poorly prepared*'. This student poverty provides a reference back to Stefan's earlier comments on the role of the teacher in 'adding value' to students.

There are two ESL teacher identities created by these constructions of student other. The first, which is Stefan's preferred position, is that of ESL teacher as skilled professional, a person who *"does their job properly ... in terms of language teaching"*. The second is the ESL teacher identity which Stefan is forced to adopt in response to a more dependent student other. In this version of ESL teacher identity, Stefan pushes, encourages and spoon-feeds, creating the illusion of student learning, rather than the reality achieved by ESL teacher as skilled professional. Stefan is not happy with this version of ESL teacher identity – *"I sometimes wonder how much I've done and how much they've done"*. Although unhappy, he accepts the role as an inevitable consequence of inappropriate early teaching by those who seem not to have accepted Stefan's version of ESL teacher as skilled professional.

7.2.3 Alice

Alice teaches ESL at Years Eleven and Twelve. In her Year Twelve five students are permanent residents and three are international students. Alice describes this class as an *"excellent group. ... They've come together as a group. They're very good together in class, very supportive of each other"*. Alice discusses each of the students in turn, commenting positively on their abilities. One student is *"full of interesting ideas ... a very clever boy"*. One of the girls in this class is *"a special friend – I just really like her"*. Another is a *"terrific girl. She writes really well. I admire her"*. It is not necessary for students to be academic high achievers for Alice to respond positively to their efforts. One girl is *"a battler. She's having a lot of trouble but she's always there and tries her best"*. The other girls are *"very focused"*, *"very hard-working"*.

Alice's Year Eleven students are *"a different group altogether"*. They are all international students and there are problems of lack of motivation and lack of interest in schoolwork combined with inadequate supervision in the students' homestay accommodation:

They don't enjoy school and we don't enjoy their company to put it very bluntly. They're not good students and we've had quite a few problems with them. These students I think have come out here because they've failed in their system or there have been other problems and I think for Mum and Dad it might be out of sight, out

of mind, but for us it's causing problems. They're not coping academically. Socially they seem to be OK.

The contrast in Alice's language as she describes the two groups is marked. The Year Twelve class is described in glowing terms which focus on positive personal characteristics, rather than on aspects of their identity as students. As a group, they are *"excellent ... very cohesive, very supportive"*. Descriptions of individuals are equally positive. One male student is *"interesting", "mature", "clever", "very charming", "a lot of charm - he'll go a long way"*. A female student is *"a special friend"*. Another is *"terrific ... I really admire her"*. Others are *"focused", "a battler", "an angel"*.

The Year Eleven class is split into two groups of students. One group are all *"good students. They're focused ... a delight to be with"*. The other group are 'bad' students. Alice suggests they have been failures in their own system and has *"absolutely no sympathy for them"* if they are unable or unwilling to comply with school regulations. This lack of sympathy is couched in terms of school policy and outside scrutiny of her work, scrutiny which constrains her ability to accommodate these less able students:

I don't think we should be making too many changes to our policies just to accommodate those students. ... When it comes to the crunch, they've [the students] got to get work in and they've got to do the same as everyone else does.

Two of the more demanding Year Eleven students have been given nicknames – the 'Princess' from Hong Kong and the 'Empress' from China. These girls are *"demanding", "manipulative", "used to getting [their] own way"*. Despite these negative descriptors, Alice suggests some positive qualities:

Even the naughty empress. She's a shocker but she has some redeeming qualities ... a certain charm about her. She's very clever and you have to admire that in her. ... Whatever she goes into, she'll do well at [because] she's used to getting her own way.

The use of these descriptors to modify negatives signals a concern to construct students in positive terms. The positive construction of students appears to be a feature of Alice's ESL teacher identity:

Some of them, even though they are difficult and present on-going problems, there is something about them that makes you like them.

There is little discussion of these students as learners, little reference to language teaching and learning. Discussion is dominated by references to personal characteristics of individual students, rather than the analysis of language learning which was a dominant feature of the student other constructed by both Tom and Stefan. In discussion of individuals Alice seems constrained to construct all of her students as likeable others. It is only when students are constructed as a group, as in the case of the Year Eleven international students, that Alice shifts to teacher as authority figure.

This sense that disliking any student is contrary to Alice's ESL teacher identity is signaled in the following passage in which a clear statement of negative reaction to certain students is followed by a series of unfinished sentences and requests for understanding and support:

I don't like some of them. Some of them aren't – it sounds terrible, doesn't it – but there are some students who really not – do you agree? Some of them are really – some you would rather not have in your class.

What is unlikeable about these students is not made explicit. The dislike is also distanced from Alice's initial closeness through use of first person pronoun to the slightly more removed second person.

Many of Alice's students are cause for concern. There is continued use of 'worry' in her reaction to student circumstances. Again there is a shift in distance from initial use of first person in the opening statement to the second person in expansion of the topic. This positioning perhaps helps to explain Alice's lack of efficacy in resolution of her concern for these students:

I'm always worried about students. I suppose you worry about young people who are on their own or in situations where there isn't a parent or a guardian in the household. You worry about students, our local students, our local ESL students. I've got students who are working in family restaurants to all hours of the night and they're exhausted. On Monday they need to be in bed. ... you worry about their ability to cope with school.

This is ESL teacher as concerned and caring parent rather than ESL teacher as the pedagogue or skilled professional constructed by Tom and Stefan. Alice suggests

that her ability to like 'all' of her students and the concern she feels for them is the result of the detailed knowledge which she has about each of them:

You find out more about their circumstance because the small group and the very nature of what we do allows you to get to know their particular circumstances better.

7.2.4 Vicky

Vicky describes the small group of ESL students with whom she works as being *"very different to the regular type of mainstream student"*:

These kids have a different angle on life. They've seen different things. They've experienced different things. Their priorities are different. ... They're more ambitious. And in many ways they're more positive about learning.

There is some contrast between Vicky's comments above in reference to ESL students in general and her comments as she discusses individual students. She is concerned about two Serbian girls who have done little work in the second half of the year. Vicky is concerned that poor exam results will prevent them continuing on to tertiary study. She contrasts the behaviour of these girls with that of another girl in the class, also from Serbia:

She's going to be one of my top A students in ESL. She's just brilliant. She speaks so many languages ... she's doing German, French plus English plus her native tongue.

A number of students in the class are from the former Yugoslavia and Vicky is aware of the potential for political conflict in class. She deals with this by refusing to discuss the issue:

In the class room I normally talk about where they're from, but it's just been an unusual sort of turn of events lately and I don't seem to want to talk about their background just in case there's a little bit of conflict.

Vicky's construction of the ESL student other as different leads to the construction of a different student-teacher relationship:

I just find I have a very different relationship with these ESL kids too. I find myself telling them stories that I wouldn't imagine myself telling students about myself or something personal, but it just makes it much more realistic for them and they can relate to it. Maybe because of my cultural background as well.

The ESL students are encouraged to see Vicky as she sees herself, that is as someone to whom they can 'relate' with similar background and experiences as

their own. She positions herself as a member of the ESL class, aligning herself with the students. Tension between desire for inclusion in the student group and awareness of her teacher identity as distinct from this is signaled by pronoun shifts. Vicky moves between use of the inclusive pronoun 'we', as she positions herself as one with the students, and use of the first person pronoun 'I', as awareness of teacher identity is foregrounded:

Often I'm concerned about doing too much talking and having conversations with them and not enough of the actual work. In an ESL class you're not just learning about this novel or that English or that grammar or this structure, you're also – we might have a bit of a whinge about something that happened at school or something that happened at home or something on the news. Things like that. So we often just talk about all sorts of things and I'm often looking at the time and thinking maybe we should be on the topic. ... We're a small class so we have the opportunity to be heard.

The ESL teacher identity which Vicky constructs for herself is ESL teacher as friend. This in turn means that the ESL students are constructed as friends, rather than students, a construction which at least one student seems happy to accept:

One ESL student that I absolutely adored and I'm [still] in contact with her. I ring her and we keep saying we're going to go out as friends, not just teacher-student.

That ESL teacher as friend is problematic is made clear in Vicky's report of an incident involving one of the Serbian girls in her class. A classroom dispute over what Vicky saw to be inappropriate clothing – a T-shirt with political slogans – saw Vicky change her ESL teacher positioning from friend to authority figure. Vicky made her positioning explicit as she called upon school rules to reinforce her stance. In this extract, the inclusive pronoun refers to Vicky as one with other teachers, rather than Vicky as one with her ESL students:

She wouldn't do it [remove the T-shirt] so I had to send her away. That fitted in with the kind of conduct [followed by teachers] because if the kids aren't in school uniform we have the right to send them to get changed and come back.

Since this conflict *"it hasn't been quite right between the two of us"*, Vicky has been unable to return to her preferred version of ESL teacher identity. She remains positioned as other than friend. She is also denied shared cultural identity with the students. Vicky's ESL teacher identity is one constructed on shared background and experiences with her students. This cultural identity as migrant is part of Vicky's ESL teacher identity which allows her empathy with her students -

"I know what it's like not to speak the language or understand how things work".

The student construction which Vicky reports constructs her as Australian and other to the migrant group:

She's often commented about Australians being too lenient and being soft and having it in for the Serbians and I guess she sees me as part of that too.

Vicky also positions herself as teacher as authority figure rather than as friend in her relationship with this student, aligning herself with other staff members:

I spoke to a couple of other teachers and they also had sort of conflicting relationships with her. ... This girl made a comment to me about teachers. ... She felt that one of the teachers wasn't dressing appropriately. ... She [also] mentioned something about teachers having too much power. ... Some teachers being more lenient on students, having a better understanding and some teachers not being understanding of ESL students. So she's made comments like that. Of course I've defended my colleagues and myself.

The importance placed on appropriate dress is also an aspect of identity construction. Identity is signaled to others through dress and behaviour. The student's t-shirt is not part of Vicky's construction of student other. She is uneasy about discussion of politics, avoiding issues in class that may result in disagreements and confrontation between students. Appropriate student dress for Vicky is school uniform. The student also has an understanding of appropriate dress for teachers and is critical of teachers who do not conform to her expectations. Power is also an issue in this incident. If Vicky is ESL teacher as friend, her power is limited. By positioning herself as teacher as authority figure, she is able to call on the discipline structures of the school – *"we have the right"*. That the student is aware of the inequality of power in the student-teacher relation is also apparent – *teachers [have] too much power"*.

In a similar incident involving other students, Vicky's reaction was to accept their criticism as valid and confront the teacher on their behalf. With this student, criticism of teachers is rejected as an attack on Vicky as one of the teacher group.

Descriptors used for this student are negative. She is *"very outspoken"*, has *"a chip on her shoulder"*, *"very strong willed"*. Other negative descriptors are attributed to students rather than given as Vicky's own opinion:

I know that other students in the class perceive her as a little too arrogant and very single-minded about things.

The conflict between ESL teacher as authority figure and ESL teacher as friend has resulted in a loss of agency for Vicky. She is undecided, unable to choose between ways of being which may resolve the issue:

I don't know what line to take with them. Whether I take a firm or a sympathetic stance on these issues I don't know. I've tried everything and it doesn't seem to be working. ... I think maybe it's me not effectively communicating with them.

Vicky's preferred ESL teacher identity is one which positions her as separate from, and different to, other teachers, aligned with the ESL students in the school, students with whom she identifies very closely:

I just feel that if I'm an ESL person, then I'm an ESL person and these are the services that I provide throughout the school. I guess it's part of my job description even though it's not there in black and white. ... I was never an ESL student but I do know what it's like. I can feel what it's like with [a] different cultural background, struggling with so many other cultural things in life and life itself and adolescent woes and then having to deal with this other language thing as well. So I'm there and I can help.

The construction of ESL teacher as friend is central to Vicky's ESL teacher identity. It is also a construction which can be problematic when placed in conflict with other aspects of her teacher identity.

7.2.5 Sally

There are two main groups of ESL students at Sally's school, students from the Horn of Africa and those from the former Yugoslavia. Although both groups of students are in Australia as a result of conflict, Sally believes that the students from the former Yugoslavia are coping more successfully with the refugee experience and associated life changes. She suggests that this may be partly due to differences in previous education but also believes that the visible difference of the African students and the racist reaction of many in the community contributes to the difficulties which these students are experiencing:

It's also because they're black – you can't say to a kid it doesn't matter what colour you are when that's not what they experience.

Both groups of students bring awareness and experience of political violence with them which can lead to violence in the classroom:

There are times when they have conflict amongst themselves, political stuff. We had two African kids throw chairs over each other and punch on in class last week. ... There was an issue earlier this year between one of the Year Eleven Bosnian girls who is Muslim and a Year twelve girl who's a Serb. ... It doesn't take much. ... Underneath they have really strong feelings. But on the whole they make an effort.

Vicky deals with this type of classroom conflict by calling upon the authority of school rules and refusing to discuss anything which might arouse anger. Sally tries to deal with these issues through class discussion:

While the bombing was happening [the UN bombing of Serbia] I'd let the kids talk. I wouldn't let them argue. I'd just let them talk. And they did it without any sort of arguing or fighting. That was a difficult time because you just had to be careful.

Sally focuses discussion of individual students on three boys, all members of her Year Eleven ESL class. Two boys are in Australia without other family members and all have limited literacy skills. The one boy with family support is, in Sally's opinion, making the least effort:

He thinks he can do it all on charm. He does a lot of evasive stuff in class. ... I know he does it because he has difficulty. I think he probably gets a lot of his work off somebody else. ... If he was motivated and got his act together, he could pass [but] his father's got contacts. He'll end up with some apprenticeship. He'll be all right.

Sally compares the progress of this student to that of the other two boys, one of whom she expects to do well:

He's just gorgeous. He lives independently. He's another one with poor literacy skills but does he work hard! There's a kid who has got the motivation, who will do really well if he can keep his act together, because he really tries.

The other student has the least developed literacy skills of all three but is making a determined effort to complete work requirements at an acceptable standard:

He's got worse literacy skills but, when I got their results yesterday, he's really tried this year. He got a D and a couple of Cs and a C+. He couldn't have done better and he was really pleased with himself.

Sally is angered by the attitude of other staff members towards this student's achievements, an attitude, which she believes, is typical of that towards many African students:

He's about seven-foot tall; he's just this great big kid, bit of an airhead and it's like he's a bit of a joke and that's how staff deal with him.

There is a clear delineation of teacher responsibility and student responsibility in discussion of Sally's ESL students. In Sally's view all teachers must recognize their responsibilities as language teachers and understand that behaviour problems are linked to learning difficulties. To Sally this is self-evident:

The simple fact is that [all] teachers need to recognize that they're language teachers; that ESL and English teachers are not the [only] language teachers. They are too. ... I link the literacy [problems] with the behaviour problems because the African kids are more of a problem than the other group, than the Bosnian kids. The kids who are having difficulties of one sort or another are naughty.

In discussion of her role as ESL teacher in the classroom, Sally signals her position as controller of student interaction through a series of 'I' statements:

The kids would just talk and I'd let them talk. I wouldn't let them argue. I'd just let them talk. They would sit and talk about it [the conflict in Bosnia] and if they needed to for a lesson, I would let them.

Teacher role, both in this controlled student discussion and in political neutrality is clarified as Sally contrasts her approach with that of other teachers – *"Some teachers let them argue or some teachers are stupid enough to give their own political opinion"*.

Teacher as authority figure is also present in Sally's discussion of her interaction with individual students. One student in Sally's Year Eleven ESL class *"might not get there"*:

He left Bosnia when he was ten. Then he spent three years in Germany. He's not literate in Bosnian. Then he had to try and learn German. So he's come here and he didn't go to a language centre. It really shows. [Despite this] the potential is there but his main interest is soccer and he thinks he can get there on charm.

Sally is *"trying [to make this student work] but not succeeding very well"*. She *"gave him Unit One"*. That is, she gave him a passing grade for the subject in semester one. This was a 'gift', rather than a result earned by the quality of his work. That this gift will not be repeated in semester two has been made very clear:

I've told him I'm not going to give him unit two unless he picks up his work rate in class. I said to him I'm going to give you a score out of ten every lesson.

There is some ambivalence in Sally's positioning of herself as ESL teacher authority figure – *"he charms his way around things like that [her plan to grade him each lesson]*. This ambivalence is reinforced in contradiction in the time clauses used to describe Sally's interaction with this student:

I often tick him off in class. I mean most of the time I let him get away with copying work because ultimately they have to produce [an independent] piece of writing.

Sally 'often' reprimands this student but 'most of the time' she does not. Sally seems aware of this mismatch between what she suggests should be done and what is done in her interaction with this student:

Now I've rung his father once. I haven't met the father but I've said to [the student] I want to meet him. I know I can't go too hard on [the student] because I know the father will take away his soccer if I do. So I'm probably not doing the best thing by [the student]. I probably should bite the bullet and he should have to wear the consequences but I haven't.

Sally 'should' give the father an accurate report of student effort and progress but she is unable to do this – *"I know I can't"*. Construction of this ESL student other is one which recognizes past history, present coping strategies and extra-curricular interests. The student is more than his lack of scholastic achievement and Sally's recognition of this results in teacher behaviour which might not be 'the best thing' for the student educationally.

A similar ambivalence is signaled when Sally discusses student use of first language in the ESL classroom:

They start speaking not in English which I let kids do. Even though I shouldn't. I just do. I can't insist that they don't speak their own language. Sometimes they even speak to me in their own language.

Sally 'shouldn't' allow students to use their first language. If students 'shouldn't' use their first language, they 'should' use English. A 'good' ESL teacher would do what 'should' be done. Sally is unable to do this – *"I can't insist they don't speak their own language"*. It is not possible for her to do that which is signaled as appropriate in terms of 'good' ESL teacher behaviour as she understands it to be. The identity constructed for the students is one which recognizes the

importance of first language. It also suggests a complex balancing task for the ESL teacher identity which Sally constructs for herself. It may be advantageous in terms of language learning for the use of English to be compulsory in the ESL classroom but to insist on this would be to deny the students an important part of their identity. Acceptance and valuing of individual student difference, which seems a strong element of Sally's ESL teacher identity, can result in behaviours which are at odds with other aspects of teacher identity, that of teacher as pedagogue.

Student progress is linked to both teacher and student behaviour, with ultimate responsibility resting with the student:

There's a lot of kids ... that we've tried to do a hell of a lot for but they haven't [progressed] because they haven't put in. There's been the odd kid where you think I'll give up with you. That doesn't happen often but it does happen. That's a bit disappointing.

One of Sally's students, who is 'putting in', is described in a sequence of positive descriptors. Despite his *"poor literacy skills"*, he is a student *"I just adore"*, *"just gorgeous"*, *"he's just that sort of kid, he's just nice"*, *"he really tries"*, *"wonderful interpersonal skills and he's just a wonderful kid"*.

Although ultimate responsibility for progress rests with individual students, the impact of teacher expectations on student achievement is signaled in criticism of another member of staff:

I heard a staff member say to him yesterday 'I'm really surprised about these results'. I thought you arsehole! Why don't you just say well done, rather than I'd never have expected you could do this. People behave according to expectations. If you expect somebody to go bad or not good enough, then they will. I have expectations that they'll get there.

7.2.6 Mandy

Mandy talks at length about each of her students, showing extensive background knowledge and detailed understanding of their progress and learning needs. Although she is critical of some student characteristics, her background knowledge of individual circumstances enables her to understand and excuse negative behaviours:

[A student from Tuvalu] is lazy ... his concentration span is non-existent. He struggles to stay awake [but] the family is never together. ... He's home by himself. So he's cooking, cleaning, putting himself to bed and all that sort of stuff.

The boy's difficulties with written work are understood in the cultural context of his prior learning:

He struggles to get things done and he just likes listening, listening, listening. It's probably a cultural thing. I'd say he probably comes from a very oral background so he'll sit in class and listen while you're reading a story or talking about something but then, when it comes to doing things on paper, he struggles.

Mandy is accepting of behaviours which may be regarded negatively by many teachers. Acting out, name-calling, questioning lesson content, is all seen as important progress in terms of language development and social confidence. Her expectations are that, once sufficient control of English has been acquired, ESL student behaviour will be like that of other non-ESL students - *"just Year Nine stuff"*.

Much of the information Mandy has about her students has been gathered informally:

[One of the brothers from Somalia] talked to me about his family the other day on a bus trip. ... He came and sat with me ... I found out that the boys had moved apart for nearly seven years ... that was a real eye opener. It must be very difficult for a kid who hasn't had anything to do with his family for so long.

In discussion of her Year Twelve class, again Mandy is accepting of student behaviour which is other than that of the stereotypical hard-working, ambitious ESL student. The class 'party girl' is *"out night clubbing on weekends"*. This behaviour is seen in the context of the student's time in Australia and her friendship group - *"she's like an Australian teenager [who could do better] if she gave away some of the partying for study"*.

As a group, *"they're all fantastic. I really enjoy being with them"*. Mandy also appreciates the maturity and varied life experiences these students bring to class:

They are just miles apart from the average Australian VCE student, miles beyond them. It makes you wonder about yourself sometimes. You question your own education and background and what you know when you sit down with them and [listen to] their experiences and the different

knowledge that they have from the different education systems they've been through.

There are several clear patterns of language use in Mandy's discussion of her ESL students. One is the consistent use of positive descriptors in reference to these students as groups – *"they're all fantastic"*. The Year Seven students are *"all gorgeous. They're so innocent and they enjoy every minute and just want more and more"*. The Year Nine students are *"great kids"*. The Year Twelve class is *"lovely"*. This all-encompassing approval of students includes recognition of group diversity. The Year Seven class is *"a really diverse group"*, the Year Nine class *"a real mixed bag"*, the Year Twelve class *"a real mixture"*.

Descriptors become a mix of positive and negative as Mandy focuses on individual students. When negative descriptors are used, these are modified by an explanatory clause giving a context of understanding within which to place negative student behaviour or lack of progress. The aggressive behaviour of a Year Seven student is explained in terms of a mismatch between physical size and emotional maturity:

He's a really big boy so that's been a bit hard for him to settle in I think. I mean he's only twelve years old but he's got the body size of a man. So I think he uses his size as a sort of defence mechanism but deep down he's still a little kid.

The lack of progress of another student is explained in terms of family background:

He's very oral but his reading and writing skills aren't that strong. I'm just trying to work out if he was born here and then gone back and come back again, one of those back and forth type kids. He's got an older sister and she's exactly the same so I think it's the family background. I think they're from a working class background so mum and dad's literacy skills wouldn't have been that strong in Turkish either.

Here the criticism is first modified – *"his reading and writing skills aren't that strong"* – and then explained as a consequence of reverse migration and family background.

A Year Nine student's previous lack of progress is seen as a developmental stage:

There's a Lebanese boy who's so much more mature than the other boys. He went through that lazy, didn't really care stage. Now he's actually trying and really come a long way in two years.

Another student's "*very difficult ... very lazy*" behaviour is framed in a context of lack of parental supervision:

Barely does any homework. If things don't get done in class they're not done. He wants to go to sleep because he gets left a lot by himself. So he sits up playing his Nintendo, watching movies and things. He comes to school and he can't stay awake. And his concentration span is non-existent. ... The family is never together. When mum goes to work, he's home by himself.

Mandy's search for understanding is signaled through cognitive 'I' statements in exploration of student background. There are repeated uses of '*I think*' in explanation of student behaviour. Mandy also makes use of other cognitive 'I' statements such as '*I mean*', '*I'm just trying to work out*', '*I realized*', '*I'd say it's probably*' and '*I can imagine*' to contextualise student behaviour.

Attention is also drawn to behavioural differences resulting from the teacher-student relationship. This is illustrated in discussion of a Year Seven student. Mandy makes use of several negative descriptors in her initial comments on this student but her criticism shifts to focus on the competence of the class teacher:

He was totally flunking out in English because he's a real attention seeker and he was struggling with core work. So he'd just be a nuisance to the teacher and the teacher couldn't deal with him. So he came across the hall and he's here with me and he's fine. He's like an angel. ... The teacher he had though wasn't very – not fantastic classroom management. He's got year Sevens and he's only got twenty of them and he's struggling to make them do what they should be doing.

The language learning process is depicted as moving from silent withdrawal to noisy, confident interaction with the teacher and other students. Mandy repeatedly uses the phrase 'come out of his/her shell' to describe this process:

- She's a real character. She's so lively. She's just come out of her shell, from being the shy girl to being over the top, joking with you.
- And so she was really really quiet. ... Now she's come out of her shell and she's just a different person.
- But he's again one of those kids who's come out of his shell. When he first arrived he was so shy but now he's so cheeky.

The 'shell' is a protective covering, an indication of the vulnerability Mandy sees in her ESL students. Mandy also uses the term to depict initial language learning as an artillery attack:

I've got a new Indonesian boy. ... He's very quiet. I think he's starting to get out of the shell-shocked phase.

Moving from 'shell-shock' to 'out of the shell' is highly regarded, with 'cheeky', 'over the top' behaviour seen as a positive stage in language development. Students who resist this and are less vocal in their behaviour "dare not say boo". Their reticence is less warmly received but even this is seen to be the result of fear – 'dare not' – rather than reluctance to learn:

- He is really really quiet. He dare not say boo. ... He doesn't want to talk much to you.
- I've got three Tamil girls who are really quiet. They dare not say boo.

Mandy's detailed background knowledge of each of her students is clearly an important aspect of ESL teacher identity. She actively seeks out this information and is keen to position her construction of student other within an understanding of both individual student and cultural background. Although ESL students are seen as different to other students, behaviours which are similar to the behaviours of local students are regarded positively. Part of Mandy's ESL teacher role is to encourage these behavioural changes by accepting and supporting students. Mandy's ESL teacher identity is also defined in the contrast between her success with 'difficult' ESL students and the failure of teachers who are other than ESL. Mandy 'knows' her students. She gives them individual attention and understands progress and behaviour in the context of this detailed knowledge of each student. Mandy's construction of student other positions her as the knowing other, but a knowing other in ways different to the knowing other of Tom and Stefan. For them, ESL teacher as knowing other is related to knowledge of English and teaching skills. For Mandy, ESL teacher as knowing other is knowing each of her students.

7.2.7 May

May's Year Eleven ESL class of twenty-two students has now been divided in two and May has a group of eleven. The majority of students in this class are 'good' students. May clarifies what she means by this term:

I mean their working attitude is positive. They are trying so hard and I call them good students. But they might not be the top students.

An international student, a girl from Japan, is one of May's 'good' students. At the beginning of the year May was unable to understand her spoken English. Her written work was equally difficult to comprehend:

I couldn't understand a word she said to me. ... I had to ask her to use the pen and paper and even like graphics to understand. And the first writing for her was a nightmare.

After six months determined effort, *"she's made so much progress, I'm really proud of her"*.

May contrasts the efforts of this student with another international student from Japan. He is one of two boys in the class who are making little progress. This student is frequently absent – *"In a week there are five classes. He will be there one or two"*. He has completed very little work and seems to have no interest in learning:

For the lessons that he came to he will be sleeping. If not sleeping he will just look blankly to the wall. ... He doesn't know what is going on in the classroom. He's never there with a full mind and full spirit.

May believes that this boy is in Australia as a student because of previous educational problems - *"he didn't do too well in Japan and the parents are thinking away from his friends, he might prosper but that's not the case"*. May has been placed in a difficult position:

This Japanese boy is a full fee paying student and the school [says] that we have to treat these full fee paying students well because they help the finance of the school. ... [but] I repeatedly say if he doesn't hand in his work, if he doesn't turn up to classes, if he is sleeping, sorry, I can't pass him.

This definite behaviour contrasts strongly with May's earlier reluctance to take a stand with regard to her own workload and is an indication of the importance she places on this aspect of ESL teacher identity.

The other student who is making little progress is a boy from Africa. He has poorly developed English language skills, limited previous education and

"*something of an emotional problem*". His response to any criticism of his work is to become physically violent:

He will all of a sudden blow up and anything in sight he will throw it, chairs, anything, he will throw it. So I am very careful talking to him.

With the exception of these two students, the group are all 'good students', hard-working and keen to do well. A young man from Turkey, with refugee experience and time in prison as an illegal immigrant, "*instead of one piece of work, he will always submit three*". A girl from Russia, with a background of family violence, police intervention and emergency foster care, writes poetry for May:

She loves poetry. She'll write poems for me. [Sometimes] she'll write the Russian word and she will read it to me and say what the poem is about.

May spends much of her free time with her ESL students. For her, the special relationship between ESL teacher and student is 'a blessing':

We are very close. ... I think it's a blessing to teach ESL because there is a special bonding there and I love that. ... When I am with them I feel that I am needed and I feel that I am treasured. It's a beautiful feeling.

May's construction of ESL student other focuses on her relationship with students, a relationship depicted in language relating to May's own emotional state and needs which students meet or, in one case, fail to meet. The ESL teacher-ESL student relationship May describes is very close – "*there is a special bonding there*".

May repeatedly describes her feelings for her students as being ones of love – "*I love them, every one of them*" and believes that her feelings are returned – "*when I am with them I feel that I am needed and I feel that I am treasured. It's a beautiful feeling*".

This close relationship is the product of intimate group discussions:

When we have that sharing where we talk about anything, when it's not confined by classtime, I get to know them. They get to know me and we are very close.

These personal sharing sessions between ESL teacher and students which May describes and the close emotional bonding as a result are similar to those

described by Vicky. They also contrast with the information gathering described by Mandy. May and Vicky share information about themselves with their students. It is clearly important for Mandy that she knows about her students, but there is no mention of her students knowing about Mandy.

May's emotional state is closely connected to student progress. She is worried by lack of progress and proud of achievement – "*I was so worried*", "*I was so pleased*". She encourages students to work hard by promising to be made happy if they do so. Her emotional well-being is directly linked to their efforts:

- I said I would be so happy if you do extra work for me.
- I said I would be very happy if you can make 450 words but if you can go beyond, I'll be far more happier.

The primary purpose of student effort is not their progress in learning English. It is to ensure May's happiness. This linking of adult happiness to child behaviour is more reminiscent of a mother/child relationship than that of teacher and student.

The power the students have over May is depicted as a physical force as they 'drag' her away from other teachers to spend her free time with them:

They try to take me out. If I have my free period they drag me out of the staffroom and get me out to the room where we have the ESL classes. ... They will drag me into the room.

May seems aware of the immaturity expressed by this type of student dependency – "*you think they are big in Year Eleven but they are not. I ask them are you Year Eleven or are you aged eleven*".

One of her students has failed to respond to the emotional bribery of making May happy – "*he's a big disappointment*". May has reacted to his lack of effort by withdrawing her emotional energy from him:

I think I've tried to channel my energy towards the others. I tend to think that if I stress over him it's pointless. Because if I keep running after him, he won't listen so I channel my time and my energy into other students.

May's ESL student other is constructed as dependent child. This in turn constructs May's ESL teacher identity as that of loving parent. ESL teacher is positioned as part of the student group, rather than part of the teacher group. May's students physically remove her from teacher space – the staffroom – to

place her in their shared space – *"the room where we have the ESL classes"*. Like Vicky, May constructs herself as part of the student group, but as loving parent, rather than friend.

7.2.8 Connie

Connie's discussion of her ESL students is situated within the context of criticism of the ESL program in the school. ESL is *"not a high priority ... not where they're going to put that time in"*. She has two ESL classes, one at Year Eight and one at Year Eleven, and is unhappy with the timetabling arrangements for Year Eight. Connie has raised these concerns with the ESL coordinator but has been told that alternative arrangements giving the class more ESL time would not be allowed because *"it will eat into time from somewhere else"*.

The extent of the problem became apparent to Connie in her role as Student Welfare Coordinator when a Year Seven student from Somalia was referred to her as *"a welfare child [who was] refusing to do work in class"*. Connie's reaction – *"Of course he's refusing. He can't do it. He's just come from a language centre"*. The visible difference of the Somali student meant that his 'problem' was identified. Another recent arrival, a boy from Bosnia who was enrolled at Year Nine, has *"just sort of got lost in the system"*.

There are fewer problems for ESL at Years Eleven and Twelve. The existence of a separate VCE subject for ESL students – VCE English/ESL – means that, at senior level, ESL is *"given a decent time allotment because it's seen as a real subject"*. There are two students in the class about whom Connie is concerned and she discusses them at length. She believes both were inappropriately advised when they enrolled in the school at VCE level. She has spoken to the Year Eleven coordinator and has been instructed to give both students passing grades if they complete the work requirements for her subject:

I said I can't pass what they've handed in. She said you can't fail them if they've handed in all the work. I said they're not capable of doing Year Twelve, not capable of passing Year Eleven. And she said they've passed in every other subject [and] don't worry - they'll get picked up in Year Twelve.

One of these students is a young man from Vietnam, a recent arrival in Australia who has limited English language skills:

He doesn't really understand much of what's going on in class or understand any of the tasks he has to do. ... I've just finished *Brilliant Lies* [a play about sexual harassment in the workplace]. He had no idea what it was all about. He didn't even understand the word penis.

Connie has advised him to transfer to a Technical and Further Education (TAFE) college and is assisting him to do this. The other student is "*a Cambodian boy who's only been in Australia a year*". Although Connie is able to suggest reasons for his aggressive behaviour, she is less sympathetic to his plight:

He's so arrogant and he's so demanding of everybody's time in class and out of class as well. ... I think that's the way he tries to deal with his lack of skills. ... He's just going to fail dismally next year. I can't see how he's passed this year in other subjects. I just can't. He doesn't even understand what I say in class.

Connie discusses her ESL students using a mix of positive and negative descriptors. With one exception, negative descriptors focus on student progress in learning English. Positive descriptors are used for personality traits and approach to work. Students are "*wonderful*", "*gorgeous*", "*enthusiastic*", "*just ideal students*".

Language learning progress is described in terms of physical strength. Less competent students are 'weak'. 'Very' is added to define the degree of weakness. A recently arrived Cambodian boy is "*very very weak ... that little boy is very weak*". Other students are "*orally strong*" but "*very weak with reading and writing*". More competent students are 'strong'. A Sri Lankan boy is "*a strong student*". They are positioned in the class according to degrees of strength. One of the students is "*one of my strongest*". A group of girls are "*probably my strongest in terms of their English skills*". Another group of students is "*not as strong*". The notion of language learning as a physical process is reinforced by the description of a Cambodian student who "*is just coming along in leaps and bounds*".

Physical references are also used in discussion of the one student who is depicted in solely negative terms. This student – "*a real concern*" – is both "*arrogant*"

and "demanding". The relationship between him and Connie is one of physical friction:

He really rubs me up the wrong way. He rubs everyone up the wrong way in the school ... I try to help him as much as I can ... even though he does rub me up the wrong way.

This reaction is shared by 'everyone in the school'. It is not only Connie who responds negatively to this student.

Connie uses a series of 'I' action statements in discussion of her work. There is a distinction made between the administrative organization of her work – "*I teach two groups of students*", "*I teach two periods a week*" – and classroom interaction. In discussion of classroom interaction the 'I' action statement changes as the 'I teach' statement is either modified or used negatively. In discussion of her Year Seven ESL class, 'teach' is used negatively as an external imposition which restricts Connie's ability to respond to immediate student need:

She [the ESL coordinator] wants me to teach them English or teach them ESL - teach them.

Connie replaces 'teach' with 'help' in response to repeated student requests for assistance with work from other subjects. Connie responds to these requests with a shift in the emphasis of her work and a shift in the language used to describe classroom interaction:

I think I'm doing that [teaching] by helping them with their SOSE and helping them with mainstream English.

The shift in emphasis from 'teach' to 'help' is not one accepted by the ESL coordinator – "*She's very unhappy with me that I do this help*". Connie refuses to be influenced by the reaction of the ESL coordinator and justifies her action in a series of qualified 'I' statements:

I try to, I mean I do teach them, but I do try to do different things with them ... then I think of my coordinator [and] I think kids are more important. Forget her.

Connie uses modified 'I teach' statements in discussion of interaction with her Year Eleven ESL class as a group. Helping statements continue to be used in interaction with individual students:

I try to help him as much as I can. ... I help him with his organizational skills.

'Teaching' is in relation to external pressures and constraints. 'Helping' is central to Connie's ESL teacher identity. Criticisms of the school's ESL program are criticisms of its failure to help students. The requirements of other areas of the school are dismissed. The ESL teacher identity which Connie constructs for herself in this discussion of ESL student other is ESL teacher solely focused on ESL student need, on 'helping' rather than 'teaching'.

7.2.9 Gary

There is limited discussion of individual students in this conversation with Gary, much of which focuses on organisation of the teaching program at the Safe Haven, the Federal Government's handling of the program and the uncertain future of the refugees. The Government is criticized for lacking understanding and sympathy for the plight of the Safe Haven residents. There is also friction between the Army which is responsible for the administration of the Safe Haven and the residents. The ESL teachers are not part of this conflict – *"as teachers we're seen more as friends ...we're not the baddies"*.

At first, Gary's work was largely organizational:

So on the first day I started teaching ... well not necessarily teaching but we got all the secondary students together and then divided them into their classes. And we did an initial assessment [to see] if some of them did have English and quite a few of them seemed to.

The validity of the 'initial assessment' is queried. Students 'seemed to' have some English skills. The use of 'seemed to' suggests that these skills were more apparent than real. There is also clear division between teachers – 'we' – and student other – 'them'.

Gary's uncertainty about his ESL teacher role in the context of the Safe Haven is clear as he describes the first classes:

I suppose we didn't know what to expect as teachers and they as students didn't know what to expect. Luckily we had the assistance of some of the Kosovars who worked as teacher aides who were able to sort of quell the noise. I don't think they took learning English as a serious thing initially. They were all just coming together in a classroom with all their friends.

Lessons are social events and teaching has become crowd control but even this work is done by others who "*sort of quell the noise*".

There is no common understanding of purpose between teacher and students:

I'm not sure how the secondary students themselves saw the role of learning English. I think many of them came to class for the social outing. So it was difficult working with the large classes at that time – very difficult. You couldn't get pair work or group work going. It was pointless. You really had to change your whole approach to teaching and it became a very much teacher focused way of teaching, which isn't necessarily my approach to teaching, but I found it worked more successfully than group work [which] is pointless in a monolingual situation. So that was a challenge.

Gary is forced to change his approach to ESL teaching, to become "*very much teacher focused*". This is an approach which does not match his understanding of ESL teacher identity – "*[this] isn't necessarily my approach to teaching*". Despite Gary's misgivings, the approach "*worked more successfully*" than his preferred teaching style. This mismatch between preferred teaching style and the preferred learning style of the students causes Gary to redefine his work – "*I suppose in a sense it was really more like teaching EFL [English as a Foreign Language] than ESL*". Redefinition of role allows Gary to teach in ways not allowed in his previous construction of ESL teacher identity:

The senior students actually said they wanted grammar. I love grammar [so] I teach them grammar. We've isolated elements of speech. We've looked at simple past tense, present perfect tense, other tenses, prepositions, pronouns and things like that - which is what they want but of course I relate it back to them. I don't just give them the work sheets and say here do it and we'll correct it when you've finished. We go through the worksheet together - there's a sentence where you have to change the verb or something and we talk about the sentence. We look at the vocab. Things like that. So I haven't deserted the communicative approach.

Despite Gary's enthusiasm for grammar and his previous redefinition of role, he continues to justify his teaching behaviour. A grammar-based approach is "*what they [the students] want*". This point is made twice. Gary's eagerness to defend his new teaching style emphasizes the degree to which he finds it to be incompatible with his understanding of ESL teacher identity. In the clause "*but of course I relate it back to them*", the use of 'of course' implies shared understanding of appropriate ESL teacher behaviour. "*I don't just give them the*

worksheets" followed by a detailed description of the approach taken acts as a pre-emptive defence against anticipated criticism. The suggestion that Gary is under attack for his changed teaching strategies comes again in *"I haven't deserted the communicative approach"*. The implicit understanding is that the communicative approach is good, an approach part of desired ESL teacher identity. The grammar-based approach is unacceptable. Gary's teaching has to be redefined as EFL in order for this to be appropriate teacher behaviour.

Gary is positive in description of his junior secondary students – *"a beautiful class to teach, a happy, vibrant sort of class"*. This is not so with the middle and senior students. These students have chosen not to accept the role of ESL student as it has been constructed for them. Gary is able to excuse this with those who are over nineteen – *"they've been out of the system too long"* – but he has expectations of appropriate student behaviour from the others:

One of the problems has been, well it's not a problem I suppose, but there is a computer room where all the residents use the Internet and there's a Website for Kosovar press so they can get information on what's happening overseas. They have hotmail addresses so they can link in with other residents at [the other Safe Havens] so they chit chat away. And it's disappointing. You'll come out of a class and stick your nose in the door [of the computer room] and you see students who could have been in English class and they've chosen not to.

The older students' preference for Internet contact with their homeland and other refugees is initially depicted as a problem, a description which Gary hastily rejects – *"one of the problems has been, well it's not a problem I suppose"*. Despite this explicit statement that the behaviour is not a problem, student use of the Internet is described as 'chit chat', a description which reduces it to the level of idle gossip. Gary's offering of English classes is rejected. He is physically isolated from the students, reduced to *"sticking his nose in the door"*.

Mismatch between teacher expectation of student behaviour and actual student behaviour continues:

Some other students ... they would seem dedicated and they would come consistently and then you wouldn't see them for a few days. But then they would come back. Then there would be a break again. So it just depended on what was happening. At times when there were excursions to [other Safe Havens] to visit other residents or

excursions to [the nearby country town] or soccer matches they would opt to do that rather than come to class.

Despite the disappointment caused by this mismatch of role construction, Gary feels an emotional connection to the Kosovar community. This type of emotional connection is a new aspect of ESL teacher identity for him:

But with these students returning to uncertainty [in Kosovar], you feel very much for them. And there were a few tears trickling down my cheeks.

Gary expresses a feeling of powerlessness, a sense that students are caught up in issues which remove them from his ability to help. The following passage is the only time Gary discusses the student other as an individual. At all other times student other is student as class or group:

This boy was going to English classes and a terrific student here and he was one that would come every day and he had good friends [here]. Then his family decided to move down to [the other Safe Haven]. He was devastated. He's one that experienced a lot of trauma. He saw a massacre [where] the men in his village were put up against a wall and shot. The Foundation [for Victims of Torture and Trauma] was seeing him and we just said the other day that he was beginning to sleep at night. But now there's total upheaval all over again. I just felt so sorry for him because [the other Safe Haven] is much smaller. There's only one secondary class I heard and attendance at that is minimal. So he's going to go through a renewed sense of trauma and that's very unfortunate.

This student is fulfilling Gary's construction of desired ESL student other – *"going to English classes ... a terrific student ... one that would come every day"*. Despite the boy's traumatic experiences in Kosovo, Gary has been able to offer assistance which has had a positive impact – *"the Foundation was seeing him and we [Gary identifies himself as part of this work] just said the other day that he was beginning to sleep at night"*. The student's willingness to accept this ESL student role construction has enabled Gary to act out his preferred ESL teacher role. A family decision re-locates the student and Gary's role as effective ESL teacher is over – *"I just felt so sorry for him"*.

The ESL teacher identity which Gary constructs in discussion of the student other is, in part, ESL teacher as administrator and organizer, but an administrator and organizer whose efforts are in the interests of the student group – *"friends ... not the baddies"*. ESL teacher is also pedagogue, the knowing other with specialist

subject skills which enable him to instruct the student other. The appropriate teaching approach for ESL teacher as pedagogue is discussed at some length and it is clear that some approaches fit more easily with ESL teaching as it should be done than others. The ability to enact this aspect of Gary's ESL teacher identity is dependent on a student other willing and able to learn, a student other not readily available in the context within which Gary is working.

7.3 Discussion

The ESL teacher identity constructed in discussion of the ESL student other varies according to the individual teacher involved and the contexts within which they work. These contexts of place include the school, the ESL program, relationships with other staff and, most importantly, the ESL students themselves as these students are understood to be by the teachers. Despite these differences of person and place, there are some general patterns arising from this data. The ESL teachers all construct themselves as 'helpers' with responsibility for both immediate student progress and future success and happiness. A close teacher-student relationship is seen as fundamental to this progress, with some teachers, such as Vicky and May, placing great emphasis on close emotional bonding with their students. There is awareness of external standards of teaching behaviour. These may be formal standards, such as those evoked by Alice in her concern to justify her marking of ESL student work. They may be shared ways of being as an ESL teacher based on implicit understandings of appropriate teaching strategies. Stefan and Gary both signal these shared ways of being in reference to their work in the ESL classroom.

There is also concern to regard all ESL students positively, to construct all students as 'ideal' – hardworking, enthusiastic, open to overtures of friendship and cognisant of the efforts being made on their behalf. Students who reject this identity construction in turn risk rejection and negative interpretation of their behaviour, as teachers choose to focus their attention on students who are more responsive to the role of ideal student which has been constructed for them. Teachers who are less open in this rejection of the non-ideal ESL student struggle

to maintain their preferred ESL teacher identity and to reconstruct student behaviour in ways which make this possible.

Another aspect of ESL teacher identity is the perception of self as able to effect positive change for students. This can be denied by student refusal to be the ideal ESL student as has happened with Tom and Alice. It can also be denied by the context within which the ESL teacher is working as Gary has found in his work in the Safe Haven.

The ESL teacher identities constructed by this process of reflection from ESL student other as constructed by these teachers, position ESL teachers as administrator, helper, friend, parent, pedagogue, skilled professional and knowing other. That the enactment of these constructions of ESL teacher identity is dependent on context is apparent in the identities which some of these teachers feel have been imposed upon them. Vicky is denied membership of the ESL student group, a denial that refuses acknowledgment of her sense of self as migrant. The identity Tom feels has been constructed for him by his students is that of cranky old man – *"a monster ... stark staring mad and totally unreasonable"*. This is not an identity which sits well with Tom's sense of self as ESL teacher. It is also one at odds with the ways of being he sees available to him in contact with other groups of ESL students.

This chapter has discussed the part played by ESL student other in the construction of ESL teacher identity. The next chapter focuses on the third conversation with these teachers in which they discussed the future and what they believed it held for them and their work as ESL teachers.

Chapter 8: ESL Teacher Identity and the Future

8.1 Introduction

The final section of this study of ESL teacher identity deals with data collected in the third case study interview, the focus of which was the future for each teacher. Discussion of the future in relation to construction of ESL teacher identity follows the work of Baumeister (1986,1997), McAdams (1997), Hart, Maloney and Damon (1987), Gecas and Mortimer (1987) and Handel (1987).

8.2 Creating Identity Coherence

Baumeister (1987, 1997) emphasizes the importance of a sense of continuity of self as a defining aspect of identity. McAdams (1997) suggests that this unifying sense of self is created through a process of 'storying', in which life events are rewritten to create a coherent life story which gives purpose to the life which has been lived. Hart, Maloney and Damon (1986:122) argue that belief in a "self that is continuous over time" is a basic component of identity. Gecas and Mortimer (1987) link character and role identity as individuals select occupations congruent with their sense of self and then work to maintain this congruence through constant retelling of past, present and future. Handel's work (1987) illustrates the ways in which people reshape experiences to create future 'ideal' identities which are coherent expression of past identities.

Like all of us, the ESL teachers in this study are affected by changes in the contexts in which they live and work. Choices for future action are limited and many of these teachers have little control over what the future holds for them. The importance of a focus on the future for a study of identity is in the ways these teachers attempt to maintain a coherent sense of themselves as ESL teachers. For those who face massive future change, aspects of self accepted or denied by future possible ways of being are

indicative of key aspects of ESL teacher identity. (Further discussion of the search for coherence in identity construction is to be found in Chapter Two.)

Again the starting point is to treat the data as transparent, as each teacher describes the future which confronts him or her, and then to consider themes, motifs and images which run through each interview. These related themes work together to build connections between past, present and future events as participants search for coherence in the on-going construction of their identities as ESL teachers.

8.2.1 Tom

Tom is facing a major life change. Under the current State Government superannuation scheme, he will be disadvantaged if he continues to work in a permanent teaching position after the age of fifty-five. Tom is fifty-four:

It's just an anomaly in the way that particular scheme works for people of my generation and length of service. If you resign a day or two before your fifty-fifth birthday your entitlements are much greater than if you're still there on your fifty-fifth birthday.

Tom is reluctant to give up his work as an ESL teacher – *"if I'm not an ESL teacher, then who am I?"* – but he is also reluctant to *"make a martyr"* of himself.

There are two related motifs which run through the conversation with Tom. The first concerns his personal situation as he is forced to consider early retirement and alternate ways of being which are congruent with his sense of self as enacted in his ESL teacher identity, an identity which, for Tom, is *"most of who I am"*. The second concerns Tom's perception of the situation in his school. I discuss the first under the heading 'Displaced' and the second under the heading 'Battle Lost'. It is not coincidence that both labels suggest images of war – this view of ESL as an embattled area with ESL teacher as warrior has been a consistent theme throughout all discussions with Tom.

Displaced

Major change has been thrust upon Tom – *"my plans sort of went all up in the air"*. Future direction and security have disappeared – it is *"all up in the air"*. The

confusion and uncertainty is intensified in that Tom had not planned for a future life beyond ESL teaching:

I mean I had never thought of early retirement or anything of the sort and in fact I don't, I don't, I can't plan my personal future. So I hadn't given it any particular thought.

Tom is torn between the desire to keep teaching and the need to protect his superannuation and secure his financial future – *"I don't want to stop the kind of work I do but I don't want to make a martyr of myself either"*.

The situation in Tom's school, which will be discussed in 'Battle Lost', is such that Tom's language combines two images, that of being on a sinking ship and the notion of jumping before being pushed – *"I've got to work out exactly when I jump and what I'm going to do"*. The two combine to convey Tom's sense of despair and isolation.

The enactment of identity expressed in 'what I'm going to do' is central to Tom's sense of self. His connectedness with 'Tom as ESL teacher' is such that being an ESL teacher is not 'what' he is. It is 'who' he is:

I guess it's a personal thing too in that it's been who I am I guess. I need to find other ways of doing it or doing something else that I can live with.

Tom's ESL teacher identity is more than a description of his work. It is a statement of Tom as person in that he has used his work as ESL teacher to enact core values and beliefs – *"it's been who I am I guess"*. Forced out of this central aspect of identity, Tom searches for another context in which to be as an ESL teacher. If this is not possible, his search is for another role which will allow the connection between self and work which he has found as an ESL teacher – *"something else I can live with ... something emotionally and ethically worthwhile"*.

Tom considers his options. The first is to continue in his part-time administrative work for the ESL teacher professional association. This option is not presented positively – *"I get sick of that too"*. It has been the practical enactment of Tom's ESL teacher identity, in combination with the administrative work for the professional association,

which has made Tom 'effective' in this role. He is also not prepared to make the shift from classroom to office and the relationships with others possible in this work are not ones congruent with his ESL teacher identity.

Other options which would allow Tom to continue in his ESL teacher identity are considered but each time there is little expectation of success. An application to tutor international students at a tertiary institution "*wouldn't bring in enough income and I don't know whether I'll get in anyway*". Although work as a tutor would offer Tom on-going contact with students, it is not an enactment of ESL teacher identity with which he feels totally comfortable:

The reason I applied for that tutorship was I thought that might be one way of continuing to do that perhaps. But with international students it would be a different ball game in many ways. But there might be some sort of cross over.

A note added to the transcript of this interview indicates that Tom was right to be pessimistic and continues the theme of displacement – "*no place for me there*".

Tom also has reservations about another option for maintaining ESL teacher identity. He is well known in the field of ESL teaching and his relationship with principals of language schools in the area should enable him to find work as a relieving teacher. Again Tom is unsure of his ability to find a place for himself but this time his uncertainty is related to his own skills, rather than to a mismatch between identity and context:

But there's some learning for me to do there too because I gather that a lot of the current language centre kids are preliterate and I don't have much experience with them.

A suggestion that Tom apply for contract work at his current school is "*not going to be realistic*". Casual teaching in other contexts is also rejected – "*I don't know what my chances would be because there'd be an awful lot of people looking for jobs*". Many Australian ESL teachers have found employment outside Australia. This option is mentioned but dropped without further discussion – "*The other thing would be looking for something overseas*".

These options are all ones which would allow Tom to continue as ESL teacher, even if the match between present ESL teacher identity and the new context of work might not be as close as he would like. Another option is to move away from ESL teaching and find a new area of work which will allow him to enact those central elements of self which have found expression in ESL teacher work – *"doing something else I can live with"*. Tom identifies two aspects of this 'something else'. The first is that it should allow enactment of his ideological sense of self in the world – *"to do something which I consider socially worthwhile"*. It must also bring him in contact with people in ways which allow relationships of friendship to develop:

What worries me personally is that I think if I didn't have something to keep me in contact with other people, I could become very isolated. And most of my friendships and things were work derived, work related. The idea of that as a source of contact completely stopping is a worry.

Tom displaced from his ESL teacher identity is Tom displaced from his sense of self. Finding a new field of employment is much more than finding a new source of income. It is finding a new way to be Tom. Looking for options other than ESL teaching is *"having to find a new way to do it, reinvent myself"*.

One option which Tom believes might offer an acceptable reinvention of identity is that of civil celebrant – *"I thought I can do that"*. Tom believes that he has the skills and knowledge appropriate for work in this area and it fits his criteria for a new way of being:

It would enable me to sort of do something which I consider socially worthwhile. ... I'm used to public speaking. ... I can interview people. I can write. It would bring me into contact with people.

Although Tom later found that he had been accepted for a course to train as a civil celebrant, at this stage he was less than optimistic about his chances:

I put in an application although I've got my doubts about being offered a place. And I'd have to do that part-time because it's fee-paying and expensive and also, if I need to keep working, I couldn't do it on a full time basis. So I'll have to make a final decision about that soon. So there's all these sorts of unknowns.

Confusion, uncertainty and lack of confidence run through this aspect of the discussion with Tom. In contrast to this confusion is the strength of connection between Tom as

self and Tom as ESL teacher and the clarity with which he is able to voice the essential aspects of this identity which need to be part of any future reinvention of Tom.

Battle Lost

This discussion with Tom is littered with images of the battle field, with the administration of the school on one side and the ESL Department and all those associated with it on the other. Tom opens discussion of the school with the comment "*the situation here is getting very nasty*". Student numbers are falling and the ESL teacher allocation has been reduced to two. In Tom's view, this rapid decrease in numbers is the result of underhand work on the part of the school administration:

The story that the Head of [the ESL] Department is passing on is that the principal misinterpreted last year's budget and gave ESL too much. Which I can't believe. I mean I can believe you could make a mistake but I would never believe he would make a mistake in favour of ESL. It's impossible.

That this is untrue is signaled by the use of 'story'. The teacher in charge of the ESL department is also positioned as a quasi part of the administration. She has no name. She is the 'Head of Department', her alignment with the principal clear in her role in 'passing on' as a true explanation what Tom believes to be clearly false. The division between school administration and ESL is also signaled with the impossibility of a 'mistake in favour of ESL'.

The newly appointed principal is "*one of Kennet's hatchet men*", fresh from his work "*closing down the working class schools*". Tom has worked in the school for more than twenty years. During this time he has seen the number of ESL teachers working in the program steadily decline. Teacher numbers are now so far reduced that the school is only able to offer two ESL classes at each level. Any further reduction will mean the program is no longer viable. Tom is deeply distressed by this but his main concern is for the fate of the four multicultural education aides:

The other thing that's a worry is that we have one full-time multicultural education aide and three part-time people. And they're very upset and they're saying to me, 'Tom, once you're gone, we know we are in the firing line'. ... The multicultural tutors are the people I'm closest to and

their support and loyalty and freshness and work with the students is the best feature of the place but their effectiveness is being undermined.

Without Tom's protection, the aides are 'in the firing line', both literally and figuratively. The program in which Tom has spent most of his working life has largely been destroyed, he is isolated from the other teaching staff and his few remaining comrades in arms are at the mercy of the newly appointed 'hatchet man' whose aim is the destruction of working class education. Faced with all this and the threat to his financial future, Tom has left the battlefield. Tom adds a final note to this bleak view of his future – he has not relinquished the struggle but withdrawn to "*regroup and battle on somewhere else*".

ESL teacher identity as it is constructed in Tom's discussion of the future is identity as expression of ideological self. Work as an ESL teacher has given space for the enactment of beliefs and values central to Tom's sense of self. This is ESL teacher as warrior in the battle for a better, more equitable world, protector of the weak and doer of 'socially worthwhile' work.

8.2.2 Stefan

Stefan has plans for both the immediate and more distant future. Next year he will continue in his present position as VCE coordinator and take on the new role of Curriculum coordinator:

I always wanted to be curriculum coordinator. ... I think it's a really challenging interesting job. So that's my goal – to learn to get into curriculum now, whole school curriculum, and learn a lot more about it and facilitate a few changes at the school and do VCE coordinating a little bit better, perhaps show a little more leadership.

Stefan will teach his usual mix of junior and senior ESL classes. He will also take two English classes – "*I've allowed people to talk me into doing two classes of English next year. Not because I prefer English, I hate it, but they needed another English teacher*".

Stefan is also considering a range of options for the more distant future. One is to return to study:

I was thinking about going back and doing a Masters, a little more ESL for my own pleasure. Not career but pleasure. Then doing some things for career, more education or admin, curriculum and that.

Stefan's belief that ESL teaching is not highly valued in terms of career advancement is expressed in the division between ESL – *"for my own pleasure"* and other study options – *"for career"*.

Another option is to apply for promotion – *"in third term I'm going to start looking and deciding whether I'm DP [deputy principal] material"*. Stefan is *"a fairly ambitious person"* and aware of the limitations of remaining in ESL teaching:

What avenues are there to grow in ESL? Apart from your classroom teaching what other avenues are there? Those aspects of your personality have to be satisfied - this feeling of moving on and doing things. I love teaching but I'm not Mr Chips.

A career path leading to principal class positions exists for ESL teachers working in specialist English language schools and centres. This is not an option which Stefan is willing to consider:

I hate language centres. I don't hate them. I think they are important but I find them claustrophobic. ... There are some things they do well and there's some things they ought to do well and they just don't. I'd be very frustrated with them. They seem to spend a lot of time and energy doing things that schools do better and they don't do things that they ought to do well. They don't have really highly tuned courses that give kids a lovely mix of structures and how to learn in Australia. ... I stay away from language centres because my manner or my comments would upset them and what's the point.

Stefan's criticism of ESL teacher work in language centres is based on what he suggests are different perceptions of ESL teacher identity. In his view, ESL teachers working in these specialist settings focus almost exclusively on the welfare needs of their students to the detriment of student progress in learning English:

It draws a certain type of person, a personality more comfortable doing that than doing things that are more what our brief is. I mean the welfare is important and they should do it, but they're only successful to a point anyhow and there's other things that they could be really good at and they don't get around to it.

Stefan believes that the transient nature of the student population in language schools and centres allows teachers to escape their failure to teach all students effectively:

If you teach in a language centre and you teach twelve kids and eight of them learn, you're happy and four of them don't learn and then they move onto high school and then they're not there anymore. So you haven't got this urgency at your back. If you teach a kid at Year Ten and it's not working, you keep seeing him in Year Eleven and Year Twelve. And you often see him when he leaves school, he still can't speak English. I don't think they see that. I don't think they understand that.

A career as principal of a specialist language school is clearly not an option for Stefan. He is also unwilling to return to his earlier work as 'ESL expert' with the Department of Education – *"I'm not an expert and I know enough now to know that I'm not"*. Stefan has always questioned the value of at least some of the work done by the Department of Education in relation to ESL teaching:

A lot of them [management roles at the Department of Education] are tied up with what I call the migrant business, the multicultural stuff, and I've always had a few problems in relation to that. So I wouldn't be able to sell it well. ... You know that sort of work – we live in a multicultural society, let's have a festival. I mean that's rubbish.

Stefan is keen to both seek promotion and to continue his work as an ESL teacher. He uses his current principal as an example of how this can be done, arguing that any school which would offer him a principal class position would be a school with a large number of ESL students:

I really admire my principal. He's still a Maths teacher. He still teaches Year Seven Maths, so why can't I teach Year Seven ESL? ... That's [ESL teaching] my great love so why can't I keep an interest in these sorts of things? If, and when, I did get a DP [deputy principal] appointment, what sort of school would it be at? Where would I be most useful and employable? I can't think of a school that doesn't have an ESL component.

That this argument is couched in a series of questions suggests some lack of conviction, that perhaps Stefan believes those responsible for the appointment of deputy principals look more kindly on applicants who have taught Maths, than applicants who have taught ESL.

Despite this hint of insecurity, Stefan's progress up the career ladder has been steady, progress he attributes to two things. One is his competitive personality, his desire to *"get to the top of the tree"*. The other is his perception of ESL teaching as part of the whole school structure – *"if you want to get things done, you've got to be part of the whole school"*. He acknowledges the achievements of the past and the progress which has been made in ESL teaching but remains critical of the work done by teachers in specialist language centres:

In ESL teaching in the last twenty-five years, we've really made fantastic leaps in methodology and stuff like that and I think that's fantastic. And I wish I knew more. I actually think that one of the reasons that I think of myself as a reasonable ESL teacher [is] because I'm not necessarily good at languages myself and I can understand what the kids are going through when they're trying to learn. ... I think the welfare part we've made leaps and bounds in. I don't think we've made a lot of progress in what they do at language centres.

Good, Better, Best

The dominant theme in Stefan's discussion of the future is one of optimism and enthusiasm. Unlike Tom, Stefan does plan for the future – *"I'm always actually focused about what my aims are"*. Again unlike Tom, Stefan is optimistic in his view of the impact of his work as an ESL teacher. His new dual role as curriculum coordinator and VCE coordinator is *"wonderful"*, *"an opportunity I always wanted"*. Curriculum coordinator is *"the second best job in the school ... a really challenging interesting job"*. Description of curriculum coordinator as 'second best job' is in conversation with the principal. The implication is that his job is 'first best' and it is one to which Stefan aspires.

In his second year as VCE coordinator, Stefan wants to *"do VCE coordinating a little bit better, perhaps show a little more leadership"*. Changes to the VCE course are an opportunity, rather than an added workload:

When something is new, you've got an opportunity to start new things and that would be a great time to change a few things here for the better.

Stefan also has *"a new campaign ... [that] started off as a joke but everybody knows I'm serious, is to get kids and teachers to class on time"*. His plans for the immediate

future are *"a couple of little ones"* like the campaign for improved punctuality and slightly more ambitious ones – *"to be a good curriculum coordinator and leader"*.

Stefan's long term plans are to apply for the position of deputy principal in schools which would allow him to combine the administrative role of deputy principal with a continued involvement in ESL teaching. He is planning to limit his applications to schools with *"an ESL component"*. These are schools where he would be *"most useful and employable"*. In a different type of school *"I hope I could do a good job but there would be better people that would do a better job in that culture"*.

All of Stefan's work is depicted in positive terms. Unsuccessful attempts at promotion in the past are seen as premature, rather than as failures:

I applied [for deputy principal positions] and I didn't even get an interview and they were right. You know they were quite right. So that hasn't been an aim at all for the last four or five years but it's at the back of my mind.

Although Stefan's ESL teacher identity is important to him – ESL teaching is his *"great love"* – it is only one aspect of his identity:

There's only a few things that I want to be really good at. Cooking, teaching, good husband, good dad - that's about it.

This recognition and valuing of other aspects of identity allows Stefan to approach ESL teaching with a level of 'commonsense' detachment. He is able to identify aims and work for change at a whole school level. With ESL teaching as one aspect, rather than the primary focus, of Stefan's identity, he is able to share ownership of the area with other teachers and to work together to meet the needs of these students:

If you want to get things done, you've got to be part of the whole school. I mean I always wanted to be a teacher anyway so I was [always] going to be part of a whole school. ... That's just good teaching, I mean it's just good management. ... That's not ESL teaching but it's just, I don't know if it's commonsense, it's just sort of having other priorities.

ESL teacher identity, as it is constructed in Stefan's discussion of the future, is ESL teacher as team player, an important and valued part of the whole school, able to effect positive change by active involvement in, rather than opposition to, power structures within the school. It is also ESL teacher as skilled professional with responsibility for

the learning and progress of all students. It is ESL teacher as useful and involved member of the school community.

8.2.3 Alice

Alice sees little change for her in the future – *"I anticipate things going on much as they are"*. Recent years have seen significant changes to Alice's school and to the ESL program. The introduction of a successful and expanding international student program has changed the way the school regards ESL teaching and has guaranteed Alice a secure future. Although the change was not one initially welcomed by the other ESL teachers, Alice acknowledges its positive impact on the ESL program in terms of raised status and increased resourcing of the area.

Change in the nature of the ESL student population, from 'local' ESL students to international fee-paying students on temporary visas, has not changed the way in which Alice sees her role as an ESL teacher. Despite changes in context, she has been able to maintain congruence between past, present and future aspects of ESL teacher identity. Alice has thought carefully about the ways in which she has been able to maintain this continuity of identity:

To be an ESL teacher [means] to have a role where sometimes you need to look very closely at the student and why the student is here and what's going on in that student's life. We recently had a young man who came from Korea. ... It was a really difficult problem because, in Korea, they had conscription and there was something wrong – a simple, gentle, nice kid - but there was something wrong. ... I felt very sorry for him. I couldn't help him. It was obvious that there was something more than ESL. ... We offered him as much support as we could. ... The numbers of hours that we've given him were huge ... trying to accommodate him so he won't have to go home. He won't have to be conscripted ... [and] he will come out with some life skills, some work skills. So that was a very big ask. It was huge really, taking into account the amount of time we have to do these things. But I didn't have a problem with that. It wasn't easy but I think you respond to the needs of students and this is what I meant. It's a long struggle with his writing and other things and dealing with the yelling and screaming and crying. So that's an extreme example, but one that illustrates [the special needs of international students].

The example Alice has chosen may be 'extreme' but it is one which allows her to demonstrate aspects of ESL teacher identity important to her. The student is in need of

more than language teaching. That is, the role of an ESL teacher is far more than instruction in English. Alice places great importance on understanding student background. In this case, her knowledge of student background – “*conscription in Korea*” – combined with her observation of student need in the classroom – “*more than ESL*” – alerted her to an area of need. Alice then worked to meet this need, despite the time involved and the extra demands upon her. This view of ESL teacher work as much more than language teaching is one Alice feels is important to maintain despite her changed context of work. The student she has chosen to discuss is a powerful example of the ways in which the needs of international students mirror those of ‘traditional’ ESL students. This similarity in student need enables Alice to maintain her role of ESL teacher as carer and helper, despite the changed context within which she works.

Making Them Comfortable, Helping Them Learn

Alice’s discussion of the future is couched in terms of caring for her students and minimizing the differences between international ESL students and the more traditional migrant ESL student. The majority of her work is with senior classes, so she is closely involved with the VCE course. Changes to VCE assessment procedures are the cause of “*some concerns ... particularly in terms of students who have come fairly recently*”. Responsibility for student achievement rests with the teacher – “*the teacher needs to have done some work*”. Alice’s future plans are focused on these students and their needs in terms of successful completion of their studies:

This year and next year I’m going to be looking at how to get those students through – I don’t know how we’re going to get them through – look after them and help them to cope.

Successful learning is a process of ‘getting through’ the VCE. Pronoun use shifts from ‘I’, as Alice considers her direct responsibility for this student achievement, to ‘we’ as responsibility is shared. This use of ‘we’ directly following ‘I don’t know’ both shifts and shares the problem. Teacher role is signaled in a series of action verbs, the first related to the barrier passing of assessment procedures – “*get them through*”. The students are passive in this process; the action belongs to the teacher. Teacher role is also that of carer – “*look after them and help them to cope*”. The final sentence in this

passage makes the distinction, and the link, between international and other students – *"And of course many of these students will be international students, not all of them, but quite a number"*.

Acknowledgment of the particular needs of international students and the linking of their needs to those of other ESL students is an important feature of Alice's ESL teacher identity. She is uneasy with the notion of student as profit, which is the catalyst for the international student market, even though it has benefited the ESL department in which she works:

[The international student program] has really made a number of people start looking at ESL in a different way. It's an awful thing to say but it's true really. It's helped because there have been more resources put into ESL, both in personnel and even in resources like computers.

The perception of ESL teaching as a money-making venture has increased the status of the program. A 'number of [unnamed] people' now see ESL in a 'different' way. This changed view of ESL has resulted in increased funding. Implicit in the notion of a 'different' way is the 'way that was before'. If the different way results in attention and increased funding, then the 'way before' must have been one of neglect and under-resourcing. Alice is uneasy about the motivation behind this changed view of ESL teaching – *"it's an awful thing to say but it's true really"*. Alice's ESL teacher identity does not include ESL teacher as profiteer and she proceeds to clarify her role in relation to the international student market.

The first point made is that the program offered by the school is a good program. That is, these students are getting what they have paid for – *"I don't know exactly how much [the school gets] but it's certainly coming through to ESL"*. Alice's positive perception of the quality of the program offered is supported by comparison with other schools which also enroll international students:

We've certainly had students transfer from other schools. Not always under the best circumstances - sometimes they've been edged out of the school system. But we've had some international students come to us because they've heard from others that there's a good program here.

That these students are seen as more than profit-generating units is emphasized as Alice outlines the ways in which the school screens out certain students. (This comment was in response to a suggestion that some international students are in Australia because they have failed in their own education system – referring back to a remark which Alice made in an earlier conversation.)

We would suggest that they leave, in fact, if they don't measure up. But I don't mean that in an awful way. If they're not coping sometimes this system is not the best system for them. Or if they're unable or unwilling to do the work, we move them on where they perhaps fit another system better.

This rejection of students is framed in terms of assisting them. Exclusion is 'suggested' in an attempt to help students find a more appropriate context for their studies in Australia. Students who are 'unable or unwilling' to work within the existing school program are 'moved on'. Alice decisively rejects the notion of a different, less demanding and possibly more appropriate, program for these students and reinforces the link between these international students and the other ESL students with whom she works:

No, I don't think you can. I don't think you can do that in your classes. Well I can't anyway. Rules for one group of students and a separate set of rules for international students? No we don't do that.

Although Alice rejects the notion of less demanding alternative courses for international students, she is equally clear that, if these students are expected to meet the same course requirements as other ESL students, they must be given the assistance needed to do so:

I wouldn't be part of a course that didn't [offer appropriate assistance]. I would find it difficult to work with students who weren't provided with that sort of help. And that's just not international students. It's any student that you take on, any student that you have in your class.

The nature of the teacher student relationship is implicit in the notion of 'taking on' a student. The student becomes a burden for the teacher, but a burden that is accepted with responsibility for appropriate care.

Alice moves on to discussion of the needs of international students, reinforcing her role of ESL teacher as carer and helper. She questions the motivation of parents who send their children to Australia for education:

I often wonder how parents let their students go and when their children go as overseas students and what we pick up because of the cultural problems that occur. ... I deal with them and the sort of expectations they bring with them and the sort of learning style that they're used to and the sort of – what you have to undo in a sense before you can get them to feel comfortable and to help them to learn.

The role of parent and teacher seems interchangeable. 'Parents' send 'students' who are 'their children' away to be cared for by teachers whose role is that of surrogate parent, helping to 'undo' previous learning.

The importance of appropriate home stay arrangements is also discussed, again with an emphasis on the need for parenting – *"They all, particularly the Japanese, would like to be with an Australian family - a mum and a dad and kids"*. Student as profit arises again as Alice expresses her reservations about some types of international student accommodation:

If they're lucky enough to go into an understanding good Australian family, it can be wonderful for them. But many of them go into home stays where the primary concern is how much money it's going to bring in.

Alice positions the international students as being in need of her care, attention, support and teaching in the same way as any other ESL student – in some cases in more need. Her work as an ESL teacher is focused on producing *"students who have had positive experiences being students at our school and being happy and settled"*.

The ESL teacher identity which Alice constructs in discussion of the future is ESL teacher as caregiver. The notion of caregiver involves care of individual students reminiscent of parental care. It also involves pedagogical care in provision of a quality program and academic assistance aimed at enabling student success in external examinations.

8.2.4 Vicky

In the first of these conversations Vicky expressed concern that declining ESL numbers and lack of commitment to ESL teaching at the administrative level in her school might mean an end to her career as an ESL teacher. At this stage Vicky suggested that her school should consider entering the international student market. The school has taken up her suggestion and Vicky has been appointed as International Programs coordinator and her contract renewed for a further three years. Vicky is pleased by this but somewhat wary of the motivation behind the plan and the changes that this shift in emphasis will bring to her work:

It's an attempt to keep ESL alive in the school because numbers have been dwindling for a while now ... so this is an opportunity to ensure that ESL survives coupled with the fact that it makes money for the school. But it [the ESL program] will change. ... It makes you wonder what the real, the ulterior, motive is for the whole program.

Vicky examines her own motivation for welcoming the International Program. On a personal level she wants to continue working in the school and she wants that work to be as an ESL teacher. Although this desire to maintain an ESL program could be seen as selfish – *"I'm teaching it for starters"* – Vicky also argues that the school as a whole benefits from a more culturally and linguistically diverse student population:

I'm a teacher because of ESL and I want to be able to teach in that area. But I think ESL helps a school too in keeping the rest of the school aware, culturally aware. That's the problem with homogenous schools. They tend to forget about other learners and their needs and it's consciousness, it's absent ... and it's colourful having ESL kids around the school.

Moving into the Marketplace

Vicky's ESL teacher identity is one which emphasizes the importance of close teacher-student relationships. Her focus as an ESL teacher is not *"just language ... but teaching about life"*. With a changed student cohort resulting from a move into the international student market, this form of ESL teacher identity may no longer be available:

But it [the work that I do] will change in itself because it won't be as permanent. ... It won't be as, I don't know, it won't be as laid back. ... If you're an international student you just want to learn what you can the best way you can, get the best marks and get out so maybe you have a

more distant relationship with the ESL teacher, not as nurturing. I don't know. I mean time will tell.

Vicky is unsure of the ways in which the shift in emphasis of her teaching will impact on her understanding of ESL teacher identity – *"I don't know. I mean time will tell"*. At this point in time she is excited by the possibilities of her new position and the changed outlook of the school which is signaled by her appointment – *"We're sort of globalizing the school if you like"*. The language of the market place dominates as she describes her part in this globalization:

The areas of growth happen to be places like Taiwan, Vietnam, Hong Kong and Korea is just starting to take off. So I thought I might target those areas and see what happens.

Vicky's first marketing trip is planned for early next year. She will attend a 'school publicity fair' in Korea:

It's a presentation and we set up our little table or stalls and you take their questions and inquiries and presumably come back with a number of kids, presumably. ... It almost feels like it's something sci-fi or something.

Vicky's lack of certainty in her new role is indicated by the hesitation signals in *"I think"*, the repetition of *"presumably"* and the final description of her task as *"something sci fi or something"*. Despite this uncertainty Vicky is convinced that the move into the international student market is *"good for everybody"*. Her initial argument in favour of this move is one centred on her own needs:

If I can have ESL in the school I'll go about it any way I can to ensure that happens.

[Why?]

Well because I'm teaching it for starters. ... I'll always have an ESL connection. I'm a teacher because of ESL and naturally it's mine. I want it here. I want to be able to teach in that area.

Positive 'I' statements dominate this passage as Vicky lays claim to her ownership of ESL. She moves from this to two other arguments, the first being that the presence of ESL students forces other teachers to be culturally aware – *"it keeps them on their toes and conscious of their own teaching"*. The second – *"it's colourful having ESL kids around the school"*.

In a final comment on her work as an ESL teacher, Vicky explores the ways in which she works to empower her ESL students:

Language is power and you do want to empower your kids, particularly the ESL kids [because] every kid has their story, their migration story, so there is that part of me that wants to reach out to those kids and have their stories known ... so they have a voice. It's important and it needs to be heard. I really want to empower those kids.

The story to be told is a 'migration story'. Vicky has her own story of migration and she feels this is an important part of her ESL teacher identity, providing shared experience as a point of connection with her students. The notion of language and power is a new element in the discussion of Vicky's work. In earlier discussion Vicky positioned herself as warrior on behalf of her students. The limited power available was hers, rather than her students. The notion of student empowerment through language shifts power from teacher to student, but it seems a restricted form of power, power to "*have a voice*" in the telling of stories, rather than power to act independently in the new society.

The ESL teacher identity which Vicky constructs in discussion of the future is an uneasy mix of entrepreneur and editor. ESL teacher as entrepreneur is an active player in the educational marketplace, selling the school at trade fairs, recruiting ESL students and providing an appropriate service. This construction of ESL teacher positions the ESL student other as both source of profit and desirable addition to the school in terms of added colour and enforced cultural awareness. ESL teacher as editor is influential in the telling of migrant stories, in providing the means by which student voices are to be heard.

8.2.5 Sally

Sally has thought about future directions for her work and has rejected the idea of promotion which would further involve her in administration, reducing her contact time with students - "*basically I don't enjoy the administrative side*":

I don't want to go any further than I am. I've got no aspirations to be a curriculum coordinator for instance. I couldn't bear it, having to deal with all those egos and people. I've just watched Curriculum Committee here and there was something the other night that involved the transition

program. I didn't go ... because I can't bear it you know when people stack things and I'd rather work with kids than adults anyway. I don't have any aspirations to be a DP [deputy principal]. I really like being a Year Level [coordinator] – don't get me wrong – but I can't see myself going any further than that because I'd have to do something that wasn't working with kids.

Sally's reluctance to participate in the power struggles that she sees as part of the administrative practices in her school – "*when people stack things*" – is clearly signaled in the repeated negative 'I' statements in the passage. These statements, such as "*I don't want*", "*I've got no aspirations*", "*I couldn't bear*", "*I didn't go*", "*I can't bear*", "*I can't see myself*", express repugnance for the process by which decisions are made. The exploration of future identity as a visual image – 'I can see myself/I can't see myself' – supports Sally's picture of herself as a person for whom the higher levels of administration are an inappropriate future direction.

Sally's rejection of a future administration role seems based on distaste for the gameplaying involved rather than a perception of herself as unable to participate effectively in the process. As she discusses her plans to alter the administrative structure of the school, limiting the number of coordinator positions, the language of action is strong and forceful, positioning Sally as a power to be reckoned with:

They're going to do a complete restructure of this school next – because all the administrative positions come up for readvertising – and I'm going to push, push, push, rationalize a whole lot of jobs, so we don't have all these people, all this administration.

An externally imposed perception of ESL teacher identity as that of less competent teacher continues to be of concern to Sally:

There's still this perception that it [ESL teaching] is a lesser form of teaching. That's got worse in the last couple of years. Part of that is the advertising [for the school which ignores the ESL program], but part of that is, I think, is the fact that I pushed so long, shit up hill, to get people in the classroom and team teach but that's evaporated in the last couple of years. ... But there's still that, that ESL teaching is easy – you know – small classes. ... All that shit still happens. ... The administration jokes to me about it sometimes – and sometimes I just get – and I say 'it's not funny'. ... Getting rid of that 'ESL teachers are nuff nuffs' was so hard. And maybe more ESL teachers are nuff nuffs, I don't know, like librarians. I mean I've had a few nuff nuffs in my time but they work

across all areas. ... Who said those who can do, those who can't teach, didn't say those who can do, those who can't, teach ESL. But that's OK. I think despite all that, on the whole, I think the profile of ESL in this school has got stronger despite there's still that sort of resistance. Mostly the kids certainly don't have stigma attached. That's certainly changed over my time.

Sally has struggled to change this perception of ESL teaching – *"I pushed so hard, shit up hill"*. The view that ESL teaching is a *"lesser form of teaching"* seems to have gained the status of a politically incorrect joke which contains sufficient truth to anger Sally – *"The administration jokes to me about it sometimes and sometimes I just get – and I say 'it's not funny'"*. Sally acknowledges the possibility of some truth in this judgment of ESL teachers as being less competent – *"maybe more ESL teachers are miff nuffs"* – and then adds her own judgment of librarians – *"like librarians"*. She deflects the criticism back on to all teachers, quoting the folk wisdom of 'those who can do, those who can't teach', a reminder that all teachers are subject to negative external perceptions of their competence. She then dismisses this as unimportant – *"But that's OK"* – positioning her self as effective in achieving changed status for ESL students in the school – *"Mostly the kids certainly don't have stigma attached. That's certainly changed over my time here"*. Although the two adverbs, 'mostly' and 'certainly', work against each other, the repetition of 'certainly' reinforces this as the dominant perception of the situation.

Despite reluctance to seek promotion, Sally is not without plans for the future but these are in terms of what she hopes to achieve in ESL – *"I'm going to take ESL on by the horns I think"*. Although what this will involve, and how it will be accomplished, is not clear, Sally is planning further study – *"some sort of postgrad stuff"* – which she hopes will help to clarify the needs of her current group of ESL students.

Reinventing the World

Sally's own plans for the future are expressed in a mix of definite 'I' action statements and a series of hesitations, doubts and possibilities for the future:

I'm not going to do Year Eleven [coordination] after next year I've decided. ... I'm going to take on ESL by the horns I think. ... I don't know. I don't know. Something to do with, I think, with the African kids.

Something has to be resolved there and I don't know – I think I'm going to take focus with ESL. Something to do with kids that are migrants and how education here does or doesn't somehow cater for them. ... So I'll give Year Level away. I think – and I don't know – I might go back and do some sort of postgrad stuff. I don't know. ... Exactly what direction it's going to take I don't know. But that's what I want to do. So much still needs to be done. ... So I don't know. I might do that course at Foundation House where the Torture and Trauma unit is. I might do that – it's got an ESL focus about it. ... I'm looking to reinvent the world. But – I don't know. ... I only ever want to do something that is with kids. I wouldn't want to do welfare because it would just be too draining. ... I'll be batting my head against a brick wall.

There is "*so much [that] still needs to be done*" in ESL and Sally is freeing herself from other responsibilities to focus all her energies on the task – "*so I'll just give Year Level away*". The task before her is one of Herculean proportions – "*I'm looking to reinvent the world*", "*batting my head against a brick wall*", wrestling the bull that is ESL "*by the horns*". Sally is also unsure of the exact direction of these efforts. The phrase 'I don't know' is repeated nine times in discussion of future plans while 'I think' indicating a possible future direction is used only four times.

Whatever Sally's plans for the future, construction of ESL teacher identity as agentic is central to this new focus. She has discarded or rejected all other aspects of her teaching to concentrate her energies on "*something to do with kids that are migrants and how education here does or doesn't somehow cater for them*". The concern expressed here is not for individual students, but for ESL students as a total group – "*kids that are migrants*" – and for subgroups of this total group – "*the African kids*". "*Something has to be resolved*" and Sally's understanding of her ESL teacher identity is such that the responsibility to "*reinvent the world*" is hers.

8.2.6 Mandy

Mandy constructs her future as a series of challenges and new experiences. In the first of these interviews she had been unsuccessful in her attempts to leave teaching for twelve months and work in an alternative setting via TRIP (the Teacher Release to Industry Program). Mandy works in a small school with limited scope for variation in

her work and expresses concern that she may become bored with both her work and her students.

She plans to continue in her current position of school timetabler, a position which means that she has been able to assign herself classes which offer some variation in her teaching – *"I had the power with timetabling"*. She will have three ESL classes next year, Years Seven, Nine and Twelve. Mandy will also be teaching a Year Seven SOSE (Studies of Society and the Environment) class. She will also teach a number of hearing impaired ESL students, working with an interpreter to assist her in meeting their needs.

Mandy is also thinking about the future in terms of employment outside a school setting. There are clear links between these ideas for possible future employment and her existing work and identity as an ESL teacher:

The TRIP experience may well be something to look into again. [I want] people oriented sort of [work]. Another thing that's a passion at the moment is real estate. ... I have these pipe dreams. I thought surely there's a market helping migrants purchase property because of all the language associated with it and knowing how to understand the jargon of the real estate world. ... That's a sort of niche that could be explored. ... [It would allow me to be a] sharing caring person because I think I've got the word sucker written above my head.

Challenge, Fun and ESL Teacher as Sucker

There are several themes related to the future and ESL teacher identity which run through the discussion with Mandy. The first is the need for on-going challenge in her work. This challenge is needed to alleviate the boredom Mandy sees as an inevitable result of a job which can be *"too comfortable"*.

Challenge

One challenge is the role of timetabler and achieving full mastery of the computer package the school is using:

I figured another twelve months because we're using more and more of the computer package and I'm getting to know the program.

Control over the computer package is an on-going process. Mandy is positioned as part of the school administration in this process – “*we're using more and more of the computer package*” – but the skill is hers – “*I'm getting to know the program*”.

Another challenge is presented by the changes to assessment procedures at Year Twelve:

We've got the added challenge of the new Year Twelve course so I've got Year Twelve. So I've got that to contend with as well.

Again Mandy moves from the ‘we’ of the school as a whole to ‘I’ as she individualises and accepts the challenge. The use of ‘so’ as conjunction suggests that the link between the challenge and Mandy is a logical progression. The use of ‘contend’ to position Mandy in relation to the changes suggests a struggle and this sense of struggle continues in later discussion as Mandy explores her reaction to the new course:

I don't know if I'm looking forward to it. I like teaching Year Twelve and I guess everyone became very comfortable with the course and then suddenly the winds change. ... It's sort of hard too because I've got no idea. I've never done it before. So you're trying to find out what everyone else is doing. ... I've got no idea what I'm doing yet because everyone is doing different things.

Despite these misgivings, Mandy enjoys her work at the ‘extremes’ of Year Seven and Year Twelve:

I think it keeps you fresh doing those two ends. Whereas the in-between, you can sort of churn things out year after year after year and get away with it. But those two ends, you're more accountable I guess. You need to know what's going on.

The repetition of “*year after year after year*” emphasizes Mandy's fears of boredom. Teaching can become a process of “*churning out*” the same material and “*getting away with it*”. Mandy's search is for freshness, new ideas, new challenges – a search which welcomes the pressure of public accountability for her work. Teaching hearing impaired ESL students is “*a challenge as well*”.

Without these challenges resulting from change –whether change in student cohort or change in course – Mandy's ESL teacher work is “*too comfortable*”, students are

known "*too well*" with the danger of "*getting bored with them*". The small class sizes of ESL teaching make this problem "*even worse*":

It's such a small group too. It's only half a dozen kids. So it's even worse. I mean it's nice but you just get bored with each other. ... They get too comfortable with you and you get too comfortable with them.

The notion of 'too comfortable' as an undesirable state contrasts with Mandy's comments on the changes to the VCE course where "*I guess everyone became very comfortable with the course and then suddenly the winds change*". There are degrees of comfort with 'very' signaling an acceptable level of comfort in contrast to 'too'. With the Year Twelve course, comfort was the result of course stability, a stability now threatened by a shift in the wind, bringing confusion and uncertainty.

Fun

A second theme in discussion of the future is the emphasis which Mandy places fun as part of ESL teacher work. This element of fun is even present in those classes which are 'too comfortable' – "*I mean they're fun to work with but you sort of know them too well. It's too comfortable I think*". The Year Seven students are "*all fun to be with*". Mandy has "*a lot of fun ... with them*". ESL teaching at this level is "*just a bit more fun*". The lower language levels mean "*you get to have more fun with it [ESL teaching]*".

The timetable is a challenge. Year Twelve is a challenge and a struggle to understand the new course. Year Seven is a challenge and fun. The combination of change, challenge and fun gives Mandy what she wants in her work – "*Well I've got things to do*".

Sucker

The remaining theme is to be found in the self-descriptors Mandy uses. She twice describes herself as a 'sucker'. The first time is in relation to her willingness to continue in the position of timetable coordinator – "*I'm a big sucker doing timetabler again*". The second time is in relation to her 'pipe dreams' of leaving teaching to work as an ESL consultant in real estate – "*Because I think I've got the big word 'sucker'*".

written above my head". Mandy also describes herself as a *"people oriented sort of ... sharing, caring person"*. The self derogation of 'sucker' is modified somewhat by 'sharing, caring person' but both convey an understanding of self which positions Mandy as a person who works in the interests of others, rather than herself. Even a move into real estate will *"help someone else make a fortune"*. Despite this slightly cynical depiction of ESL teacher as sucker, Mandy sees herself as continuing in this role *"or something in that vein"*.

The ESL teacher identity which Mandy constructs in discussion of her future is ESL teacher as one who cares for others, often to the detriment of self-interest. ESL teacher work is enjoyable but the contexts of this work – small classes, students who can become too well known – can result in boredom. This construction of ESL teacher as the doer of easy work, the occupier of comfortable space is one Mandy rejects, but it is also one which lies behind much of the discussion of her future.

8.2.7 May

May was overseas at the time of the final case study interviews. We met early in first term of the following year. The past year had not ended well for May. Injuries while supervising the student recess break resulted in her absence from school for most of the final term:

I was hospitalised and then I couldn't get back to work for Term Four. ... That created quite a bit of turmoil because I understand that for quite a while no one actually picked up the class and got them on with the appropriate work.

By the time May was well enough to return to school, *"the Year Elevens had left already ... and there is another teacher taking over Year Eight"*. Although May was covered by accident insurance, she had no guarantee of future employment with the school. She had by this time been employed on contract for over three years. Each contract was for one term which meant that she was not eligible for holiday pay. Lack of security and lack of recognition of her work meant that May was actively seeking more permanent employment elsewhere:

I started hunting for jobs elsewhere. ... Being on contract from term to term I never had the job security and I could never plan financially for the

family. ... That [contract employment] makes you feel that I'm not valued and I'm not of much worth.

May left Australia not knowing if she had a contract for first term of the next year at her current school or if she had been successful in finding a job elsewhere. On her return she found that she had been offered a permanent appointment teaching Chinese at a large private school – *"that was really a miracle"*. Although May is relieved to have found permanent on-going employment, she regrets that this has been at the expense of her work as an ESL teacher:

I am now teaching mainly Chinese, no more ESL classes which I greatly miss because I love ESL kids. ... I love teaching as a whole. I love Chinese teaching too but I just like meeting the kids from all over the place and the way that they are so keen and genuine and when you really get them on the path, you feel that you've done something that's really happy, like very happy.

Hard to be a Teacher

There are two dominant themes in discussion of May's future. The first, associated with her past and present contexts of employment, is of physical exhaustion and unhappiness. The second, associated with her ESL teacher identity, is of emotional connection with her students, of love and happiness.

A Bit Downhearted

Expressions of unhappiness and negativity dominate as May talks about her experiences. After being employed on a series of short-term contracts for three years, the school was still unwilling, or unable, to offer her more permanent employment:

I was getting a bit down hearted. ... I was very very disappointed with the administration, the way we were never consulted on major issues. ... When they [the administration] had to do anything, they would just go about it in their own way. And a lot of the times the teachers were very very upset because of certain decisions ... A lot of teachers were very upset. ... [Being on contract] makes you feel that I'm not valued and I'm not of much worth. Maybe I interpreted wrongly but that's how I feel. ... There can be ways of going about it not necessarily violating the teachers' opinion, you know, and the way they look at things. Because many teachers, even though they don't hold senior positions but they have heaps of experience, they can see things for what it is. And we should be

consulted. ... It makes you feel really really very uncomfortable. If you're not optimistic – you can get quite depressed with the situation.

The focus shifts throughout this passage from May's own feelings to the feelings of other teachers who also feel *'very very upset'*. May's inclusion in this group is implied rather than stated but the implied inclusion is reinforced by the use of the inclusive *'we'* in *'we should be consulted'*. Reading back from this point of explicit inclusion, May is one of these teachers with *'heaps of experience'*, able to see *'things for what it is'* in a way that the administration are not. This suggested valuing of herself as having *'heaps of experience'* is the only indication that May regards her own teaching highly. Elsewhere the emphasis is on her efforts to be a good teacher, rather than on her achievements as a good teacher. In this passage the emotions explicitly attributed to May are those of being *'down hearted'*, *'very very disappointed'*, *'not valued'*, *'not of much worth'*, *'really very uncomfortable'*, *'quite depressed'*. The validity of even these emotions are open to question – *'maybe I interpret wrongly but that's how I feel'*. If we read May as being included in the group of teachers to whom she refers, her treatment has reached a level of unpleasantness which is almost that of physical assault in its impact on the teachers concerned – *"there can be ways of going about it without violating teachers' opinions you know"*.

Like Dead

May's new position teaching Chinese in a large private school was *"really a miracle"*. Despite her pleasure at eventually being successful in finding a permanent teaching position, May's new work is physically exhausting:

Last week I was like dead. I thought I couldn't pick myself up any more. ... I just wanted to drop down dead and never to rise again. ... It is hard to be a teacher.

That's Really Happy

The depression and exhaustion associated with teaching Chinese in her new school is in stark contrast to May's language as she describes her past work as an ESL teacher:

I love ESL kids. I love ESL classes. I love the subject. I just loved interacting with them from all different places in the world. ... I love ESL teaching. I love teaching as a whole. I love teaching Chinese too but

I just like meeting kids from all over the place and the way that they are so keen and genuine and when you really got them onto the path you feel you've done something that's really happy, like very happy. ... When they walked in, they couldn't really utter a proper sentence and by the end of the year ... they'll be raising their voices in the corridor in English. I was so proud. Yes – I helped that person. They were yelling – raising their voice right across the corridor. I feel so good. ... It's so good. It's such a good feeling.

May's work as an ESL teacher is a work of love. The word 'like' is replaced by 'love' in the first line of this passage, as May rejects 'like' as too small an emotion for the pleasure she finds in her interaction with ESL students. She strives to be a good teacher – *"It's hard to be a teacher. ... I mean a good one and I want to be a good one"*. Her efforts are poorly rewarded at an administrative level. They are unrecognized in her previous school and result in physical exhaustion in her new school. Despite this May is still able to say *"I love teaching"*. For her the rewards are the contact with her students and watching their progress as they gain confidence in their use of English – *"raising their voice right across the corridor"*. Being a teacher may be hard but rewards such as this make her efforts worthwhile – *"It's so good. It's such a good feeling"*.

Elements of May's ESL teacher identity, her commitment to teaching and the effort which she puts into her work, may be carried over into her work as a teacher of Chinese – *"I love teaching as a whole. I love teaching Chinese too"*. But the students are absent when May talks about her new position:

I am now teaching mainly Chinese. No more ESL classes which I greatly miss because I love ESL kids.

It is the rapport with her students which makes ESL teaching so special for May. There seems little indication that this special closeness between teacher and student will be possible in her new position.

The ESL teacher identity constructed by May in discussion of her future may be past identity but it is an identity in which ESL teacher as student helper, the doer of valuable work dominates. The ESL teacher is guide to the new world, a person who 'gets students on the path'. The notion of ESL teacher as enabler of student voice mentioned

by Vicky occurs again in May's description of student voices raised in confident use of English. The rewards for ESL teacher work are high in terms of personal satisfaction and close emotional bonds with students and it is clearly a part of teacher work which May will miss in her future work as a teacher of Chinese.

8.2.8 Connie

Despite a difficult beginning to life in her new school, Connie appears to have impressed the principal with her teaching skills. She has now been offered an on-going position in the school. (Although Connie is a permanent teacher with the Education Department, her appointment to the school was for a fixed term.) Connie has had to reapply for the position of Student Welfare coordinator and she is not confident that she will be reappointed. Although Connie is pleased that her work as a class teacher has been found acceptable, she is not happy about the type of teaching she will be doing if she is unsuccessful in her application for the position of Student Welfare Coordinator:

If I stay in the Welfare position, I'll be teaching Year Eleven ESL which is just fine, with a top up of junior ESL. If I don't get the Welfare position, I'll go back full-time into the classroom, mainstream English with very little ESL.

Connie does not feel that this is an appropriate use of her expertise as an ESL teacher. She is also unhappy about the degree of curriculum control exerted by the English coordinator:

The English coordinator has all week by week, day by day, outlined for me and you can't really escape it ... she prepares all the material. Everyone just collects it. The first meeting of the English faculty there were tables for each year level laid out with all the materials, everything prepared – this is what you teach.

Connie is more flexible in her approach to teaching and, although she works within the course guidelines for VCE teaching at senior level, she is adamant that she must be able to modify her teaching in response to student need:

With my [Year Eleven] ESL class I did what I wanted and we didn't really stick to it [the curriculum devised by the English coordinator] but that's the way I operate and the kids needed things that weren't on the program.

Connie is unwilling to change her approach to teaching but she fears that, if she does not follow the centrally controlled English curriculum very closely, she will be in

conflict with the English coordinator – *"a very powerful person in the school ... she could make life very difficult"*.

I've got Some Options

Although Connie's future ways of being as an ESL teacher seem largely controlled by others, it is conflicting motifs of externally imposed and individually determined power which dominate the discussion of her future. She has experienced the past year as a constant test of her teaching skills to determine whether or not she was a 'real' teacher:

You know all the things they ask you to do – second term was a nightmare in terms of 'do this, do that'. ... But it was done and I did it.

Connie's determination to succeed was motivated by her desire to stay in the school and, more importantly, to avoid being forced to return to the language centre:

I knew that if I had to work really hard that I could stay here. I mean I didn't want to go back to the language centre, that particular language centre.

Her efforts were rewarded:

They're very happy with me. The principal thanked me a number of times in public for the work I'd done in the school. And I thought I'm here to stay ... and I knew my teaching was fine

'I' action statements throughout these three passages position Connie as a significant player in determining the ways of being available to her. Having been forced to accept her in the position of Welfare coordinator, the school administration had to be convinced that she was a competent teacher. That Connie was able to do this is emphasized by the repetition of such phrases as *"they're very happy with me"* and *"they want me"*:

What they did to keep me here ... to keep me here because they're so happy with me, they actually made a position ... an on-going position and all I had to do was decide if I want it, which I did. But now I'm a permanent member of the staff. ... So whether I stay in the welfare position or not ... I still have a position here at the school because they want me to stay ... they want me.

Although the anonymous 'they' control the context as a whole, Connie's decision determines her continued involvement – *"all I had to do was decide if I want it [a position in the school], which I did"*. Despite the external pressures, she has been able

to maintain a sense of agency in the on-going construction of identity. She has resisted the identity imposed on her, that of a less than competent teacher, and reshaped the ways in which others understand her to be. However this success in establishing herself as a competent classroom teacher has worked against her. Connie is now regarded as too good to stay in the ESL classroom:

They need good teachers in VCE English classes because they're so large and because there are a number of staff who couldn't actually do it. ... I haven't had any trouble with any of the classes I've taken.

It is ironic that Connie risks being forced out of ESL teaching because she is seen to be a competent teacher. It is also another indication of an external perception of ESL teacher work as a lesser form of teaching, one that does not necessarily require the services of 'good' teachers.

Connie's position as welfare coordinator is also at risk. If she is not reappointed as Welfare coordinator, her main role will be as a classroom English teacher and *"that's when I'll go part-time"*. This decision is not because Connie is unwilling or unable to work with a full class of students:

They'll [the students] be fine. They're wonderful. I'm not afraid of the classroom. It will be another challenge in my life.

The problem confronting Connie is one of external control of her teaching. The English curriculum is determined by the English coordinator and all teachers follow the same program without variation – *"you can't really escape it"*. Teaching in response to student need is central to Connie's ESL teacher identity – *"I'm sensitive to their needs and I respond to what they need"* – and she is unwilling to give control of her teaching to an external authority:

With my ESL class ... I did what I wanted. ... But that's the way I operate and the kids needed things that weren't on the curriculum. ... Next year, I'll be sent this program, but depending on the class and what the class needs, I'm going to fit it around the kids.

Teaching in response to student need is central to Connie's understanding of ESL teacher identity and she is unwilling to compromise on this aspect of identity enactment. In the conflict between external control and her own perception of ESL

teacher identity, it is Connie's sense of self as ESL teacher which will determine the action taken in her classroom.

Although Connie's sense of agency in identity construction is a strong feature of the data, so too is her isolation from the other staff. Connie is never part of the staff group. A solitary use of the inclusive pronoun 'we' positions Connie as part of an ESL class, rather than as part of the staff. That this isolation has been difficult for her is expressed in the joy with which she welcomes a colleague from the language centre who is joining the school – *"So thank God – I've got a buddy coming in"*.

The ESL teacher identity constructed in discussion of Connie's future is ESL teacher as responsive to student need. External demands of curriculum are secondary to the primary focus of ESL teacher work – the identification and meeting of student need. Connie's construction of ESL teacher identity is also ESL teacher as competent professional, a 'good' teacher with all the class control and teaching skills of other good teachers, regardless of teaching method. This is also a version of ESL teacher identity which Connie believes to be at odds with that commonly held in the context in which she works.

8.2.9 Gary

The past year has been one of great change for Gary and the future remains uncertain. The Federal Government decided that the remaining Kosovars would be repatriated and the Safe Havens made available to refugees from the conflict in East Timor. The Kosovars were given two days notice to leave. Timorese refugees were moved into the Safe Haven and Gary resumed his work teaching English. After a short time working with the Timorese refugees, Gary was relocated to northern Victoria where he was reunited with the remaining Kosovar refugees. Although these Kosovars have applied for permanent residence in Australia, Gary expects that their applications will be denied – *"at the moment the Minister is just giving flat refusals"* – and they will be forced to leave.

Gary's plans for the future are uncertain. When he is no longer needed at the Safe Haven he will take Long Service Leave. After this he is only sure that it is time for him to move on from the English Language School where he has worked for so many years – *"I realise that it is time to look at other things"*.

There are three main themes running through the conversation with Gary in which he discusses his work in the Safe Haven and possible future directions for his work as an ESL teacher.

The Reluctant Critic

The first is in the muted nature of the criticism which Gary voices in response to the administration of the Safe Haven and Government policy in the treatment of the Kosovar refugees. The forced repatriation of the Kosovars was *"quite a bitter time"*. The final two days were *"very emotional. Incredibly emotional"*. At first there was *"a lot of bitterness"* and Gary *"saw that there would be big big problems ... [but] luckily they [the Kosovars] did leave. They were very unhappy about it but that's what they did. But it was very very difficult saying goodbye to them"*. Awareness of the potential for *"big big problems"* is the only emotion which Gary owns directly. Any involvement with other emotions is implied rather than stated. Both the bitterness and the unhappiness belong to the Kosovars. Gary seems caught between empathy for the Kosovars, fear that the situation will escalate, perhaps into violence, and relief that the problem is finally resolved with minimal conflict – *"luckily they did leave"*. 'Luckily' for the Government and perhaps 'luckily' for Gary in that he is not caught up in the conflict but certainly not 'luckily' for the Kosovars who are returning to a war zone.

The Kosovars leave. The Timorese arrive and Gary *"just thought we've got to stay on and teach the Timorese"*. Matters were not so easily resolved and Gary's new sense of himself as skilled ESL teacher is made explicit in his reaction to the administrative confusion over the reemployment of the Safe Haven ESL teachers:

We found out from AMES [Adult Migrant Education Services] that if we wanted to stay on we had to reapply for our jobs. And that sort of took the wind out of our sails because we just thought we would continue on

because we'd done it with the Kosovars. We knew the running of the place. We knew what was appropriate. We knew appropriate teaching content, all that. But AMES said no because the Catholic Education office wanted to become involved because the Timorese are devoutly Catholic. The Catholic Church wanted to get their snouts in the trough.

Gary has a range of skills relating to ESL teacher work in the Safe Haven. He knows *"the running of the place ... what was appropriate ... appropriate teaching content, all that ... we knew what needed to be done"*. Gary positions himself as one of a group of appropriately skilled teachers, clear about his rights to membership of the group and his ownership of the necessary teaching skills. His criticism is pointed and explicit. AMES's vacillation is the result of pressure from the Catholic Education Office, wanting to *"get their snouts in the trough"*. Having made this criticism, Gary retreats from it, modifying his reaction and rewording it in terms of relevant skills, rather than piggish greed:

I shouldn't say things like that. But it just annoyed me a little bit because we know what needed to be done whereas the CEO [Catholic Education office] wouldn't have.

These reactions to changes in context which are first expressed as anger and emotional distress and then modified suggest that Gary has a perception of ESL teacher identity as one removed from personal involvement in conflict, whether this is political conflict or administrative conflict. Gary's role is to teach English, rather than to play an active part in these issues.

Response to Student Need

A second theme is that of Gary's development as an ESL teacher as he becomes increasingly responsive to student expectation and need, often in ways which compromise his previous understandings of 'good' ESL teaching practice. This development is demonstrated in a public meeting called in response to falling student numbers:

We had a meeting and actually asked them what is it exactly that you want from us - because we felt that we weren't assisting them the way that they wanted to be assisted. We had a few ideas ourselves about what we could do and we were also wanting feedback from them. It was a very successful meeting. ... It was opened up into work groups that worked quite well because that's not something that they were used to. Anyway

the outcome was that they wanted accreditation for what they were doing and that's an idea we, or the staff, had had as well.

Gary's responsiveness to student need is a gradual development. That this is a departure from the norm of student teacher interaction is signalled by the use of 'actually' – *"actually asked them what is it exactly that you want from us"*. The process is one of stages. First is teacher concern – *"we felt we weren't assisting them the way that they wanted to be assisted"*. Despite this concern that teaching should be appropriate to student perception of need rather than teacher perception of need, the teachers are positioned as the primary source of knowledge and expertise – *"we had a few ideas about what we could do and we were also wanting feedback from them"*. Student input is sought in addition to teacher ideas. Student ideas are 'feedback' to teacher suggestions, rather than an original source. The organisation of the meeting is determined by teacher preference, rather than student preference – *"it was opened up into work groups that worked quite well because it's not something that they were used to"*. The outcome of these work groups is a student suggestion that mirrors a teacher suggestion – *"that's an idea we, or the staff, had had as well"*. Other student suggestions are received less enthusiastically:

There were some other things discussed. They wanted more excursions. We [already] effectively went everywhere. They were funny. Many of the work groups said punctuality was an issue. Students should get there on time. Well that was their responsibility, not ours.

Gary's confidence in his expertise as a Safe Haven ESL teacher is highlighted by the reaction of new staff members to teaching the recently arrived Timorese. Again initial enthusiastic participation in English classes is followed by rapid decline in student numbers:

Initially class attendance was fine - large classes. But about three weeks after we started they were issued with their free travel tickets and class numbers sort of halved instantly.

This concerns the newly appointed ESL teachers but not Gary who is one of the 'oldies':

Of course the new staff were very concerned about that but us oldies who had been there previously knew what was going on. And once again we had to think about what their priorities were. ... So the students

themselves – their attitude to education was very different compared to ours was as staff.

Again Gary's teaching changes to meet the needs and expectations of his students:

Apparently the approach [they were used to] was just drilling and they loved doing that. They just loved reciting sentences in English. We'd have these sentences written up on the board and you'd just get them to recite the sentences. So we had to change our approach to teaching. Because when they return to Timor they're not going to get that style of English teaching that we're used to teaching. So we had to adapt to their learning style. Because in the few weeks that were possible we couldn't change their whole approach to learning. And also they weren't in a communicative environment at all. It's very hard to do group work when you've got thirty-eight.

Gary's sense of the 'right' way to teach ESL – a communicative approach with group work – gives way to an approach suited to "*their learning style*". The justification for this changed approach is argued in a series of 'because' and 'so' statements which remove responsibility for this change from Gary. He has not discovered a new and better way to teach; he is acting in response to a series of external pressures that make this approach to ESL teaching appropriate.

Gary's position in relation to English as a global language is made explicit in discussion of an official language for East Timor:

And for East Timor itself, there's debate going on about what the official language should be. ... Many of us, the staff, feel that English – value the importance of English – and tried to get that across to them because we told them that Australian involvement in East Timor will be long standing, rather than the mess of the past. We're there for quite some time now.

The use of the inclusive pronoun 'we' first positions Gary as language expert, part of a group of skilled and knowledgeable professionals, and then as part of the Australian presence in East Timor – "*we're there*".

New Skills

The past year has been an important one for Gary in the development of his ESL teacher skills and he is keen to find a context for future work which will allow enactment of these new skills. Although Gary has enjoyed his time working with the Kosovars and is learning Albanian, teaching English in Kosovo is not an option that he

is willing to consider. An ESL teaching job in East Timor is a more attractive proposition and one which offers an appropriate context for his new version of ESL teacher identity – *"it's the birth process of a nation and to be part of that would be exciting"*.

A return visit to the language school in which he worked for the past twelve years reinforced Gary's desire for change:

The priority of my long service [is] to give me time to think about what I really want. ... You still have to think – right, where to from here and ... I'm not sure. But it has got to the stage where I have to really focus and think about other directions. Of course I want to stay in ESL. I mean I just spent, what, \$5000 on a Masters' degree so that's the area I want to stay in.

Gary's financial investment in his ESL teacher identity is an important factor in his continued commitment to the area but so too is his desire to explore 'other directions'. The experience teaching in the Safe Haven has been a confronting one but Gary believes that he has developed as an ESL teacher during this time. He has also gained confidence in his ability to teach effectively and appropriately in different contexts. This recognition of ESL teacher skills as transferable to a range of different contexts is an important step for Gary and an empowering one for his future work as an ESL teacher:

Look at what has happened to me. Just things that I never expected would happen. ... During this year I've continued to develop as an ESL teacher. ... Working on a Safe Haven, your approach to teaching has to be very different because you work with traumatized students ... you have to be very strong yourself to cope. ... I've seen myself develop as an ESL teacher ... I know there's other opportunities out there. ... There's more to life than that [teaching at the language school] and there's more to ESL teaching than that.

The ESL teacher identity constructed by Gary in discussion of his future is ESL teacher as skilled professional, able to adjust to new and challenging teaching contexts, modifying existing approaches to meet the needs of different student groups. This is ESL teacher as player on an international stage, with skills in teaching English as a global rather than second language. It is, however, an identity which limits ESL

teacher input to language teaching with little involvement in other, more controversial, issues.

8.3 Discussion

Discussion of future directions of ESL teacher work for those involved in this study is relevant to an understanding of ESL teacher identity. Those elements of teacher identity which are a continuing part of present and future are likely to be those which are key to a coherent construction of identity. Areas of similarity and difference among these teachers are related to similarity and difference in context and the member resources called upon in interpretation of context and construction of teacher identity. There are shared elements but there are also elements which are different in terms of focus and emphasis.

Tom's ESL teacher identity is one based on his perception of 'socially worthwhile' work which ensures close relationships with others. Stefan's ESL teacher identity is part of his teacher-as-professional identity, an aspect of his teaching which he enjoys and carries out conscientiously but which is not the whole of his teacher self as it is with Tom. Alice maintains her ESL teacher-as-helper identity in the face of a changed student cohort by positioning her students as equally but differently needy to other ESL students. Vicky has willingly embraced a new context for her ESL teacher work. Despite misgivings about the appropriacy of her existing ESL teacher identity, with its emphasis on bonding with students, the move has at least provided a space within which to enact a version of ESL teacher identity.

Sally's future is dominated by her identity as ESL-teacher-as-agentic as she reassesses her priorities in favour of a focus on problem-solving at the macro level of ESL teacher work. Mandy continues in her role of ESL teacher-as-sucker as she juggles the at times conflicting priorities of helping others and creating on-going challenges for herself. May is shut out of ESL teaching and the close contact with her students which is

central to her teacher identity. Her reaction is one of physical stress and exhaustion as she struggles to maintain a coherent sense of teacher self.

Connie struggles in a context of conflict in which her commitment to meeting student need, a core part of her ESL teacher identity, appears to be incompatible with the demands of an externally imposed curriculum. Gary has also discovered a commitment to student need as a prime element of ESL teacher identity. This has lead to a reshaping of his approach to ESL teaching in which student learning styles determine teacher approach and a communicative approach to language teaching is replaced by direct grammar teaching, grammar translation, full group drilling and rote learning.

The constructions of ESL teacher identity in this data are ESL teacher as doer of socially worthwhile work, ESL teacher as helper and friend, ESL teacher as skilled professional, ESL teacher part of a whole school community, ESL teacher as agentic and ESL teacher as responsive to student need. It is these versions of ESL teacher identity which are projected from present to future creating coherence between past, present and future constructions of ESL teacher identities and maintaining a sense of consistency and purpose in their enactment.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

9.1 Introduction

This study set out to explore ESL teacher work and identity as understood and enacted by a number of ESL teachers working within the government secondary school system in Victoria. This has been done in detail and at some length, but there is nothing neat and finished about this study. It does not offer a clear prescription of duties and responsibilities for those engaged in ESL teacher work. Instead it presents a complex, and at times contradictory, picture of the diverse ways in which ESL teacher identities are understood and ESL teacher work carried out by those who participated in the study. These teachers all define themselves as ESL teachers and seem to experience a sense of shared group identity. They agree on the importance of their work and the rich personal rewards which come from it. But, even at those times when they appear to speak with one voice, the ways in which these shared understandings are enacted are ones specific to individual context and are therefore unique in their interpretation. At other times views of ESL teacher work and identity are quite separate and teachers are critical of those whose understandings are other than their own.

Despite this lack of clarity and agreement, I do not feel that the study has failed in its original intention. Understandings of identity and work must, by their nature, be both personal and shared, immediate and transferable, fixed and flexible, constructs that are "never complete, always in process" (Hall 1996c:110). The complexity of the area is reflected in the complexities of this work and I offer it for what it is – a series of discussions which present a variety of ways of being as ESL teacher. These ways of being are in a constant state of development and change, but they are also, for the purpose of this work, frozen at a particular point in time and space.

9.2 ESL Teachers and Understandings of Identity

I began by discussing ways of thinking about identity and linking these ways of thinking with ESL teacher identity and work. Identity has been variously described

as "an unresolved question" (Hall 1996c:175), a "chaotic process" (Gilroy 1996:48), an "open question with a shifting answer" (Davies 1989:229), a concept "imagined ... but not imaginary" (Jenkins 1996:175). If identity is a concept so difficult to capture for consideration and discussion, why is it important that those involved in ESL teaching reach an understanding of the identity and work of ESL teachers? It is because, for all its complexities, contradictions and inadequacies, identity is "central to the question of agency and politics" (Hall 1996a:2). If ESL teachers are unable to feel connectedness between individual identity and work identity, they are less powerful as individuals in their immediate work context. If ESL teachers as a group are unable to articulate who and what they are as ESL teachers, they are limited in their ability to critique and develop ways of being. They are also less able to respond effectively when ESL teacher work and identity is placed under pressure by external forces.

Understanding of the complexities and diversities which can be accommodated within group constructs of identity is essential to the development of shared understandings of ESL teacher work and identity. It is through these shared understandings and acceptance of various ways of being as ESL teachers, that a unified sense of group identity is possible. From this unity comes the strength needed to confront the challenges which lie ahead.

Congruence between sense of self and ideological identity and ways of being available in the work identity are also part of this discussion. This is a consideration for all studies of work identity but it is of key importance for ESL teachers who have chosen, many as a conscious act of choice, to position themselves as members of a marginalised group, in order to maintain congruence between self, ideological and work identities.

Gee (1999:127) has described discourse as "a sort of identity kit" which enables group recognition. The components of this kit and the ways in which the kit is assembled are many and varied, but the connecting element which enables identity recognition among ESL teachers seems to be the purpose of being as ESL teacher. This purpose of being is one focussed directly on the perceived needs of students. It is expressed in a variety of ways but it is a purpose held in common by all ESL

teachers involved in this study. As such, it is the factor that defines ESL teacher identity and connects all interpretations of this identity. It is what determines how ESL teachers understand their work and the ways in which they enact this work. It is also what provides congruence between self, ideological identity and work identity.

The centrality of discourse to identity construction is also related to issues of power and agency. It is only by first understanding the ways in which discourses operate to define, constrain and empower, and by then actively and consciously engaging in these discourses, that ESL teachers are able to take control of themselves and of their work.

Understanding of these complexities is a way for ESL teachers to develop a notion of group identity which affirms, develops and articulates common purpose and shared understandings in a celebration of similarities. The ability to do this, while at the same time seeing the diversities and contradictions which exist within as part of group identity, as a source of strength and richness, rather than as a threat to group solidarity, can only strengthen the position of ESL teachers as a group. The more ways of being as ESL teacher that are articulated, examined and made available as legitimate enactments of ESL teacher identity, the more able ESL teachers will be to participate as powerful players in the broader contexts of their work.

9.3 ESL Teachers and Understandings of the Past

I describe the context of ESL teacher work as being one of constant change, challenge and struggle. Almost thirty years ago Martin (1976:63) described ESL teaching as a process of "abortive beginnings and forgotten understandings". I have discussed the historical context of ESL teacher work and identity in some detail in an earlier chapter and would like to modify Martin's description to include an acknowledgment of the progress and achievements which have also been part of this process. Much good work has been done by many hard-working and dedicated teachers but the struggle is far from over. Indeed there is much to suggest that ESL teacher work and identity is under threat in a way it has not been for some years.

The ESL Branch in the Department of Education has been dismantled in a recent restructure. ESL consultants are now widely dispersed throughout the Department, acting as support personnel to other named areas. ESL itself is no longer regarded as a separate entity with specialist concerns and expertise particular to itself. Immigration numbers have steadily declined over recent years. Refugees have been reconstructed as illegal aliens, a threat to national security, in a cynical, politically motivated appeal to previously covert racism within the Australian community. Teachers are again in short supply and, in times of teacher shortage, the needs of minority groups of students are given little consideration. There are few employment opportunities for ESL teachers but many advertised vacancies for other teaching areas. In the early years of ESL teaching "the only teachers left over for migrant education [were] those whom ... 'nobody else wants'" (Martin 1976:40). During a recent session for pre-service teachers on employment, a guest speaker from the Department of Education explained that, in many schools, ESL classes were taught by any teacher available, with little regard for qualifications or understanding of the area.

A sense of shared history and an understanding of past struggles and successes is important if ESL teachers are to build on what has gone before, rather than being trapped in endless repetition of the past.

9.4 ESL Teachers and Understandings of Teacher Work

Understandings of ESL teacher work were explored through discussion of initial motivation, primary focus of teacher work and the rewards which come from this work. Despite individual differences in initial motivation, there exists a shared understanding of purpose. ESL teaching is seen to offer a space for work place enactment of valued aspects of ideological identity. In the words of one participant, an ESL teacher is able to be "a good person". The ability to be a good person is related to the work done by the ESL teacher and, for all of these teachers, it is work primarily focussed on meeting the diverse needs of individual ESL students. It is this purpose of meeting student need which determines all other aspects of ESL teacher work. Professional development of other teachers, involvement in school

decision-making processes, development of teaching materials, political activity in the wider community, are all directly connected to the primary purpose of ESL teacher work.

It is also from this primary purpose that the rewards of ESL teaching come. All the teachers involved in this study spoke of the special relationship which exists between ESL teachers and their students. Many of them speak of their love for their students and contrast the relationship between ESL teachers and their students and the relationships between other teachers and students. The relationship is close, special, different. ESL teachers are motivated to help their students. ESL students are grateful when their needs are met and express this gratitude. The combination of teacher success in meeting need, student gratitude and the continuing needs of other ESL students combine to form a powerful pattern of motivation and reward. It is also a combination that is key to the understanding and development of ESL teacher identity as teachers' representations of themselves are reflected in students' responses and representations of them, thus reinforcing ESL teacher identity.

9.5 ESL Teachers, Conflict and Change

Descriptions of work identity often focus on duties and responsibilities, the tasks to be performed. The understandings and beliefs, that is the ideologies on which the interpretations and enactment of these duties and responsibilities are based, are likely to exist as unexamined elements of folk wisdom. That is, it is not necessary to be able to explain why the ways of being as ESL teachers exist as they do because it is shared wisdom that these are appropriate ways of being for ESL teachers. This is something which is known and accepted and therefore unexamined. When changes in context result in changed ways of being available for ESL teacher work and identity, teachers may experience conflict between established identities and those now available to them. Conflict and resolution of conflict is a way to clarify those aspects of identity which are central to ideologies.

All the ESL teachers involved in this study have been involved in both conflict and change. Responses varied. For some there was minimal conflict between existing teacher identity and changed contexts of work. For others, although the potential

for conflict seemed to exist, they were able to reshape both changes and identity to avoid confrontation. Other teachers were aware of conflict but unable to articulate reasons for this – it existed as a source of unhappiness but was unexamined. Some teachers were aware of conflict and able to articulate the reasons for the conflict. Despite this awareness, they felt powerless to act to resolve the conflict in ways which were accepting of existing ESL teacher identity. Some teachers were empowered to act in explicit and critical examination of ideologies and resolution of conflict. Others attempted to do so but were unsuccessful.

Teachers who experienced success in conflict resolution were all operating from a strong sense of ESL teacher identity as agentic which enabled them to argue their opposition to contradictory ideologies explicitly and powerfully. It also made their ESL teacher identity available for discussion, critique and change.

9.6 ESL Teachers and Understandings of the Student Other

ESL students and ESL student identity is central to ESL teacher work and identity. The close relationship which exists between ESL teacher and ESL student is seen as the most rewarding aspect of ESL teacher work. ESL students are in need, the ESL teacher is both needed and able to successfully meet this need. The ways of being available for ESL students are also the ways of being available for ESL teachers and the fit between the two can serve as either powerful reinforcement of, or as disruption to, existing teacher identity.

ESL students as a group are constructed as ideal students – hard-working, enthusiastic, highly-motivated and grateful for the efforts of their teachers. They are admirable both in their present behavior as students and as a result of their previous life experiences which have given them a maturity not to be found in other students.

This ideal group construction is not always successfully transferred to individual student identity. Discussion of ESL students as a group is overwhelmingly positive. Discussion of individual students is more varied. Individual ESL students can be lazy, lacking in motivation, dependent on charm rather than effort for success, too

talkative or too quiet, manipulative, demanding and even aggressive. Despite this reality check in terms of individual student identity, ESL teachers seem able to reframe most negative behaviours in terms of unmet need, previous experiences or stages in learner development.

The few students who explicitly reject the close relationship offered by this construction of ESL teacher and student other are cause for concern with ESL teachers unsure how to proceed in interaction with them. The interdependence between ways of being as student and ways of being as teacher is clear in the confusion caused by the breakdown between teacher and student identity.

Despite individual variations in ESL student identity, the group construction of ESL student as ideal is sufficiently reinforced in practice to maintain credence as a continuing and central part of ESL teacher work and identity.

9.7 ESL Teachers and Understandings of the Future

The ways in which ESL teachers discuss future directions of their work is linked to understandings of ESL teacher identity in the desire to create coherence between past, present and future enactments of identity. The stories which these teachers tell about themselves and their work are stories of ways of being as ESL teachers. If ESL teacher identity is a construct which has meaning beyond immediate reaction to contexts of time and space, the elements which make it so must provide a connecting thread consistent throughout each episode of identity-in-practice.

These ESL teachers discussed past motivations for their work, present experiences and interactions which offered or restricted opportunities for the enactment of underlying purpose and moved on to consideration of future ways of being. For some the flow of ESL teacher work and identity continued from past to present to future with "things going on much as they are". Others were less sure of the future but saw themselves as actively and powerfully involved in identity construction and the ways of being available to them. Others faced massive change and upheaval to current ways of being which threatened aspects of identity central to both ESL teacher identity and notions of self. For those facing futures in which they were to

be forced out of ESL teacher work, the struggle was to find new work identities which would allow the connection between self and work which had been a valued part of their ESL teacher identities.

At this point it is tempting to consider how the ways in which these future concerns, now in the past, have found meaning in the present for each of the participants in the study. Tom, who faced forced retirement and a future in which his ESL teacher identity had no place, has recently returned from a period of teaching in East Timor. He has found a number of short-term positions as replacement ESL teacher in a variety of teaching contexts in which his ESL teacher identity is recognized and valued. Stefan, who planned to apply for promotion, has taken extended long service leave. Although the reason for this was exhaustion and the need for time away from teaching, he is currently teaching English in China. Alice, for whom the future was very much like present and past, continues in her work, with little disruption to her ESL teacher identity. Vicky has made several trips overseas and the school has an increasing number of international students (and Vicky an increasing workload). Sally, who felt unable to meet the needs of her ESL students from the Horn of Africa, has started a Masters of Education by Research with a focus on the needs of refugee ESL students. Sally's dominant metaphor for her ESL teacher work, ESL teacher as warrior, was reinforced recently when an ESL student revealed that her nickname among the students was Soldier. Mandy, who was concerned that the future would be boring, has set up a series of challenges for herself and plans another application for the Teachers in Industry Program. May, who had been forced to take up a position as a teacher of Chinese in a school which offered no chance for her to work as an ESL teacher, has left teaching. She felt unable to make the changes in teacher identity necessary for a successful move into the mainstream classroom. Her health suffered and she is currently unemployed. Connie was concerned that she would not be reappointed to the welfare position which she fought so hard for in her initial application to the school. She was also concerned that her class management skills were so highly regarded that she would be shifted out of ESL teaching into mainstream English. This has happened and Connie's reaction has been to move to part-time and to become emotionally distanced from her work. In her words, "it's just a job now really. I mean the kids are great but it's just a job". Gary, who was planning to move out of the language

school in which he has spent the majority of his teaching life, has returned to the language school and resumed his position as secondary coordinator. Plans for change have been postponed until his next period of long service leave. He has, however, applied for a short term position teaching English in Cambodia during the January school break.

The importance of connection between past, present and future identity is evident in the reaction of the teachers for whom this connection has not been possible. May has resigned. Connie has withdrawn. Others have found a variety of ways of being which are coherent with on-going constructions of work identity and sense of self.

9.8 Researcher-as-Insider in Understandings of Identity

My position as both ESL teacher and researcher of ESL teachers has involved an intensive process of reflection and self examination. I have been forced to explicit expression and critical analysis of my own ESL teacher identity and the overlap between this and my identity as researcher. This process has not been an easy one. I am aware that my positioning as insider has given access to ESL teacher identity as experienced by the teachers involved in this study in ways which may have been denied to others less intimately connected to the area. This insider access is a strength of the study but it has also been cause for concern. I have struggled to balance the desire to protect participants and to applaud their work as ESL teachers (and by inference my own) with my interest in their work from the position of researcher. I believe that what has come from the study has been worth the pain involved and the benefits which come from the position of practitioner-researcher, insider-outsider, outweigh the difficulties inherent in this positioning. The process followed of self-examination, close and explicit collaboration with participants and careful balancing of consideration for participants and demands of the research task is one which may be of use to others involved in similar studies. The researcher other is always present. When the implicit other is also an insider, this positioning must be made doubly clear.

9.9 Conclusion

This study of ESL teacher identity and work has been an exploration of ways of being which are both individual and shared in their interpretations of what it means to be an ESL teacher. There are differences which are uniquely individual. There are differences specific to contexts of time and place. There are differences between teachers. There are also differences within individuals between one enactment of identity and another. But, despite these variations of practice, there is one common purpose within which all ESL teacher identities and work exist. This is a purpose directly related to ESL students and ESL student need. It is the shared concern to recognize and respond to individual student need which is central to the identities and work of all these teachers. This student need may be only partially connected to issues of language learning and language teaching, but it is clear that ESL teacher concerns are not confined to subject content.

There is a shared purpose of service in relation to student need and it is this which provides the link between personal and work identity. It is this common purpose which is the connecting link enabling recognition of shared identity in individually different interpretations of group identity. In many ways this common purpose is the group identity. The complexities of ESL teacher work and identities find simple expression in the notion of service to student need, a shared purpose which demands to be recognized and valued as the essential element of ESL teacher identity.

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Appendices

Appendix One – Questionnaire

1. Male Female

2. Age: 20-25 25-30 30-35 35-40 40-45
 45-50 50+

3. Country of Birth

4. Your First Language

5. Mother's First Language

6. Father's First Language

7. TESL Qualifications (please be specific)

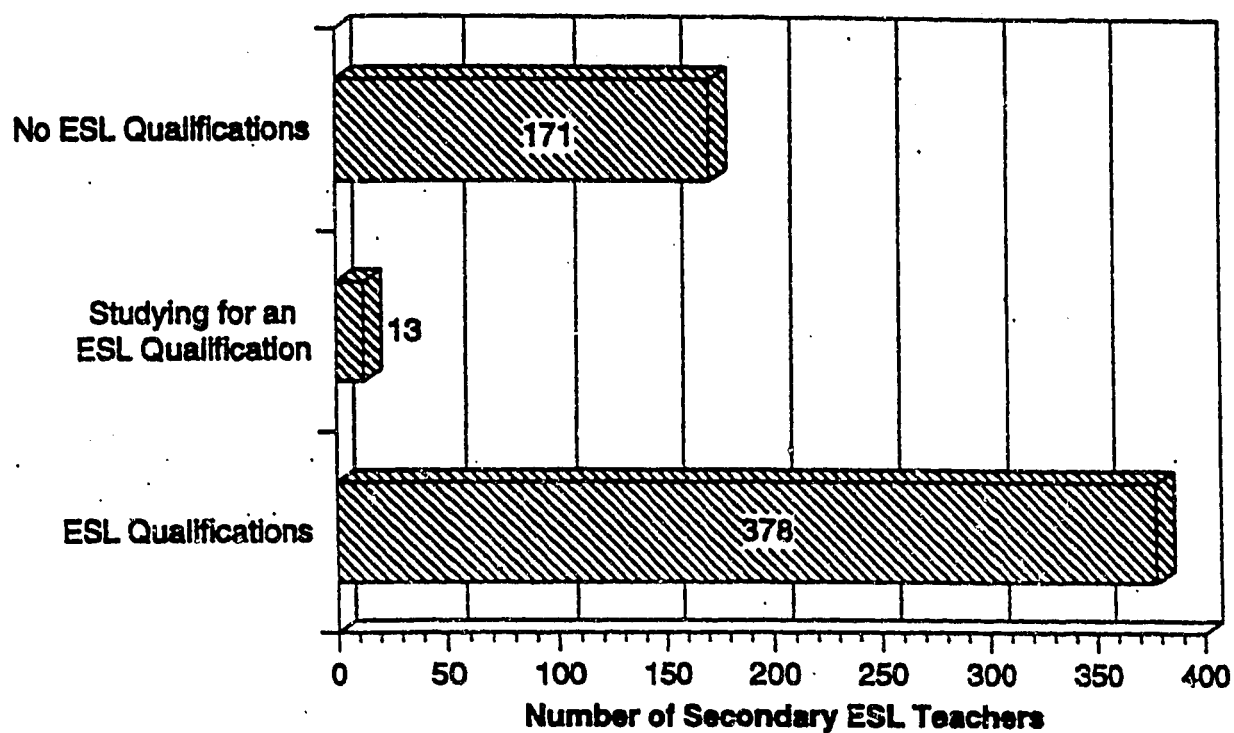
8. Other method qualified to teach

9. When did you last teach your other method?

10. How many years experience have you had as an ESL teacher?

Thank you

Appendix Two – ESL Report 1996:23



Number of secondary teachers with ESL qualifications or currently undertaking ESL qualifications involved in ESL programs, government schools, Victoria, 1996

Appendix Three – Results of Questionnaire

Table One Sex

Female	Male
82%	18%

Table Two Age

20 – 25	5.1%
25 – 30	5.6%
30 – 35	14.9%
35 – 40	18.1%
40 – 45	20.0%
45 – 50	18.6%
50+	17.7%

Table Three Country of Birth

Australia	69.8%
Greece	6.0%
United Kingdom	4.7%
Other	19.5%

Table Four Teacher's First Language and Parents' First Language

Language	Teacher	Parent
English	73.5%	56.3%
Greek	8.8%	16.7%
Italian	3.7%	8.4%
Other	14.0%	18.6%

Table Five ESL Teaching Qualifications

Diploma of Education – ESL teaching method	48.4%
Bachelor of Education – ESL teaching method	11.6%
Specialist Post Graduate Certificate	3.7%
Specialist Post Graduate Diploma	18.1%
Master of Education (TESL)	7.0%
Other	1.9%
None	9.3%

A Diploma of Education is a one year teaching qualification completed after a three year undergraduate degree. A Bachelor of Education is a four year teaching qualification.

Table Six *Experience as an ESL Teacher*

1 – 5 years	20.5%
6 – 10 years	41.9%
11 – 15 years	17.7%
16 – 20 years	10.2%
20+ years	9.8%

Table Seven *Teaching Subject other than ESL*

English	46.0%
LOTE*	24.7%
Humanities**	20.9%
Other	8.4%

*LOTE – Language other than English

**Humanities – History, Geography, Studies of Society

Many teacher training courses require a background in LOTE or linguistics as a prerequisite for entry to ESL method. This limits entry opportunities for graduates in other areas such as maths or science.

Appendix Four – Introducing the Teachers

Tom

Tom started his teaching career as a French teacher in the crisis years of the 1960s working in crowded classrooms with large numbers of students, many of them unable to speak English. He resigned from this position to start work as an ESL teacher in 1971. He was one of the pioneers at a time when there was no ESL teacher training, no materials, no accommodation and little understanding of the area. His teaching has been in schools in the western suburbs of Melbourne - working class areas of high migrant density. Tom played a key role in the development of the ESL teacher professional association and has been part of many developments in the area at local, State and Commonwealth level. His commitment and dedication to ESL teaching is beyond question and it is impossible to think of a study of ESL teacher identity which did not include him. Tom took early retirement in 2000 and since that time he has been working in East Timor teaching English to civil servants as part of the reconstruction and development of the country's administration. I first met Tom in the 1980s and we have worked together on innumerable committees and working parties since then. He is a friend and much admired colleague.

Stefan

Like Tom, Stefan is an experienced ESL teacher who has played an active part in the development of the profession. Stefan was born in Italy and came to Australia when he was seven. He chose ESL method as part of his initial teacher training and started work as an ESL teacher in 1975. After a number of years teaching in the western suburbs of Melbourne, Stefan joined the Child Migrant Education Service (CMES) as an ESL consultant. He ran professional development sessions for teachers, visited schools to set up ESL programs and solve problems and developed materials for teaching. Stefan worked at CMES for two years before returning to teaching. He worked in two more schools before moving to his present school - a working class school in the western suburbs of Melbourne with a large number of migrant students. Stefan has always taught both ESL and English and is currently VCE Coordinator. (The Victorian Certificate of Education, or VCE, is the final

qualification for students completing secondary school. This course is done in Years 11 and 12. Coordination of VCE is an important position, usually reserved for respected, senior members of staff). Stefan and I have known each other for many years and worked closely on numerous committees.

Alice

Alice has taught ESL for eleven years. She is a mature woman who returned to study in her early thirties when her children were all at school. She completed a Bachelor of Education and started work teaching English to adult migrants. Although Alice enjoyed this work, it was not possible to get a permanent job and, after several months on short-term contracts, she applied for a position in a secondary school. She started work in her current school in a middle class area in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne in 1988 and has been there ever since. Alice has always taught both ESL and English. She completed a course in Student Welfare and is currently Welfare Coordinator for the increasing number of international students at the school. (International students pay substantial fees to attend school in Australia. They do not have permanent residency and most are from more affluent families. Many share flats with other students or board with local families). I met Alice when I was Chief Examiner and Assessor for VCE English/ESL. We have worked together marking exam papers for many years and I have been guest speaker to her Year 12 class on a number of occasions.

Gary

Gary is in his mid thirties. He has taught ESL for eleven years. Gary's first teaching appointment was to an English language school in the eastern suburbs. (English language schools offer intensive English programs to recently arrived children. Students stay in these specialist settings for six months before moving on to a mainstream school). Gary completed a course in Student Welfare and a Master of Education (TESL). He worked as welfare coordinator for a number of years before being appointed secondary coordinator – the school caters for both primary and secondary students. After eleven years, Gary was due to go on long service leave. After his leave had been approved, he applied to work in one of the schools which had been set up in the 'Safe Havens'. The Safe Havens were set up as a government initiative to provide temporary accommodation in Australia for a

number of Kosovar refugees fleeing the conflict in the former Yugoslavia. Gary was appointed to work with secondary students in one of the country locations. After several months, the Kosovars were relocated and replaced with refugees from East Timor. Some weeks later, the East Timorese were returned to East Timor and the majority of the Kosovars were persuaded to return home. A small number of Kosovars who had applied for permanent residency were relocated to a camp in northern Victoria and Gary went with them. Very few were granted permanent residency. The rest were declared illegal immigrants. The 'Safe Haven' became a detention centre and they were forced to return to Kosovo. Gary went back to his long service leave but this was again interrupted with a trip to the Middle East as ESL consultant for the Victorian Education Department which had tendered to set up an English language program there. Gary has returned to long service leave for the rest of the year but is undecided about his future. I worked with Gary for four years in the English language school and we see each other socially on a regular basis.

Connie

Connie has taught ESL for eighteen years. Connie was born in Australia but, because she was cared for grandparents who spoke only Greek at home, she started school unable to speak English. Connie started teaching in 1980 in an inner suburban secondary school. After working in several schools, Connie moved to one of the newly formed English language centres. (English language centres fulfil the same function as English language schools but they are smaller and are part of a larger mainstream school.) She completed a course in Student Welfare and combined welfare work with ESL teaching for a number of years. In 1998 Connie applied for a position as Student Welfare Coordinator and ESL teacher at an outer eastern secondary school. She was initially refused the position because the principal believed that her experience in the language centre was not relevant to a mainstream school. After an appeal to the Merit Protection Board, Connie was appointed and is currently working in the school as an ESL teacher and as Welfare Coordinator for all students in the school. Connie and I have met at network meetings and in-services.

Vicky

In her mid twenties, Vicky is the youngest teacher in this group. Her parents are Greek and as a child she was aware of her mother's struggles to learn English. Vicky started teaching in 1997. This is her first job in a small secondary school in an affluent bayside suburb. Vicky is the only ESL teacher in the school and was first appointed on a twelve month contract. She teaches both English and ESL. The school decided to enter the international student market and, in her third year at the school, Vicky successfully applied for the position of Coordinator of the International Student Program. She now has a permanent position at the school. I had not met Vicky before starting this research but she has attended in-services in which I have been involved.

May

May has only a little more than one year's experience as an ESL teacher in Australia but she first started teaching in 1973 and taught English for several years in Hong Kong. Since then she has studied and worked in a number of countries. After a break from teaching, May decided to re-enter the profession. Despite her extensive teacher training both here and overseas, May does not have any recognized qualifications to teach ESL in Australia. As a result she planned to teach Chinese, but was offered a position in a newly established inner suburban secondary school as a Chinese, Music and ESL teacher. May was employed on a series of short-term contracts which meant that she was not paid for term holidays. The school was unable to offer her a permanent position. Despite her preference for teaching ESL, May accepted a permanent position as a teacher of Chinese in a large private school. She thinks that it is unlikely that she will be able to teach ESL again. I met May when we were both post-graduate students but had no further contact with her until starting my research.

Sally

Sally has taught ESL for twelve years. Her interest in ESL comes initially from her own experiences at school where she was aware of ESL students as a marginalized group and from her family background – her father is from what was then Yugoslavia. Sally completed a Bachelor of Education and started teaching in 1988. Her first position was to a school in the outer western suburbs where she was the

only ESL teacher. Sally set up an ESL program and managed to have another ESL teacher appointed. After two years in this school Sally moved to a larger school in the same area which had an established ESL program and a large number of ESL teachers. After four years she moved again to her current school – a smaller school also in the western suburbs. The students here are predominantly from non English speaking backgrounds and, because the school is on the same site as an intensive English language centre, it also has a large number of recent arrivals with very limited English. Sally reorganized the ESL program which she now coordinates. She is also the Year 11 coordinator. I first met Sally when I was Chief Examiner and Assessor for VCE English/ESL. We have worked together marking exam papers for a number of years and have also represented the needs of ESL students on several committees.

Mandy

Mandy has taught ESL for seven years. She majored in linguistics and geography at university and completed a Diploma of Education with teaching methods in ESL and Geography. After eighteen months as an emergency teacher (a teacher employed to cover short term absences) in a number of different schools, Mandy was appointed to her current position as an ESL teacher in a small school in an industrial area in the outer eastern suburbs. When Mandy started at the school, there was a large ESL program and five ESL teachers. There are now only two. After an unsuccessful application to the Teacher Release to Industry Program, Mandy was appointed as School Timetabler and Daily Organizer, a position of responsibility usually held by a senior maths teacher. She has now held this position for two years. In the past Mandy has taught in a range of different humanities subjects but falling student numbers and cuts to staffing have removed this flexibility and she is now only teaching ESL. Students in my Diploma of Education TESL Method class have completed teaching practicum under Mandy's supervision and we have met at various inservices and conferences.

List of Tables

Table 1. Understanding identity

Table 2. Settler arrivals, top ten source countries of birth, 1964-65,
1974-75, 1984-85, 1994-95