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Chapter 9 The production of the literate subject: What counts as literacy in a disadvantaged school?

It is the institutional structure of the school with its increased managerial and bureaucratic control over teaching and its demands on teachers to transform children and to solve all their social and personal problems by attaining certain tests results that creates a difficult work situation for teachers. (Weiler 1988, p.123)

The significance of modern pedagogy is its tie to problems of social regulation; pedagogy links the administrative concerns of the state with the self-governance of the subject. The forms of knowledge in schooling frame and classify the world and the nature of work, which, in turn, have the potential to organize and shape individual identity. (Popkewitz, 1991, p.14)

No less than the Koranic school of Islam, our school is a purpose-built literate milieu in which ethical and literate competencies form a continuum. (Hunter 1994b, p.117)

9.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapters I have foregrounded the complexity of teachers' work - how teachers struggle to make the space and time for positive and productive academic and social education. That schools are expected to 'transform children' produces many contradictions for teachers (Weiler 1988). The kinds of transformations made possible and desirable in schools involve political and cultural decisions, where different groups struggle to make their knowledges count. Literacy pedagogy is moral and ethical work because it has as its goals the formation of competencies for the future citizenry (Hunter 1994b). In text saturated societies, literate practices increasingly organise the mundane routines of life, work and consumerism, leisure and cultural pursuits. Thus the need for the production of a literate population has become, in Foucault's terms, a 'truth' of post-industrial fast capitalist societies. Governments have made literacy a political and economic imperative, devoting considerable sums of money towards literacy education for all citizens (see for example Commonwealth of Australia 1991). The need to account for this spending requires that such competencies are monitored and assessed, both nationally and locally. In this managerial context schools must monitor, record and gauge the literate performance of their students. In disciplinary societies the examination takes many forms and happens as a part of everyday practice.

In this chapter I discuss written assessments of children's literate performance in order to consider what counts officially as literate competence for Banfield students at this time. Three sources of data inform this chapter: the entire corpus of teacher written school reports for the 1992 school year, the archival collection of reports for the grade five/six/seven class, plus a collection of children's written self-assessments made during classroom observations of the four classes. Reading across this corpus of data and through detailed analysis of contrastive examples, I consider how assessments shape the ideal literate student at Banfield at this time. I discuss how literacy assessments draw on a multiplicity of discourses in 'transforming' the child to be educated.

The chapter proceeds in four main sections. First I discuss the context of production of report cards. Second I summarise the major discourses deployed across the 1992 corpus of reports, illustrating what counts as the ideal literate student through a discussion of five contrastive reports. Third I provide an analysis of one student's reports taken from across his primary school career. Here I am interested in continuities and discontinuities in the formation of the literate subject. Finally I move to an analysis of the self-assessments written by the grade five/six/seven class.

9.2 Producing report cards for multiple audiences and functions

Assessment involves a set of discursive practices where the gaze of the teacher and institutional disciplinary practices combine to produce a visible and semi-permanent record of the educable individual. In many modern schools, assessment involves continual monitoring and writing regular written statements about each student. This surveillance culminates in 'report cards' and 'parent-teacher interviews' - teachers' official accounts of children's work in schools. Here the teacher evaluates the performance of individuals across grids of specification which change from time to time. Areas specified may include literacy, maths, environmental studies, behaviour, religious education, physical education and so on. The literacy field can be variously named and divided. For example students may be assessed on reading, writing and spelling, or language arts, or English. The report card marks out the things which count. At the same time as the students are assessed by the teacher they are also being trained in forms of self-surveillance - technologies of the self - and learning to record judgements of their performance across specific criteria.

My time at Banfield coincided with a period of discursive change within the school (Fairclough 1993). During this period 'new' educational, social and political discourses competed for prominence and were newly combined and blended: managerial (with

vocabularies of productivity, quality, excellence, standards), political (with vocabularies of equity, justice, opportunity, equal outcomes), social (with vocabularies of community, group, member, contributor, rules) psychological (with vocabularies of behaviour management, self-control, rules, rights of others). The same words, such as 'excellence', 'justice', 'rights', and 'outcomes', are deployed to different ends. To illustrate, at this time 'excellence' became a key word in evaluations of social justice programs with the demand for demonstrable gains in outcomes.

These hybrid discourses were 'new' in the sense that they re-defined the student subject that teachers should produce and thereby altered teachers' work. For example, the emphasis on literacy standards was new for the teachers who had been at the school for some time. For teachers who had been literacy advisers elsewhere, this emphasis was not new but found inflated urgency in this context. Literacy thus became a problem. My arrival at the school increased its status as an object of study. Additionally, national moves to make Australia a 'clever country', including award restructuring and competency frameworks, the push towards national statements and profiles, and the National Policy on Languages and Literacy (Commonwealth of Australia 1991), International Literacy Year, and a global trend towards information industries, resulted in a proliferation of texts concerning education and the workforce.

Quality and standards became key words across the educational sectors and a concomitant industry of 'audits' and 'reviews' emerged to document the assessed outcomes of public spending. Yet schools simultaneously became major targets for cost-cutting state governments suffering the effects of economic recession. Increasing pressure on schools to deliver a quality student product and threats of closures put schools in the position of competing for students. In these circumstances students are constituted in different ways. They become clients who might take their business elsewhere. Schools with small enrolments, such as Banfield, were under threat of closure. Given these conditions, the discursive construction of the literate student in the official school report at this time is likely to signal the contested and changing nature of the school ethos and its student product. The report card can be considered the primary student record - the written communication where the teacher evaluates the child. Here the student subject is produced publicly. If subjectivity is discursively constructed, what kinds of literate subjects are constructed in teachers' written assessments of students?

Foucault (1979) has pointed out how institutions of modern societies are sites for transformations of the individual. Referring to prison reform he explains how transformative goals are linked with record keeping - building the dossier of the individual.

> But no doubt the most important thing was that this control and transformation of behaviour were accompanied - both as a condition and as a consequence - by the development of a knowledge of the individuals. When the new prisoner arrived, the Walnut Street administration received a report concerning his crime, the circumstances in which it was committed, a summary of the examinations of the defendant, notes on his behaviour before and after the sentences: indispensable elements if one wished to 'decide what steps will have to be taken to destroy his old habits'. (Foucault 1979, pp.125-126)

Schools are not the same as prisons, but they employ similar techniques of power over individuals, which Foucault describes as 'the disciplines' - meticulous control in order to produce docile and useful citizens (Foucault 1979, p.137). For example schools, like prisons, are places of legal detention - if only temporary. Within the school there are specific places for specific individuals to be (and not to be). Timetables govern movement and make it possible to locate teachers and their students throughout the day. One adult is in charge of, watches and cares for large groups of children. Regular records are maintained of individual students' behaviour, attitudes, abilities, work habits, performance on tests and attendance at school. In Western societies, 'dividing practices'- such as entry criteria, testing, profiling, examining, streaming and ability grouping - have a pivotal role in organising education (Ball 1990).

> In the process of schooling the student is compiled and constructed both in the passive processes of objectification, and in the active, self-forming subjectification, the latter involving processes of self-understanding mediated by an external authority figure - for our purposes, most commonly the teacher. (Ball 1990, p.4)

The report card can be seen as a key site in the process of 'compiling the student'. Here the teacher assessor documents officially how the student measures up along a continuum of ethical and literate competencies (Hunter 1994b). Having examined the child in the school context across grids of specification they construct a semi-permanent official record of the institutionalised individual (Collins 1991; Luke 1989). Yet few studies have investigated how assessment as an ensemble of discursive practices works in the formation of the student. As a starting point it is necessary to consider teacher written report cards as a specific kind of textual practice constrained and produced in particular institutional and community contexts.

Texts are multi functional, simultaneously producing a number of social effects and consequences, both intended and unintended (Halliday 1985; Fairclough 1993). Written assessments in educational institutions have multiple purposes and audiences. The report card is the document sent home, often couriered by the child, for parents to read. Teachers and principals put their signatures on the report to attest to its authenticity and to their belief in its 'truth'. As such, the official school report represents a unique document linking, in a web of writing, child, parents or guardians, teachers, principals and future

unknown others who may have cause to read it. Sometimes its 'life' continues in the extended family and community; grandparents, aunties, uncles, siblings and friends check out how the focal child is performing in the public institution. At other times the report card may have little impact and receive little or no attention.

Reports document the student in ways which can be used by next year's teachers, future teachers, would-be employers. Thus it can be used in and out of the institution in order to predict the performance of the student/person in a new context. Verdicts about students' futures may be contingent on these records. For example, entry to a private or specialised high school may require presentation of these documents. Legal, medical and psychological professionals may refer to school reports in decisions about child placement, access to specialist assistance and appropriate response to child law breaking. These extreme uses of the report as evidence of the 'truth' about the child suggest how and why it becomes a complex and contradictory document. The institutional and societal context of the production and interpretation of report cards is therefore important to dwell on before proceeding to an analysis of specific documents.

What kinds of texts are report cards? They can be likened to case notes, references, examination records, letters, narratives and recounts. Yet they can also be contrasted with each of these. Grammatically, they mainly take the form of declaratives, where the subject position of the writer is that of giver (of information) and the addressee's position is that of receiver (Fairclough 1989, pp.125-126). At times reports also include imperatives. In this corpus, the principal's handwritten note to the student reader sometimes takes that form: 'Keep practising those management skills Julia'.

Writer authority can be of two kinds: 'relational modality', where one participant has authority over another, such as the principal or teacher over a student, and 'expressive modality' where the writer claims truth in their representation of reality (Fairclough 1989, pp. 126-127). Both relational and expressive modalities are therefore relevant to reports. The teacher writer is concerned with an evaluation of truth about the student subject and brings to bear her professional knowledge in constructing that evaluation. However the teacher writer is ambiguously positioned relationally. While she has relational authority over the object of her text – the student – she has no such authority over the parent reader. Thus the writer must move between expressions of authority with respect to the truth of their topic – the student – but avoid expressing relational authority. Modality, or writer's authority, is evident in verbs such as 'may', 'might', 'must', 'should', 'can', 'can't', 'ought'. Teacher report writers both claim the authority of their professional knowledge of the student, and simultaneously deny any relational authority in respect of

the parent readers. Reports as a genre are specific to the functions of schooling as an institution. There is considerable variation within the genre of reports as schools determine their own categories, layout and text requirements.

The report card is a complex and not insignificant document. It has potential status in a number of contexts. Teachers as report writers exercise power. Reporting can be seen as one of a network of disciplinary practices which govern the student population. Aware of the potential power of this document in a child's life, teachers invest considerable time in making it 'fair' and 'useful'. They are aware that their own success as a teacher may also be at stake when they assess students. Student failure can be attributed to teacher failure. Preparing reports then is stressful work as teachers struggle to find and put together words which account for the student – the student entrusted to their care and instruction.

During the period of my study written reports at Banfield increased in length and complexity to the point where the principal became concerned that teachers were doing too much. There was no consistent format for report cards with the staff deciding as they did on numerous policy issues to do things as they put it, 'in their own unique ways'. Thus the layout and design were not prescribed, there were no boxes to tick and in the first two reports of the school year there were no subject headings or divisions. On the surface, then, the Banfield report appeared an open-ended document – a blank canvas to be filled by each teacher as she saw fit. However across the corpus the impact of progressive developmental discourses was evident in the trend towards holistic, naturalistic assessment, based on 'kid-watching'. For instance the teachers wrote in terms of 'observed behaviours' and 'signs of development'. Mostly teachers produced one full page of text. Several teachers used the newly leased Mac computers to produce their reports and incorporated border designs. Others wrote by hand and the school assistant word processed their texts. The school assistant, who had been at the school longer than any other staff member, was quite vocal about her knowledge of individual children and her opinion was respected by the teachers. Thus in some cases an extra reader – the school assistant – was already inserted. Teachers also knew that the principal would check every report and sometimes add a hand written comment directly addressing the student.

While teachers might anticipate as collegial readers the school assistant and principal, their target audiences are parents (or guardians) and the student. Report writing is not straight forward. Teachers' professional knowledge must be evident, yet the language cannot be so jargon-laden that it will be 'over the heads' of its primarily lay readers – parents. Thus we might predict reports will include a mix of professional educational discourse and everyday commonsense observations. These texts must therefore be

polysemous in order to be read by different readers. In this school many of the parent audience had themselves not finished high school education, others were studying at university and others had completed various levels of education outside of Australia. There is then a diversity of parent readers. The report must display teachers' authoritative expertise and a demonstration of knowledge of the individual student in a document that is accessible and believable to the parent.

The written report is a site for examination of the student but it is also a mechanism for monitoring of teachers and the school. Here the teacher displays her professional knowledge of the student for all to see. Reports are checked by the principal in terms of content, appropriateness, language and correctness. At this point teachers may be asked to reconsider wording, to proofread, to add or delete. The principal's task is to anticipate how the text might be read:

- in the home, (by parents or guardians, the student, siblings, extended families, overseas relatives);
- in the community, (by friends and visitors, parents' employers, church groups);
- in different educational sites, (by other teachers and administrators, Catholic education officials, state authorities.
- in other institutions, (by doctors, lawyers, psychologists or police officers).

Thus the content, the syntax, the spelling, the wording, the jargon, the portrayal of the student, the corollary portrayal of the teacher and the school must all be considered before the document is safe to go out. A school's reporting system may be checked by state education authorities in order to check school performance. While the most common scenario is that the report has a short life span and few readers, the possibility that this official school document may have an unpredictable and varied readership cannot be forgotten and impinges on its production. The report simultaneously works as both an individualised disciplinary practice and as a record of that examination through the ongoing gaze of teachers and principal.

In addition the teacher is writing for the student. The report card, in defining and classifying studentship, is a vehicle for rewarding the good student and admonishing the bad student, however that 'goodness' or 'badness' might be constructed. Thus teachers must make the report do its work on the student by using language which together the student and parent readers can decipher and weigh up, in answering questions such as: 'How did I perform? How do I measure up?' The student reader, already schooled in educational discourses, may inform or translate for the parent reader. Whilst schools may not see the report as a judgement and may work hard to avoid this, their social function ensures reports are read as judgements. Reports cards are part of a wider social practice

of accountability measures in education. Through the detailed written evaluation of each student, a cumulative record of achievement of the educable individual is maintained. In subjecting each student to normative grids, the school simultaneously re-writes its own identity as an institution. The results of day-by-day teacher surveillance and examination of the collective student body contribute to the construction of a school ethos and desired student subject in the school's archival records. In the process the teacher writers and collegial readers produce official ways of talking about the student population and their performance in school life. In this chapter I consider how and why certain discourses become dominant in this disadvantaged school at this time. I turn now to a summary of the key trends across the 1992 corpus of reports. My interest here is in the lexical choices made by the teachers in assessing the literate student.

9.3 Report writing as normalising practice: formations of studentship

In Australia recent definitions of literacy include writing, reading, listening, speaking and in some cases, viewing (see for example the National English Profiles, Curriculum Corporation 1994a). In the midst of academic debates, policy decisions and media hype, teachers continue to teach and assess local forms of school literacies. However school reports tend to be an internal matter with school communities deciding their frequency, content, philosophy, subjects and design. Thus the report card as a locally produced text can be seen as an official statement of what counts for that community at a particular time. Hence reading the report cards is illuminating in the sense that these texts make visible how school literacies are defined and how students are subjected to the performance categories that come to matter in a specific site.

The construction of studentship is a cultural practice; thus what it means to be a school student varies across time and place. The subjects for study, the physical conditions of the school environment, the tools of the trade and the relationships between teachers and students are situation specific. In the report card there are written traces of what is considered important in a school community. The school report transforms children into students and evaluates them across agreed grids of behaviours, attitudes, aptitudes and so on. The report card records these official judgements. In this section I explore how the literate student is evaluated and described by teachers. In particular, I am interested in the ways in which success is constructed at this time in this school. In the first instance I discuss the key discourses emerging from a lexical analysis across the entire corpus of 1992 reports. I then move to a more detailed analysis of five contrastive reports of students from the grade five/six/seven class.

I collected all available reports for the 1992 school year - three reports for each child written by each of the four class teachers. I read this set of texts noting repeated words. Identifying lexical chains or content words helps build an analysis of the world and its participants as represented in texts (Halliday 1985; Kamler 1994a). Content words include nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs, and exclude functional words such as articles, prepositions, conjunctions and pronouns. The idea is to build up lexical classifications schemes in order to 'chart how discourses are made up of various wordings' (Kamler 1994a, p.132). Using this approach I identified common lexical items. (Table 9.3 represents a sample of commonly occurring vocabulary.)

Table 9.3 Common lexical terms

Nouns	Verbs	Adjectives	Adverbs
work	is	effective	wisely
task	is committed	strong	quietly
success	displays	hard	quickly
development	manages	helpful	successfully
commitment	uses	enthusiastic	
time	asks	cooperative	
tasks	begins		
progress	remains		
skills	helps		
strategies	supports		
management	needs		
help	continues		
effort	completes		
understanding	evaluates		
learning	monitors		
member	develop		
justice			

My aim in conducting a broad analysis across the corpus was to get a sense of what words were used by the teacher writers in reporting on the entire Banfield student population. Lexical choices are not insignificant. Networks of words indicate the discourses employed by teachers as they evaluate students and record that evaluation in writing for the student, parents and colleagues to read. Words construct specified grids, norms against which the student can be judged. In this site at this time key lexical items include work, develop, task, time, success. For example the word 'work' (or worked, works, working, worker) appeared 594 times on a computer search of 148 student reports. My aim is not to provide a quantitative analysis here, but it is interesting to note that on the same scan the word 'learn' (or learnt/learned, learns, learning, learners) appeared 187 times. In this scan no other key words were used anywhere near as frequently as work, as counts on other common words indicate: task (179), develop (170), help (166), time (161), success (122), progress (59), commit (53), strategies (4), manage (33). In the same scan, writing appeared 185 times, spelling 109 times, language 44 times, reading 35 times, grammar 6 times, and speaking on one occasion.

This broad analysis and comparative counts of key vocabulary highlight the significance of the managerial discourse in the formation of the student at Banfield that year. However teachers did not draw exclusively on the managerial discourse but blended it with other discourses: educational (skills, strategies, progress, learning), psychological (displays, development, attitude) political (justice) and moral (helpful, cooperative, commitment). For instance, teacher references to students having a sense of justice in dealing with others in the community is informed by progressive Catholicism. Thus it cannot simply be said that the ideal Banfield student was constituted entirely through managerial discourse.

9.3.1 The ideal Banfield student: Transformations and reformations

To give a clearer picture of this heteroglossia of discourses at work in the formation of the literate student I turn now to an analysis of the report cards of five students whose classroom performance I observed first hand. Here I consider the documents in their entirety, considering any statements about literacy within the context of the whole report. My aim is to consider how and what kinds of students' school behaviours are observed and recorded in order to establish what kinds of knowledge teachers bring to bear in constituting the student. There are several reasons for close consideration of the reports of these particular students. The grade five/six /seven class were the senior students and expected to play a leadership and pastoral role with younger peers. They were in their final years of primary schooling, soon to be graduates of Banfield. I have focussed upon the reports of contrastive students, based on my observations in the classroom, interviews with the teachers and my reading of their reports. For example, I have included students new to the school and those who have a long history of schooling at Banfield. I have analysed the reports of students whom the teacher constructs as ideal and those who are portrayed as problematic or as deviating from the school ethos and norms. I have included students from different cultural and language communities. I have included two girls and three boys. Several of the students received government assistance because their families are classified as economically disadvantaged. In addition, I have selected reports of students who readers will have already briefly encountered in previous chapters, notably, Julia in Chapters Six and Seven, Tatiana in Chapter Seven, Carlo in Chapter Eight, Mark in Chapters Seven and Eight and Joel in Chapter Eight.

Below I include the April reports for Joel, Tatiana, Mark, Julia, and Carlo. Each of these reports is written by the same teacher. First the reports are presented fully with no discussion, in order that readers can read them one against the other, noticing similarities, patterns and contrasts. I follow with a discussion of successful and problematic students.

Figure 9.3.1a Joel's report

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BANFIELD SCHOOL REPORT

Joel   Year 5/6/7   April 1992

Since school began Joel has displayed the behaviours of a student committed to learning and success. During classtime Joel begins work quietly. He remains on task despite distractions. He ensures that he has all the things he needs to begin work. He asks many questions, clarifies tasks and expectations, accepts his mistakes and is resourceful about getting help when he needs it.

During our recent Language work, Joel demonstrated his effective use of time management strategies and organisational skills. He used his time wisely, monitored his own progress and evaluated his efforts. To his credit, Joel is currently feeling the satisfaction and success that comes with consistent effort and hard work.

Joel is a valuable contributor during class meeting time. His strong sense of justice and his compassion towards others is evident in his thoughts, ideas and opinions. Joel willingly helps and supports others.

Signed Teacher...Principal.............................
[A hand written note on the right hand side, added by the principal, reads:] *Joel I am absolutely delighted with your approach and commitment this term.*

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Figure 9.3.1b Tatiana's report

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BANFIELD SCHOOL REPORT

Tatiana   Year 5/6/7   April 1992

Tatiana approaches school work with enthusiasm and a strong sense of commitment. This is shown by Tatiana's work habits. Tatiana will clarify a task before she begins work, making sure that she has understood. She works quickly and remains on task. Tatiana completes work in the given time.

Tatiana understands the need to plan her time wisely. She has successfully used some effective time management strategies. She has shown an ability to monitor her progress, evaluate her efforts and set future learning goals. With consistent practice in this area Tatiana will continue to refine these important skills.

Tatiana is an effective group member. She expresses her thoughts clearly. She builds on the opinions of others or disagrees without aggression. Tatiana is supportive and encouraging of other group members. She is a fair and just organiser, showing sensitivity to the needs and feelings of others. Tatiana endeavours to keep our negotiated class rules. She is co-operative and helpful in class.

Signed teacher................................Principal....................................
[A handwritten note on the bottom, added by the principal, reads:] *It is great to see you developing very sound learning strategies.*

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Figure 9.3.1c Mark's report

BANFIELD SCHOOL REPORT

<u>Mark</u>   Year 5/6/7   <u>April 1992</u>

In the early weeks of this term Mark demonstrated difficulty relating to other class members and adults in the school. He found that many of his attitudes and actions towards others conflicted with the general expectations of the school. This realisation presented a challenge for Mark. He had to make some hard decisions and take some responsibility for changing his behaviour. To his credit, he has begun to take on responsibility and lately, he is showing some very positive and observable signs of development.

On many occasions he is;
- helping and encouraging others.
- allowing others the right to learn by minimising disruptive behaviour.
- allowing others the right to speak without interruption.
- responding appropriately to requests.
- making useful and valuable contributions to class discussions.

This has been evident in his role as 'chairperson' for class meetings and 'computer expert' for other classes. Mark's excessive knowledge has also enabled him to contribute valuable thoughts and ideas in class discussions.

Initially Mark wasted much class time. He took a long time to settle, to begin the task and to stay on task. However, our recent language work has shown Mark the importance of time management and effective organisational skills. Mark has begun to direct his energies towards the development of these skills.

Mark is forming positive relationships with his peers. He has a sensitive nature that he is beginning to share with others. Mark can be co-operative, helpful and responsible when he chooses.

Signed teacher................................Principal....................................

[A handwritten note on the right hand side, added by the principal, reads:] *It is wonderful to see these positive aspects to your learning and behaviour being mentioned here. Keep this up!*

Figure 9.3.1d Julia's report

BANFIELD SCHOOL REPORT

<u>Julia</u>   Year 5/6/7   <u>April 1992</u>

Julia began this year with a healthy attitude to learning. She was keen to meet the set work expectations. She endeavoured to complete her work on time. She worked consistently during classtime.

Julia's attitude and commitment to work has been through observable changes these past few weeks. She is slow to get organised and slow to begin work. She is not managing her time. Consequently, she is not experiencing the satisfaction that comes with personal effort and success. I am helping Julia to overcome this by:
- stating the expectations that she is required to meet eg. time limits.
- expecting her to accept the consequences of her chosen course of action eg. work not finished is to be done in her own time.
- helping her to set goals and to use strategies for time management and organisation.
Julia is beginning to respond to these ideas.

Julia expresses herself articulately. Her thoughts, ideas and opinions are valued in our class meetings and discussions. When given leadership roles during class meetings, she demonstrates an ability to summarise discussions and make insightful observations. Julia has a warm and sensitive nature. Her delightful sense of humour is appreciated by us all.

Signed teacher................................Principal....................................

[A handwritten note on the right hand side, added by the principal, reads:] *Keep practising those management skills Julia. They are essential for success.*

Figure 9.3.1e Carlo's report

BANFIELD SCHOOL REPORT

Carlo   Year 5/6/7   April 1992

Carlo began this year with a positive attitude. His actions showed that he was determined to succeed. He was prepared each day with the things that he needed, he began work quickly and he remained on task. Carlo has maintained this attitude most of the term. Consequently, he is experiencing a successful term.

Our recent language work represented a major challenge for Carlo and he worked hard to meet it. During this work Carlo began to realise the importance of managing his time wisely. He is currently developing the skill of breaking the large task into smaller bits and then working through them, step by step. He is beginning to realise the need to clarify the task when he is unsure and to seek the help that he needs. He is gradually becoming aware of his own responsibility in his learning. With continued practice and encouragement Carlo will further develop in this area.

Carlo's main area of need at this stage is reading. He needs support and daily practice. I am encouraging Carlo to regularly change his book, to read at home and to read to me. He is showing positive signs of growth.

Carlo is helpful and co-operative in class. He is always willing to take on extra duties.

Signed teacher................................Principal....................................

Across the five report cards, representations of the ideal Banfield student are constructed across specified behaviours, abilities, attitudes and knowledges. Readers may have noted the consistency of the teacher's criteria across the students. Whilst there are no headings, as such, each child is clearly assessed using a similar formula.

The teacher writer makes reports on:

- observable behaviours
- attitudes
- contribution to class community
- areas in need of change
- teacher action
- academic performance in specified subject areas.

The first three areas, observable behaviours, attitudes and contribution to class community, are positive descriptions of what a student should be like. Below in tabular form I summarise this grid of required behaviours, attitudes and contributions in order to build a composite identity-kit of the ideal student.

Table 9.3.1 The ideal student

Observable behaviours	Attitudes	Contributions to the class community
• working quietly • remaining on task • having necessary equipment • clarifying tasks • asking questions • seeking help • managing time • evaluating own progress • completing work	• being committed • being enthusiastic • [being] without aggression • being responsible • being keen to meet work expectations • being positive • having a healthy attitude to learning	• being sensitive • being compassionate • being fair and just • being helpful and cooperative • forming positive relationships with peers • helping, supporting and encouraging others • contributing thoughts, ideas and opinions • summarising discussions • making insightful observations • having a sense of humour • building on opinions of others • ready to take on extra duties

The specified observable behaviours explain how the student should relate to their work and to the teacher as student. In sum, the ideal student actively relates to the teacher by seeking help, asking questions and clarifying tasks. Further, the student is prepared for work, works quietly and consistently, evaluates their own progress and completes tasks on time. A teacher-student-work relationship is constituted here. The ideal student is one who initiates contact with the teacher in order to get the job done. Such a student is self-regulated. The picture of the student subject constructed here is of the individual worker and learner. When students display such behaviours, the teacher is able to make diagnostic assessments about student attitudes - commitment, enthusiasm, responsibility, a healthy attitude to learning and so on. Students are congratulated on these assumed internal attitudes, which allow them to become successful students.

The grids of behaviours and attitudes indicate how the students should relate to themselves and to the teacher. However as members of a classroom community, students are not only responsible to themselves but also to their peers. In the third column the teacher lays out how students fulfil such responsibilities. The student subject required here is a social being who demonstrates care for their community by being sensitive, helpful, cooperative, compassionate and by using their talents (sense of humour) and abilities (making insightful observations) for the good of the whole community. Thus the ideal student at Banfield at this time is not the isolated competitive worker or even an active learner, but a socially responsible community member. Being fair and just, compassionate and having a sense of humour are placed alongside completing work and meeting deadlines. The student, as the citizen-to-be, is assessed on more than academic aptitudes or work rates. Thus the managerial discourse is recontextualised in the ethos of this Catholic parochial school.

This teacher writer usually made positive rather than negative statements about students. She reframed problems as areas for teacher action including, for instance, stating expectations, setting consequences, helping students set goals and showing students time management strategies. Nevertheless, three major transgressions were explicitly reported as areas requiring students to take responsibility for change - wasting time, interrupting others and not complying with teacher authority. Thus the students' responsibilities to self, peers and teachers are laid out. The teacher writer presents an individualised blueprint for action for each student, their parents, the principal and herself. The report card represents the formation of the ideal student subject and simultaneously delineates transformations required of students who deviate from the specified norms. It outlines how students should act, what they should say, how they should be. A generic identity is constructed for the would be successful student.

9.3.2 Successful students: Joel and Tatiana

Reports are sites of textual reward and punishment. In these accounts teachers publicly praise the successful and chastise the deviant. Thus report cards can have direct effects on the lives of students and upon their identity formation. They are one of the major forms of public identification of the child as an official subject. (Others include birth certificates, passports, medical records.) In the case of school reports they are written in part for the child reader. Thus potentially the report may have substantial effects upon the student. At this point then my interest is in how different students are reported. I begin with a lexical analysis of the reports of two successful students, Joel and Tatiana, in order to see how success is discursively produced in individual cases. (See Figs 9.3.2a and 9.3.2b.) A lexical classification scheme makes the discourses easier to discern (Kamler 1994a).

Table 9.3.2a Joel: Lexical Analysis

Nouns	Verbs	Adjectives	Adverbs
behaviours	(is) committed	resourceful	quietly
work	has displayed	strong	wisely
task	begins	effective	
time	remains	hard	
progress	ensures		
effort	asks		
success	clarifies		
justice	accepts		
compassion	is feeling		
classtime	demonstrated		
management	used		
contributor	monitored		
help	evaluated		
mistakes	is		
Language	helps		
satisfaction	supports		
sense	needs		
distractions	comes		
things			
strategies			
skills			
credit			
thoughts			
ideas			
opinions			

Table 9.3.2b Tatiana: Lexical analysis

Nouns	Verbs	Adjectives	Adverbs
work	approaches	school	quickly
enthusiasm	will clarify	strong	wisely
commitment	has understood	future	clearly
habits	completes	effective	successfully
time	plan	consistent	
task	to monitor	important	
goals	to evaluate	supportive	
management	set	encouraging	
organiser	disagrees	fair	
feelings	endeavours	just	
needs	works	cooperative	
practice	understands	helpful	
learning	will continue	negotiated	
skills	to refine		
aggression	expresses		
strategies	has used		
group	is able		
member	is		
sensitivity	builds		
rules	remains		
thoughts	is shown		
sense			
opinions			
others			
class			

By April 1992 Joel and Tatiana had attended Banfield for some years and were seen as successful students. They were well-liked by teachers and their peers. Their class teacher's reports indicate what counts as success at this time. The lexical analysis is illuminating. Key discourses and associated lexical items include:

* managerial (work, habits, time, tasks, goals, organiser, management, effort, strategies, progress, resourceful, effective, quickly);

- social (community, group, member, class, rules, feelings, needs, others, helpful, contributor);
- educational (skills, learning, practice, clarifies, understands, behaviours, has displayed);
- political (justice, just, fair);
- individualism (thoughts, ideas, opinions, sense);
- psychological (sensitivity, enthusiasm, commitment, compassion, wisely, [without] aggression; [despite] distractions; cooperative).

These categories overlap but this preliminary analysis begins to show what counts as the successful student: workers who manage their time, cooperate with others, have a social conscience, control their own behaviour and are committed to school goals. In these first reports of the school year little is said about students' performance on school subjects as such. Only one reference is made to 'Language work' in Joel's report and no references to a school designated subject are made at all in Tatiana's. In Joel's case Language is placed with a managerial discourse.

Tatiana and Joel represent the kinds of student outcomes teachers at Banfield aimed for. Successful students exhibit a repertoire of work habits, personal attributes, social dispositions, moral commitments and academic abilities. Within this contested ethical terrain, as I discuss below, literate competencies are enmeshed. Literate practices do not happen in a vacuum and the school ethos, history and contemporary discursive practices impact on what teachers come to see as their work. Literacy pedagogies and associated strategies are always in a process of reformulation and redesign in local sites.

At Banfield, for instance it becomes more important for Joel's teacher to report that he is 'a valuable contributor to class meeting time' and that he has a 'strong sense of justice' than it is for her to describe his competence in the 'oral report' genre. Similarly the 'important skills' that Tatiana is reported as practising are 'an ability to monitor her progress, evaluate her efforts and set future learning goals'. Thus at this time students' generic skills and dispositions as workers, class members and learners are made central. Literate competencies, by whatever definition of literacy, are backgrounded. If teachers are required to 'transform children' (Weiler 1988) and literacy is seen as a major component of that transformation, it is important to analyse the discursive events in which literacies are located.

In this first report for the year the blueprint for proper studentship is laid out. These reports announce to each student and their families what kind of student is required. In the case of Joel and Tatiana we hear the stories of successful students: committed,

enthusiastic self-regulated workers, learners and community members who manage their own time, support their peers and demonstrate a sense of justice. Thus the student as ethical subject is registered. These sets of obligatory traits will have different impact on different students. Becoming an ideal student requires fundamental transformations for students whose out-of-school identities conflict with the student self demanded at school. I turn now to a discussion of April reports of three students who were each in different ways constructed as problematic: Mark, Julia and Carlo.

9.3.3 Problematic students: Mark, Julia and Carlo

Mark had recently transferred to Banfield, somewhat unwillingly, from a local state elementary school where his previous teacher noted (in a report filed at Banfield) that he was making 'serious attempts' to 'eradicate his behaviour problems'. Mark's parents had recently separated and he and one younger sibling lived mostly with their father. Mark is Anglo Australian and spoke English as a first language. Mark's full report is reproduced in Figure 9.3.1c. Table 9.3.3a is the lexical analysis made of this report.

Table 9.3.3a Mark: Lexical analysis

Nouns	Verbs	Adjectives	Adverbs
weeks	demonstrated	early	appropriately
difficulty	found	general	
class	conflicted	hard	
members	presented	observable	
adults	has begun	positive	
school	is showing	many	
attitudes	is helping	disruptive	
actions	is allowing	useful	
expectations	is responding	excessive	
realisation	has enabled	valuable	
actions	wasted	class	
expectations	took	long	
realisation	has begun	effective	
challenge	is forming	organisational	
decisions	is beginning	language	
responsibility	chooses	co-operative	
behaviour		helpful	
development		sensitive	
signs		responsible	
occasions			
credit			
right			
interruption			
requests			
contributions			
discussions			
role			
chairperson			
class			
meetings			
knowledge			
thoughts			
ideas			
time			
task			
skills			
management			
nature			
energies			

As the table shows, Mark is assessed on the same grid as his successful classmates: management, skills, contributions to the community and so on. However, Mark is seen as having some difficulties and challenges. His actions are also described in terms of conflict and wasting time. Mark's difficulties are constructed in terms of how he relates to other people; however his actual misbehaviours are not spelt out directly. Rather his teacher reports that he has made some 'hard decisions' and 'has begun to take responsibility' and that she can now see 'positive and observable signs of development'. In reporting these positive signs she implies what was wrong with his previous ways of relating:

> On many occasions he is;
> - helping and encouraging others.
> - allowing others the right to learn by minimising disruptive behaviour.
> - allowing others the right to speak without interruption.
> - responding appropriately to requests.
> - making useful and valuable contributions to class discussions.

Thus the report tells of a student in the process of transformation. At the same time as it tells of Mark's conflicts with Banfield expectations, it explains how this is being changed, indeed how Mark is being transformed by working on himself and taking on the responsibility for his own reconstruction. The report provides a positive model or 'identity kit' which Mark appears to be on the brink of embracing. Mark is becoming a self-regulating individual who can modify his behaviour according to the norms of his school community. This is described as a sign of development. In this first segment of the report the teacher writer employs a number of discourses to assess the student. She uses her expert teacher knowledge of the developing child to psychologise his behaviours, attitudes and internal cognitive states in the context of this school. Thus she employs psychological, moral and educational discourses to know Mark as student.

> The danger here is that, as 'behavioural clinician' (Foucault, 1977), the teacher will be ascribing to the student a cognitive state which is indeed the accomplishment of institutional discourse (Luke 91, pp.17-18).

The teacher then goes on to present evidence of Mark's development and to refer to what count as his positive contributions to the class:

- being 'chairperson'
- being 'computer expert'
- contributing to class discussions from his 'excessive knowledge'.

Both Mark's problematic and positive behaviours can be read as forming part of a gendered ensemble often associated with male communication styles. His leadership and knowledge are placed against his interrupting and disrupting, his discounting of the needs of others. What is required of Mark then is an analysis of what counts as appropriate for a knowledgable, energetic, male student in this classroom. His energies must be subjected to self control and redirected to more useful ends

> Thus discipline produces subjected and practised bodies, 'docile' bodies. Discipline increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (in political terms of obedience). In short, it dissociates power from the body; on the one hand, it turns it into an 'aptitude', a 'capacity', which it seeks to increase; on the other hand, it reverses the course of the energy, the power that might result from it, and turns it into a relation of strict subjection (Foucault 1979, p.138).

As his teacher puts it:

> Mark has begun to direct his energies towards the development of these skills.

Mark is then named as potentially someone who might be a good student if he chooses. School success for Mark simply requires that he make the right choices at the right time and those right choices are very much about his self-control in relation to others. What Mark has to demonstrate is that he knows when it is appropriate for him to be a computer expert, a chairperson, and to contribute from his 'excessive knowledge' and when these

behaviours will be considered as interruptions or disruptive. Thus for Mark there is no question of him having academic credentials, but he must learn when and how to display these in the community as well as what cannot be displayed. Mark's parents have been given an instrument which explicates how Mark should be in school. Implied in reporting as an institutional discursive practice is the ever-present, but unspoken assumption that parents and teachers will form alliances in re-shaping the wayward student. For disciplinary practices to work they must penetrate all institutions of the social body. Thus the report must go home to do its work in the family.

I move now to discuss a female student, Julia, who was also considered by her teacher as problematic. Julia had attended Banfield for several years and was well known by staff members and students. Julia lived with her mother, who was unemployed at that time and physically unwell. Like Mark she was considered a potentially able student academically but without the right student habits, attitudes and behaviours. Unlike Mark, Julia made a good beginning to the year but her teacher reported that her performance had since deteriorated. Her full report is reproduced in Figure 9.3.1d. The table below represents the lexical analysis of this report.

Table 9.3.3b Julia: Lexical analysis

Nouns	Verbs	Adjectives	Adverbs
attitude	began	healthy	consistently
hearing	was	set	articulates
work	individual	observable	
expectations	walked	time	
time	has been	personal	
class time	is managing	slow	
commitment	is	chosen	
changes	am helping	finished	
satisfaction	is beginning	class	
limits	expresses	leadership	
effort	are valued	insightful	
success	demonstrates	warm	
consequences	is appreciated	sensitive	
course		delightful	
action			
management			
ideas			
thoughts			
opinions			
meetings			
discussions			
roles			
waiting			
observations			
nature			
sense			
humour			

Julia does not have a problem with anti-social behaviour but for different reasons she does not meet deadlines and does not produce the work required. What is problematic here is that Julia's 'healthy attitude to learning' has not been sustained. A healthy attitude

is defined within the text as being 'keen to meet the set work expectations', completing 'work on time' and working 'consistently during classtime'. The issue here is Julia's commitment to work. No explanation is offered for Julia's change of attitude. It is simply reported as fact – supported by the 'observable changes' noted by the vigilant expert teacher. Thus the parent reader is presented with evidence of this change and the teacher's action on this problem.

> I am helping Julia to overcome this by:
> - stating the expectations that she is required to meet eg. time limits.
> - expecting her to accept the consequences of her chosen course of action eg. work not finished is to be done in her own time.
> - helping her to set goals and to use strategies for time management and organisation.
> Julia is beginning to respond to these ideas.

Thus the new regime is spelt out for the absent parent who in some way may be implicated in Julia's deterioration in her student duties. Once again the teacher employs a managerial discourse as her organising framework. In other words the teacher rewrites Julia as a student in terms of 'time limits', 'setting goals', 'time management and organisation' and so on.

I did not speak to parents and certainly not to Julia's mother (with whom Julia lived at that time). However it is interesting to speculate on the ways in which such a discourse might be read by families who have not had the opportunity to participate in regular paid work in consistent set hours of the day. The ideal student is constructed as a keen self-regulating worker who can produce on time and work consistently. The promise of satisfaction and success is dependent on Julia making the 'personal effort'. Again success is just there – awaiting the student's correct choice for hard work, effort, speed and organisation. Thus the teacher presents her diagnosis of the student and her treatment of the problem. In effect, in laying out her pedagogical solutions the teacher writer prescribes an appropriate pedagogy for the family.

Next Julia's teacher moves to the part of the report text where Julia's strengths are defined. All the reports end on a positive note. Here we find a different Julia who is not slow and who does not lack commitment. The 'oral' Julia as opposed to the 'non-producing literate' Julia is highly successful within the classroom community. She 'expresses herself articulately', 'summarises discussions', makes 'insightful observations' and 'has a delightful sense of humour'. While these things obviously count as part of the ideal student repertoire, they are presented last almost as antidote to the critique of the student which takes up most of the text. Even though Julia's oral accomplishments are not ignored, they are separated from her other 'work'. Her articulateness is constructed as a gift, a talent, something other than learning and work. It

clearly does not count in the same way as producing the desired product by the set deadline - Julia's literate work. Even though literacy is not mentioned (nor is reading or writing), implied in all of these reports is that the work is students' written products – that, after all, is one of the major forms of work which students produce in school.

It must be remembered that these reports contribute to the dossier to which the principal refers when the time comes for students to go on to selective high schools. Julia's attitude problem may result in the principal withholding a reference for her preferred high school. If she is asked to submit her reports for her last year of primary school this will be one of them. Unlike Mark, Julia is not asked to change her behaviours towards others but her own ways of operating in the classroom. She is asked to manage her time better to improve her productivity. This will happen if she is more committed and if she takes on her teacher's advice and strategies for time management. Again the object is to train Julia in self-regulating practices which will allow her to govern herself.

Another problematic student is Carlo. Carlo had been at Banfield for upwards of five years by the time the present report was written. Carlo lived with both parents and several brothers and sisters. He spoke Italian as his first and family language and had learnt English as a second language. When this report was written he was in grade six in a grade five/six/seven composite class.

Table 9.3.3c Carlo: Lexical analysis

Nouns	Verbs	Adjectives	Adverbs
year	began	positive	quickly
attitude	showed	successful	wisely
actions	was determined	recent	
day	was prepared	language	
things	needed	rigor	
work	remained	hard	
task	has maintained	large	
term	is experiencing	smaller	
challenge	represented	continued	
important	worked	main	
time	is developing	daily	
skill	is working	helpful	
bits	is beginning	co-operative	
step	is unsure	extra	
need	needs		
help	is becoming aware		
responsibility	will develop		
learning	am encouraging		
practice	is showing		
encouragement	is willing		
area			
stage			
reading			
support			
signs			
growth			
class			
duties			

Carlo is also evaluated across a similar grid of performance drawing on managerial, psychological and educational discourses. He has a 'positive attitude', 'his actions showed that he was determined to succeed', he has 'the things he that he needed', he 'began work quickly' and 'remained on task', 'he is experiencing a successful term'. The use of success in relation to a 'successful term' is qualified. In the second paragraph there are some signals that Carlo, despite his following the norms of hard work and effort, may not be experiencing the satisfaction and success Joel and Tatiana are reported to enjoy. In Carlo's case positive attitude may not be enough. We are told that the recent language work 'represented a major challenge for Carlo'. Then we are told that Carlo 'worked hard to meet it'. However the teacher goes on to portray Carlo as needing to 'break the task into smaller bits' in order to work through them 'step by step'. While it is never made clear, the educational discourse employed by the teacher can be read as euphemistically suggesting that Carlo finds school work difficult.

> A *euphemism* is a word which is substituted for a more conventional or familiar one as a way of avoiding negative values. (Fairclough 1989. p.117)

In Carlo's report, words such as 'major challenge', 'unsure', ' smaller', trigger warning bells for teacher readers, but may well go unnoticed by parent readers. Given their multiple audiences and functions, it is not surprising that teachers are cautious in what they write in reports. In anticipating student, parent, teacher, principal and other allied 'child professionals' as would be readers, teachers need to be careful. The report is a document intended to produce positive effects unobtrusively and to avoid producing negative effects. Euphemisms provide one technique for teachers to soften negative evaluations of the student (McKenzie 1992). As McKenzie notes, it is not only through the use of euphemisms, but also through the use of double negatives such as 'not unsatisfactory' and moderating phrases such 'a little' that the text is given its cautious quality.

While Carlo has presented himself as the ideal student in terms of work habits and attitudes, the language work continues to present him with a major challenge. After signalling that perhaps all is not completely well with Carlo but never specifying what exactly is wrong, the teacher moves to reassure by promising that with 'practice and encouragement' he 'will further develop in this area'. Exactly what 'this area' is remains unclear.

Unlike the other students' reports, for Carlo literacy is marked out as an area of concern. Following the remark above about the recent language work being a major challenge for Carlo, the teacher returns to her theme of 'area of need'. The report states his 'main area

of need at this stage is reading'. Exactly what is needed is not specified, but if we deduce from what follows, it would appear that Carlo needs reading practice. He needs to change his book regularly, to read to his teacher and to read at home. The report indicates that the teacher is watching Carlo closely and that he needs to be checked regularly. Having been identified as a novice reader, Carlo is reported as requiring step by step practice and continual professional monitoring. Why Carlo needs this practice is not explained. This paragraph reassures parent readers that he is showing positive signs of growth, presumably in reading, though what these signs consist of is not explained.

The teacher is faced with multiple dilemmas in writing Carlo's report. Having set her criteria around work habits and attitudes, it is then difficult to write about a student who presents these, but still struggles to succeed by academic criteria. Thus the report is written to acknowledge Carlo's efforts but to signal to a professional reader that all is not completely well. Carlo spoke Italian at home. His teacher was unsure whether Carlo's parents could read in English but he had an older sibling who could read and translate. The chances are that this report could be heard by Carlo, his parents and siblings as 'successful', whilst the principal, future teachers and the principal of the selective high school to which he might apply, will recognise the euphemisms for a student experiencing learning and literacy difficulties – the child who needs the task broken into smaller bits, who experiences major challenge with his language work and who at eleven and a half years of age needs to read to his teacher. Locked into a network of writing, Carlo (even with the right attitude, commitment, responsibility and work habits) is recognisable as a student with literacy difficulties, if unspecified. Because literacy is a stumbling block for Carlo's school success, I decided to investigate his archival records more closely and I return to this analysis in Section 9.4. Before looking closely at Carlo's reports I conclude this section with a discussion of the apparent absence of literacy in the 1992 corpus.

9.3.4 An absence of literacy?

Despite the proclaimed importance of literacy, it is at first sight largely absent from the reports studied above. Except for the case of Carlo, there are very few specific references to literacy in the April reports for the grade five/six/seven class. However, it may be that literacy is not absent but present in a reconstructed vocabulary. For example, in the excerpts which follow it could be argued that literacy is present but in a renamed form.

> During our recent Language work, Joel demonstrated his effective use of time management strategies and organisational skills. He used his time wisely, monitored his own progress and evaluated his efforts.

> However, our recent language work has shown Mark the importance of time management and effective organisational skills. Mark has begun to direct his energies towards the development of these skills.
>
> Tatiana will clarify a task before she begins work, making sure she has understood. She works quickly and remains on task. Tatiana completes work in the given time.
>
> Julia began this year with a healthy attitude to learning. She was keen to meet the set work expectations. She endeavoured to complete her work on time. She worked consistently during classtime.

In Joel's and Mark's reports literacy is reframed as 'language work' and embedded in a managerial discourse. In Tatiana's and Julia's reports language is an absent category altogether. However if we replace 'work' with 'write' in the excerpts from Tatiana's and Julia's reports the results are interesting.

> 'Tatiana will clarify a task before she begins **writing**, making sure she has understood. She **writes** quickly and remains on task. Tatiana completes **writing** in the given time.'
>
> 'Julia began this year with a healthy attitude to learning. She was keen to meet the set **writing** expectations. She endeavoured to complete her **writing** on time. She **wrote** consistently during classtime.'

In these texts 'work' and 'effort' come to stand for 'writing' and 'products'. In other words, the managerial discourse surrounding work becomes so dominant that it equates with or stands for writing. Writing is after all students' work. Written products are the results of students' efforts to be on task. In this school context then, writing is constructed as students' work, as a product to be finished by a deadline. The discursive construction of the literate student in this school at this period is enmeshed with accountability and economic agendas. When progressive discourses were dominant, a split between children's activities at school and paid employment was marked by avoidance of terms associated with labour and work for what children did in school (Close 1992). In this school at this time there seems to have been a blurring of these boundaries as the managerial discourse of employment and training increasingly merges with the discourses of education. In these circumstances students' literacy can be equated with productive work. This was evident in the teacher's everyday classroom talk and reiterated here in the reports to parents. I would argue that this discursive change indicates a shift from the emphasis on reading and literacy for personal enjoyment and fulfilment to written productive literacy for work and personal management. The report cards foreground students' self-management, use of time and productivity.

Foucault (1979) has argued that disciplinary practices inserted into modern institutions, such as armies, schools, hospitals and workplaces govern the population unobtrusively through detailed control of individuals in time and space.

> [A]n attempt is also made to assure the quality of time used: constant supervision, the pressure of supervisors, the elimination of anything that might disturb or distract; it is a question of constituting a totally useful time. (Foucault 1979, p.150)

While Foucault described the modern factory, he could just as easily be talking about the school. The emphasis in the reports is on productive use of time and the avoidance of anything which may interfere with that. The pressure on teachers to produce well-behaved, productive, literate students translates into the vocabulary of report cards and classrooms. This is a period of discursive change where the literate student in a disadvantaged school is constituted in particular and non-accidental ways. The discourses employed in reporting on school students shape certain possibilities for identities. While the developing child of the eighties is still visible here, there is a new urgency about productivity, behavioural self-control and working within time limits. The formation of the 'new worker' required by fast capitalist industrial information societies is in process here.

How and why the literate student in a disadvantaged school such as Banfield is discursively constructed as 'worker' and what the social and material effects are or might be in students' life trajectories are important and complex ethical questions. Predicting or evaluating the outcomes of such an education are beyond the scope of this project but are clearly important questions for later research. I move now to the report card archive of Carlo, in order to look more closely at the shaping of literacy and the related construction of school success and failure.

9.4 The construction of the literate subject across a school career

As I have discussed in Chapters Four and Five, the late eighties and early nineties were a period of discursive turmoil and contestation in school education. The romance and optimism of progressivism were under attack from both the right and the left in terms of alleged student outcomes. The right made claims about literacy crises and the left argued that disadvantaged students were failed by schooling and school literacies. Through an analysis of the report archive of one child across his primary school career, I examine how a multiplicity of discourses collide and compete in producing the literate student subject. It is evident in Carlo's report archive that progressive discourses ('taking children from where they are at') coexist with and are reshaped by managerial discourses ('productivity', 'time management' and 'standards').

Carlo's corpus of reports can be read as the dossier of a literate subject. In analysing Carlo's report file my focus is upon what counts as literacy and how Carlo performs according to changing and non-changing criteria. I read the reports historically making

reference to dominant educational discourses especially those which relate to literacy education. My aim was to consider the discursive construction of the literate subject, with reference to one student. What do Carlo's reports say about: Who Carlo can/should be? What must be transformed? What must Carlo do and be to be a success in the literacy classroom? What changes and what remains the same over his primary school career? Focussing in particular on the literacy related entries, I followed Carlo's school career at Banfield through an analysis of his reports from 1989 (the earliest on file) to 1993 making comparisons across the five year period. Through this longitudinal corpus, I worked towards historicising and contextualising the discursive construction of the contemporary literate subject at Banfield and I considered continuities and discontinuities as they related to one child's school experience.

I decided to analyse Carlo's reports for a number of reasons. Along with his siblings he had attended the school for most of his school career. Carlo had grown up in the local vicinity and, like many other families in this community, his parents had experienced longterm unemployment. As is noted in Section 9.3.3 Carlo, had been identified as having needs in literacy and spoke English as a second language. Carlo then was not an unusual student in the context of a disadvantaged school community. When I visited the school, I worked closely with Carlo's class. His teacher regularly described her concerns about the standard of his written work. I worked with his younger sister in another class where the teacher's story about Adrianna was similar. An older sibling of Carlo's attended the same high school as my son so I regularly encountered Carlo and his family at local events such as weekend soccer matches. The family supported their children by regular attendance at school-related events. When I came to Carlo's dossier I was informed by my regular contact with him and his family both in and out of school.

Carlo's report archive began at grade three and concluded with grade seven. Reading the corpus of Carlo's school reports retrospectively was akin to reading a narrative of a child's life at school – a series of regular updates on Carlo as student. It also illustrated how the reporting of literacy was done over this period by a number of teachers. We can see how different aspects of literacy are made to count differently at different times. In Figures 9.4a to 9.4l, I include literacy-related excerpts from each report starting with his early school career and concluding with a report made in the middle of Carlo's final year at Banfield.

Figure 9.4a Carlo Grade 3 First report early 89 (First term)

LANGUAGE ARTS

WRITING
Carlo's writing skills have become such that he is able to construct short stories quite well, using fullstops and capital letters. His spelling has improved and now displays an understanding of the sounds that make up words. Carlo is capable of presenting neat work.

READING
Carlo's reading has become more fluent this year. He has the potential to be a good reader in the future if he continues practising at school and at home. He has shown a positive attitude towards books of all types and has learnt many new things through reading.

Figure 9.4b Carlo Grade 3 Second report 26/6/89

[No headings for language arts/reading/writing - all references to literacy selected]

Carlo's reading has improved tremendously this year. He has developed a broader knowledge of words and sounds and is coping well with more difficult books to read. He is very motivated to read and his confidence is such that he is able to make good attempts at difficult words and sentences. He has been very responsible about borrowing and returning class books.

In writing Carlo has begun to produce more! He is enjoying writing stories which are longer and contain more difficult vocabulary. He is beginning to understand the need for punctuation, and is practising fullstops and capital letters in his work. His time with Mrs. A. has been valuable, as he has become more attentive towards the whole reading and writing area. He has grown in confidence because of the extra attention, and loves sharing his achievements with myself and the other children.

Figure 9.4c Carlo Grade 3 Third report 4/12/89

[No headings for language arts/reading/writing - all references to literacy selected]

Academically Carlo has become much more attentive and he has been able to concentrate well at reading and writing times. He has become an independent reader who enjoys reading to me, and to the class. He is now able to read more difficult books using sounding out methods to help him with hard words.

In writing Carlo is much more motivated, producing longer stories which he is happy to do rough copies and good copies of. His spelling and punctuation skills have improved over the year as has his neatness of writing. Carlo should be proud of the great effort he put into his project on the 'Grand Prix'.

Figure 9.4d Carlo Grade 4 First report 21/3/90

LANGUAGE

Carlo usually writes in short bursts, which are vividly descriptive. He enjoys following a story with a picture, using this as a visual extension to his thinking. Generally he finds it far more exhilarating to discuss his thoughts and adventures! He attempts to self-correct his work, by circling words which he is unsure of spelling.

Carlo generally takes time settling down to tasks, but when started he records quickly. There is a need to develop more refined listening skills, which could improve concentration and accuracy.

Figure 9.4e Carlo Grade 4 Second report 3/8/90

LANGUAGE

Carlo writes short amounts often rushing his work. He is often the first person to finish a story. He writes one long sentence joined by the words "and when". At times his handwriting is very large and untidy. When Carlo takes time with his writing it is neat and carefully presented. He has shown that he is capable of a higher standard of work but finds it difficult to remain on task. Yet when he is congratulated on a very good piece of work, he is very proud and enthusiastic. He needs someone to look at his work regularly. Perhaps he could practise his writing at home. It would be to Carlo's advantage to practise his reading more too.

Figure 9.4f Carlo Grade 4 Third report 8/12/90

[No headings and no specific literacy references]

He loves people paying attention to him particularly when he has worked hard to finish a task. Often his true ability is affected by his lack of concentration. ..In order for any marked progress to occur, Carlo needs to become more dedicated and confident. At times he is capable of neat and accurate presentations but that is dependent on how he is feeling.

Figure 9.4g Carlo Grade 5 First report 11/9/91

[No headings for language arts/reading/writing - all references to literacy selected]

Carlo finds some areas of his learning challenging and I am encouraging him to listen attentively, stay on task, complete work started and work independently.
Carlo is confident when working in a group and he is developing appropriate group work skills. Carlo responds well to encouragement and he is very proud of work that he is able to present to an audience.

Figure 9.4h Carlo Grade 5 Second report 9/12/91

[No headings for language arts/reading/writing - all references to literacy selected]

Carlo is a lively and energetic member of the class. He has made a determined effort this term in some areas of his work. However, he is still finding some areas challenging.
He has shown a development in his understanding and knowledge of spelling skills and strategies and this has been evident in his writing.

Carlo now has an understanding that writing is for different purposes and has different styles and with support he has shown evidence of success. However, he is still having difficulty in putting his thoughts and ideas in to the written form. His initial enthusiasm in many activities is often not sustained to complete a task thoroughly. Carlo needs to be encouraged to read and write more daily.

Figure 9.4i Carlo Grade 6 First report April 1992

[No headings for language arts/reading/writing - all references to literacy selected. Full report in figure 9.4.1e]

Our recent language work represented a major challenge for Carlo and he worked hard to meet it. During this work Carlo began to realise the importance of managing his time wisely. He is currently developing the skill of breaking the large task into smaller bits and then working through them, step by step. He is beginning to realise the need to clarify the task when he is unsure and to seek the help that he needs. He is gradually becoming aware of his own responsibility in his learning. With continued practice and encouragement Carlo will further develop in this area.

Carlo's main area of need at this stage is reading. He needs support and daily practice. I am encouraging Carlo to regularly change his book, to read at home and to read to me. He is showing positive signs of growth.

Figure 9.4j Carlo Grade 6 Second report 15/9/92

[No headings for language arts/reading/writing - all references to literacy selected]

Carlo's has approached his recent research work on dolphins with great enthusiasm and genuine interest. Consequently this has helped him produce some good quality work of which he is very proud. He gathered information, sorted it into categories and then used the computer to present his information which is to be included in his group's big book. He has enjoyed using the computer and has helped others to learn how to use it.
During lesson time Carlo participates enthusiastically, asking questions and joining in class discussions. He offers good opinions and suggestions during class meetings where he is becoming aware and more respectful of others' opinions.

Figure 9.4k Carlo Grade 6 Third report December 1992

[The report is organised under headings, two of which relate specifically to literacy]

LANGUAGE ARTS:
Carlo's research on Greek gods and symbols produced some interesting and imaginative results. Carlo would benefit more from a greater effort to complete class tasks. This he has been encouraged to do with mixed results. His artistic contribution reflected creativity.

LANGUAGE:
Carlo tried hard to read fluently and well. He has been encouraged to read more at home. His spelling, grammar and sentence construction has benefited from the extra time spent with him. Carlo is able to express his ideas clearly and participates enthusiastically in class discussions.

Figure 9.4l Carlo Grade 7 First report April/May 1993

Part of an 'evaluation book'. No headings for language arts/reading/writing- all references to literacy selected]

Carlo has improved in his ability to read, to write and to research. He is more confident to read aloud. He is confident to write information in his own words. He asks for help in conferencing. His very real challenges lie in Spelling, Handwriting and in copying.
He needs to further develop strategies for word attack. He needs to carefully copy words. He needs to break up the words and he must apply all previous teaching to the word. Carlo is taking more responsibility for writing words but for his success he must take responsibility himself. He must see the value in correct Spelling and must always apply the strategies he is learning. Only he can do it.

Much could be said about Carlo's reports. Together they represent a fascinating account of Carlo's primary school life as told by a series of teacher assessors. I do not attempt to summarise Carlo's school history here. Readers will no doubt already have constructed their own theories. Nor do I deal with these texts through an in-depth analysis. Here I take a wide view of the reports as a cumulatively constructed text which tells particular stories about literacy, competing pedagogies and Carlo as a primary school graduate. I confine myself to some comments about changing formations of school literacies, the competing discourses at work in constituting the student subject during this period and some observations about Carlo as the object of professional knowledges.

9.4.1 What counts as literacy in the late eighties and early nineties? Looking through Carlo's reports

Five years is a short period within which to consider change. However this particular five year period was, as I have discussed previously, one of considerable change at Banfield and therefore I anticipated some traces of this contestation to be evident in the official school reports. Reading across the report cards I listed what was reported during the period in regard to Carlo's literacy. In brief, over this time the following aspects of Carlo's literacy performance were reported:

- writing (including spelling, handwriting, copying and punctuation);
- reading (including reading aloud, borrowing habits, difficulty of book);
- areas of challenge (including reading, spelling and handwriting);
- research work (including the Grand Prix and Dolphins);
- using the computer;
- behaviour during literacy lessons (including enthusiastic oral participation);
- suggested changes to Carlo's literacy behaviour (including the need to practise reading and writing at home and to complete tasks)

I have tabulated the references under these broad headings (based on the teachers' divisions and namings) in order that readers can see at a glance what was reported in different years of schooling and what wasn't. Tables 9.4.1a to 9.4.1e represent a composite of the references made to literacy in the reports for each grade.

Table 9.4.1a How Carlo's literacy is reported: Grade 3

Behaviour during literacy lessons	Suggested changes to behaviour
• more attentive to the whole reading and writing area • more attentive • able to concentrate well during reading and writing times • great effort • loves sharing his achievements	nil

Writing	Reading
• using fullstops and capital letters • produce more • enjoying writing • understands the need for punctuation • practising full stops and capital letters • longer and more difficult vocabulary • more motivated • producing longer stories • happy to do rough and good copies • neatness has improved Spelling • understanding sounds that make up words • spelling and [punctuation] skills have improved	• fluent • potential to be a good reader • practising at school and at home • positive attitude towards books of all types • learnt many new things through reading • improvement • broader knowledge of words and sounds • coping with difficult books • motivated to read • good attempts at difficult words • responsible about borrowing and returning books • an independent reader • enjoys reading to me and to the class • able to read more difficult books • using sounding out methods to help him with hard words

Research work	Using the computer
nil	nil

Areas of challenge	Other
nil	nil

Table 9.4.1b How Carlo's literacy is reported: Grade 4

Behaviour during literacy lessons	Suggested changes to behaviour
• takes time settling down to tasks • often rushing his work • the first person to finish • finds it difficult to remain on task • when he is congratulated on a very good piece of work he is proud	• a need to develop more refined listening skills • perhaps he could practice his writing at home • practise his reading more too • needs someone to look at his work regularly

Writing	Reading
• writes in short bursts • vividly descriptive • follows a story with a picture using this as visual extension • finds it far more exhilarating to discuss his thoughts • attempts to self-correct his work • circling words he is unsure of spelling • writes short amounts • writes one long sentence joined by the words 'and when' • when Carlo takes time with his writing it is neat and carefully presented • capable of a higher standard of work	nil

Research work	Using the computer
nil	nil

Areas of challenge	Other
nil	nil

Table 9.4.1c How Carlo's literacy is reported: Grade 5

Behaviour during literacy lessons	Suggested changes to behaviour
• enthusiasm in many activities not sustained to complete a task thoroughly • made a determined effort	• encouraging him to listen attentively, stay on task, complete work started and work independently • needs to be encouraged to read and write more daily
Writing	**Reading**
• now has an understanding that writing is for different purposes and has different styles • still having difficulty in putting his thoughts and ideas in to the written form Spelling • development in his understanding of spelling skills and strategies evident in his writing	nil
Research work	**Using the computer**
nil	nil
Areas of challenge	**Other**
nil	Other areas of learning: • finds some areas of learning challenging • still finding some areas challenging

Table 9.4.1d How Carlo's literacy is reported: Grade 6

Behaviour during literacy lessons	Suggested changes to behaviour
• worked hard • participates enthusiastically • asking questions	• continued practice • greater effort to complete class tasks • encouraged to read more at home
Writing	**Reading**
Spelling, grammar and sentence construction: • benefited from the extra time	• main area of need • positive signs of growth • tried hard to read fluently and well • needs support and daily practice • regularly change his book • read at home and read to me
Research work	**Using the computer**
• On dolphins • On Greek gods and symbols • enthusiasm and genuine interest • produce some good quality work • gathered information, sorted it into categories and then included in the group's big book	• used the computer to present his information • enjoyed using the computer • has helped others learn how to use it
Areas of challenge	**Other**
• major challenge (language work) • currently developing the skills of breaking the large task into smaller bits and then working through them step by step • becoming aware of his own responsibility in his learning	Class meetings and discussions: • offers good opinions and suggestions • joining in • becoming more aware and more respectful of other's opinions • able to express his ideas clearly

Table 9.4.1e How Carlo's literacy is reported: Grade 7

Behaviour during literacy lessons	Suggested changes to behaviour
nil	• needs to further develop strategies for word attack • needs to carefully copy words • needs to break up the words • must apply all previous teaching to the word • must take responsibility himself • must see the value in correct Spelling • must always apply the strategies he is learning
Writing	**Reading**
Write information in his own words • more confident • asks for help in conferencing • his very real challenges lie in Spelling, Handwriting and in copying • taking some responsibility for writing words	Read aloud • more confident
Research work	**Using the computer**
nil	nil
Areas of challenge	**Other**
nil	nil

The tables indicate that what is reported at different times varies. For example, reading is sometimes a key category for reporting and sometimes ignored altogether. After being reported positively in grade three it then disappears in Carlo's grade four and five reports, only to appear again in grade six as a major area of need. By grade seven, Carlo is simply reported to be more confident in reading aloud. In this case it is easy to see how children may become casualties of pedagogical trends. Pedagogical discourses allow children like Carlo to be seen as an 'independent reader' in grade three but for reading to be his 'major area of need' by grade six. The frames for assessment affect what can be seen by the teacher and how it can be reported and produce effects for particular students which may make a difference to their school careers and life choices.

Thus the report card at Banfield is subject to a number of influences including teachers' own particular views of what should count as literacy. A further instance of the somewhat arbitrary and local nature of the construction of successful literacy is the reporting of research work and the use of the computer in grade six which disappears again in grade seven. At this point I discuss briefly two issues relating to the construction of literacy at this historic moment which produces effects for Carlo and his classmates.

The first of these is the question of who is responsible for children's literacy learning. Apart from 1989, when he was in grade three (the year prior to the current principal's arrival at Banfield), teachers usually specified changes Carlo needed to make in order to improve his literacy performance. These include behavioural changes at school and at home. From grades three to six behavioural changes required of Carlo for improved literacy performance at school included him being more attentive, having more

concentration, staying on task, reading and writing more and making more effort. Thus Carlo's improved literacy depends on him becoming a better worker, with the right attitudes and dispositions for school work. This echoes Hunter's argument that 'ethical and literate competencies form a continuum' (Hunter 1994b, p.117).

In the grade seven report the teacher draws on her professional knowledge of literacy development to outline what Carlo must change in regard to his literacy behaviours. However these changes continue to be constituted as Carlo's responsibility. At the same time his improvement is also made contingent on his practising his reading and writing at home. Given that his parents' literacy in English was limited, this emphasis on checking, encouragement and practice at home may be difficult for the family to organise.

In Carlo's reports there is evidence of how literacy problems become individualised and placed at the feet of the child and his family. When the professional action fails, the problem is explained through the psychological analysis of the child's inappropriate attitudes or through a lack of support at home. In either case the report card maintains that literacy difficulties are ultimately personal or family matters for concern. The report card officially documents the school efforts and the child's and his parents' needs to make the right choices. Given that students who have English as a second language and who come from impoverished communities do less well in mainstream measures of literacy assessment, how the report card functions for or against the student recipient needs further investigation. If the report card is to work for the child then any diagnosis of problems needs to be met with appropriately resourced help at school, as appears to have occurred in Carlo's case in grade six.

A second issue which requires further comment here is the changing nature of school literacies. Early on in the reports there were references to stories: 'able to construct short stories', 'enjoying writing stories', 'producing longer stories', 'enjoys following a story with a picture', 'often the first person to finish a story'. From grade five onwards stories are no longer mentioned in Carlo's reports. Rather we hear of Carlo's 'work',' his understanding that writing is for different purposes and has different styles', 'his language work', 'his recent research work', 'some good quality work'. How literacy gets talked about and reported, particularly in reference to Carlo's writing changes over this time. One explanation for such a change relates to the ongoing academic debates of the period in Australia about the importance of students' reading and writing in genres other than personal narrative or story. Teachers at Banfield had participated in professional development courses about genre pedagogy and resource based learning. If it can be assumed that what gets reported indicates what is thought to be important, then

over time it is evident that research, writing for different purposes and Language work come to count and that stories disappear from the reports.

The discursive traces of the report cards indicate which curriculum reforms have impact in what counts as literacy at a particular time and place. Given the emphasis in much literacy related research about the importance of children from diverse and disadvantaged communities having opportunities to tell and write their own stories this closing down of this part of the literacy curriculum may signal a potential problem (Dyson & Genishi 1994). Whenever a narrowing of curriculum occurs it needs to be scrutinised in terms of whose interests are served by such a trend.

Professional development courses in genre pedagogy and resource-based-learning promise better outcomes for disadvantaged students. They also proclaim a different kind of literacy. Teachers at Banfield took such messages seriously and made story writing less important. They worked hard on teaching the genres of power and having children read and write information. At the same time they were under pressure to increase student productivity and outcomes. Thus the word work comes to feature in assessing Carlo's literacy - 'his language work', 'his recent research work', 'some good quality work'. Literacy pedagogy is subject to discourses other than the educational in its formations of the literate student. Carlo's reports provide further evidence of the impact of managerial discourses. For teachers who work with and for disadvantaged communities the pressure to attend to new priorities is great. However despite the inroads made by new pedagogical trends and managerial discourses I do not mean to suggest that other educational discourses were completely cut out. In fact what is interesting is to see the ways in which an amalgam of discourses and practices are employed in compiling the student subject in the report card. By way of illustration I turn now to the ways in which progressive discourses of development were utilised during this period

9.4.2 Discourses of development: talking positive

In Carlo's grade three reports progressive discourses of development are easiest to discern. Here we can see a teacher whose report writing is informed by the proposition that children, given the right conditions and support, develop naturally and at their own rates. Thus the teacher writer focusses on what the child can do with print. Such discourse was dominant in the Early Literacy Inservice Course (ELIC) which all early years teachers in South Australia undertook in the late eighties. Teachers were encouraged to welcome errors as signs of growth and see mistakes as evidence of new learning. The emergent literacy learner was encouraged to take risks. Teachers learnt how to watch children for signs of growth and to write assessments which reported positively

on 'what the child can do now' rather than what he or she could not do. Carlo's grade three reports indicate that his teacher has been extremely diligent in following this professional advice.

Carlo's grade three literacy is constructed in terms of writing skills and reading. Evidence of development is in Carlo's production of more text ('produce more', 'longer stories'), reading more. Other evidence of improvement are Carlo's 'attempts' to read more difficult vocabulary and books. Attitudes are also important as indicated by words such as 'enjoy', 'motivated', 'happy', 'positive', 'loves'. The teacher writer portrays Carlo as a child who is developing as a reader and as a writer and who is 'more attentive to the whole reading and writing area'. On the surface Carlo is doing just fine when the progressive criteria of healthy attitude and risk-taking are applied to his performance. However careful analysis of the text indicates that the teacher's positive evaluation is not unequivocal. Use of words such as 'more', 'longer', 'improved', 'capable', 'potential', 'now', 'coping', 'difficult', 'attempts', 'hard' and 'effort' signal Carlo's qualified success in early school literacy. Carlo's positive assessment is on the basis of his improvement, but Carlo has not yet made it. He 'is capable of', 'beginning to understand' and 'has the potential to'. The message is that Carlo is now beginning to do what the literate student should and that if he keeps practising he will improve on the things that count: longer stories, spelling, punctuation and neatness.

The unstated model student happily reads and writes increasingly longer and more difficult stories and attends to correctness. A parent reader of these reports is reassured that what should be happening for Carlo's literacy is indeed happening. But the developmental discourse – becoming, beginning, developing, improving – makes it difficult to know where Carlo really stands.

By grade four Carlo's new teacher, whilst still using positive developmental discourse, begins to slip in more direct warnings that Carlo's continued development and improvement is contingent on his making some changes. His reports for this year can be seen as expressions of conditional or contingent improvement. Carlo will improve if he:

- develops more refined listening skills
- could practise his writing at home
- practise his reading more too.

In grade four Carlo's reports are laden with words and phrase which signal conditional growth: 'at times', 'when Carlo takes time', 'but', 'yet', 'perhaps', 'could', 'particularly' and 'when'. The teacher summarises this stance in the third report for the year.

> Often his true ability is affected by his lack of concentration. In order for any marked progress to occur, Carlo needs to become more dedicated and confident.

In this years reports is also the first indication from a teacher that Carlo prefers the oral to the written mode.

> Generally he finds it far more exhilarating to discuss his thoughts and adventures.

Thus it seems that Carlo has not continued to produce more as he did in grade three or that the amount expected for grade four is more again than Carlo produces. In grade five this theme is continued. At this point the teacher writer states directly, if euphemistically, that Carlo finds some areas of learning challenging. Whilst maintaining the progressive developmental discourse of what Carlo can do here these are counterbalanced with what Carlo does not do.

Carlo's literate performance is thus subjected to a kind of heteroglossia. At times he appears to be making progress, at others he is a cause for concern. Until grades five, six and seven however, there is no clear statement that Carlo's literacy performance requires anything other than patience, effort and practice. He is in a sense simultaneously protected and put at risk by the dominance of developmental theories in progressive educational discourse of that period. How this works can be seen more acutely through an analysis of the ongoing theme of spelling which appears in some form throughout Carlo's primary schooling.

9.4.3 Spelling: Developmental site or moral responsibility?

While some things change across the years some things stay the same, in each grade Carlo's spelling remains a category for reporting. However a review of the references made to spelling across the corpus shows that while it is always a specified area of reporting for Carlo, how it is reported over time changes markedly.

Table 9.4.3 Comments on spelling - Carlo

Grade three	His spelling has improved and now displays an understanding of the sounds that make up words. His spelling and punctuation skills have improved throughout the year.
Grade four	He attempts to self-correct his work, by circling words which he is unsure of spelling.
Grade five	He has shown a development in his understanding and knowledge of spelling skills and strategies and this has been evident in his writing.
Grade six	His spelling, grammar and sentence construction has benefited from the extra time spent with him.
Grade seven	His very real challenges lie in Spelling, Handwriting and copying. He needs to further develop strategies for word attack. He needs to carefully copy words. He needs to break up the words and he must apply all previous teaching to the word. Carlo is taking more responsibility for writing words but for his success he must take responsibility himself. He must see the value in correct Spelling and must always apply the strategies he is learning. Only he can do it.

While spelling is never absent from Carlo's reports it is not explicitly defined as a problem until his final year of primary school. In earlier years the reports suggest that his spelling is improving. This talk of improvement implies that spelling is a difficulty but reassures the reader that it's getting better. Carlo understands the sounds that make up words, attempts to self-correct and had developed an understanding of spelling skills and strategies. In grade six he has 'benefited from the extra help' and he has received help in spelling, grammar and sentence construction. However by the middle of grade seven Carlo's spelling is made the teacher's major focus in the report. In the early years of Carlo's schooling two things are happening which serve to make spelling visible, but not a cause for concern. Firstly the process writing movement constructed spelling errors as signs of development. Secondly Carlo's early childhood status protects him from the expectation of correctness as a norm throughout his early and middle primary school days.

By the time Carlo reaches grade seven, however, process pedagogies have been severely challenged particularly in terms of the academic outcomes they produce for disadvantaged students (see for example Delpit 1988). Newspaper publications have fabricated a literacy crisis. His elementary school career is near its end. He will soon move on to high school, perhaps taking this report with him to show his prospective principal. How spelling is reported in these circumstances changes.

While spelling maintained its place as something to be addressed over the five year period, how it is reported alters. What can be said about spelling in 1989 differs from what can be said in 1993. In 1989, 1990 and 1991 Carlo's spelling is reported in the context of his writing development. His teachers employ the rhetoric of process-writing and developmental literacy pedagogies to account for Carlo's spelling: 'displays an understanding of sounds', 'self-corrects', 'circling words he is unsure of'. So long as there is improvement along the developmental grid, there is no problem. During this

period Carlo is within the norms of 'healthy development' as defined by progressive accounts of literacy. In 1992 his teacher reports that he has extra time spent with him on spelling, grammar and sentence construction and that he has benefited from that. Carlo's receiving extra assistance is a clear sign that teachers perceive him as having difficulty in these areas. Nevertheless the positive reporting is maintained.

By 1993 however Carlo's time to develop appears to have run out! In this report Spelling (this time capitalised by the teacher writer) takes on a new significance in Carlo's formation as a literate subject.

In his grade seven report Carlo's spelling becomes an issue of moral identity. If Carlo is to have success he 'must take responsibility himself'. The repeated 'must' signals obligation. The obligation to take responsibility for oneself is a continued theme throughout the report corpus. It may refer to on task behaviour, meeting deadlines, abiding by school rules, treating others with respect and many other attributes required of the ideal Banfield student. On this occasion spelling becomes central to Carlo's success and only he can take responsibility and fix the problem. The teacher writer lays out the pedagogy required – what Carlo must do in order to become properly literate or a success. The many years of time to develop now behind him Carlo must now do all that his previous teachers have told him in order to spell correctly and he must see the value in correct spelling.

In this context Carlo's literacy is no longer subject to the judgement of the patient, positive kid-watcher, but to a discourse of accountability to which even the school student must defer. All of the previous teaching he has been given must now pay off. Carlo must now fix himself using the resources his previous teachers have given him. Not to learn to spell is irresponsible on his part. One could read Carlo's reports as an exercise in unfairness. We might ask how is it that Carlo's spelling could be reported in positive terms for so long only to become a major cause of concern in his final year of schooling.

I want to argue that 1993 report results not from any unfairness or lack of attention to a learner at risk, but becomes possible at this time in a way that it could not have been written earlier. Changes in how the literate student is reported in 1989 and in 1993 exemplifies a discoursal change in education. It is not that the 1993 teacher writer suddenly blames Carlo, but that the kinds of student she is asked to produce in 1993 constitutes Carlo's spelling as a problem. If Carlo's spelling is a problem, then treating Carlo wholistically (because progressive discourses are not completely absent, merely displaced) then Carlo himself becomes a problem. He is constituted as a student who has

major work to do upon himself. Spelling becomes a moral issue - something which can be modified through taking responsibility for oneself.

9.4.4 Carlo: Primary school graduate?

To conclude this section I refer to three further documents found in Carlo's file which indicate further complexities in Carlo's life as a student which are not foregrounded in the other reports. These include an undated statement from his ESL teacher (see Figure 9.4.4a), a statement written by the principal for Carlo to take to his interview at his preferred high school (see Figure 9.4.4b) and a statement from Carlo in his 'evaluation book' written during his final year of elementary schooling (see Figure 9.4.4c). Firstly I present the English as a Second Language teacher's report.

Figure 9.4.4a Carlo's English as a Second Language Report (undated)

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

READING: Although Carlo really wants to learn to read he needs so much work to do before he improves. He reads the same books over and over, yet he knows them by heart. When I question a certain word he usually has little idea of what it is. At this stage he must begin looking at word structure, (beginning sounds) before he attempts anything else.

WRITING: Over the past few weeks I have seen improvement as I have put pressure on him to concentrate and think before he writes. Obviously Carlo needs to master the alphabet before he can read. Follow up work at home will surely be appreciated.

GRAMMAR: Carlo still needs to learn more than half the alphabet. He seems rather immature and cannot concentrate for very long. Carlo doesn't seem to remember simple things we have done. I am sure if he concentrated he will do better.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS: Occasionally Carlo mixes up his spoken questions and phrases. Time at school and remembering work done will slowly overcome some problems.
Overall I find Carlo to be a cheerful friendly boy who is liked by everyone.
Signed............................... Date...............................

The specialist ESL teacher is much more direct in her assessment of Carlo's literacy. Perhaps because he goes to her already marked out as a problematic student she appears less concerned about presenting a negative account. Ironically, Carlo is criticised for his compliance with progressive pedagogical approaches – reading 'the same books over and over, yet he knows them by heart'. The ESL teacher spells out a skills approach to solving Carlo's problems – looking at word structure, mastering the alphabet. Yet she also prescribes more work at home, more concentration, maturity and remembering as key generic processes by which these skills will be attained. Having laid out rather bluntly that Carlo has difficulties she concluded by softening her assessment with the coda: 'Overall I find Carlo to be a cheerful friendly boy who is liked by everyone'. In the report card teachers make wholistic evaluations of the person who presents, combining professional discourses which are often contradictory with moral pronouncements.

Carlo began his childhood as disadvantaged in that his parents had limited financial resources. His own linguistic resources as a bilingual speaker are not useful to him until his final year of primary schooling when he learns Spanish. It is difficult to see most of Carlo's school reports providing him or his family with any assistance at the time or in the future. Yet, as I have suggested earlier, such reports can and do sometimes have specific effects as was the case when Carlo required a principal's report for entry to a high school for which he was not zoned geographically. I move now to consider this document.

Figure 9.4.4b Carlo's Application for Special Entry to Winefield High School

REPORT BY THE PRINCIPAL OF THE PRESENT SCHOOL
This report to be forwarded by the Principal to Winefield High School, Ninth Street, Winefield. 5999 before 21st May, 1993.

Ability: (across subject areas)
An enthusiastic student.
Has some limitation in written language area. Reflects language experiences of family (ESL)
Enthusiastic approach to school life and learning.

Achievement: (in subject areas)
Average levels of achievement.
Good attitude to learning.
Very interested in Spanish lessons where he is doing well.

Suitability:
Whilst he has some limitations in English - reading and some aspects of writing - his enthusiasm for learning should not be discounted.

Signature:

Written reports of students can make a difference to their immediate and long term futures. When Carlo's primary school principal is required to fill in the proforma for his preferred high school (a state high school with preference given to students with demonstrated language or musical proficiencies) he reaches a key transition point in his educational career. For the first time in his schooling it was possible that he might be denied access on the basis of his academic achievement. Here the principal draws upon a progressivist discourse, with its sympathetic and at times euphemistic accounts of the student with some direct facts about Carlo's language and academic proficiencies. She does not sidestep the problems Carlo has in the 'written language area', but plays down and tries to counter-balance these limitations with an emphasis on Carlo's enthusiasm, which she reiterates three times. In this document it is evident how educators who are committed to social justice, such as this principal, struggle to make a difference for students such as Carlo in these times. She works to keep his options open without making false claims for what Carlo can do.

To conclude this analysis of Carlo's school history as told through his report dossier I include an extract from Carlo's evaluation book at the end of term one of his final year at Banfield.

Figure 9.4.4c A statement from Carlo in the 'evaluation book'

CHALLENGE My personal challenge is to finish all my work off that we have been given. IN THE NEXT TEN WEEKS I WANT TO ACHIEVE 1. I will like to be more organised in the morning 2. I will like to do my homework when I am supposed to. 3. I will like to be more on task than off task. 4. Reckon I can be more cooperation. This is how I will achieve these goals. I reckon if I will work harder I could achieve the goals that I have written down.　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Carlo 24/4/93

In this self-evaluation Carlo demonstrated how he had internalised the managerial discourse used by his teachers and could reproduce it on demand. However his proficiency with the grammar of written English still identifies him as a student with difficulties – difficulties which relate largely to Carlo's learning English as a second language. Yet Carlo, like his teachers, constructs the solution to these difficulties as simply 'working harder'. As far as it is possible to tell from this document Carlo has the discursive technologies of the self required of the successful student, yet his future is far from assured.

During the period of this research I revisited Carlo's principal and asked her how the graduates of the 1992/1993 years were going at high school. She told me that Carlo had left high school at fifteen as soon as he was no longer required to attend. Both he and his older brother were unemployed and in the principal's terms now spent a lot of time 'hanging around the streets'. Carlo's story is too common. Despite teachers who were committed to Carlo and his peers, there were many forces which worked against him having a successful school career and learning the kinds of literate competencies that might give him more chances in an unfair society where structural inequalities guarantee an uphill battle for Carlo and his siblings.

Carlo's self-evaluation is one example of the way the graduating senior class of 1992 and 1993 assessed themselves. The final section of this chapter focusses on how Carlo's peers wrote about themselves at this time and in this context.

9.5 The self-assessing student

> I would say that of now I am interested, in fact, in the way the subject constitutes himself in an active fashion, by the practices of the self, these practices are nevertheless not something the individual invents by himself. They are patterns he finds in his culture and which are proposed, suggested and imposed on him by his culture, his society, his social group. (Foucault, in Bernauer & Rasmussen 1988, p.11)

> The self is made an agent of self-control (Fairclough 1990, p.71)

An emphasis on the self, and along with that an emphasis on self-management, is not restricted to educational discourses and sites but appears in economic and psychological discourses in the workplace as well as other institutional sites of contemporary life (Rose 1989; Fairclough 1990; Miller & Rose 1993). The ideal child subject of the national Early Literacy Inservice Course was self-motivated, self-directed and self-regulating - 'a healthy functioner' (Education Department of South Australia 1984). It was the era of independent learning (Hancock & Comber 1987). Teacher as assessor was replaced with teacher as 'kid-watcher' and friend who knew individuals so well that teaching could be responsive to the individual's needs. In this context, student self-assessment became a popular practice in progressive literacy curriculum and authentic assessment. What is important for my purposes is understanding the conditions in which 'self-assessment' became a normal classroom practice and what kinds of local rationalities informed its use.

It was argued that having students assess their work is a crucial part of them developing meta-cognitive awareness and being able to take control of their own learning. In some cases students' written self-assessments were sent home as a supplement with the official school report. Self-assessment continues to feature regularly in books and journals about authentic literacy assessment, which is a major theme of wholistic approaches to literacy pedagogy. In some cases it is recognised as a way of finding out about students' achievement levels and is enshrined in official policy.

It is important here that I make my own standpoint and history clear on this practice. During the eighties I actively popularised this technique through my writing, teaching materials and talks for teachers. For example, I claimed the following benefits during a talk at a State conference on reading.

> It provides an opportunity for the children to become articulate about their feelings and reactions to a learning problem and work out approaches which will assist them.
> It requires the children to reflect on themselves as writers and think about the challenges and satisfactions.
> It provides the teacher with valuable information about each child's self perceptions.
> [Writing goals helps] children become more self-aware about their personal learning needs and styles.
> Setting goals is one aspect of the children beginning to achieve control and be successful.
> (Comber 1989)

I promoted this practice as a potentially empowering use of literacy. In the section which follows I now re-visit this practice employing Foucauldian interpretive analytics, particularly his insights about disciplinary practices, such as surveillance and the examination and the ways in which technologies of the self are deployed in the government of modern states.

Self-assessment is but one of an ensemble of school literacy practices which require forms of presentation of the self. Writing requiring self-disclosure on the part of the student allows teachers access to students' lives. Students' classroom writing, despite promises of its liberatory potential, continues to be a site for surveillance and examination. The humble morning talk or 'show and tell' requires a version of one's life experiences or a selection of possessions to be exhibited. Thus literacy events which have made claims to giving students a voice and providing opportunities for personal empowerment become instances where the individual can be monitored and known. Fairclough coins the term 'discourse technologies' for the specialised communication practices, such as the interview, which have emerged from psychological discourses, and used across a variety of institutional settings (Fairclough 1990, p.58). Other technologies are designed for the construction and maintenance of the self.

> Through self-inspection, self-problematization, self-monitoring, and confession we evaluate ourselves according to the criteria provided for us by others. (Rose 1989, p.11)

The argument is that our disciplinary society employs particular techniques to govern the population. Similarly in school literate practices techniques for knowing, classifying and monitoring the individual are often language based. Students' literate work builds the dossier on the individual.

Whilst different Banfield teachers claimed to identify with different pedagogical positions, all regularly used written forms of self-assessment. My concern is how and why did this technology come to be used in this educational institution at this time. In what ways is the student constituted through self-assessment? In what ways might the students' self-assessments be constrained by the discourses authorised by their teachers at this time? I now discuss two entries in some detail and draw on excerpts from other students' self assessments to illustrate themes.

Students were asked to complete their weekly goals in their self evaluation books for selected school subjects, for behaviour and for one 'other' area selected by the student, such as sport (See Figure 9.5a). The subjects usually include the traditional 'basics':

reading, writing and mathematics. The emphasis on literacy is indicated in the inclusion of spelling and word study. The inclusion of behaviour shows the teacher's other priority. Students pasted this form into their self-evaluation books, wrote goals at the beginning of the week and on Fridays they recorded how well they had performed. The example in Figure 9.5a was produced by a grade six male student.

Figure 9.5a Goals written by a grade six male student

WEEKLY GOALS	DATE:
Behaviour	• My goal this week is to sit down and get right to work
Reading	• I will read at least 40 pages in my book
Writing	• I will finish Ms. A's work
Spelling	• I will spell at least 15 out of 20 in spelling
Word study	• I will finish my creature feature
Maths	• I will catch up with work with Mr D
Other	• I will make half a century this week in cricket

The self-assessment form specifies the areas for self-monitoring. The teacher's emphases here are basic areas of primary school curriculum – literacy and maths – with literacy featuring in four of the six specified areas to be assessed. Along with the named areas of academic knowledge students must produce a written goal about their behaviour. If students follow the format they will consider behaviour first. In the case of the student above his approach to behaviour matches his other specified goals in the subject areas. He will 'get right to work', 'finish' and 'catch up'. The work he promises to do is described in terms of quantity - 'at least'. The work he promises to do is for or with teachers. Other students' self-assessments for this week reveal similar goals:

- I might finish one or two chapters
- Try and finish Maths to one hundred
- Getting my book finished
- Finishing find three adjectives
- Getting my art work done
- Concentrate on my work and do my work quietly
- Finish my contract(due Friday)
- Finish My Grandmothers (due Thursday)
- I would work quietly at work time
- This week I need to finish the spelling words
- I will work hard in another lesson

Like their teachers' assessments, the students' self-assessments employ a discourse of work: time management, finishing things off; getting a specified amount done; working hard; due dates. In addition some students make promises about how this will be achieved. They will work quietly and concentrate. The achievement of work is allied with

self-control. Students' self assessments reveal fragments of classroom conversations and teacher pep talks. In other words in the self-assessment the student takes on the teacher's language to set goals and evaluate. Students' writings reproduce their teachers' reprimands and reminders. They claim to keep watch on themselves, examine themselves and record their own results. The students read the situation and used a specific kind of discourse in their goal-setting.

The sameness of students' responses indicates how powerfully the classroom culture informs which discourses can be employed in self-assessment. It is by no means an open-ended proforma to be used in the construction of the student self. The construction of a particular kind of student is required. The broader study indicates a discourse of work is present across many school texts – in newsletters to parents, teachers reports on students, principal's feedback to teachers, staffroom discussions and interviews. Before leaving this example I return to the self-assessment made by the same grade six student at the end of the week. (See Figure 9.5b.)

Figure 9.5b Self-assessment by a grade six male student

Behaviour	• I achieved my goal because I sat right down and got on with my work.
Reading	• No I didn't achieve my goal because it was too many pages to read.
Writing	• Yes I did achieve my goal because I tried hard.
Spelling	• No I didn't achieve my goal because we have not had our spelling test yet.
Word study	• Yes I did because I tried hard.
Maths	• Yes I did because I tried hard.
Others	• No because I did not play much.

Thus the student is required to return to his promises and write an assessment of how he went in achieving his goals and to explain both success and failure. Where the student has been successful he has attributed it to his own efforts and presents himself as someone who 'tries hard' and 'gets on with' his work. Where he has not met his goal various reasons are provided, such as the target being too high. While he accounts for himself, simultaneously, in noting that the test was not given, he monitors the teacher. Thus the student's self-assessment records in some detail attitudes, behaviours, amounts, things done and not done. In this way students and teachers are recorded in a 'network of writing'.

Here the technology of self-assessment is infused with the vocabulary of work. Other educators have noted the colonisation of education by managerial discourse and economic rationalist discourses (Fairclough 1990; Lingard et al. 1993). I do not make the case that self-assessment in schools is always so used. Self-assessment constructs many versions

of the self. It was deployed in this instance to have students constitute themselves as workers.

A discourse technology such as self-assessment can be deployed to do different kinds of work. A few weeks later in the same classroom the proforma has different headings: Handwriting; Swimming; Reading; Behaviour (yard). In addition it has a new section at the bottom of the form entitled Reflection. The example shown in Figure 9.5c was produced by the same student as in Figures 9.5a and 9.5b. Thus as the teacher or school agenda changes the self-assessment technology has new targets. On this occasion behaviour in the yard is specified. Here what counts as behaviour differs from the classroom behaviour. As his goal the student writes 'I will not get in a fight.' and in answer to whether he achieved his goal, 'Yes because I am a good boy.' The student subject, as defined by the self-assessment proforma, is not unitary. This male student must regulate his use of physical violence in the school yard. This self-control means that he can describe himself as a good boy and it is because he is a good boy that he can avoid getting into fights. Thus the good boy is one who does not fight, tries hard and finishes his work.

Figure 9.5c Self-assessment of weekly goals

WEEKLY GOALS	DID I ACHIEVE MY GOAL? WHY/WHY NOT?
Handwriting:	
I will finish my handwriting this week	Yes because I tried hard
Swimming:	
I will make the top swimming class	Yes because I am a good swimmer
Reading:	
I will finish my book	Yes because I was nearly finished before
Behaviour (yard):	
I will not get in a fight	Yes because I am a good boy
Reflection: Week 5 March 6th	
I think that I am doing good at swimming and my handwriting	

Other versions of the ideal student are constructed. These do not replace the earlier version but name different aspects of the school student which can be accounted for and recorded. Observational knowledge of this student confirms that his struggle to avoid getting into fights continued throughout the school year. The self-assessment proforma records it as an issue identified by the student himself. In print he records his problem. In print he records his 'goodness'. The extent to which self-assessment of behaviour is a gendered practice is evident when the goals of the group of girls are compared with those of the group of boys in relation to behaviour in the yard. When the students apply the

behavioural grids to their performance they do so in ways which intersect with gendered constructions of identity. 'Being a good boy' is not the same as 'being a good girl'.

Thus the construction of appropriate behaviour in the yard is not surprisingly quite different in the girl's self-assessments. The girls included: 'No yelling, playing games, not sitting down;' 'My goal will be to do the right behaviour;' 'I will speak softly in the yard'. My review of the students' self-evaluations over time indicates that this occasion was not unique. Typically boys read 'behaviour in the yard' as about self-control in terms their physical actions towards others, such as not fighting. Girls were also concerned with self-control in terms of their verbal behaviour, such as not yelling or speaking quietly. Reading across the corpus of self-assessments indicates that good boys don't fight and good girls do not yell. The priority for boys in the school is the regulation of physical actions and for girls the management of their verbal output. Thus the technology of self-assessment involves students in working on their gendered subjectivities.

Surface readings of discourse fail to account for the complexity and multiplicity of subjectivities (Walkerdine 1990, p.135). In this study the analysis of discourse was combined with classroom observations and interviews with students and teachers over an eighteen month period. Texts are not transparent and do not represent anything in the learner that can be directly deduced from their writing. This is a peculiar kind of writing where one writes to document who one is and how well one is doing in designated areas.

Students' self-assessments can be employed as a way of training in certain kinds of self-regulating practices (where children analyse and write about their own behaviour) and as a mechanism of surveillance of the individual that can be checked at a later date by the teacher - a kind of a student produced written confession. It is not my object here to critique self-assessment as a negative practice. Rather self-assessment can be seen to be a productive technology. As a discourse technology it needs to be considered in relation to demands of this institutional workplace at this time. Given the available discourses, outlined in Chapter four and five it is not surprising that self-assessment becomes a regular routine, nor that themes of work and behaviour management are prominent.

Producing self-regulating, self-assessing individuals may be considered mundane goals and as disciplinary practices but they are not insignificant (Tyler 1993).

> Nevertheless, the mundane goals of these normative programmes - those of making children healthier, more articulate and more self-directing - are ones which few modern educators or parents would dismiss lightly. (Tyler 1993, p.53)

Students who can organise their time, control their use of violence, get on with other people and get things finished have learnt much that is important. This kind of training does not necessarily produce repressed automatons (Hunter 1993).

9.6 Summary

Competing discourses produce dilemmas in local workplaces. On the evidence of the corpus of report cards studied, in this school what counted as the ideal student was changing. In the previous decade this community school had taken on a largely pastoral role in helping families experiencing different forms of crisis. Teachers had been encouraged to accept students, foster their individuality and their self-esteem, respond to their individual needs. Traditional academic curriculum had been displaced as a priority by broader and at the same time more immediate personal, social and psychological health of students. Teachers had translated this into classroom practice by emphasising oral discussion, craft, play and singing for example. At the period of this investigation these pastoral concerns were not rejected, but other discourses were added and intersected with the progressive goals in sometimes unpredictable ways. Now in addition to producing happy, stable, healthy, confident children, teachers were charged with producing quality students. High levels of literacy became a social justice agenda item. From teachers' viewpoints if these disadvantaged students were going to succeed they would need to be well-equipped with the competencies 'the clever country' defined as essential.

Caution is needed in analysing the managerial or work discourse. In educational discourse work has had a history of being 'a dirty word' and has been associated with limited pedagogies and outcomes (Anyon 1981; Jones 1989). There is a need to move beyond binary opposites which see play as good for children and work as bad (Walkerdine 1984). Schools are workplaces: both for students and teachers. Like other workplaces they produce pleasure, discomfort, learning, conflict and work amongst other social and personal effects. Educational research has argued that schools reproduce class through different kinds of education for different groups of students (Anyon 1981). School learning which replicates workplace scenarios has been seen as negative and as maintaining inequities.

However, as a number of social commentators has made clear the nature of work is changing. The boundaries between work and leisure are shifting. We cannot simply read off these texts a case of children being trained for low-paying work. In fact one could argue that the kinds of training they are receiving are likely to be useful in high school education, in the workplaces of New Times and in democratic communities. As

numerous educational commentators have pointed out post-industrial societies have needs of new kinds of workers in service, information and technological industries. Fairclough explains the new culture of management.

> [T]he aim is new cultural values, workers who are 'enterprising', self-motivating and self-disciplining, resolving disputes as individuals through negotiation between individuals. (Fairclough 1990, p.58)

Fairclough notes how official language education policies responding to discoursal changes in advertising management and counselling. He cites the example of working in groups as a core competence of Social Skills to underscore the ways in which these other discourses intersect with overlap and in some case colonise educational discourses. Through policy and programs, discoursal change comes to have impact in local sites. Following Foucault, discourses of the new worker can be read as productive. What needs continuing scrutiny are the kinds of student subjects these written self-assessments produce. How is the student subject constrained and delimited? Who can students be? What kinds of literacies can they practise? Rather than providing an occasion for self-awareness which might be considered liberating, these texts are invested with the moral regulation and training of the student population. Unlike other student writing which covers its evaluative intent the self-assessment form is clearly about monitoring and judging. Here students are explicitly trained to monitor and record their own performance in designated aspects of school community life.