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The Public Construction of Values in Education: A Synthesis of Case Studies

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Abstract

This paper explores the approaches taken by a selection of schools in the South-East region of Queensland to values education as explicated in public texts freely available on schools' websites. Documents such as Behaviour Management Policies and the School Prospectus are used as data to explore how schools construct values education for the public and to investigate what approach(es) to values education are being advocated within these publicly available texts. A suite of four case studies are presented that employ qualitative methodologies in the exploration of how value-laden texts and curricula offerings are deployed by schools to endorse preferred identities. A synthesis of the findings of the case studies presented provides evidence that schools employ the repertoires of language/practice used in public texts to develop cultural identities suitable for marketing themselves as being values rich in competitive times. Possible refinements to the methodologies used in the case studies are discussed in order to identify opportunities to develop a qualitative methodology for exploring school approaches to values education across a larger corpus of publicly available data.

Introduction

Values education is a current topic of debate in Australian schools. Government schools in Australia have been characterised by influential politicians as being 'too politically correct and too value-neutral' and as hastening the exodus by parents to private education (Colman & Colman, 2004). In the context of this public debate, the Department of Education, Science and Training commissioned the *Values of Education Study* (Department of Education Science and Training, 2003). This study resulted in the development of the *National Framework for Values Education* (Department of Education Science and Training, 2005) that has since been distributed to all Australian Schools. This framework provides schools with a set of values and principles intended as discussion starters to assist schools in the development and revision of policies and programs related to values education and to provide practical guidance in implementing values education (Department of Education Science and Training, 2003). So as to make a contribution to this discussion, this paper aims to explore how schools construct values education to the public.

Schools operate in a 'cultural/ethical', as well as physical, environment (Haydon, 2004). The climate of ideas surrounding 'how to live' influences the approaches to values education developed by schools. In times of intense change such as have been occurring in Australia since 2001, public relations become important and strategic tools for effecting change in institutions such as schools, and in bringing about change in society. Schools are being positioned in the current economy to compete for market

share. Fundamental to this competitive ideology is the notion that outcomes for students will improve because schools will have to 'lift their game' when they are required to compete for clients. Thus, consumer choice will determine which schools are successful.

A three year study undertaken by Hughes, Wikeley and Nash (1994), in England and Wales with parents of beginning primary school students, established that there are two predominant reasons why parents choose a school. The first is location and the second is the school's reputation. These reasons were often combined with other reasons. These being: impressions during a visit, school size, school ethos, and the ability for children to develop local friendships networks. Social and emotional factors rather than academic standards or teaching and learning approaches were concerns parents identified. However, parents in this study did indicate that they would be interested in league tables of school academic performance when it came time to consider secondary schooling. A surprising finding of this study was that parents of children as young as five had already begun thinking about secondary schooling options.

Just as corporations compete for 'reputation status' in order to attract customers and potential investors, and to enhance the standing of their products (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990), public schools find themselves in the same position. Although all schools have an interest in building and maintaining a positive reputation, the increasing proliferation of private schools has meant that public schools have found themselves in the position of having to compete with the private sector for students. Schools have taken up the practices of the market in order to attract and keep enrolments, much like the practices employed by a business to increase profitability (Bowe, Ball, & Gold, 1992). Reputation is constructed from a variety of sources: from information that is made available by the organisation itself, from the media, and from other sources such as community information texts and narratives. In the texts made available by the organisation, reputation building is achieved by delineating a position and appealing to certain values.

The phenomenon of using public relations texts to bring about change in schooling is evident in the Gold Coast region of Eastern Australia. The Gold Coast region supports a growing population equivalent to the sixth largest city in Australia and boasts that its families can choose between an abundance of government and independent schools equal to the best that Australia has to offer (Gold Coast Australia, 2005). This paper examines specific documents that schools make publicly available via their websites, in order to explore what value frameworks schools employ to 'brand' themselves as they work to distinguish themselves from competitors, and position themselves within particular marketplace niches.

Framing Values Education

Although values education has gained currency in educational literature over the last decade, there is limited research available about the approaches taken by schools to values education and how these approaches support their stated values (Taylor, 2000). From the literature available, the approaches taken by schools to values education can be broadly grouped into three, often overlapping, frameworks. First, behavioural approaches to framing values education in schools are about developing good habits of conduct by shaping student behaviour. These approaches are usually based on the

belief that schools have a duty to teach students values directly and involve designating core values and timetabling opportunities for students to learn them (Lickona, 1996). Second, cognitive approaches to framing values education often present students with problem situations and facilitate student movement to higher levels of reasoning about values by employing strategies such as those related to Gardner's (1993) 'multiple intelligences' or De Bono's (1985) 'six thinking hats'. Third, communal approaches to framing values education in schools generally focus on the climate of the school, developing institutional role taking and student participation in rule making and monitoring (Halstead & Taylor, 2000). Schools that employ this approach often develop a culture of discussion amongst staff and students with norms relating to listening to others; openness to ideas; changing points of view; and collective decision making scaffolding values education learning initiatives.

In terms of framing values education in schools, the research of Power and Power (1992) suggests that it would be socially beneficial for schools to adopt communal approaches to values education because such approaches encourage participation in decision-making and inclusion and respect for diversity across social divisions. However, the research of Halstead & Taylor (2000) suggests that schools prefer to implement behavioural and cognitive approaches to values education rather than communal approaches, due to the significant demands made by communal approaches on teachers in terms of establishing open classroom climates and in terms of the effective organisation of time-tables: two key elements of an effective approach to values education (Department of Education Science and Training, 2003).

Methodology

The research reported in this paper utilises varied approaches to data analysis in order to unpack the complexities of values as a tool for differentiation within the school education market. This is in keeping with a growing dialogue around the issue of using multiple and diverse approaches to the analysis of qualitative data more generally (Honan, Knobel, Baker, & Davies, 2000; Johnson, 1999; Reid, Kamler, Simpson, & Maclean, 1996). In describing an aggregation of theoretical frameworks, Miller (1997) suggests that the purpose should not be to obscure – or for that fact deny – each perspective's distinctive features, but rather to use the different perspectives as mutually informative. So while the “geography of the discourse terrain is complex, with widely disparate assumptions” (Antaki, Billig, Edwards, & Potter, 2002, p.1), we aim to engage with discourse, text and analysis in a way that moves beyond binaries. The task of each of the analytic frameworks has been “to see how broader formations of discourse and power are manifest in the everyday quotidian aspects of texts in use” (Luke, 1989, p.8). We take different tools and approaches in order to ensure that the analysis stays focussed on the level of the concrete social practices of marketing schools in competitive times.

We use data collected for a much larger study into the framing of values as a marketing tool by schools as they engage with a competitive market terrain. As part of this larger study, the webpages of all schools in the Gold Coast region are being analysed using a variety of quantitative and qualitative methods. This paper serves as a way to investigate what questions can be answered by four different toolkits which were used to enable the researchers to bring a range of theoretical lenses to the data. In order to allow these tool kits to be trialled, four schools were selected as data sites. The schools (A, B, C, and D) were selected so as to represent the grids of differentiation evident in the larger corpus. So the schools include private and state

funded schools; primary and secondary schools; suburban, 'city' and rural schools; and schools of a variety of sizes. In this way, we hope that our sampling will allow us to make some assumptions about the larger corpus generally. The corpus of data used in the research reported in this paper is the publicly available web-based texts used by the four schools, all being within the Gold Coast region, to market their values systems and their schools more generally. Greater details of each school site are included within the case studies below.

Each of these four data sets were then analysed using one of the four toolkits. The tools of analysis employed are an adaptation of (MCA) membership categorisation analysis (see Baker, 1997), discourse analysis using Foucauldian notions of binary division (Woods, 2004), Bakhtin's notion of voice (Wertsch, 1991) and critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2001). We aim to show the different work that can be done with the different approaches and what we are enabled to see by each framing of the data set. We use 'values' as a central focus of investigation, aiming to uncover the recurrent and taken-for-granted aspects of this term and what it represents, along with how it is itself represented.

Each analytic toolkit produced different ways of seeing and making sense of the data (Honan, Knobel, Baker, & Davies, 2000). So when utilising MCA, the ways in which documents are organised were examined in order to discern particular identities presented to the public. The discourse analysis attempted to uncover the taken for granted ways of knowing 'values' within visual images taken up by schools as they market their wares. Utilizing 'voice' allowed for the texts to be read as dialogical, in relation to other texts, noting the building of 'reputation' in text and exploring the genres deployed and the values implied. When utilising critical discourse analysis, the social and cultural practices supporting the development of different values education discourses within the texts were explored. By employing different analytic toolkits, we gain different takes on the data examples in order to unpack the complexities of 'values education' and the work done by this concept in schools today.

In reporting the research, we present the different analytic toolkits in the contexts of the case studies in which they were utilised. The suite of case studies presented allows us to explore the relevance of the four toolkits in terms of their potential for analysing a larger corpus of data. Each toolkit aims to explore how value-laden texts and curricula offerings are deployed by a school to endorse preferred identities. To facilitate reading the research analysis, each case study employs common headings and sub-headings.

Case Study A: Interrogating a school prospectus

Context of the study: providing a seamless pathway

This case study focuses on the prospectus of a P-12 independent, co-educational school situated in a middle-class suburb of the Gold Coast. The school has been established for 10 years and caters for a population of over 1200 students. The prospectus was chosen as the focus document of the case study as it describes the chief features of the school that the School Board wishes to present to the public and because its content is featured in information webpages peppered across the school site-map.

Analytic method employed: membership categorisation analysis

An analytical technique that aligns with the purpose of this case study is Membership Categorisation Analysis (MCA). The school webpage analysed in this case study, namely, the school prospectus, may be considered to be a series of utterances, that is, written communications, that link with each other to convey the school's view of the world (see Bakhtin, 1981). In this sense, the school prospectus may be said to be a narrative that is imbued with the beliefs, intentions and values that the school wishes to present to the public. MCA provides an analytical technique for gaining access to the value dimensions of such narratives and for gaining insights into the source to such values (Baker, 1997).

Research approach: organising the data

In order to conduct a disciplined analysis of the prospectus, a table was developed to code the utterances contained within the text. The first column listed the utterances (see Bakhtin, 1981) as they were taken verbatim from the text. For the purpose of this study, an utterance was defined as 'a unit of meaning' contained within the text. The second column situates the utterance within the text of the prospectus and places the utterance into a membership category. As categorisations are classifications that can be used to describe persons, places, activities, events or situations (Baker, 1997; Hester, 1998), the categories employed reflect the authorial identities (decision maker, leader, etc.) reflected in the text. The third column explicated the behaviour described in the categorised utterance, that is, those activities, rights, entitlements, obligations, knowledge, attributes and competencies that are associated with a particular category (see Hester, 1998). Column four notes the frequency of a 'key' word in the utterance being considered. Key words were chosen on the basis of their capacity to reflect the overall meaning of the utterance. These frequencies give some indication of the prevalence of the utterance in the 5 000 word prospectus document. The fifth column identifies, where possible, the value (see Appendix 1) that best describes the behaviour in terms of the *National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools* (Department of Education Science and Training, 2005) and column six identifies a possible philosophical source (see Appendix 2) of the identified behaviour.

Table 1 provides a range of utterances taken from the prospectus and demonstrates how they were organised in order to reveal the view of the world presented by the school to the public.

Table 1: *Categorising the school prospectus*

Utterance	Membership Category	Behaviour	Frequency of Key Word	National Framework Value**	Possible Philosophical Source***
... a proudly Australian school ...	From the Principal ... Leader	Identifying the school as Australian.	16	Freedom	Patriotism
... we leave faith development to parents ...	From the Principal ... Citizen	Identifying the school as Non-denominational.	3	Freedom	Secularism
... students can follow a clear and well planned pathway from their first day of school to graduation ...	From the Principal ... Expert	Identifying the pathway of students.	6	Doing Your Best	Structuralism
To challenge the individual to achieve and to act with purpose and character.	Mission Statement Challenger	Privileges the status of the individual.	13	Integrity	Individualism
... challenging and supporting students to develop the intellectual character necessary to become ...	Vision Statement Supporter	Privileges the status of the intellect.	3	Doing Your Best	Intellectualism
... development of intellectual character through the provision of a seamless curriculum and consistent expectations and values ...	Values Statement Provider	Identifying the pathway for success.	5	Integrity	Structuralism
All members of the school community have the right to be treated with dignity and respect in a caring environment.	Values Statement Evaluator	Privileging the status of the college community. Merges rights with responsibilities.	2	Respect	Institutionalism
Students need to understand and appreciate their Australian culture and heritage, including its Christian dimension, with a view to contributing constructively to society.	Values Statement Builder	Privileging the status of the Anglo-Christian view of the world.	2	Responsibility	Assimilation
... a tradition of ' value-added ' education ...	Values Statement Entrepreneur	Privileging the economic imperative.	2	Fair Go	Commercialism

** See Appendix 1 for a definition of each value.

*** See Appendix 2 for definitions.

Analysis and discussion: Back to the future

The range of utterances presented in Table 1 suggest that the image of the school projected in the prospectus is that of a college of experts who can provide individuals with a seamless pathway to intellectual success. In so doing, the college seeks to identify itself as a loyal citizen ready and able to provide leadership in character development and to challenge and support students to do the same. Not concerned with faith development, but privileging a Christian view of Australian culture, the college promotes an entrepreneurial concern for the rights of individuals, social obligations and value-added education. There is evidence in Table 1 (see column 6) to suggest that the authorship of the school prospectus has been more strongly influenced by philosophical perspectives that have historically influenced the development of educational enterprises in the Western world, than by the specific values framed in the *National Framework for Values Education* (Department of Education Science and Training, 2005). This would imply that the school prospectus is a long-standing document designed to appeal to an audience that privileges western values and culture and that the document has been updated to reflect elements of the national framework.

In many ways, the school prospectus bespeaks a communal approach to framing values education. For example, it focuses on the climate of the school, and enunciates the development of institutional role taking. However, the prospectus provides little indication as to the roles that students and parents may take in rule making and monitoring. Utterances within the text that speak of ‘clear and well planned pathways’ and ‘a seamless curriculum’ provide a sense that it is the school that takes on the role of decision maker in relation to values education. As such, it could be said that the school, in its prospectus, is privileging a behavioural approach to framing values education: a well-worn approach that privileges the development of good habits of conduct over the development of a culture of discussion amongst staff, parents and students.

Case Study B: Disciplining road works toward responsible behaviour*Context of the study: Discipline plan as training and control*

This case study uses material from a school website to investigate how values might be used as a technology for the transmission of values as commodified entities. The school featured in the website is a medium sized public primary school consisting of 16 primary classes, two preschool units, a special education unit, a special education developmental unit and an inclusion class linked to a neighbouring special school. Students come from a number of local suburbs and while there is a wide socio-cultural diversity, the backgrounds of many of the students are impacted by the effects of poverty. The student population is transient with up to 40% of those students attending the school at any time having begun their schooling elsewhere. Many of these students have migrated from other Australian states and from New Zealand. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students make up 6% of the school population, 12% of students speak a language other than English at home, 11% of the school population is appraised as dealing with learning difficulties (Woods, Carpenter, & Lack, 2005).

The school website is extensive with material aimed at community members, parents, staff and students of the school all being publicly available. The analysis below deals

with just one section, the *Discipline Plan*. This section was chosen for the analysis for two key reasons. The first being the fact that an overall scan of the larger data corpus of the study suggested that ‘values’ seemed often to be synonymous with control or at least disciplining techniques in these sites. Pages were selected in order to investigate on a small scale, and as a way to uncover effective tools for analysis of the larger corpus, how values might work to discipline and shape ‘good school citizens’. This school’s site was particularly interesting as it was one of very few sites that defined discipline as an object. A second point of interest was how visual texts and other multimodal features of web design were used to represent ideologies in particular ways, and how these representations worked with or against the written text. As will be discussed below, this page has a visual representation which is a main feature of the opening page and this attracted investigation into the complementarity of written and visual text.

Analytic method employed: Discourse analysis

This case study draws on research from within the family of discourse analysis. There is in fact no singular approach to discourse analysis, but instead a conglomerate of perspectives – some more or less practical and applicable to the study of power and knowledge in values education. In each case, however, the purpose of analysis is to problematise the everyday assumptions of society through critical, political and socially motivated research. It is a form of analysis which attempts to address questions around the issues of power and class, gender and culture within a systemic configuration of society (Luke, 1998). The concepts of values and discipline are theorised by framing the relationships between subjects, institutions, discourses and social practice.

Data analysis: “There’s always a way back from the bumpy road of irresponsible behaviour”

This analysis will focus on how the text of the school’s discipline plan represents an essential ‘one’ truth about moral citizenship. The text sets out one place to aim for, one way to behave, as being beyond critique or question. The values of those involved in administering this school are set out as commodified essential constructs that all “effective and independent members of society” would hold. This is achieved through several techniques. For example, the use of pronouns such as *our* and *we* are employed to provide a sense of collective engagement toward realising the values, and by framing rules as declaratives with an active construction (“We respect the rights of others”, for example), the text works to provide authority to these rules and to narrow the space for resisting their essentialism. However, in the rest of this short analysis, the notion of binary division will be employed to shape up how the ‘ways of being a responsible citizen’ are essentialised in this text.

Foucault (1977) details the way in which binary division functions in the control and formation of particular types of subjects. In today’s institutions, binary division and labelling continues to set out sane and insane, good and bad – and, in the case of the work reported here, the ‘responsible’ student and the ‘irresponsible’ student. Within this text, the key image sets this binary out explicitly. In figure 1, the approach to student “self control” is represented as being about a choice of roads. While the road to responsible behaviour is discussed in the text as being smooth, the visual image represents this ‘road’ as being ‘straight’, short and a place to move ahead (the green light to the side suggests forward movement). The metaphor of staying on the straight and narrow links this visual to other texts about discipline and ‘good’ behaviour. In

contrast a conscious – although irresponsible – choice to travel on the “bumpy road of irresponsible behaviour” is represented as windy, and increasingly diverging from the responsible road. So there is an assumed temporal intensity that is not characterised as an increase in behaviour - good choices need to be made early or there is a sense that it becomes more difficult to return to the smooth road (although the way back is always available). Road signs placed on this ‘bumpy’ road are stop signs, which provide time to reconsider one’s choices. The three crossroads are discussed in the text as being ways “back to the smooth road of responsible behaviour” – these roads are thus one-way, the assumption being that you would not make an irresponsible choice once you found yourself on the smooth road. The use of questions around the text (Which road are you on? and Which road would you like to be on?) not only frame this journey as involving decisions, but as requiring self understanding and, thus “self control” to be disciplined and responsible.

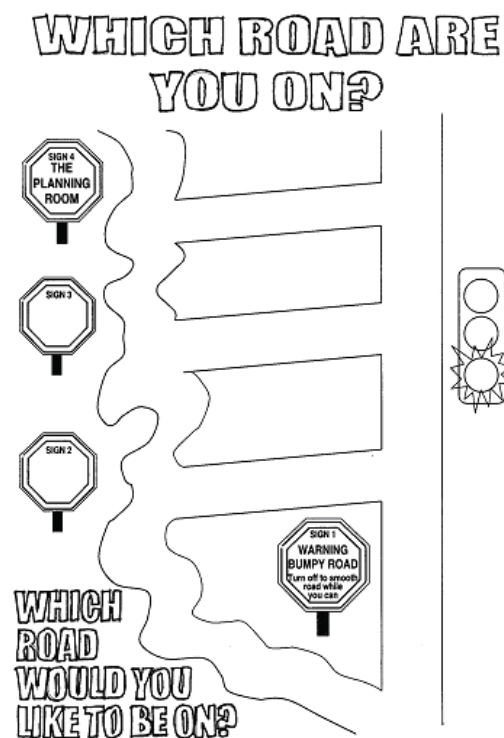


Figure 1: Which road are you on? A visual representation taken from the “Discipline Plan” of school B’s website

The visual image, supported as it is by the surrounding text in this case, sets out student behaviour as being a simple choice between the autonomous and divergent binaries of ‘responsible’ and ‘irresponsible’. Such simplistic grids essentialise ‘good’ citizenship within this school, and Australian society more generally.

As part of the hegemonic discourse this works to highlight values as relating to the individual in an autonomous sense, and hides and naturalises that which remains unmarked. A notion that there is more than one way to behave, without necessarily exposing the “rights” of others, remains unmarked and thus invisible within this representation.

While this analysis is brief and without depth of coverage, it does provide a beginning understanding of how investigating binary division and coercive assignment

(Foucault, 1977) as functioning within the social practices of disciplining through values works to essentialise values promoted by ‘Australian society’.

Case Study C: Building a reputation

Context of the study: Maintaining the status quo

School C is a state primary school located in the Gold Coast hinterland. The area is semi-rural with tourist attractions, restaurants, craft markets, art galleries and small farms. Although these industries provide some local employment, many of the residents commute to larger centres. There is also a significant population of retired and semi-retired people. Household income is similar to the national average (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2002). Two government primary schools have been established in this area, and ninety three percent of the children in the area attend these two schools (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2002). School C is a small school with a long history of more than 100 years. Most of the two hundred and fifty students who attend the school are from ‘middle class’ homes (Drought, 2005).

Analytic method employed: Dialogicality

The analysis of this case study is underpinned by Bakhtin’s (1981) notion of dialogicality. According to Bakhtin all texts are dialogical: they are always read in relation to other texts. For Bakhtin the fundamental dialogism of discourse characterises the way speakers’ concrete utterances interanimate with utterances of another. Any utterance in dialogic interanimation is an instantiation of and for the reconstitution of the social. Wertsch (1991) articulates different analytical levels around which Bakhtin construed his theories of discourse: utterances, voices, genres, social languages. Dialogue is at the centre of these analytical constructs. Utterances (written as well as spoken) are always dialogic; they are always answerable to other’s voices. Thus, they always involve at least two voices; the voice is always responding to another and anticipating another. Understanding involves orienting oneself to an utterance – laying down ‘counter words’. All texts are responsive to social contexts and the textual systems that constitute them (Hicks, 2000). Bakhtin extends dialogicality to the interaction between and amid social languages. Social languages are a type of language use associated with particular social groups, for example “social dialects, characteristic group behaviour, professional jargons, generic languages, languages of the authorities or various circles and of passing fashions, languages that serve the specific sociopolitical purposes of the day” (Bakhtin, 1981, p.262). This analysis considers the voices, genres and social languages deployed by school in their interaction with the ‘public’.

Research approach: Deploying ‘values’ to build reputation

Since the focus of this analysis is reputation building, the first two pages encountered in the school’s website, the ‘prospectus’ and the mission statements, have been selected. These webpages are multivoiced phenomenon, that is, they not only draw on existing genres but also respond to a historicised socially situated context. For example, current debates around schooling have fuelled fears about the quality of public education, particularly in relation to literacy achievement and discipline. The introductory statement in the welcome page/prospectus of the school website speaks directly to this context by describing the students’ reputation – “our students have a reputation for being well mannered, disciplined achievers”. In their economic model of “reputation building”, Fombrun and Shanley (1990) have identified four ‘signals’ corporations construct: market signals, strategy signals, accounting signals, and institutional signals. For example, market signals which represent corporate

performance are evident in the way the school positions itself in the market as a well performing low risk investment by taking up the corporate genre of the “prospectus” where achievements are listed and verified by appeal to external sources, and the schools future prospects listed. Each of these ‘signals’ is evident in the texts, however, for the purposes of this paper, we focus on ‘strategy signals’ and consider the values both implied and professed as the school works to build its reputation.

Analysis and discussion: Strategy signals

Organisations are assessed and their reputations constructed in terms of their choice of corporate strategies. By developing “strategic postures”, organisations differentiate themselves from their competitors and “provide themselves with a measure of good will from consumers and other stakeholders” (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990, p.241). These postures are underpinned by value statements that not only signal the organisation’s characteristics but also present them in a favourable light.

The school’s “Mission Statement” reveals this school’s strategic posture. It encompasses a set of beliefs and strategies. Although these statements are formatted in five ‘chunks’ of text, six strategies or belief statements are evident, and are initiated in the following ways:

The school sees its chief task as...

We believe the main objective is...

Staff also believe...

We shall endeavour to...

We accept...

Our school is committed to ...

The “we” referred to in these statements is synonymous with “the school”. Although it is initially unclear who is included in “the school”, from the third statement, “staff also believe”, it appears that “we”, thus “the school”, refers exclusively to the staff. Therefore, the Mission Statement could also be read as advertisement – what “we” will do for your child. “Common to economic models of reputation building is a view of advertising as a source of product and imaging cues designed to influence the perceptions of external publics” (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990, p.241).

The underlying issue in each of the statements entails values in terms of the relationship between the individual and the social. The first statement focuses on the individual by identifying the goal as “the development of the child to his/her full potential in our Australian democratic society”. It continues by acknowledging the diverse values of society, but qualifies this by identifying six central values: tolerance, trust, self-discipline, work ethics, respect and honesty. Preparing children for ‘complete’ living is the issue in the second statement. ‘Complete’ in this context refers to the diverse ways a student needs to be prepared for the living in the world - academic, cultural, ethical, moral and recreational. A third statement of belief formatted with the second statement outlines another set of values: “courtesy, consideration of others, respect and cleanliness”. This framework of values suggests that the school has adopted a behavioural model of values education based on the self-regulation of the individual, by designating core values rather than a communal or negotiated approach. The fourth statement returns to notions of individuality and highlights the uniqueness of each child, and while the fifth recognises diversity, that Australian society comprises “different ethnic groups”, that Australia is a “multicultural society”, this recognition is again qualified. This time through redress to the law – “all members in our society, however, must confirm to Australian laws”.

This text clearly speaks to the current socioeconomic and historical context. Whilst multiculturalism and diversity are acknowledged, the discourse markers “but” and “however” alert us to contrastive relationships, and that these values are viewed as problematic with an assumption that these differences may equate with unlawful behaviour. The dialogic character of a text is revealed in these examples, although both ‘but’ and ‘however’ function as conjunctions maintaining the cohesion of the text, they also have an interpersonal function in evaluating the text. Whilst the initial clause acknowledges diversity, the way the text then responds exemplifies the dialogical character of text. It presupposes and addresses an anticipated counter response by using these conjunctions. The conjunction here then is part of the negotiation of meaning between writer and reader, and since the proposition is not in fact the point that the writer wanted to make, the need to mention it must derive from the writer’s assumption that it is an issue that may be raised, if not by the reader then institutionally it may be a notion that needs to be addressed. For instance, it may be a response to the social justice policies of Education Queensland. Thus the writer needs to forestall any objection that the reader might raise (Thompson & Zhou, 2000). Evaluating and negotiating meaning in this way produces a text that may reassure parents in this community, a long established middle class community, that a middle-class way of life and its implied values will be upheld.

Case Study D: Secondary schooling care and support

Context of the study: established with a range of opportunities

School D is a co-educational school offering education for students in years 8 – 12. The school has been established for over thirty years. During this time, School D has developed specialised facilities to support academic and extra curricular activities in the following areas: Science, Dance, Music, Drama, Sport, Art, Manual Arts and Home Economics. The school is unique in that it draws from a wide range of primary schools within the region. There are 40 teachers employed at the school, 1 Principal, 2 Deputy Principals and a Head of Department for each of the eight key learning areas.

Analytic method employed: descriptive critical discourse analysis

The research approach adopted to achieve this review of values was Norman Fairclough’s (1992) descriptive discourse analysis of the webpage text with the aim of identifying how values are portrayed and the way in which School D uses values to market itself to parents as consumers of education. To guide the analysis a set of 16 questions were asked of each webpage examined to identify values displayed in the text through: word meaning, metaphor, transitivity, theme, modality, cohesion and large scale text structures (Heck, 2003, , in preparation). These questions are included as Appendix 3. Descriptive discourse analysis is the first of three phases within critical discourse analysis. For the purpose of this research only, the first phase of analysis will be examined as further phases would require interviews that were beyond the scope of this research project.

Research approach: identifying the care and support sample

Three webpages were selected as a sample of the corpus of webpages for School D for analysis using the 16 descriptive discourse analysis questions outlined in appendix 3. Page one was the homepage for school D. This webpage discussed the notion of care and support. The researcher identified a page titled care and support and this became the second page for analysis. The second page mentioned behaviour management and led the researcher to page three on behaviour management. The 16 descriptive

discourse analysis questions (appendix 3) were asked of these three webpages to identify the different values evident in the texts as outlined in the analysis and discussion.

Analysis and discussion: traversing transitivity and morphing with metaphors

One of the key values identified within the School D text is ‘care and support’. This is highlighted in the text through the use of words, active clauses and material, mental and relational processes or transitivity. The following examples from the text identify School D as the actor or agent in achieving the goal of care and support. This goal is achieved through mental processes like pride and material processes such as offering. This illustrates the importance in this school of the notion of care and support and suggests that this is an important issue for parents in making a decision about the transition from primary to secondary school. For example:

School D prides itself in the exceptional care and support it provides (page 2).
 School D offers...
 Strong support of all students by school personnel ...
 Values that support family life, respect for others, tolerance and individual difference. (page 1)

The text does identify relational processes for achieving the care and support goal. For example ‘The IGNITE Program promotes friendliness and support through student involvement’ (page 2). In this case, the actor is the educational program ‘IGNITE’ and the process is ‘student involvement’ in this program. The text provides further detail on this relational process as it identifies that during IGNITE lessons older students are involved in facilitating activities for those commencing in the first year of secondary schooling. The mechanism for delivering care and support is via a formal education program that is timetabled within the school day. Halstead and Taylor (2000) suggest that the development of formal programs of pastoral care is one of the mechanisms that schools utilise to develop values education within a school setting. The development of a school pastoral care program demonstrates an emphasis on a particular school ethos that was identified as important for parental school choice in the work of Hughes, Wikeley and Nash (1994).

The second example of relational processes within the text indicates the reputation of the school as well established and respected within the community. The message in this text is that parents should trust that the community will recommend this school to them. For example ‘...academic, cultural, social and sporting traditions are well established and respected by the ... community’ (page 1). Hence, School D considers reputation as an integral and important part of the decision making process for parents. This is closely aligned with the findings of Hughes, Wikeley and Nash (1994), that the reputation of a school is one of the major factors that influenced parental choice.

A metaphor heavily drawn upon in the text as part of the care and support approach was ‘do the right thing’ as the single school rule. The notion of do the right thing is mentioned many times and clearly identified as a value of School D. What is not clear from this text is what it means to ‘do the right thing’ in this school context. This lack of definition might be provided in the spirit that all parents as consumers then construct their own view of what ‘do the right thing’ means. Hence, allowing a wide interpretation of the view of values ranging from the notion of values as objective

truths through to values as subjective responses to things that we like or dislike (Aspin, 2000). This view of 'do the right thing' may be strongly influenced by parents of this era growing up with the use of these terms in relation to a large scale litter campaign that used the same terminology. In this sense, many parents of this era would be familiar with this phrase and see this in a positive light as something that can and should be achieved within a school setting. The care and support webpage also makes reference to a behaviour management policy with statements such as 'The school operates a Behaviour Management Policy in support of students, teachers, and parents' (page 3).

Care and support is further defined in the text through the use of conjunction and extension. For example 'A relatively small school, is large enough to offer your child a strong academic and vocational education but not so large that your child loses identity' (page 1). This demonstrates the need for the school to be large enough to offer a range of choices for secondary students and promotes that notion that these choices provide for both an academic and a vocational option. It also suggests that this school is small enough to be known and not so large that a student might get lost. As illustrated in the work of Hughes et al. (1994), the size of the school is considered one factor that influences parent choice of school. Hence, school D has identified and addressed both the strengths and weaknesses of the issue of size for secondary schools that they feel will influence parent's choice of school.

Conclusion

This paper presents a suite of case studies that employ qualitative methodologies in the exploration of how value-laden texts and curricula offerings are deployed by schools to endorse preferred identities. A synthesis of the findings, of the cases studies presented, provides evidence that schools employ the repertoires of language/practice used in public texts to develop cultural identities suitable for marketing themselves as being values rich in competitive times.

Specifically, the study centred on school A provides evidence that schools can filter current educational initiatives, such as those contained within the *National Framework for Values Education* (Department of Education Science and Training, 2005), through the lens of historical approaches to education in general and values education in particular that situate the enactment of initiatives within a western cultural and ethical framework. This has the implication that initiatives that require schools to involve the community in the implementation and monitoring of values education programs, such as those promoted by DEST (2005), run the risk of being filtered through approaches to education that do not require the school to change what and how values are taught. In terms of the methodology used to analyse the prospectus provided by school A, it can be said that Membership Categorisation Analysis provides the researcher with a tool to make visible the assumptions behind the view of education presented in this school authored text. Through making visible the values being displayed in the text and their possible sources, MCA permits the researcher to situate this document within a larger discourse and to link individual utterances contained within the text to a chain of utterances contained in a series of school documents that narrate a particular view of the world. However, MCA is designed to be employed with texts that tell stories such as those derived from interview data or, in this case, a school prospectus. To employ MCA in analysing the large corpus of data generated by one school as it presents its ideas and policies to the

public is a far too complex and inefficient use of its research potential. As such, MCA needs to be seen as one of a number of analytic tools that need to be used strategically to reveal a school's view of the world and the assumptions that underlie it.

The study centred on School B utilised Foucauldian notions of binary division as a framework to uncover how 'values' were presented as essential, commodified constructs. The texts explored placed 'choice' within individual capacity, but also highlighted the 'right' choice as being a responsibility of each member of the school community. The analysis demonstrated how features of the language, such as the use of pronouns, presented a collective assumption around the values foregrounded. However particular attention was given to a key visual text which symbolised the binary of 'irresponsible' and 'responsible' behaviour presented in other aspects of the text. This visual text shaped 'straight', smooth and short journeys as leading to that place where it is assumed that all would like to be, while a bumpy, difficult road, marred by stop signs, but also providing constant choices to return to the 'smooth' road, is represented as becoming increasingly divergent from the 'right' place to be. Setting up this simplistic binary limits options open to the school population. There is one 'right' way and one 'irresponsible' way to 'be'. There is no blurring of boundaries. The analysis of how these texts work to frame values and student behaviour is enabled through the Foucauldian notions of binary division, allowing the techniques evident to be constructed as social practices employed to limit and constrain moral behaviour and values.

The case study centred on school C provides a way of considering how a school has appropriated corporate practices as it constructs itself as a high performing low risk investment. Taking up Bakhtin's notion that texts are always dialogical, the analysis of the key texts on the website of School C considered how the building of reputation in a text is a dialogic event and the genres deployed and values implied are in response to other values and other texts. The values implied in the 'corporate' genres the school appropriates in constructing its webpages privilege particular consumerist and individualist values. We are also alerted to the constant tension between centripetal and centrifugal forces, between tradition and innovation, between conserving, preservative forces and forces that challenge the status-quo and seek to establish new community practices (Renshaw & van der Linden, 2004). Dialogism is positioned between these two forces and seeks to maintain a tension between them. In this case, the school maintains the status quo and builds its reputation by appealing to and preserving middle class values, and, although it 'talks' to it, does not engage with the multicultural and diverse sociocultural context of Australian society. Fombrun and Shanley's (1990) model of reputation building provides a useful framework for analysing a large corpus of data and the identification of patterns across the data. This, coupled with a focused analysis of the dialogical nature of selected webpages, for example the home page or mission statement, enables the identification of the ways in which the school constructs its reputation through the enactment of specific non-negotiable values.

The study centred on school D illustrates a focus on the development of a behavioural values frame rather than a cognitive or communal frame. The care and support notion illustrated in the analysis of School D is targeted at parents through the promotion of the school reputation, the school ethos, the size. The formal teaching program around the value of care and support is further evidence of the use of the behavioural values

frame. The emphasis on this traditional values frame may be a product of schools structures and processes as suggested by Halstead & Taylor (2000) and or a reflection of the influences on parental choices (Hughes, Wikeley, & Nash, 1994). The use of the descriptive phase of discourse analysis of the broader data set using the 16 questions identified would be a time intensive process that raises a number of issues. First, the selection of a sample of pages from each school webpage would be difficult to justify on a larger scale. Second, to address in the analysis of all 16 questions would be difficult. Therefore, for application to the broader data set this approach could be utilised by reviewing only the home page of each website and a selection of the 16 questions specifically related to issues of word meaning, transitivity and metaphor within the texts.

These findings suggest that the research reported in this paper is significant in that it affords a timely opportunity for exploring the ways that values are contextualised in school authored public documents. The market-driven educational context of the Gold Coast region is a unique site to examine how an 'economy of values' has developed. Many schools, both government and private, are competing for market share and 'brand' themselves with the purpose of becoming distinctive. A central plank in their marketing strategy, to potential students and families, is to claim a set of 'values'. The research reported in this paper also offers an opportunity to note what value frameworks schools construct in order to distinguish themselves from competitors and to position themselves within particular marketplace niches.

In this paper, we have considered the ways in which schools construct and enact values. The four case studies of diverse schools in the Gold Coast Region used varied approaches to data analysis to unpack each school's construction and enactment of values. The findings of these case studies suggest that schools are taking conservative and preservative approaches by adopting behavioural approaches to values education. That is, they frame values education in terms of designating core values and by developing and regulating student behaviour. Case Study A exemplifies how a school is able to filter and resist educational initiatives and retain the status quo. Similarly, Case Study C illustrates that whilst the school pays lip service to diversity it works to build reputation by appealing to the preservation of core values. Likewise, Case Studies B and D found that a behavioural approach was enacted in the conduct and regulation of student behaviour. In Case Study B, these values were presented as essential, commodified constructs that were not open to negotiation, and, in Case Study D, a traditional values frame was adopted in its notions of care and support. We argue that this retreat from both the cognitive and communal approach to values education is a response to market forces. When schools are forced to compete with each other for students, and schools are called on to market themselves, values education become the stakes in building reputation. It is not surprising then that an appeal to 'traditional core values' which has become the catch cry of these neoliberal conservative times impacts on schooling and is reconstituted in the identities these schools construct.

The research reported in this paper took up the purpose of bringing a range of methodological tools to bear when exploring school approaches to values education. What has become apparent through adopting this approach to research is that it is not possible to synthesise a qualitative methodology for exploring approaches to values education, no matter how complementary the approaches may be theoretically. What

is evident, however, is the richness of the analysis when complementary methodological tool-kits are brought to bear on a specific issue. Today, it is virtually impossible for any one methodological approach to be used to explore the complex issues intrinsic to research in education. What is possible, however, and what has been demonstrated in this paper, is the efficacy of using different methodological tool-kits to productively explore phenomena in the realms of values education.

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Appendix 1

Definitions of values as elaborated in The National Framework (Department of Education Science and Training, 2005)

Value	Definition
Care and Compassion	Care for self and others.
Doing Your Best	Seek to accomplish something worthy and admirable, try hard, pursue excellence.
Fair Go	Pursue and protect the common good where all people are treated fairly for a just society.
Freedom	Enjoy all the rights and privileges of Australian citizenship free from unnecessary interference or control, and stand up for the rights of others.
Honesty and Trustworthiness	Be honest, sincere and see the truth.
Integrity	Act in accordance with principles of moral and ethical conduct, ensure consistency between words and deeds.
Respect	Treat others with consideration and regard, respect another person's point of view.
Responsibility	Be accountable for one's own actions, resolve differences in constructive, non-violent and peaceful ways, contribute to society and to civic life, take care of the environment.
Understanding, Tolerance and Inclusion	Be aware of others and their cultures, accept diversity within a democratic society, being included and including others.

Appendix 2

Definitions of possible philosophical sources

Possible Philosophical Source	Definition	Source of Definition
Patriotism	The virtue of an individual that refers to his/her allegiance to a state or nation-state.	Buckley, F. H. (2000). The rediscovery of nationalism. <i>Berkeley Program in Law & Economics, Working Paper Series, Paper 4</i> , http://repositories.cdlib.org/blewp/4
Secularism	The view that religious considerations should be separated from public education.	Padraic, R. (2004). Comparing styles of secularism: The separation of church and state in Finland and France. <i>Polity@Carleton Volume 1. Issue 1 (Winter 04)</i>
Individualism	Belief in the primary importance of the individual and in the virtues of self-reliance and personal independence.	The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition Copyright © 2000 by Houghton Mifflin Company.
Intellectualism	Devotion to exercise	The American Heritage® Dictionary of

	or development of the intellect.	the English Language, Fourth Edition Copyright © 2000 by Houghton Mifflin Company.
Structuralism	A method of analysing phenomena, as in anthropology, linguistics, psychology, or literature, chiefly characterized by contrasting the elemental structures of the phenomena in a system of binary opposition.	The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition Copyright © 2000 by Houghton Mifflin Company.
Institutionalism	Adherence to or belief in established forms or organisations.	The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition Copyright © 2000 by Houghton Mifflin Company.
Assimilation	The process of adopting the customs and attitudes of the prevailing culture.	Hartmann, D., & Gerteis, J. (2005). Dealing with Diversity: Mapping Multiculturalism in Sociological Terms. <i>Sociological Theory</i> 23(2), 218-240
Commercialism	An attitude that emphasizes tangible profit or success.	The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition Copyright © 2000 by Houghton Mifflin Company.

Appendix 3

Descriptive Discourse Analysis Questions

Research Question	Data Gathering
To what extent are difference values evident in the school webpages text of School D?	Sample Webpages
Description Discourse Analysis Questions	
Word Meaning	Can the words chosen within the text be identified and classified according to different discourse types? Is there any evidence of use of words with unstable meaning potentials that indicate sites of ideological contestation? Is there any evidence of overwording or rewording of the text using near synonyms to emphasise ideas? Is there evidence of relationships between meanings through the use of synonyms, hyponym, antonym and euphemism? What level of formality is evident within the text and how does this demonstrate social relations and respect for status?
Metaphor	What metaphors are used and how do these metaphors illustrate different discourses in the text?
Transitivity	What material, mental and relational process types have been used most within the text? Are there any factors that explain this pattern?

	<p>What choices are made in terms of the use of the active or passive voice?</p> <p>Have nominalizations been used and for what purpose?</p>
Theme	<p>What thematic structures are present in the text in terms of knowledge or practices that are assumed?</p> <p>Are marked themes used frequently in the text? If so for what purpose?</p>
Modality	<p>What sorts of modalities are most frequent those with low, medium or higher level affinity with the proposition?</p> <p>Are modalities predominantly subjective or objective?</p> <p>Are modal verbs or adverbs used most?</p>
Cohesion	<p>Are there explicit surface cohesive markers used in the text? What type of markers are used most frequently (reference, ellipsis, conjunction or lexical)?</p>
Large Scale Text Structures	<p>What large-scale text structures does the text have?</p>