Brockton Secondary College Short Film Festival: A Celebration

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Declaration

This thesis contains no material that has been accepted for any other degree in any University. To the best of my knowledge, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by any other person, except where due reference is given in the text.

Signature: ______________________________

(Wayne Murrill)
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I would like to thank my Mum, Vicki Murrill for her love and unwavering support.

I dedicate this thesis to the memory of my Dad, Allan William Murrill. He taught me that with hard work, I could achieve anything.
Abstract

Every so often, education is marked by critical events that invoke profound changes in both teachers and students. This study proposes that the “Boscars” - Brockton Oscars – a local presentation of student film and dance is a critical event for those involved. In contrast to conventional routine processes and accumulation of learning, these events represent a flashpoint in our educational lives. Critical events pertain to deep personal meaning and agency. This research investigates the Boscars. This retrospective study is one of interactive ethnography which has strong affinity with symbolic interactionism using a range of qualitative techniques on an event in the recent past. The work was collaborative. Teachers, pupils and other critical agents worked with the researcher to reconstruct and analyse the event with the general purpose of informing and improving local educational practice. It is a celebratory account focused on expressive outcomes, drawing in large measure on teacher and pupil articulations. Respondent validation was important within the context of other tests of validity. One of these tests is the ability of the research to strengthen the participants in their work and to influence other practitioners – in other words for the research to share the criticality of the event. These criteria apply to the extent to which the account facilitates the drawing of inferences that may have application in other contexts or situations. For the student and teacher authors in this research it is an exercise in writing historical memory.
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Rationale

In November 2006, I had the pleasure of co-organising the ‘Boscars’. A short film festival held at Brockton Secondary College, which presented the multimedia and live performance work of its Year 10 students in a variety of disciplines. Throughout my teaching career, I have attended a number of school performances and exhibitions of student work. However, at this performance I witnessed something, which I had not seen previously. I had never witnessed such enthusiasm, pleasure and expressions of gratitude. I had never seen students more proud of what they had achieved and more appreciative of the teachers who had assisted them. What was designed as a one-off show to showcase student learning, due to its popularity turned into a 6-show event.

In subsequent conversations with teachers and students after the event, I found testimonies to a critical event that had changed lives. Teachers recounted feeling much closer to their students, that students were more engaged in their learning. Students expressed an escalation in both the relationship with their teachers and peers. They were proud. Several expressed that they had never thought they could organise and orchestrate an event of such success. Disbelieved attestations that something of this magnitude could ever have occurred at ‘a school like ours’.

This study endeavours to explore the experience of those involved in this production and asks: what made this event such a success? As opposed to many other teaching and learning experiences.
There are 2 main questions of which this research will endeavour to explore:

- What impact did this event have on both individuals involved and the culture of school community?
- Why was the ‘Boscars’ significant to the educational lives of its participants?

There are also several sub-questions, which need to be addressed in order to inform this study:

- What is criticality in education?
- Are the contributing factors of criticality the same for all involved?
- Is this impact long lasting? Or do the routine processes of traditional education overpower the celebratory atmosphere?
Chapter 1: Opening Narrative

The setting
The shock success of the ‘Boscars’ cannot be understood apart from its context.

Brockton is an unlikely place for such an artistic venture to occur. Located in middle suburbia, it is approximately 20 kilometres northwest of Melbourne. Positioned just minutes from Melbourne’s main airport, it has a medium sized shopping centre, a range of fast food outlets and one restaurant. The architecture is 70’s style clinker brick homes with ¼ acre back yards, mixed in with semi-industrial printers, logistic companies and machine maintenance workshops. Scattered throughout the suburb are small parks with children playgrounds, football ovals and soccer pitches. Brockton is a sporty place. The area has a diverse population. There are many first and second-generation immigrant families hailing from Italy, India, Lebanon, Egypt and Turkey. 33% of the households are either bilingual or do not speak English at home. 38% of the residences have a primary household language other than English at home, most identifying Italian, Arabic, Greek and Turkish (2006 Census QuickStats, 2008).

Brockton is primarily working class, with much of its labour force based in retail, reception, clerical work and trades. This is not an affluent suburb, 61% of the adult population has full-time employment. 5.5% of this population is unemployed, a statistic which was well above the national average in 2007.
The community is relatively isolated from wider Melbourne. Being positioned directly behind a major freeway, there is little public transport into the city of Melbourne. The nearest train station is 5 kilometres away. Few buses leave Brockton for the train lines. Despite only being 20 kilometres from the CBD, many students from the Secondary College rarely go into the city, except on rare occasions or with school trips.

There are no discernable heritage arts or cultural venues in the area. There are no local galleries or museums. There is no local cinema. Residents have to travel to a neighbouring shopping centre to see the latest blockbuster.

As a result of its relative isolation and multicultural base, Brockton has a strong sense of community. There is a local community centre, which offers services and courses aimed at the needs of local families, such as maternal and child health, playgroups and toddler activity and learning programs. Services and groups are bilingual, breaking down some sense of cultural isolation. The community library is integrated into the Secondary College. This brings a number of people into the school that would not ordinarily have the need. It is common to see school children studying next to community members reading, or even assisting them with the library technology.

**The College**

Brockton Secondary College was founded in 1975. It quickly grew to become the largest school in north-western Melbourne. Enrolments are strong at approximately 1480, generally with waiting lists at each year level. The school has 5 main feeder primary schools from the local area,
however, due to specialist programs such as Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) and (Select Entry Accelerated Learning) SEAL, students travel from beyond the prescribed boundaries to attend. Having such a large student population is in many ways extremely advantageous for the College as it is possible to offer an enormously wide range of elective subjects in both its Middle Years and VCE programs and has a large and specialised staff. There are over 140 staff at the College, encompassing teachers, administrative assistants, library technicians, educational support staff, counsellors and grounds staff. With nearly 100 teaching staff, the school has large faculties for most subject areas.

Despite such a large student population, the facilities and grounds remain virtually rubbish and graffiti free. The school has 65 classrooms; many of them are portables with small staffrooms in the middle. All but one of the classrooms at the school have the students sitting in rows, facing the whiteboard and teachers desk. Walls are well painted but scarcely decorated. There is little exhibition of student work, possibly with the exception of the Year 7 homerooms.

In recent years, the state Labour Government has belatedly invested in physical facilities undertaking a large building program in the College. This includes a 300-seat theatre with mirrored dance studio and potential for a recording suite, large scale renovations of the school gymnasium and the planning of a new science wing untouched since they were built 30 years ago when the school had half its existing population of students.

Subjects with clearly tangible careers paths are by far the most popular courses elected by students at Brockton. Subjects like: Mathematics, Psychology, Chemistry, Accounting, Legal Studies and Business
Management dominate the subject structure. Subjects in the humanities and arts areas such as: Languages, Philosophy, Geography, the Performing and Visual Arts have struggled to attract students at senior level.

While newer subjects in the Visual Arts, such as Photography and Visual Communication and Design have gained some popularity, the Performing Arts remain under-represented in the timetable. With the exception of Media in the senior years, there are no drama electives and very few students opt to study Music. The school has a band, however, considering the size of the student population, its activity does not attract much of a following.

The ‘Boscars’ is not Brockton Secondary College’s first achievement in multimedia. In 2004 and 2005, the senior Media students were finalists in a State competition sponsored by commercial interests. They designed and produced a television commercial that was broadcast in a road safety campaign.

The College has a physical culture. While there are vacancies in auditions and rehearsals for arts based activities, sporting teams are over subscribed. At any one time, the school can have over 30 sporting teams; soccer, tennis, basketball, golf, athletics, and table tennis to name a few. Many of the teams achieve consistent success at regional and state competitions. The College proudly displays its sporting achievements in large glass cabinets near the entrance of the community-connected library.
The Scene

‘The Boscars’ – The Night of the Brockton Oscars
Students dressed in suits and ties greet members of the audience at the door. With guest lists in hand, ushers escort the guests up red carpet, which leads into the theatre, to their seat.

“Have a good night”.

The 300-seat theatre quickly fills with an equal mix of students and adults. The lights dim as the red velvet curtain slowly opens. The thunderous applause signals anticipation and encouragement. The music sounds and the night begins with an opening dance number, performed by the College’s Year 10 students. This is clearly an homage to music in film. This musical-style choreography pays tribute to many of the modern classics to which the audience, both young and old, can relate. The musical number is completely student choreographed. The preparation was a feature of the Year 10 Dance Elective curriculum. The performance ends with the dancers running up the stairs of the theatre into the crowd.

The crowd goes wild.

The lights dim and a spotlight on stage illuminates a pair of formally dressed students who speak in impressive unison.
“Ladies and Gentlemen, Welcome to the Boscars”

As with any award-style show, there are hosts. Their role is not only to announce the nominations and declare the winners, but also to entertain.

“Well what a massive evening we have planned. The ‘Boscar’ is the most sought after award in the film industry”.

The hosts’ confidence grows as the audience reacts to every joke, every pun.

“This night attracts the world’s best directors, actors and film makers coming from all parts of the world...stretching from Brockton North to Brockton South and everywhere in between”.

Spontaneous Applause

It is the students’ moment to shine. They have their long awaited audience and are in control. They orchestrate the night. The teachers who have guided the planning and rehearsal of the show are now just part of the audience.

The show has style, intricate in timing and detail. Seamlessly, films and filmmakers are presented. The preparation and dedication to making the
student films is clearly appreciated by the audience. Some films express teenage themes of bullying, love, popularity, isolation, some cultural comment and some murder/mysteries plumb dramatic humour. While the films don't display professional production values they illustrate skill in all the camera techniques, music and special effects that could be obtained from a handycam and simple desktop computer.

True to the Hollywood cliché, the winners are welcomed to the stage with generous applause. Kisses and hugs are exchanged as they are handed gold statues, which they hold aloft with obvious pride. The acceptance speeches are staged in familiar Oscars-style with the awarded director thanking their family, friends, cast and crew.

Terryn for Peut-Être Plus Tard, the winner of the Best Film speaks:

“First I would like to thank everyone in our group, we had such a great time, learnt a lot and we made lots of friends. Thank you to our friends and family, for coming along tonight and supporting us, that means a lot. And most of all we’d like to thank our teachers, the best teachers out and without them we would not have been able to make this film, of which we are so proud.”

The acceptances are often spoofs, all the more effective for that.

Ahmed, the gangster movie director, straight faced:

“I’d like to thank my manager Fawaz, this is for you baby!”
The massed celebration recognizes the free spirited endeavour, the skill, the cheek and the audacity. Palpable is the excitement of public recognition of local talent.

At the end of the night, after much laughter and applause, an audience member turned to me, smiling:

“Wow, there was a lot of love in that room”.
Chapter 2: Literature Review – Critical Events in Educational Research

Every so often, education is marked by critical events. In contrast to the standard routine and process of contemporary schooling, these moments represent profound flashpoint in our lives. They are highly charged moments that evoke strong personal change and development, holding deep significance for those involved. They are episodes which provide valuable insight. Success equals fulfilment. They are complete moments in pedagogical time and space.

It is not the content covered which offers an event’s criticality, but rather the consequences which arise (Webster & Mertova, 2007). Initially stemming from constructivist learning principles, critical events arise from integrated programs, encompassing considerable personal and curricular time, challenge and change. Woods (1993) argues that unlike critical incidents that are contingent, critical events are feats of ingenuity, bucking trends of retrogressive education. Although the consequences are unforeseen, these educational projects need solid curriculum resources, teacher competencies and educational infrastructure in order to germinate (Mangubhai, 1997). These moments should not be cast into the category of extra-curricular. Despite frequently requiring something ‘extra’, their foundations rest on real learning, built upon needs and relevancies. This is curriculum. Research in critical events requires a high degree of teacher, student and teacher-researcher agency. It is often those who reap the most directed benefits.

For a child’s education the research examines claims that these events promote an accelerated development of learning in often previously
uncommon ways. There is an advance in attitude towards learning, acquisition of knowledge and development of skills. Inter and intra-personally, there is often a claim of a leap towards the discovery of a new self. Students internalise the more transformative aspects of the curricular (Mangubhai, 1997). There are claims of holistic and radical change enhancing students' understanding of self and relationships with others (Woods, 1993).

For teachers, critical events are often claimed to have a rejuvenating effect. As educators, our needs are met through our teaching; a pride in craftsmanship, secure test results. Teachers sometimes say they have been deskilled by centralized pedagogical reform. External forces may be said to have reduced educators to technicians, employed to deliver curriculum supporting outmoded dogma. A culture of discontent sometimes implies the art or moral craft of teaching has been dispersed by prescribed pedagogical reform. Critical events are seen, out of the blue, to plant the seed of opportunity, germinating in unpredictable and unforseen territory. For teachers, they appear to present a new frontier in teaching in which the active learner is implicit. Critical events are claimed by teachers to promote the refinement of teaching methods and to enhance understanding of how children learn.

Perhaps most significantly these critical episodes are held to expose our real selves as teachers – an identity constructed and negotiated in the process of overcoming the constraints of standardised curriculum and in transcending institutional contradictions.

‘Identity is seen to be expressed discursively when individual teachers subvert mandated syllabus or the expected practices of the school in accordance with their personal philosophy’ (O’Connor & Scanlon, 2006, p. 1).
My interest however here is less with identity and more with community. Critical events offer a new engagement. The exploration of teachers’ stories express and assert the active ‘Me’ and the reflective ‘I’ within professional dialogue. The shared success and heightened agency has a preservation effect. It helps sustain educators during less productive periods. Discussing and celebrating examples of excellence, through conceptualising interactions mediating the construction of knowledge and identity together sustains our vision, confirms our practical philosophies and presents strategies which transpose outside conventional teaching. By acknowledging the momentary, the responsiveness of others or otherness, an aligned identity is carved—What we do, our deeds are who we are!

‘Places, memory, experience and identity are woven together over time….schools must develop strategies that better enable students and teachers to perceive places that are alive in the human and more human world’ (Gruenewald, 2003, p. 625).

The promise of critical events research is the emphasis on reality. The commitment to agency explanations for psychological phenomena constructs situations embedded and embodied in the social, symbolic and discursive. More than the mere transfer and acquisition of knowledge, such research

‘develops a grasp or understanding of what gives sense to knowledge. This understanding includes developing a feel, a sensitivity, a grasp and a love for a subject, entering creatively into the spirit of an area of inquiry’ (Woods, 1993, p. 4).

Research in this field reveals an emergent progressivism. Its significance is not on the facts of what one did, but how. In this type of research, teachers claim to know, to be connoisseurs. We engage in
critical dialogue and praise intertwined with supportive, constructive and reflective criticism.

Critical events are unifying, bountiful in communitas. There is a synthesis of the individual and the social (Linehan & McCarthy, 2000). In contrast to hierarchy, roles, duties and the social structure of institutions a newfound homogenous human kindness emerges. No longer idiosyncratic individuals, a oneness transpires. Within this spirit new persons are born, suppressed feelings, abilities and thoughts are set free. Aspirations are celebrated. There is an uncommon excitement and expectation.

**Historical Background to Critical Event Research**
Exploration and discussion of critical events as they occur in human experience in teaching and learning is not a new endeavour.

The origins of critical events hail from the field of aviation psychology. John Flanagan made the first reference to critical events. During the Second World War, Flanagan developed ‘critical incidents technique’ (CIT), an analytic method employed to investigate the high rate of failure in pilot training. This method retrospectively studied incidents of both success and failure aiming to identify the specific behaviours which fostered both positive and negative outcomes. Flanagan developed his theory by analysing 3 main features of an event:

1. Description of the situation
2. Personal accounts of the actions and behaviours of the key player and,
3. The outcome or result.
Through this investigation, Flanagan was able to devise a set of procedures for collecting direct observations of human behaviour and to facilitate their potential usefulness in solving practical problems and developing broad psychological principles (Webster & Mertova, 2007).

The significance of critical events however, was later highlighted over a significant timeframe by many authors including Strauss (1959), Berger and Kellner (1964), Becker (1966) and Measor (1985). It was not until the work of Sikes (1985) that the concept of critical events was elaborated. Moving from the belief that these events solely invoked professional and instructional change, Sikes et al added that critical events are in fact highly charged moments and episodes that have an enormous consequence for personal change and development (Hammersley, 1999).

Interactionist ethnographic studies emerged from British Sociology studies of education in the 1960’s. Prior to this work, little focus had been given to the teaching and learning of students. Rather, forces such as social class were the focus of studies. Psychological studies of this era on education were largely concerned with measuring learning and documenting those features of teaching and learning that maximised it (Hammersley, 1987). Sociologists and ethnomenologists, such as Woods however, were more concerned with the exploration of the classroom and documenting it.

The work of Peter Woods moved critical event research into schools. He worked to shift the attention of study from key player focus into a more collaborative methodology, further focussing on the sense of communitas and the relationships these events create. Identifying
critical events through both the media and his relationships with schools, Woods furthered previous studies by not only describing the situations, actions and outcomes but also observing and analysing the primary features, structures, conditions and handled strategies of these educational flashpoints. Using historical ethnography, Woods’ first study included the investigation of four various literacy forms: the creation of a children’s book, production of a film, design of a local heritage centre and a school musical production. The subsequent synthesis of collected data revealed that critical events move through a series of clearly defined stages. These being:

1. Conceptualisation
2. Preparation and planning
3. Divergence
4. Convergence
5. Consolidation

**The Promise of Symbolic Interactionism**

Much of the existing work in the area of critical events has used symbolic interactionism as the major analysis tool for the qualitative methodologies. This interactive ethnographic method is ideally poised to understand the nature of the art of teaching and the sociology of learning. Descriptive practice and process illuminates the micro-end of interaction whilst enlightening the macro-continuum.

Experience is a symbolic activity. Through interaction one constructs and interprets one’s self and one’s self with others, the ‘I’ and ‘Me’; the inner of an individual and how the self arises from a social process. The analysis of symbols assists to highlight cultural determinants, social norms and psychological drives. Symbolic interactionism respects roles and appreciates culture.
Hargreaves draws attention to the following strengths of Symbolic Interactionism:

1. Its appreciative capacity, or its ability to explore social action from the point of view of the actor;
2. Its designatory capacity, or its ability to articulate taken-for-granted, commonsense knowledge, thus providing a language for discourse about these areas;
3. Its reflective capacity, or its ability to provide members with the means to reflect on their own activity;
4. Its immunological capacity or its ability to inform policy by providing knowledge and understanding of the everyday life at a school, this helping to protect the policy from failure;
5. Its corrective capacity, or its ability to offer a critique of macro-theories that may be incorrect in their empirical assumptions and, hence serving as a means of strengthening them. (as cited in Woods, 1996).

A Shift in Research Paradigm

Within the circles of academic research, there are calls for a shift in paradigm. Garrison (1996) states that much of the field of educational research is largely regressive. Inquiry needs to evolve in this evolving world. Positivist research is often clinically controlled, centered around technical problems. This research position often fails to address the human emotive, social, political and historical elements which construct school life. Such feltness needs addressing in contemporary research.

‘Emotion in its entirety is made of behaviour which is purposive, or has an intellectual content, and which also reflects itself into feeling or affects, as the subjective valuation of that which is
objectively expressed in the idea of purpose’ (Garrison, 1996, p. 395).

This investigation is unique from previous studies into critical events as it takes the form of practitioner-based research. Practitioner research gives unique first hand knowledge, it allows for a greater comparative study. The practitioner research element strengthens the reliability and validity of the event reconstruction. In keeping with traditional forms of ethnography is the researcher’s dependence on the testimony of others and other secondary data. In this research, the ethnographer is his own primary source of data, being an eyewitness to the event. Previous critical events research has solely depended on the testimony of others:

‘Not being present at the event as it happened means that one does not experience the emergent, unfolding process as it occurs. The researcher does not experience the triangulating force of one’s observations’ (Woods, 1993, p. 313).

A remote ‘other’ as critic permeates an inherit powerlessness (McDonald, 1992). The removal of an outsider’s agenda encourages a collaborative and consensual validation which enriches conversation and refines sensitivity. The starting point was to theorise participation in social settings. A dialogue between individuals and communities; practice and discourse (Linehan & McCarthy, 2000).

Practitioner research relies on interactions. There is a privileged access to ‘truth’. Practitioner research reconceptualises the work of the school practitioner as intimately linked with ongoing inquiry and the restructuring of schools as a collective process of inquiry-
Inquiry is an artistically creative endeavour. The arts help us to understand more imaginatively and more emotionally problems and practices that warrant attention in our schools. Eisner (2006) states that without a revolution of awareness, epistemology and methodology in contemporary research, we are likely to fail in developing holistic knowledge and understanding of classroom practice.

The positivist stance labels artistically crafted research and its focus on the aesthetic, artistry and creative factors irrational. To such theorists, this style of inquiry fails to import the practical and the substantive. Its limitation is the lack of disciplined criterion (Phillips, 1995).

The need here is for a methodological pluralism, research with considerations of both artistry and rigour. Artistically crafted research enlarges human experience (Martin, 2005) creating a paradox, revealing what is universal by examining what is particular. It has the capacity to put us in the shoes of those we do not know and thus to foster empathetic understanding (Eisner, 1995). More than mere description, artistically crafted research informs practicing educators and scholars in illuminating and powerful ways. Its focus is on our common existence as interpretative human beings within inter-subjective contexts. This is the basis for diverse perspectives, discussing and understanding (Martin, 2005). For Lincoln and Guba (1990), the strength of such case studies is moving from simple awareness to transference and applicability.
The investigation into the artistry of teaching requires a connoisseurship, an art of appreciation, rather than critical scientific approaches. Scientific impositions remove teachers from decision-making. Connoisseurship is an attestation to the skills and grace of teaching. In contrast to national aggrandizement which has occurred in recent years, focusing on the art and craft of teaching works to re-establish, legitimise and publically acknowledge teachers for their craft (Strugnell, 1985).

Connoisseurship is not solely an artistic perception. In linguistic terms, it is relational to what the researcher has encountered.

‘Its aim is to lift the veils that keep the veils from seeing by providing the bridge needed by others to experience the qualities and relationships within some arena of activity’ (Eisner, 1977, p. 348).

It pays awareness to the qualities and characteristics of context. Place, after all, has preludial qualities. This makes us pedagogical (Gruenewald, 2003).

Research into critical events is a shift in paradigm from deficit-based research which utilizes blame-victim vocabularies (Preskill & Tzavaras Catsambas, 2006). This Appreciative study represents systematic inquiry into what communities find enriching and life-giving. This creates hope, energy and motivation. These site-based investigations preserve the sense of community. They share stories, imagine, innovate. These are conversations that matter!
Contextual Considerations: the Importance of this Research

The importance of this research is evident through the critiquing of education by both cultural psychologists and advocates of critical pedagogy, particularly in relation to:

- Current educational experiences;
- Current curricular and pedagogic practice;
- Current cultures of schools.

Australia is currently embarking on a ‘language crisis’ (Clyne, 2005). Currently only 13% of Year 12 students complete a second language in their final year of study. Over the last decade, the number of languages courses offered at universities have halved. Clyne asserts that we need to pursue and explore programs which offer students extrinsic motivation where success of the learning tasks motivates the child to continue and excel in his/her language studies.

‘If students feel languages are something in which they can do, then it becomes an important part of them. It promotes self-esteem’ (Clyne, 2005).

The Languages Other Than English (LOTE) pedagogy presented in this study is a testament to experimentation and the student learning and engagement which can be cultivated.

Ethnographic research in relation to teacher narratives often highlights a level of growing discontentment in the teaching profession (Pole & Morrison, 2003). Conversations with teachers reveal professionals who identify issues of commitment affecting their roles as educators. Rife within the teaching profession are feelings of marginality, feelings of distance. Some identify feelings of internal conflict between the ideals and the realities of the profession.
Teachers describe reverting solely to ‘survival’ strategies in order to self-preserve through the demanding and stressful times teachers can sometimes experience. (Woods, 1985, p.24)

Sociologist Peter McLaren (2007) speaks of the cultural deprivation that is sweeping our education systems internationally. He argues that students are treated simply as passive recipients of rituals and symbols, resulting in generations of youth feeling disenfranchised from the very institutions which are meant to nurture, educate and inspire them to become active and engaged members of society.

Cultural psychologist Carl Ratner simply refers to traditional education as unnatural. Current mainstream schooling he argues, is removed and isolated from everyday life.

‘the physical design of colleges in isolated campuses composed of sterile classrooms, isolates learning from practical activities, and fosters the learning of abstract concepts through verbal exchange, intellectual manipulation of ideas and emotional suppression’ (Ratner, 2006, p.91).

A positive and connected culture is not developed in such a fashion. Teachers and students need to maintain a positive morale.

Ratner also believes that the cultural agency is located in curriculum based in activity, conditions, resources and communities (Ratner, 2000). These elements he observes can be drawn from a school campus but as well extending out to the local community and beyond. Curriculum should be about expansion. It should endeavour to cultivate student perceptions, emotions, cognitive processes and personal attributes. It should expand concepts of social justice,
freedom, equality, addressing all major political and economic spheres (Giroux, 1997). However, although these elements of curriculum are universal, curriculum should also be highly personalised. Curriculum should be negotiable and meaningful for all. It should be solicitous and be applicable outside the classroom.

Both individualistic and non-individualistic cultural psychologists argue that curriculum should be based on social interactions and dialogues. Students should have the opportunity to learn with/from a mixture of people and groupings. Giroux (1997) argues that all disciplines should be taught through drama. It should not be a stand-alone subject like in most colleges but rather a technique, which all teachers draw upon.

Unlike many educational reforms aimed at changing the behaviour of teachers and students, I am not aware of any State strategy or implementation model of change which seeks to strengthen social fabric. My short experience endorses the proposal that a sense of community can be progressively promoted through first addressing the social relationship of school members, secondly focusing of developing strong extra-curricular activities and lastly improving the schools curricular stance (Pritchard, Marshall & Morrow, 2003).

Critical events, and the 'Boscars' is but a case study, have the ability to encompass and positively contribute to understanding those areas of educational malaise and discontentment and actively to the necessary improvement of educational practice. The conditions of their success should be better understood in order to improve their frequency.
Chapter 3: Methodology

This inquiry into the ‘Boscars’ as a Critical Event (Woods, 1993) and its subsequent effect on school culture takes the form of ethnography, as the aim of this research is not simply to describe a world, but rather discover and faithfully represent the nature of social phenomena (Woods, 1999). The ethnographic study here draws on symbolic interactionist, discursive psychological approaches with the researcher being periodically in situ, immersing himself/herself in the day-to-day runnings of the culture being studied. It lends itself naturally to the study of small-scale cultural investigations (Elliot, 2005).

As one cannot identify an event as critical prior to its occurrence, this research will specifically take the form of historical ethnography, meaning all methods of investigation occur retrospectively, as it is only the respondents themselves who can identify the events criticality and impact (Woods, 1993).

Central to the elements of ethnography is the investigation of cultural themes, such as roles and behaviours. Ethnographic studies, as does this research, aim for high-level detail primarily in narrative form (Creswell, 1998).

The methodology of this study is highly interactive. A mixture of ethnographic and autoethnographic methods have been used. This work is a collaborative joint construction between the researcher and other actors. Voice and point of view emerge with greater clarity through both interaction and contestation (Diamond, 1992). Any
story is half someone else’s. Empowerment is a purpose in this research.

A large proportion of this case study has been given over to considerations of conscious reflexivity. The methodological treatment comprises both reflections on the participants’ and the researcher’s own personal experience. The inquirer has an obligation to be self-examining, self-questioning, self-challenging and self-critical (Lincoln & Guba, 1990). The construction of reality and understanding is deeply rooted in the person, character and context.

**Interviews and Character Vignettes**

Qualitative research methods were utilised in this research attempting to present first hand and first person accounts of the critical event in narrative and engaging form. It was my intention to achieve data triangulation by collecting and analysing the following sources. The quest is for meaning over data.

- Written documentation such as; school magazines, teacher’s note, unit plans, teacher correspondence such as: email
- Audio/Visual documentation such; as video taken of the event, student video reflection
- Interviews.

Collecting and analysing various types of documentation and media as data sources served to:

1. contextualise the event;
2. provide multi-perceptival resonance through the accounts of staff, students and significant others;
3. interrogate claims by asking for articulation of personal meaning;

4. include as much primary description of events as would afford understanding of the speaker’s agency;

5. allow for post-analysis by video recording the event itself;

6. provide for enculturation effects through both public and personal materials.

Conversational interviews were conducted in order to gain dialogical narrative. This method of investigation allowed for the attainment of specific and concrete accounts of the public process leading to various internal effects whilst still enabling and empowering the participant to guide conversation identifying personal areas of importance (Harré & Moghaddam, 2003).

Questions during the interviews were open-ended using everyday language, such as:

- Can you tell me about your experience of the ‘Boscars’?

This enabled and empowered participants to use their own vocabulary, personalising their experiences, increasing the internal validity of the data produced. Interviews undertaken were recorded to allow fine-grained analysis of the interaction between the teacher-director and other participants. However, some simple note taking occurred in order to record gestures and the body language displayed.

The dialogical accounts of the 2 students, 3 teacher-directors, 1 teacher-audience and the headmaster, presented in separate chapter length character vignettes are intended to engage the reader directly
in their agential actions and reflections on the Boscars as an educational intervention, first describing it, and then producing thoughtful explanations. The character vignettes combine a systematic approach with the expression of personal meanings. Each of the ‘characters’ interviewed were asked to consider the situation in relation to:

- The context;
- Your hopes;
- Who was involved;
- What did you do;
- What happened as a result;
- What the impact was;
- Why this happened;
- Other comments, such as expectations, predictions, what was learned etc.

Between them, the vignettes were expected to recreate the event in respect to: information gathering, evoking the past and conveying feelings about the film festival. During the interviews the researcher and other actors were to be seen constructing various joint understandings of the nature and significance of the Boscars as a critical incident in the participants’ life spaces or umwelten (Harré, 1997)

Scenes were revisited in order to attempt to recreate moods and atmospheres for the interviewee (Woods, 1996). The interviews some 8 months after the events described:

- Occurred to coincide with the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Boscars
• Were held in the Performing Arts Centre of Brockton Secondary College, the site of where the event being investigated occurred.

The initial round of interviews took place over a 2-week period. Each interview was followed up in some form or another, providing further insight and clarification during the data analysis process.

**Participant Selection**

Participants were chosen to satisfy a range of predetermined criteria. The criteria and justification for selecting interviewees is as follows:

• 2 students who participated in the event. They were to give the researcher insight into the student experience and agency in all realms of the critical event, from the conceptualisation through to celebration stages.

• 2 teachers directly involved in the production of the ‘Boscars’: These sources allow insight into the teacher experience and agency in all realms of the critical event, from conceptualisation to celebration.

• The College Principal. This source allows insight into the chief executive’s experience and agency in all realms of the critical event, from conception to celebration.

• 1 Audience member. In this case the school counsellor who due to her role has insight independent of the Boscar teacher team into the problems and needs of the students at the college.

• Myself as Teacher/Researcher. As a Director and initiator my reflections on my own agency and dialogue with the others on theirs gives insight into what it means to take responsibility for such an educational intervention outside the normal disciplinary structure.
The quality of this research rests with the instances rather than sample size. Its purpose is to explore deeply the experiences and multiple constructed realities attached to the educational lives of these individuals. Increasing the sample size, it was perceived would have overpopulated this study, resulting in participants struggling to locate their voices and biographies within the study (Diamond, 1992).

With reference to negotiating access to research sites and participants, the following considerations were made:

- Firstly, the research satisfied the ethical requirements of the University of Melbourne.
- The research sought permission from the Victorian Department of Education and Training and the Principal of the School to allow observation and fieldwork to occur.
- Informed consent was obtained from those proposing to be studied. For students, this meant gaining consent from them as individuals and their parent/caregivers.

**Data Presentation**

The data presentation follows Wolcott’s recommendations, presenting the data in the following format:

1. Description
2. Analysis
3. Interpretation of the culture-sharing group.

He states that the perfect starting point for this type of research is to describe the culture-sharing group and setting:

‘Description is the foundation upon which qualitative research is built....Here you become the storyteller, inviting the reader to see
through your eyes what you have seen...Start by presenting straightforward description of the setting and events. No footnotes, no intrusive analysis – just the facts, carefully presented and interestingly related at an appropriate level of detail' (as cited in Creswell, 1998, p.152).

As per Wolcott’s recommendations, this thesis commences with an opening narrative. An account rich with content and description which paints the picture in terms of context and locale.

The data produced from the semi-structured interviews are rich conversations. The ideas and explanations of the researchers/participants voice were reciprocally enriched by the interaction which took place. Standing independently as fertile biographical narratives, the interviews have been included in their entirety. Any treatment of plot and any shaping or structuring of ideas risked misunderstanding.

Structurally, the page has been divided into two columns. Down the left hand side of the page, the reader has the interview conversation just as they took place. The participant here is placed at the centre of the data. In the right hand column, interview analyses takes the form of narration. Voices and analysis have been placed side by side bonding researcher and participant voice. The intention was for the reader to live vicariously through the experiences of the community of Brockton by presenting ample voice and contextualisation. For this reason, extracts from the student films in their original French form have been placed into the conversations. This is how they were experienced by the Brockton audience.
A reprise is offered after each character vignette directly quoting the character’s response to the final transcribed research conversation and analysis. After the initial conversation they were invited to comment on the transcript, changing their opinion or elaborating on them. The Reprise was written several months later as a response to the chapter as it is presented.

The end result of these memoirs is hopefully characters which are believable.

**Data Analysis**

As stated previously, much of the descriptive analysis in the field of ethnographic research surrounding critical events has been undertaken using symbolic interactionism to offer a rich cultural analysis. However, this research also seeks to locate the criticality in the Boscars in the agency of the actors and to do this uses positioning theory as an analytic tool.

Positioning Theory explores social episodes attending simultaneously to the person and context—time and space. Harré & Moghaddam argue that with other methods of analysis:

‘The social realm is all too often pictured as one in which causes are deterministic in a Humean sense and in which space and time are independent’ (Harré & Moghaddam, 2003, p.14).

The criticality of the Boscars is obviously a product of its location in the time and space of the agents. Linehan & McCarthy (2000) justify utilising both a practical and discursive method of data analysis as implemented in this research. Practical methods, like symbolic interactionism involve attending to the words of people we are interacting with as gestures, spontaneous reactions and responses in social practice. The concept of positioning offers a dynamic, agentive
model of identity construction where a person creates a possible identity for himself/herself in a particular context through their active positioning in relation to, or perhaps in opposition to, elements in their discursive cultural context.

Discursive methods, like positioning theory:

‘enrich the account of agency without taking from community of practice’ (Linehan & McCarthy, 2000, p.445).

Symbolic interactionism:

‘offers a complement to positioning theory by grappling with how particular practices, through their cultural and historical re-production, constrain and facilitate particular kinds of identificatory possibilities’ (Linehan & McCarthy, 2000, p.450).

Symbolic interactionism as a tool in interactive ethnography is particularly relevant here because it allows the researcher to:

- explore social action from the point of view of the actor;
- articulate taken-for-granted, commonsense knowledge, thus providing language for discourse about critical events;
- provide participants with means to reflect on their own activity;
- inform progressive policy development by providing knowledge and understanding of everyday life in school, thus helping to protect the policy from failure;
- offer a critique of macro-theories that may be incorrect in their empirical assumptions- and, hence, serving as a means of strengthening them (Woods, 1996).

Positioning theory is particularly well adapted to the analysis of moments in discursive encounters among a group of people who meet
again and again. While there is no one true interpretation of social situations, they are better understood by analysis from various perspectives. Situations can only be understood by looking at particular relations between this student and this teacher (Linehan & McCarthy, 2000). In analysis of the meaning of the speakers in the conversational interviews positioning theory proposes a mutually determining triad of psycho-social entities;

1. The Position taken by the agents, their role and intent in the interaction
2. Social Force of the speech acts: both the intent of what has been done/said and the way it can be interpreted by others
3. Story-line: the symbolic meaning narrated by the speakers.

‘Using the triad of concepts it is possible to explain and even to anticipate other ways that the very same words and positions can be interpreted as socially meaningful acts’ (Harré & Moghaddam, 2003, p.142).

The actors position themselves in social episodes like the Boscars within the local moral order encompassing the individual’s rights, duties and obligations in the School.

**Validity and Trustworthiness**

The conventional validity of this research is supported in the following ways:

- The multiple representation;
- The systematic recording of interviews using note taking and a laptop computer (audio recording);
- The use of respondent validation.
But Taylor (1995) argues the validity in social research of this sort rests on its contribution to the improvement of practice. This research was perceived from this perspective.

It is possible in ethnographic research to either overstate or understate the research findings. Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that when the objective is to reconstruct events and the perspectives of those being studied, the standard for both ethnographic and qualitative research is the demonstration that the findings and the researchers’ interpretations are credible to those who were involved. Participants in this research were asked to comment on both the transcriptions and the analysis of the interviews undertaken.

However, the emergence of alternative paradigms to guide inquiry has raised questions as to how research of this nature should be judged. Although one cannot negate the importance of rigorous social research methods, according to Lincoln and Guba (1990), artistically crafted research should not be subjected to the same quality and rigour criterion as other more positivist studies. They argue that trustworthiness and authenticity are more applicable standards by which to assess this style of research. Often, rigour and validity judge the process rather than the product. Process judgments tell the reader something about the trustworthiness and authenticity of a given study, however, say little about the quality of the narrative presented. Lincoln and Guba describe alternative criteria by which narrative rich investigations should be judged.

**Resonance:** Purposeful sampling, data triangulation and the narrative approach to data analysis used in this research reflect the multiple realities constructed by the respondents. The narratives demonstrate
resonance through the mutual shaping of phenomenal elements—a chorusing of voices.

**Rhetoric:** The inclusion of complete biographies is more than the mere insertion of appropriate quotations, but rather are rich with the sense of human encounter. In this way, the interviews are embodied and embedded. They are participants’ own articulations. The validation is, in part, achieved by them as they assess the credibility through their own experiences, their personal and practical knowledge. This view of validity places emphasis on the insider’s perspective and follows logically from the principles of collaboration on which this research was based.

**Empowerment:** This research is aimed at the staffroom table. It encourages discussion and debate. A story of success, intended to inspire. There is a social objective here. The data presented conveys a deep understanding of reality. This in turn reorient, focuses and energises the reader towards knowing the reality of our context in order to transform theirs (Anderson & Herr, 1999). It is not about replication, but rather empowerment through consciousness-raising. To this end, Lincoln and Guba argue empowerment means that case studies should avoid ending narratives solely with suggestions of further research. We conclude our story, not simply describing what we have and how we got there, but rather where we, in education, should be going (Lincoln & Guba, 1990).

**Applicability:** Avoiding context and time free generalizations, this research facilitates transference through thick description. The result is powerful representations of individuals and their social milieu. Combining emotive narrative with analytical technique encourages us
to delve beyond the surface and live vicariously through our experience. The autoethnographical stance allows the reader a chance to experience and respond directly to the statements and actions of the teachers and students and to draw on his or her own conclusions as to what has transpired (Zeller, 1995). It suggests inferences to one's own situation and context. Ample contextual description, conversation and analysis support the construction of a personal meaning relevant to our own educational lives. Psychological and sociological, it is a description of the past and the future - the actual and the possible.

**Limitations**

There are several limitations to the research conducted here.

- This is a one-shot study. My defence is that the aim of this research is not to locate a formula for creating or assessing such critical events but rather to better appreciate the unique aspects of the Boscars and the agentive meanings expressed and felt by participants that may have made it significant in their lived world.
- As the population/sample size is small. All findings of this research are not generalisable but rather applicable solely to understanding the insider's perspectives. Others may find something of value in aiding their own reflectivity and possibly bring something further to bear on the phenomena described as expressive educational approaches seen by many as currently under siege.
- The research is relatively short-term. The study is concerned with the nature and function of the Boscars as a critical event in the lives of the participants and to try to capture its spirit. The approach is an artistic pursuit concerned with expressive and instrumental objectives. Other kinds of study would need to be
conducted in order to ascertain longer-term structural reformative significance of the Boscars but this research may act as a sounding board.
Chapter 4: We did it! Data and Analysis

The Cast: Rita
Rita is currently completing her Year 12 studies. She has attended Brockton Secondary College since Year 7. Until later in her schooling career, Rita has not involved herself in school activities. By her own admission, she has attended class and ‘that’s about it’. Rita has always been a keen French student and hopes to continue her language studies at tertiary level.

Wayne: Could you please describe your experience of the Boscars?

Rita: It was a good experience to have. I learned to work well with other people. It built up my confidence. Having the confidence to speak in front of people, to perform in front of other people. Rita attributes personal and social development to her involvement in this show.

Wayne: What made you decide to put your hand up and offer to be a host?

Rita: Because I just wanted an experience. I just wanted to know how it feels to go up in front of people and talking and doing things. I’ve never done it before. She feels the desire to feel a part of something. To see if she could change things for herself. She was looking and she found it.
Because of my lack of confidence.

Wayne: What made you choose to do it this time?

Rita: Because I saw the Boscars the year before and I saw what they could do. It looked fun. It looked like a good experience to have.

In an effort to raise the profile of the Boscars within the College, the final dress rehearsal had been performed to the school’s Year 9 cohort. This was a very successful strategy. The surprise and joy measured by the audience's spontaneous engagement.

Wayne: What was it like to be in the audience of the first Boscars?

Rita: Everyone was so happy with it. Everyone was excited. They were all so pleased and amazed, especially the parents. They were like ‘I did not think kids at our school could do that’!

For this performance, the audience as community were publicly applauding the school perhaps for the first time. The community response was vital to the impact. Like participants, the audience saw the school and its students in a different light—something to be proud of.

Wayne: Had you not seen talent like that before at the school?

Rita: No, I had never seen it. I

The audience became part of the
Conversation continued
hadn’t been to other school things.

Analysis continued
greater community.

Wayne: Then what made you go for this one?

Rita: Because it sounded fun. It was something different.

Wayne: What expectations did you have as a performer?

Rita: I expected it to be fun and it was fun. All the students were so organised, they all knew their parts. It was set out so well.

Wayne: What did you get out of being a Boscar girl?

Rita: It built my confidence, speaking in front of people. I had struggled with doing that before. I never liked being in front of the class, you know, oral

The sense of being there, as opposed to being told about it.

Responsiveness in an audience is important to any performer. They became supporters in a public coming out, a part of the one-ness, embraced by the exuberance on the stage. Their reaction was more than the appreciation of a good show. The audience identified with the young people as characters, felt the emotions, anticipated, prompted, reveled, laughed, grieved. They participated with their whole selves, not just minds, but their hearts and feelings. It was one of those rare occasions where there was a mutual celebration of being outside ourselves, but looking at ourselves. The kind that reflects true reality. It comes from being lifted right here on to the plane of expression over mere existence.
Conversation continued  

presentations. I wanted to build my confidence, to see how it felt.

Wayne: And how did it feel?

Rita: At first it was really daunting. I was up first. But then I got over it.

Wayne: And after?

Rita: I was amazed with myself. I was pleased that I could do such a thing.

At this point of the interview, there is a pause, the memory engrossing. Rita smiles. There is pride and self-recognition. The sustained satisfaction of realised potential one year later.

Wayne: What did your family think?

Rita: They really liked it. They didn’t think kids like this could do such things. Especially the LOTE subjects, to be able to perform in a different language they were really amazed.

Place is where the world manifests itself in human beings. Place can be said to hold culture and even our own personal identity. That was the place to be that night.
Wayne: What do you mean by students like this?

Rita: You would not think they’d do school activities, usually they are pretty nerdy. But people did it. People saw the last one and said, hey that’s fun. Let’s do it too. Much of what a school normally invites students to demonstrate centres around forms of recitation. But here the knowledge was in the movement of the actors and dancers. It came from deep within them. The skilled use of a digital format made this experience contemporary. A door opened to the new world.

Wayne: And you made a film, what was that like?

Rita: It was good. A good experience to work with others. Especially having it recorded we got to take something away. Again, it was pretty daunting. The long lasting impact of the Boscars is facilitated by the participants’ possession of performance video; an artefact with which students and parents can re-visit and celebrate as a significant shared moment of public recognition.

Wayne: When you found out you were making a French film, what
Rita: At first I thought, no we can’t do that! It’s not going to work out because the way students behave in some classes. They’re all everywhere, all over the place. But when we started to make a movie, we all come together. Everyone was quiet, everyone did what they were told in their groups.

Rita’s film titled ‘Je vous la revaudrai’ (Payback) is about a new student being tormented by a group of bullies upon his arrival at his new school. The film starts with a simple classroom scene. The students are busy at work. The classroom door opens and the Principal enters the room and walks to the front of the class.

Le Prof: Excusez-moi classe. Le principal veut parler. Silence s’il vous plait.

Le Principal: Je vous presente le nouveau étudiant. Il s’appelle Chris.

Chris greets the class, then sits in the only available seat in the class. It is next to a ‘nerdy’ girl. She has pigtails and thick glasses. The shot changes to a group of boys sitting at the back of the class, no books open, swinging on their chairs.

Bully: Elle a finalement des amis!

The class laughs.

The following scene shows Chris sitting on his own in the school yard eating lunch. Gangster rap music starts as a group of bullies turn the
Conversation continued

corner and spot Chris on his own.

Bully 1: Qu’est-ce que tu manges?

Chris: Un sandwich.

Bully 2: Vraiment? Nous aimons les sandwiches

The bully grabs the sandwhich from Chris and takes a big bite.
Laughing the bullies walk off. The ‘nerdy’ girl from the classroom appears in the background. Seeing what just happened she approaches Chris:

Jade: Ça va?

Chris: Oui, mais ils ont pris mon déjeuner.

Jade: Tu peux manger mon déjeuner.

The two students are then shown walking through the schoolyard. You cannot hear their conversation but they are leaning in, whispering to one another. They are plotting something. Jade stops, smiles and exclaims:

Jade: Parfait!

There is a close-up of a sandwich. A hand reaches in shot, peels open the bread and shakes a white powder into it. The container says laxatives. There are giggles in the background.

The following scene shows Chris sitting alone once again. Sandwich in hand, he is about to take a bite. Gangster rap sounds again as the bullies enter the shot.

Bully 3: Qu’est-ce que tu fais?

Chris: Rien.

Bully 2: Oh Regardez! Un sandwich. Nous t’avons dit que nous aimons...
The bully once again grabs the sandwich, he takes a bite and passes it on to his friends who also take a bite. After a few chews, the bullies grab their stomachs and groan:

Bullies 1, 2 and 3: Oh! Ma ventre!

The group of bullies run into the toilet block. Seconds later, we hear the sound of an explosion as the camera trembles. Chris and Jade are shown pointing and laughing.

The final scene is back in the classroom. The Principal marches the bullies into the classroom. Each have their heads bowed.

Bullies 1, 2 and 3: Nous sommes désolés.

The camera cuts to Chris.

Chris: On récolte ce que l'on sème! (What goes around, come around)

Fade Out.

Wayne: What was it like working with others?

Rita: It was good working in a team. Cause not only would we meet at school, we'd also meet outside of school and work on it together. And our film turned out really well. Better than we thought it would. The unforeseen unity extended well beyond the classroom. It impacted on their lives; their social circles. It gave them purpose to meet. And from that purpose, kinship blossomed.
Conversation continued

Wayne: What did you learn from making a film in French?

Rita: Working with others. Talking in French fluently. I used to stutter when I spoke in French, but I practiced a lot for the movie. I got used to it.

Analysis continued

Along with the progression of social development, the Boscars also signified for Rita an escalation in academic ambition; more cultural identification with the foreign language. For her, confidence and fluency in French has been maintained. 4 years of LOTE learning to that stage was validated.

Wayne: Do you ever watch your movie?

Rita: I watch it all the time. And I think, I can’t believe I did it. I amazed myself. I can’t believe that I could do something so...oh my god! I watch the whole thing from start to finish. Everyone put in such hard work it would not be fair to just watch my own performance. Everyone did such a great job. I also compared ours with others. What we did well, what we could have done better. We could have been a bit better organised.

She still surprises herself, learns from this. It was an iconic achievement that changed her sense of self.

The accolades are powerful. Just as personal achievement is recognised, so too is the collective. Everyone internalised, everyone achieved. There is amalgamation in the communal accomplishments.
Wayne: What other impact did it have?

Rita: It changed the way I felt about school. It used to be boring. I never did anything. Never got involved in things. It’s now fun, we have more activities.

In this instance, participation was the catalyst for connectedness.

The removal from the normal setting, even briefly, has produced a metamorphic transformation.

Rita feels as if she belongs.

Wayne: What about the Boscars stood out for you?

Rita: Making the movies. Not only did we show them to the parents, but kids from other year levels are coming up to us and saying, we saw your movies. It was pretty embarrassing at first but then I got over it. Cause some of the kids we know and some of them are random. We don’t know them. It’s really good when they come and talk to us about it. We talk about whether they liked the film or not, if it’s fun making them. They ask if it’s fun doing it. I tell them it’s fun, but be really organised.

The multi-directional acclaim is what sets the Boscars apart from anything else. Praise from parents, under these circumstances is almost to be expected. However, it is the recognition from the community of the college; being a star comes with responsibilities!

Everyone should be a hero in his/her life. The festival created a common curriculum in which they could aspire to. Filmmaking is culture creating; reinventing yourself and the place.
Wayne: Can you describe the night itself?

Rita: It was really good. I did not think that many people would come. But it was full. The theatre when you saw it was, I was like ‘Oh my God’. I did not think that many people would come, especially students. We don’t usually go to those things.

Brockton does not have a tradition of evening engagements. Students often passively progress through their secondary schooling, nothing much past 3.10 in the afternoon. With regards to the wider community, family are expected to attend these nights out of duty and obligation. No one expected to actually have a good time!

Wayne: What is the difference with this event?

Rita: Wanting to see what it would look like. The year before everyone was talking about it. I know myself, I was talking about it, the next day, how good it was and everything. People just wanting to come and be a part of something. The night was so good. It worked out as good as we hoped. The red carpet, the theatre. It felt like ... it didn’t even feel like school. It felt like out of school at some theatre or something. It didn’t feel like it

A full theatre is a testament to the surprise, even euphoria, which resonated in the space. The ambition of greatness, for once realised. They carried the audience. The audience recognised themselves, identified with the characters and their secret lives. The plots were often parodies, jokes joined and comedy appreciated.
Conversation continued was at school. Like it was somewhere else with the red carpet, the gold poles, the seating plan and everything. It was really professional.

Wayne: Is that what made it popular? It wasn’t like school?

Rita: Yeah, it was. It doesn’t feel like school. It feels like you’re out watching some musical. I know some people that night who walked out saying ‘It felt like we were at the Oscar awards’. Like we were watching the Oscars on TV. It felt like we were just sitting right there.

The Boscars escaped the straightjacket of the timetable and room. The ambience was different to performing other musical school performances at Brockton. This was creative realism. These were not students performing others’ scripts, this was more edgy. They were film directors, actors, cinematographers- new media. It was modern culture- their world.

Wayne: Is that something this school needs?

Rita: Yeah, it’s a different activity. No other school I know does it. It’s something different altogether. All right, we have a musical, but all the schools have

Unlike other initiatives at the college, there is a profound sense of ownership of the Boscars. It is entirely student created and orchestrated. The festival due to
Conversation continued
musicals. It’s something different that only we do.

Analysis continued
its very nature must be shared, it is performed to an audience but the performance is indisputably theirs.

Wayne: How does it compare with normal school work?

Rita: It’s more exciting.
Schoolwork is just like you sit down and write, finish your work then get more. But the Boscars is really fun. Working with others, making movies, getting along with others.

Elements of Rita’s disconnection from the college stems from her classroom experience; the routine of conventional curriculum. To students, it is a seemingly never-ending cycle of handouts, essays and textbook questions. The passive, isolated controlled sedentary acquisition of abstract concepts.

Wayne: How did it make you feel about learning a language?

Rita: I loved it! I always have liked French. But it really made me want to do it in VCE. And for me, it’s something that I did not think I could do, speak another language but I’m sure I can.

She internalised the aspiration to actually speak French authentically.
Conversation continued

Wayne: We have spoken about how it's different to your normal work, but we've had special projects in other years before, how does it compare to those?

Rita: Well, they are similar cause we worked with people, getting along, achieving work with other. I know some people that did not get along well, but when we started working together everything was fine. But the Boscars was better. With the others, our parents didn’t really get the opportunity to come and see what we did. With the New World Expo you could come see it, but not many did. But with the Boscars, the parents came to see what their children were doing at the school. To look at our learning. More parents came to this than anything before.

Rita has moved through Brockton during a period of curriculum innovation and experimentation. Students in her year level have participated in an integrated curriculum unit each year of secondary schooling. Year 7 saw students complete a unit around the concept of Family. Year 8 began the Business Enterprise Unit where groups of students established and ran their own business. In Year 9, students completed the Year 9 Expo. Students worked in groups of 14 to establish their own country and society from an existing landmass.

What set the Boscars apart from everything else were the pedagogies that embodied and embedded the student work. Film is universally entertaining. It is part of their everyday lives. A knowledge of French was not needed by the audience to appreciate the extraordinary, the illusions, the actual aspiration, the
Wayne: What impact did it have on the College?

Rita: Yeah, a positive one. It just made us...all the students just changed. We thought ‘why can’t we just cooperate for once. There were people I didn’t like but now we are fine. I can’t wait to come along again. I know now that I’m in Year 11 and I am not involved. But I want to see what is going on this year, what kind of talent they have. And I’ll keep coming back even when I’m finished school. I want to see it get better, with different people, to see what they come up with.

Wayne: Did it have an effect on teacher student relationship?

Rita: Yeah, teachers got along better with students. Some teachers that didn’t often get along with some of us, like always yelled at us and things, now we get along. Even if they don’t have those students, they’ll come up to them in the yard and

Considering only two have ever occurred, there is already a sense of tradition in relation to the Boscars.

The unifying power of the festival was not contained to the student cohort. Enthusiasm was transmitted to all corners of the college. A great moment such as this gives teachers and students positive feeling of community.
Conversation continued

say ‘Hi, how are you? How’s Year 10, great film’ and stuff like that.

Wayne: *What about your relationship with me as a French teacher?*

Rita: Yeah it changed. Your attitude towards the students changed because it turned out so well. You didn’t think it was going to be as good as it was. But when it was, your attitude changed. You were happy with us and proud.

Wayne: *I was very proud of you all and I still am. Is there anything else you’d like to say?*

Rita: Only that it is the best. A summit for me as a teacher has been reached from which to survey teaching.
Rita’s Reprise:

The Boscars was (and still is) the highlight of my life at school. It was a time I will never forget. It changed my opinion about my education so much. It showed me that more was possible, to get involved.

The analysis of my interview was correct. It was really good to read about something we had done. I must admit, I never thought that something I did at school would be researched...and for something positive! We can all be very proud of what we did. I know I am. Thank you again.

Rita.
The Student Film Director: Terryn

Terryn completed Year 12 in 2008. During her 6 years at the College, she always wanted to ‘get involved, to work hard but have a good time as well’. Terryn participated in numerous College dance performances, notably the annual school Rock Eisteddfod Challenge. Due to her experience in dance, she took on student leadership in her senior years acting as an instructor/mentor to younger students. Terryn is currently undertaking a degree in Hospitality at RMIT.

Wayne: Can you describe your experience of the Boscars?

Terryn: It was excellent. I was in the dance performance and made a French film. It was so fun and so professional. Nothing like we had done before. Our school needed that. We need to be a bit more professional with things. The audience loved it. They all cheered. Family, friends, other classes. 2 years later, we all still talk about it.

Terryn confidently asserts the need for an upmarket ‘performance’ countenance.

Wayne: So your family came. What kind of feedback did you get from them?

Terryn: That it was entertaining. And usually when they come to our school things. It’s like oohhhh no! But this was professional, She associated this upmarket professionalism with formality. This might be expressed also in the debutante balls of the past or
Conversation continued

formal. So formal

Analysis continued
in today’s formals. All to do with
public coming out- expression
meeting market standards.

Wayne: Do you think that is
something this school needed?

Terryn: Yes it did.

Wayne: Did you get feedback from
anyone else about the dance
number? Were any of your friends
in the audience?

Terryn: Yeah, but I think they
were more focussed on the films.
I don’t know. I think the students
would have been more focussed
on the films. But I guess the
parents liked both the films and
the dancing.

Wayne: If we just focus on the
dancing just a little bit longer. Do
you think you got anything out of
that?

Terryn: It built up my confidence.
To perform at my best.

Terryn links learning to the
expressive, social, physical and
disciplined multi-dimensional
experiences of education. She
Conversation continued

Wayne: Had you lacked confidence before?

Terryn: Yeah, performing in Rock Eisteddfod, you’re in a big group. But when you’re with fewer dancers. There is more pressure. There is more focus on you. So the pressure.

Wayne: Were you nervous?

Terryn: Yes. For the first performance. But when you get into it. And you see your friends obviously that made it better and fun.

Wayne: What was it like working with your teacher on that dance?

Terryn: Yeah it was good cause...she’d help us when we

Analysis continued

reflects readily on changes in her self-confidence, self-esteem, personal growth and the ability to express ideas.

With a smaller ensemble comes a greater pressure, to excel in the new intimacy between performer and spectator. The group is reliant on one another. Standards are high.

Repeated public performances intensified the professional challenge and heightened the potential for learning from experience. Surprise continued to arise, up to and including the final performance.

I think she means Jayne expected
Conversation continued
needed it obviously.

Analysis continued
high standards.

Wayne: Did it affect your relationship with your teacher in any way?

Terryn: No. Not in a bad way. [Laughs]

There is an irony here about student-teacher relations.

Wayne: It can be in a good way.

Terryn: Oh yeah, definitely in a good way yeah. I have known her through Rock Eisteddfod anyway so it wasn’t that difficult to get along with her.

Individuals already lifted by initial recognition in larger spectacles were further lifted by their involvement in the performance.

Wayne: But as you said before in the Rock Eisteddfod there’s 80 kids and in the Boscars there’s 15.

Terryn: Oh, obviously we got to know her better. More one on one time. If we needed help, she was there to help us. We saw her not as a teacher but someone to go to. Friends.

Terryn sees her teachers differently- different personas.

Terryn sees her teachers differently- different personas.

There is a shift in the perception of institutionalised roles and barriers. This is a classic category distinction rhetorically preposed here between ‘teacher’ and human being.
Wayne: You said it was really good dancing with your friends. When you started the Boscars was everyone your friend?

Terryn: No, no, no, no, no but from working together, helping each other out with new ideas, we all formed a closer friendship.

Relational meanings in dancing are powerful for Terryn.

Wayne: Do you still talk about the Boscars now?

Terryn: Yes, all the time.

2 years have passed since the Boscars. As a testament to its success and significant to students’ education, it is still part of their everyday lives and conversations.

Wayne: And what do you say?

Terryn: Just about how fun it was, and you know that song that was in it. When we hear it we are just like ‘oh my God’. And about what we wore, funny things that happened on the night, and how we went early to get ready.

Wayne: So now we are going to watch a little bit of your film.

Wayne: What was it like to make a film?
Conversation continued
Terryn: At times it was stressful, but when we saw the final result, obviously it was all worth it. But we were very happy with it in the end anyway. So no matter what, if we didn't win, we still found the process interesting and fun.

Wayne: So when I came to you and said you were going to make a film in French. What did you guys think?
Terryn: Impossible. Like a whole movie in French. We had been learning French, like conversation but putting it all together, filming it, working together as a group.

Wayne: And how do you think it turned out?
Terryn: Excellent. At times I just wanted to kill people [Laugh]. Because there would be times when somebody wasn’t there. And actually coming up with the story was quite difficult. But then once we got on track it was pretty good.

Analysis continued
Competition may have sparked interest but the real catalyst was the communitas.
Terryn realised the high standard required. Personalities were tested. There had to be a maturity in their self-perception, patience and dedication. This developed from dealing with people, from disagreement, new ideas emerged.
Wayne: And what do you think of your finished product?

Terryn: It’s really good. I still find it interesting to watch it today. A deeper aesthetic side to her self-expression has developed.

Wayne: You have a copy? Do you watch it?

Terryn: Yes, our mates, we watch it when we’re all together. When we’re hanging out, we’re like ‘oh let’s watch the Boscars’. It’s fun. A collective aesthetic.

Wayne: What do you say about it?

Terryn: How good we were [Laughs].

Wayne: What parts of it do you watch?

Terryn: We watch Nat’s film because she made a film too. And my film, and the dancing. We weren’t really interested in the other ones. Not because of our own, just because they’re not our thing.
Wayne: When you saw the Boscars, what did you think about the films in general?

Terryn: The language, foreign films were most excellent, but then when it got to media. There was no effort put into it. It’s just like they got a camera and shot a few things and it was done. Where we actually spent time, actually working on it.

Extensive planning went into the production of their films; brainstorming, storyboarding, script-writing rehearsals, costume design, soundtrack choice etc. Their initial uncertain efforts paid off in this appreciation of what it takes to express yourself in the way they wanted.

Wayne: Does that make you even more proud of what you achieved?

Terryn: Yeah, and we did put a fair bit of time into it at home as well, writing scripts and stuff.

Wayne: What did you learn from making a film?

Terryn: A lot about the French language. Being able to talk properly.

Wayne: Did you think before that you would be able to speak that
Terryn: No, putting on the accent is hard, but it’s alright to talk in French sometimes. Because we had to work together we learned to cooperate and incorporate our ideas. Yeah, because I directed the film and then hearing everyone’s ideas really helped. We didn’t have to fit everything in.

The sophistication of language used in the production of these short films extends far beyond any conventional Year 10 textbook. The ability to rehearse her script and role built the capacity in the spoken form.

Wayne: Did you build relationships? Friendships?

Terryn: Yeah, yeah. And we still talk about it. I don’t have many of them in my classes anymore, like Kirsty. But when we see each other we’re like remember when we were in French and made a film. And just how...what happened in it and we say parts of it.

Sections of the script have become part of the group’s vernacular. It holds special meaning, which only
The film starts with stop motion animations. A series of still photographs displayed quickly. In the photos are hands in surgical white gloves. They are cutting out letters from magazines. Piece by piece, letters are glued down until they spell the phrase ‘Peut-Être, Plus Tard!’; the film’s title ‘Maybe, Later’.

The next shot is a close up of a boy, Jean-Pierre, walking through the schoolyard. He looks nervous. Ever so quietly, he is repeating to himself:

Jean-Pierre: Tout va bien!

Jean-Pierre approaches a group of girls sitting at a table. Looking nervous once again, he takes a gulp of air.

Jean-Pierre: Bonjour Virginie et Amanda, puis-je m’asseoir ici?

Virginie et Amanda: Eh! No!

Looking discouraged, Jean-Pierre approaches another group of girls. With another visible gulp of air he asks:

Jean-Pierre: Bonjour Camille et Sandra, puis-je m’asseoir ici?

Camille responds coldly: Peut-être plus tard.

Both girls roll their eyes, get up and walk away. Jean-Pierre sits and places his head in his hands. He sobs.

The following scene is in the school counsellor’s office. Jean-Pierre is still very upset.

Jean-Pierre: Les personnes ne m’aident pas. Pourquoi?

In a soft, reassuring voice, the counsellor responds: Jean-Pierre, tu ne
peux pas changer.

Jean-Pierre: Mais, je suis tout seul. Qu’est-ce je devrais faire?

Counsellor: Tu dois suivre ton cœur.

The following scene is in a classroom. The students are studying their French verbs. There is mild chatter. A voice over from the loud speaker sounds.

Voice over: Camille, viens au bureau s’il vous plaît. Camille, au bureau.

The class erupts with laughter. A student nudges her.

Student 1: Camille, qu’est-ce que tu as fais?

Camille: Ferme la bouche!

Camille gets out of her seat and leaves the classroom. Outside the sun is bright and reflecting into the camera, eventually the entire screen is white from the sunshine. Mysterious music begins. As Camille approaches the corner, two arms jut out, grab her and pull her behind a wall. Fade out.

A quick transition occurs and shows a student (Odette) running into the room.

Odette: Monsieur, Monsieur. Camille est morte!

Le prof: Tu es folle.

The teacher dismisses her, turns and walks away. The students stop their French work and huddle around a table to find out what happened.

Student 2: Qu’est-ce qui s’est passé?

Odette: Camille est morte poignardé.

Teacher: Calmez-vous! Camille n’est pas morte.
The students return to their seats and commence their work. Visibly upset, Odette excuses herself from the room. She leaves through a door at the back of the room. A shot of a clock shows that several minutes have passed.

Terryn: 'Odette, Odette! Où est‐elle?

A loud thump and a girl's scream is heard. A student runs to the door at the back of the class. Knocking loudly, she screams to Odette.

Teacher: Bougez‐vous!

He nudges the students out of the way and unlocks the door. The faces of the class are shown, they look at the floor, shocked.

Student 3: Elle savait trop.

Back in the classroom the students are conversing.

Student 1: Qu'est‐ce que nous allons faire?

Student 2: Allons‐y!

The following scene shows Jean‐Pierre walking down the corridor with his student planner in hand. A photo drops to the ground. The group of girls run out of the room. They notice the photo on the ground and Jean‐Pierre walking off in the distance. A student picks up the photo and they notice that it was taken from behind a bush. The photo shows the girls eating lunch. Jean‐Pierre had been spying on them.

Student 3: Regardez. La foto. C'est tout le monde.

Student 2: Nous disons qui?

Student 4: Pas la police. Mais nous devons penser vite.

Student 1 exclaims: Le Principal.

Heavy guitar music plays as the girls run in slow motion across the
Conversation continued

Analysis continued

They enter another school corridor, this one is lined with lockers on either side. The notice Jean-Pierre closing one of the lockers and walking off. He forgets to lock it. The girls run quickly to the locker. The camera shows what is inside. There are several photos of the girls, all taken from behind something. There are also notes resembling ransom letters made from cut magazines similar to that of the opening credits. The notes say 'Amour' and 'Amis' (love and friends). The girls notice a list of student names. Camille and Odette have been crossed out.

Student 2: Ce sont nos noms

Student 3 [Scared]: Pourquoi nous sommes encore ici?

Terryn: Je suis la personne prochaine

A long shot shows Jean-Pierre standing, in silhouette at the end of the corridor. The girls turn around.

Student 2: Tu as tué Camille et Odette. Pourquoi?

Jean-Pierre runs to the open locker. In slow motion, he slams the door shut. The sound echoes.

Jean-Pierre: J'ai suivi mon cœur. Il m'a dit à tuer.

Fade Out

Wayne: And what about the relationship with me as your teacher?

Terryn: Yeah, excellent. You helped us a lot. And people on the awards night were like yeah, thank you Mr Murrill [Smiles]
Conversation continued
because you helped us a lot. You
did, but then we did a lot too.

Wayne: So do you think that doing
the Boscars, you built a better
rapport with people?

Terryn: Yeah, of course. For one,
we were doing practical work.
And it’s better than student work.
It was different and all of the
other classes were like student
work. But when we got to this
one it was different for us.

Wayne: Your film won best film, so
we are going to watch your
acceptance speech and have a chat
about that.

Terryn: Ok.

Wayne: Do you ever re-watch your
speech?

Terryn: No, because it was
embarrassing.

Wayne: Why embarrassing?

Terryn: Because we did not think
The moment relived – the
we were going to win. I thought ours was pretty good but throughout the night, we hadn’t won an award and we were like ‘ohhhh well’. So we did not think we were going to win anything.

**Wayne: How did it feel to win?**

Terryn: It was really good. All that hard work. We won.

**Wayne: Where do you keep your Boscar?**

Terryn: It’s on my shelf in my room. It’s funny to look at. Best film.

**Wayne: In your speech, you thanked your group.**

Terryn: Yeah, because without them we would not have had a film. And we had friendships that we never had before. We hadn’t really associated with each other before. It brought us closer together. Because we worked on it for a while.
Conversation continued

Wayne: What did the audience think of your film?

Terryn: I think they liked it. My family were proud because I was speaking a different language. They think French is hard. They did not think I would be able to make a French movie and direct it and win best film. Obviously they were proud.

Wayne: What did you get out of winning the award?

Terryn: It obviously had a positive impact. But I didn’t feel like it was all my work. We all did a fair bit. So it impacted all of us.

Wayne: What impact did it have on Year 10?

Terryn: It was something different, very different. Not all classes were doing it. So it was a privilege us doing it. I think that’s why we took it a bit more seriously because we knew

Analysis continued

The language became accessible and presentable. With traditional LOTE pedagogies momentarily abandoned, expressive objectives were realised.

Genuine appreciation of the consultation of others is not so easily learnt in a social system that honours only the individual – learning to listen is as important as achievement.

Opportunity for this kind of creative association is rare in schools, particularly secondary schools. They felt ‘privileged’ to have this direct learning.
Conversation continued
others weren’t doing it. On the night, no one put anyone down. We all had an excellent, great time.

Wayne: And after it?
Terryn: It did change our school lives. I don’t know how to explain it. How is it different? It’s very different. We don’t have the opportunity of doing these things. Even now we don’t that much. So it was a really good experience. Like excellent. No one was disappointed in any way. The whole process illustrated learning as it should beempowered rhetoric here.

Wayne: In school, do you sometimes feel disappointed?
Terryn: Yeah, not getting top marks and stuff. But no one let anyone down. Everyone just worked together. That’s why it’s popular 2 years later. The social learning speaks here.

Wayne: You went to the Boscars the following year?
Terryn: Honestly? Obviously I think nothing could have beaten What made the Boscars special was that it contained parts and
Conversation continued

ours. I don’t know, we just have something different. The dancing, technically I think ours was better. But they did a good job. I’m not saying they didn’t. But I still reckon we did a better job.

Wayne: Why did you go?

Terryn: Because we wanted to see how different it was. Because different things were happening we had to see how different it really was. They had the full red carpet, blah blah. But even though we did not have that, I still had a better time at ours. For me it seemed better.

Wayne: What impact do you think the Boscars had on the school?

Terryn: Well, we performed it to the school in the afternoon. I reckon for them to see that, they would have been waiting for next year. Their chance to do it. They wanted to do it. Because the musical and stuff, people think that’s daggy. But seeing us do

Analysis continued

elements of themselves. Loyalty to her friends yes, but there is also a confident connoisseurship in her expression.

The red carpet aesthetic was important with regard to the feeling of Hollywood authenticity, but it does not detract from the quality of her performance.

She feels her Boscars sets a new benchmark for school performance; a paradigm contrast to the unauthentic nature of most school performances.
Conversation continued

this, everyone doing it. They want to.

Wayne: Do you think it changed the culture of the school?

Terryn: Yeah, cause we’re all different and for all of us to get along, even though we know that we are different. It was fine. We didn't really think about all that when we were working together and performing.

Wayne: Why was it such a success?

Terryn: I don’t really know. We did not expect to get such a great response. I think just the energy we had, how we performed and the films were good too, the hosts, the audience. I think also because ours was the first and there wasn’t anything like it before.

Wayne: Thanks for your time.

Terryn: You’re welcome.
**Terry’s Reprise:**

After reviewing the interview, it still makes me chuckle as the memories are still there. Everything I had said was interpreted accurately and to actually read about the Boscars is inspiring as it was a great achievement and definitely the major highlight of my high school years. Strong relationships formed during and after the Boscars and even hearing the songs from the dancing brings back the memories, and we do not see these as normal songs but as songs that have created lasting memories that will never be forgotten. The Boscars was a new "event" and it succeeded which made it so exciting that the new creation pleased everyone from students to parents to teachers. I definitely feel the same and meant every word of it. I have now finished school and can say I will never forget the hard work and accomplishment of the Boscars. 😊
The Producer: Diane – Geographer Teacher and collaborator.

Diane is a History, Geography and Psychology teacher who worked at Brockton Secondary College for 14 years. During her time, she held a number of leadership positions such as: Year Level Coordinator and other welfare roles. Between 2003 and 2006, Diane was the Innovations and Excellence Coordinator for the local cluster, a group of 5 primary schools and one secondary college in North-Western Melbourne. She coordinated a 3 year action research project supporting teachers in developing a thinking culture within curriculum frameworks and classrooms. Diane is extremely well respected throughout the area for her knowledge of curriculum design and her creativity in the classroom. In 2007, Diane began working as an Educational Consultant for Social Education Victoria.

Wayne: Can you please describe your experience of the Boscars?

Diane: I think the Boscars for me was a very positive experience for lots of reasons. I really enjoyed working closely with you in particular, and the fact that you could come into the classroom and work with the class. It seemed to be the usual boundaries of the way the class would operate were broken down a lot. And I mean by that there wasn't somebody standing at the front of the class teaching, that it became a different environment, it became much more of what I...

The typical structure of a secondary college is not conducive to meaningful collegial collaboration. Timetables and allotments act as barriers to cooperative practice. The Boscars brought Diane and I together to explore, share skills and dream of possibilities. I came into Diane’s class to work on film editing with students. Such staff collaboration is rare at Brockton. Besides the time and significant constraints,
Conversation continued

would call a community of learners, in that some of the kids learnt from each other. I learnt from what they were doing. I think the fact that it culminated in an event that they all enjoyed so thoroughly, their learning was purposeful for that event and I think it also allowed a lot of them to be creative in their learning so that could take what they had learned in their usual subject, Geography, and actually put it to something more creative. I think it also allowed some kids to focus on particular skill or interest, you know, to connect with technology in a way that they perhaps would not normally in a classroom. And I think it was good that they brought it all together in this event and that some of them got to be involved in particular roles, such as the dance group, and they saw it as very much something that they had created, something especially for them at their year level and something that they had not had the opportunity to do before. So I think that they were really enthusiastic about it. So that's why, you know, it was a very positive experience from

Analysis Continued

constructivist projects require a certain kind of teacher/student relationship. A classroom founded on democracy and equality. The teaching must exemplify 'geography'.

Conjuncture of structure and flexibility, planning and celebration. The process had a logical sequence, consisted of various IT/editing tools which exercised their creative abilities, writing, speaking and discussing. It presented opportunities to all to excel, both individually and as a group.
Conversation continued

Wayne: So when you spoke about the change of the learning environment in the classroom, what impact do you think that had on everyone involved in the process?

Diane: Well, I think hopefully, I would imagine that changed perhaps some view of a teacher-student relationship which in some classrooms still exists with the teaching being the holder of knowledge and, you know, disseminating that to the kids, to the students, but in this classroom, I know that a lot of those students have a lot more skill and knowledge about the technology and the way it operates, so it changed that balance of the holder of knowledge. I think within their groups and it was clear that they were, you know, showing each other how to do things as well. I think it also probably, hopefully was good for them to see you coming in and working with me, obviously who didn’t know, you know like, what to do half the time. But that’s also

Analysis Continued

In this situation, Diane feels as much a learner as her students. She experienced great and relevant development. She learns in the same way, as a clear philosophy of ‘learner by doing’. Her finding out about the technicalities of filming, of organising a project of this nature and complexity.

Students developed a sound understanding of both the media and how information is selected, compiled and packaged. They acquired technical aspects of production, understanding the qualities and developing an appreciation for the media.

As with any pilot project, not everything ran smoothly. Teachers and students were all approaching this kind of event for
Conversation continued

demonstrating a cooperative kind of relationship, where as in lots of classrooms it’s just the teacher who is seen. So I would think that if you look at it from various levels and from a modelling level, we did that quite happily, and I think that’s a really important thing, that teachers aren’t seen as the ones who hold the knowledge because it’s moving so quickly now. We have to be seen as asking for assistance or help from you, when you are doing it, so that’s what I mean about a much more cooperative environment in terms of the learning that took place.

Wayne: When you refer to the Boscars, you seem to refer to it as a process and not just necessarily an event which happened?
Diane: MMMM!

Wayne: Can you elaborate on that?
Diane: Well it definitely was a process. It was good that it had an end event for the kids to aim for as well. You know a kind of, well actually I don’t even think that ended the process actually.

Wayne: Celebration of learning?

Analysis Continued

the first time. We all had much to learn- about our own capabilities as well as those of our students. We had to learn new roles, about ways of working together on something new, about management and method, as well as the substantive content of the project itself.

Even after the curtains closed and the lights dimmed for the last time, the sense of celebration and pride remained.
Conversation continued

Diane: Yes, a celebration of learning, but then I don’t think actually that ended it because what happened after that is that the kids were on such a high after the event, it carried through, they could see that things could be different. So I think that the start of the process, you know by doing that event and leading up to it may have also opened their eyes to maybe how other learning can perhaps take place. Cause I think some of them were keen for it to happen, and happen again in the future. And then when you look at even the spread through the school, so that the year below then became aware that this event could take place as well. So I think it did open the fact that there were other ways to learn, you know, so it was a process that opened up lots of people’s eyes. Not only the students but some of the staff, maybe too, who originally weren’t particularly too enthusiastic or interested or keen, but then after they saw it and how much the students enjoyed it and how much that was obvious to everyone watching it that they used that event over and over

Analysis Continued

Critical progress was made by students. They gained a new found knowledge of self and skills associated with the art of learning.

Their learning awakened a heightened potential. It developed a shared framework for knowledge and action. It laid a strong foundation for future developments.
Conversation continued

again to show other schools and students what the Year 10s had done.

Wayne: When you talk about the success of it in terms of student engagement. Do you think it had any impact on the demonstration of what they had learned?

Diane: Ok. I think probably from a content point of view, there are different sorts of learning. There was the learning they learn that was with regard to the media they used and that was in terms of making the film. There was the content of the subject which we based it around, which was in this case Geography and they were doing their films on Melbourne. I actually believe that if I were to do it again, I could improve, or we could improve on the content learning because it was kind of tagged on at the end of a unit of work, so we did a lot of the information on Melbourne then they put the DVD together. I believe that if I were to do it again, you could actually build the whole unit of work so that at the beginning they had the focus of the DVD, so they are learning, you

Diane learned lessons from this experience. She refined her pedagogical and technical skills. With hands-on experience, teacher and students advanced beyond the textbook and found better ways of doing things.
Conversation continued

could be much more...I don’t

know...rigorous in the content

that was included in it and it
could then be more valuable

learning. For the course content, I

think they certainly learnt a lot

about working together in terms

of groups and about teamwork.

Just talking to some of the kids,

there were the ones that were

frustrated because others
couldn’t uphold their share of the

workload. So there are kind of
different levels. There were the

skills level on getting the DVD

made to a certain level, there was

the content of the subject that

ought to go into it, there was also

the experience of what it is like to

learn in a cooperative way, to

work and share in a team, which

is all good stuff for later on and

how you deal with the issues of

people who don’t pull their

weight etc. The fact that it was
going to be publicly displayed, ok,
kids would work in group work
before and do a project and it gets
handed in and someone hasn’t
done the work. But this time
because it was something that
was going to be on public display
to their peers and to members of

Analysis Continued

Inevitably in such a project, there

were times of frustration and

social uneasiness. This is an

invaluable lesson in itself.

Students learnt that creative

work couldn’t be all fun and

excitement. They require

consolidation and perseverance:

not solely the glamorous on-
camera stuff. The films are a

testimony to the sense of

achievement countering any

negativity felt. Despite any

frustration, everyone knows it

was worth it.

The Boscars is about more than

attaining predefined learning

outcomes. An event such as this

provokes excellence as well as

record. It moves teacher and

students. It honours the

recursiveness of human

knowledge. Intellectual

achievements are points of

reference in the continuing

struggle to maintain intellectual

power, not just items that can be

checked off and be done with.
Conversation continued

the school community, I think that added an extra kind of accountability.

Wayne: When the Boscars was first planned, what hopes did you have for the event?

Diane: I hoped that it would be a mechanism to engage the kids in the course and maybe to give them the opportunity use another medium to apply their knowledge; to show what they had learnt. I was keen to employ some more technology into the way I taught and so that allowed that, for me to get a bit more understanding of that. I was hoping that it would be a mechanism mainly to bring about a greater engagement with the students in their learning. That’s a road we need to head with our teaching, we actually use technology that kids have in their everyday life and take so very much for granted, that we need to look at how we can apply that to the sorts of learning what we think is important, and that is a mechanism for that. It is interesting because in the beginning there were high

Analysis Continued

Classroom activity is not limited to the knowledge and skills of the teacher. Diane is conscious of the technology rich world and the need for schools to embrace it. Moving from the word processing nature of ICT ‘rich’ tasks which typifies current classroom activity to the multimedia world in which these students live.

Support from the leadership team of Brockton was a crucial element in the success of the Boscars. It not only provided time and
Conversation continued

expectations in terms of, no, there was a fairly good degree of support from the administration for it, and that was really good because it was fairly trusting, they agreed to provide some funding for it etc, in fact on just the idea and little else. In fact, I would have hoped that at the beginning, there would have been more support for it in some other curriculum areas. That we would have more of a multidisciplinary flavour to it. I would have hoped that the other subject areas would have seen that it could have grown into a much sort of whole school event from different subject areas embracing it, and that didn’t happen so..And you know maybe it could as it builds up over time that there is potential for that to occur because it would have, I think, broadened it and made it a whole school event where all subject areas could enter would be really a great event to do. Other expectations I had. I suppose to be honest I sort of expected better quality work in terms of the content I would have hoped that I think out of the 3 DVDs that were

Analysis Continued

money but encouraged the exploration of the new style of learning with little pressure to succeed. A chance to add a new dimension to the school curriculum.

This lack of involvement stems from the disjointed vision of what the Boscars stands for and what curriculum should be. Innovation versus tradition. Creative versus academic. Here, a successful synergy between the two was sought.

The documentaries presented information about the city of Melbourne and the appreciation for community life. They discussed the multicultural nature of the city and all that has to offer; food, festivals, sense of community. Students developed skills in information retrieval, producing a product enhancing community integration. The
Conversation continued
presented on the night of the Boscars from my subject area a couple of them were light in terms of content of the subject area. The actual night, I think it lived up to expectations in terms of how it all went, I do not think there were many negatives about that night at all, about the actual Boscars night. There was certainly a degree of enthusiasm on the day working with those kids. They were really excited about what they were doing, so that’s something that you don’t often see in schools.

Analysis Continued
subtle blend of words, images and music and the close detail to the sensitivity of the topic all ensured that the culture of the city was faithfully evoked in both a mental and aesthetic way.

From the onset, this was special.

Wayne: When you say that in some of the films you thought that the display of content or knowledge was a little bit light. Do you think they could have displayed a greater depth of knowledge?
Diane: If they had done it to another medium?

Wayne: Yes
Diane: Not necessarily, no. And I suppose that’s just everybody’s skills level with working with a new medium. As I said, if you were doing it a second time around you could set parameters

Filmmaking is solely a medium in which students can display their learning. It, in itself, does not guarantee excellence. Students and teachers need time and support to plan, experiment and
Conversation continued

that use that medium to get
deep levels, just like you get
criteria with project work or any
other work, that's just part of
learning experience from a
teaching point of view as well.

Wayne: So it lived up to
expectation?
Diane: Yeah, I think so.

Wayne: Did anything stand out?
Diane: I think people's
enthusiasm, some of the roles, the
2 presenters who they dressed up
in suits, they did take it seriously.
I didn't hear many people being
very critical of it. And sometimes
kids can put down other kids
work. From the reaction of the
audience and on the actual
Boscars night, there wasn't that
sneering, you know sometimes
they can be very judgemental. The
dancers were very well received. I
think that all the ‘foreign films’
and the subject ones were very
well received, there was none of
that sniggering or booing that
sometimes happens. So I think
that was probably the highlight,
that they clearly all saw the films
saying something cultural

Analysis Continued

trial. There is a need to do it again
to refine and enhance those
learned skills, to develop the
pedagogy further.

Students found confidence in
themselves and their schooling.
The micro politics of the college
had shifted for a period in their
favour from order to expression.
They were empowered by an
open window of opportunity.

Many of the films made a critical
statement - took a position.
effectively—content and style. Oh and the other thing is that they were very appreciative of the work that went into it by the teachers that was also pretty obvious as well. And sometimes that’s not obvious either in other events or you know the learning that takes place. They are not that responsive, they were very appreciative of that, of the opportunity to do something very different and unusual.

Wayne: Before you spoke about the enthusiasm of the night, then that enthusiasm still being carried on in the classroom. Can you give any concrete examples or elaborate a little bit?
Diane: Word had obviously spread that the night had been an enjoyable and good one. I think probably as the kids began to talk about it. They wanted to see the DVDs again. They were very keen to have their own individual copies of it. And I think all of that, you know, was something that was pretty obvious for the appreciation of it. It was getting towards the end of the year so it was getting near to exams etc, but
Conversation continued

I think they still talked about the event in a very positive light, that they enjoyed it all. And I think, I am trying to remember at that stage, whether any other year levels mentioned it. I think there was some talk about whether it would be going to be done again the next year by the next group coming into year 10.

Wayne: It was seen by the year below.
Diane: Oh below, in the afternoon. That’s right. Yes, and I was teaching the year 9’s and they had a discussion about it.

Wayne: What were their comments about it?
Diane: They all wanted to know whether they would have the opportunity to do it again next year. And again you know the response to that was it would depends on the subject teachers being willing to again be involved in it. So that’s what I mean about the fact that if it’s just done by a couple of people who have an interest in it etc, and it’s not taken up by the other. It sometimes means that kids who would like to

Analysis Continued

Heights of uncommon excellence were reached. This euphoria of self-identity with success transcends for the night, standard labels such as: age, graded academic achievement, body shape, gender. It stands in stark contrast with the institutionalised social structure of the College.

It was a hit before the curtains had really opened. Even in rehearsals greatness was apparent.
be involved in it through a subject area, no matter what it was, miss out on that opportunity. If people don’t embrace it.

Wayne: You spoke about the perceived impact on your class and another class that you taught. Do you feel it had any impact on the wider school or wider school community?

Diane: It did that after the event. I don’t know why but I don’t think people kind of were that keen or interested to know a lot about it before hand I think they saw it as just some sort of you know. Apart from some key people who were interested in it on a curriculum or administrative level who were quite supportive of what was going on but I think from other staff members. There was not a great deal of enthusiasm. That was evident by the very low turn out of staff on the night. And just the general lack of interest in taking up offers to be involved in it. Also to even ask questions, even though there were announcements made at assemblies and notices in the bulletins. People weren’t terribly
Conversation continued

interested or engaged in it. It seemed to be after the night, there was this follow up of people, once it was recorded that it was a success. And, I suppose having the kids discuss it and seeing what was produced. People became more enthused about it then. But certainly only some staff and not universal.

Wayne: Why do you think that is?
Diane: I think there are a number of reasons. I think that a lot of people would regard that type of activity as something extra to the actual core teaching that needs to take place. And if you are not working to a textbook or working through a syllabus, and not doing it in traditional ways, then it’s not real learning. I think maybe for some people the technology, and this for me personally. The technology is a huge leap from my current level of understanding in using technology. It’s a big leap. And I would not have done it. Just decided to do something like this. Without the support of a colleague who had a greater level of understanding of how to do it and what to use. So for some

Analysis Continued
development in relation to the knowledge of self and skills associated with the art of learning.

Traditional structures embodied in ritual practices provide quasi ‘good teaching’. Epistemological assumptions supported by centrally prescribed outcomes-based policies are challenged only rarely by ontological expressions of local agency.

This can be seen as challenging the local moral order, resting of the rights and duties. “Doesn’t this make my teaching look bad?” “Isn’t this really a distraction from the learning these kids
people it may be that there is a huge leap between well... I don't know how I would use this in my classroom and I don't feel confident or I don't have the inclination or whatever to skill myself up enough to be able to use this. So it could be that. And I suppose. I already mentioned that they don't see it as real learning. And I suppose that sometimes things like this people see as, it's all a bit extra, it's all a bit hard that extra effort to, run something like that.

Wayne: You said that after the event there were a number of staff more enthusiastic about it. So do you feel that, viewing this event and the celebration of it, broke down at all that concept of real learning and how difficult ICT can be?

Diane: I don't know whether it broke down that part of it. I think the fact that the night in itself was such a success and so well attended made people realise that this had been a successful event as opposed to some of the other activities that had taken place in the school, like the New World...
Conversation continued

Expo. Something like that some staff view as something a bit out there, challenging serious learning and did not regard them as successful. But by all measures of the feedback from the night they were hearing that this had been a more successful event, so therefore it maybe was something to take notice of. But I don’t know how many then said “Oh well perhaps. Maybe I need to look at how I use technology in the classroom.” I don’t think it made that leap for people. But what it may have done, in the following year was cause people to think, “Well would I want my Year 10 class to be involved in something like this?” So it may have opened up a reassessment, for them to think about it in the future because it was a successful event rather than something that had flopped. But I don’t know how many people would have personally taken the kids’ achievements on board...“Oh I must find out more about this and how I can use this in my classroom”.

Wayne: You compared it to

Analysis Continued

The New World Expo was an integrated unit within the Year 9 curriculum at Brockton. Students took an existing land mass and created their own country. They invented a language, political system, government, currency and many other societal and political elements. It culminated with an exhibition of student learning, where parents, student and teachers were invited to ‘tour’ their nations.
Another interdisciplinary project that was held at the school, the New World Project, and you said it was more successful than that. Why do you think this particular event was more successful than say something that the school had tried before?

Diane: I think clearly the level of student engagement and how the night went, that there was this kind of fairly shorter, sharper event at the end of it that was clearly successful by attendance, by the people who went and enjoyed it so I think that filtered through the school community. Whereas perhaps with the New World Expo I don’t think there was the same level of...there was student engagement to a degree, but the staff certainly did not enjoy that event at all. They certainly did not enjoy the public aspect of that, which was the displaying of the work. That did not seem to get much support from staff in the same way. It did initially, perhaps in the first year, but over the course of time it was seen as more of a burden. Not successful from staff perspective.

Staff do not want to be associated with something that was not successful. However, they attended as a public display of recognition of their colleagues.
Wayne: Would you do it again?
Diane: Yes. I’d need to….and that’s the difficult thing about technology isn’t it? I’d need to start from scratch again. I’d need to probably, you know, work with somebody, yet again, to figure out how to make the movies. I’ve forgotten, I have not had cause to do it again. But I know I could do it again. And I would certainly plan and use the whole..you know making of the DVD in a different way. I’d build the whole unit of work around it. So if I did it again I would change and enhance it. Like I think you do with all teaching and learning strategies etc. So I think I would do it again definitely.

Wayne: How do you think you could get more people involved?
Diane: If you were going to do it again, how would you get more people involved? I think you’d probably have to tackle the things we spoke about before. First of all, if it’s lack of skill level, maybe some PD for staff on a regular basis before the whole thing took place to just help them clarify how to be involved, in terms of...
Conversation continued

making a film etc. So that might need to be planned in advance, a term in advance or something. I suppose if you are going to do it as a whole school project there might be some more resourcing in terms of supporting staff and students in the classroom, with some ICT support. And I think probably that if you wanted to get more staff involved in the beginning maybe there would need to be some talking up at a staff meeting, showing what was done in the past, maybe showing some results from student perceptions and their involvement in the project to try and have people commit to it and see that it’s ok to give something like this a try and sometimes they might not always produce the best work, but hey, a lot of those kids who may have not been engaged in the traditional learning and teaching that takes place in the classroom anyway. It’s not as if they are going to be losing anything from it. And it would have been nice to be able to allow people the opportunity to ask questions and maybe it needs to be developed and modified

Analysis Continued

what is possible and leave others to pick it up in their own way?

A teacher’s ability to teach is often defined by the level of their students’ work or the chapter of the class text they have covered; the attainment of learning outcomes. For many, deviating from the norm is too great a risk. If unsuccessful, it could be to the detriment of their professional self-identity.

The teachers involved were grateful for the opportunity to work closely; to team-teach.

Expanding the project to include
Conversation continued

with their input about how and what might need to be changed in order to allow them to participate. They may see that certain things need to be done or met or whatever. I certainly think in our case, we were talking about the Boscars and perhaps some people didn’t quite get the notion, even though it was explained that they would be modelled on the Oscars etc. I don’t think that everyone came to terms with what that meant.

Wayne: So as a teacher allowing their students to do this, what did you get from it?

Diane: I probably felt that they were far more comfortable using the various equipment, including cameras and their mobile phones, to transfers music to soundtrack etc. They were far more comfortable in doing that than of course I was and so personally it made me realise how much technology is part of young people’s world. And the more that we can utilise it in their learning, I think the better. It’s engaging for them. I thought it was interesting watching some of the personal

Analysis Continued

formal professional development places the spontaneity at risk and allows for the treasured human aspect of this endeavour to be lost. It becomes direction over participation. People value the inclusiveness of the task, the ability to create something hands-on. This could not be achieved to the same degree in a workshop or PD session.

The crafting of the documentaries produced was a notable achievement even if the geographical content was weak. They showed remarkable skills and sensitivity. They captured the spirit of Melbourne, celebrating the diversity of the city in its many cultural forms.

For Diane, the Boscars was an inspiring insight into the capabilities and responsiveness of her “ordinary” students –their ordinary courage.
Conversation continued

stories of student who were trying to work in group work and with other people as to how they could get the people that were not carrying their weight to do so. And at particular points, coming as a teacher and sort of wanting me to sort out that problem which is always difficult. And to try and work with them to find out strategies that they could use to sort it out. The other thing was to see some kids who actually did, just like any other project you would do, but kids who really took it upon themselves to do extra work, to put in more than what their fair share was because they really had something personally invested in this and they may or may not have been the sort of student who would have normally put more into a project or any other piece of assessment you would be doing, but there was certainly some kids who found it really engaging and who put in that extra effort and felt quite responsible and there was quite a bit of cooperation across the groups. There was no competitiveness about whose DVD would be better, they were

Analysis Continued

Real learning had taken place. Students learned much regarding the value of a technical production. They developed their understanding of social learning, treasuring the opportunity to work together while enhancing their skills with reference to dispute resolution.

Some students discovered their limitations, yet working collaboratively with others to successfully overcome them.

Effort and reward combining to produce excellence.
Conversation continued

quite happy to help each other
and transfer their skills across the
groups which was also really nice
to see.

Wayne: When you said that it gave
you an insight to see how
technology is so involved in the
teenage world. Did it give you
insight to the teenage world?

Diane: I suppose so yeah. It was
when we were talking about
multicultural Melbourne and they
had their ethnic songs on their
phones, you know they were able
to transfer them straight away. So
I suppose it did give me an insight
into some of the teenage world
and what sort of things interest
them, what sort of things don’t
interest them.

Wayne: And do you think that had
something to do with the amount
of engagement, the fact that they
could bring their world into what
they were learning?

Diane: Yeah, and they certainly
did that with music especially
they really enjoyed, you know, in
fact a lot of effort went into the
soundtrack of those DVDs, didn’t
it? And as I was mentioning, so

Analysis Continued

Their films depicted a culture that
they recognised and identified
with. A culture that was
important and necessary to them.

The main text was interspersed
with scenes of the city and its
people. There was variety not
only in content but also in
presentation. A full range camera
shots were used; close-ups,
Conversation continued

much when into the soundtrack and getting it right, now when I hear some of the soundtrack from those movies 18 months later I can still visualise those DVDs as they accompanied the soundtrack. And it showed how important music is to them I think, that they were very keen to do that and it also showed how many in that class were quite proud of their cultural background. In fact that was a really interesting one because in some parts of it there were some students who were interviewed about their cultural background and they were quite reluctant to talk about it, if I remember rightly. And it was with the encouragement of some others they actually were interviewed about their families’ entry into Australia and settlement here. So that was quite nice to see. I think it was a fair celebration of various cultures. I am just trying to think. Did it tease out? Were there some issues with that and one of the boys in the class? I think most of them were certainly happy to include that in their DVD and celebrate the cultural diversity of

Analysis Continued

planning, as well as voice over, audio inputs were skilfully used. There was music from a range of cultures: a celebration of humanity.

Through interviewing their peers, students displayed affectionate portrayals of humour and warmth. They opened up and invited the audience into their emotional space, sharing their own biographies; family stories. Stories of migration, of hardship, of love and loss. This was real community education.
Conversation continued

Melbourne. I don’t think there were any issues. I know when I used to do multiculturalism with other classes that there were some issues with some students. That they would feel annoyed or uncomfortable talking about it. But that was not the case here.

Wayne: That’s an interesting point, that in other classes you found there can be some tension or resistance when talking about multiculturalism, but in this circumstance there wasn’t, do you have any idea why?

Diane: Well.. because we had gone out on an excursion to make the DVD, and had photographs of particular areas of Melbourne that were known, such as Lygon St and the top end of Lonsdale St for the Greek community etc and Sydney Rd and they then downloaded pictures of food etc that really perhaps what we were doing was looking at what those particular cultures had bought to Melbourne. And so because they had seen that it took it outside the classroom, so you could see the contribution that other cultures had made. Maybe that’s it? Maybe Learning left the classroom and went out into the real world. Students made discoveries about the people of Melbourne, including themselves. It was a celebration of a city life in which they all shared. It gave them a feeling of pride and reinforced their sense of belonging to the college, suburb and the city.
when it was about putting music to the movies they had an appreciation of just what other cultures could bring in terms of music and food. Maybe actually going out and seeing that and realising that may have been the difference.

Wayne: Thank you
Diane: You’re welcome

Reprise:

I’ve read through the transcript of the interview you conducted re my involvement in the Boscars. I think the transcript is an accurate account of my feelings and thoughts about the event and Wayne’s questions some months after the interview, and a significant time after the Boscars. I can still clearly remember the genuine excitement and engagement displayed by the students. I don’t think anyone could dispute we were all engaged in the learning!
The Choreographer: Jayne

Jayne is a teacher of Dance, Humanities and Italian. In her 6 years at the college, she has been involved in many performing arts initiatives. Outside of her work-life, Jayne is an experienced and celebrated choreographer and director of semi-professional musical productions, working with various theatre groups in the northern suburbs of Melbourne.

Wayne: Can you start off by describing your experience of the Boscars?

Jayne: The Boscars was a fantastic experience. I think the best thing about it was the students had never really done anything like it before. It was territory for us, so it was a learning experience for everyone. But I think the best experience was seeing the students grow, whether it was by making films or the dancing section or even the hosts, they all grew throughout. Their confidence grew, and I guess seeing them on the night was the best experience we had because they all shone. They were the right age, the maturity of the students came out. It allowed them to lead and do something that they would not ordinarily have the

Professional pride and enthusiasm is instantaneously evident.

The satisfaction and pride in the Boscars does not stem from her own achievement, but rather the successes of her students: social, personal and academic. The progress they made. The heights attained. There lies the professional reward.

Delight is far from being
Conversation continued

opportunity to do. And for me watching the LOTE films, even though I did not make them, it gives them something they can walk away with and to be proud of what they did.

Wayne: When you say that the maturity of the students had come out, had it not come out before?

Jayne: I think that for some of the students it probably hadn’t. I think that some of the students because they had been given a little bit of responsibility or they had to take a bit of initiative. I think the maturity came out of them in those sorts of situations.

Wayne: You’ve been involved with the Boscars in terms of dance and the organisation. Can you break down those parts? What was it like creating and assisting the kids with the dance?

Jayne: Because I am an experienced choreographer and because I have a Guild Award [both laugh]...sorry am I allowed to say that? From the dance perspective, my role firstly was

Analysis Continued

unilateral. The recognised value and impact is not just for her kids. It is true celebratory collaboration.

Trust is a driver for sociological cohesion. It breaks down barriers; all levels involved dissolved social and intellectual inequalities. There is a strong sense of the importance of providing students with a challenge, that they saw a chance they could rise to. The opportunity to do well.

Jayne was awarded ‘Best Choreography’ from the Music Theatre Guild Association of Victoria in 2002 for her work on ‘Song and Dance’. I saw her begin her classes: “And
Conversation continued

choreography and I was their
dance teacher. So I worked pretty
closely with them, mostly in class
for the first year and in the second
year out of class. So I guess again
working with the students, some
of them had experience in dance
which was great, but some of them
had never danced before. So it
gave them an opportunity to not
only learn different dance styles
but also performance skill and
stagecraft was very important.
And also for them to understand
what goes into putting on a
performance. Not just a dance
performance but a whole evening
performance. Things like
costumes, make-up, hair, even
things down to the awards, again
their stagecraft, getting on, getting
off stage and working together as
a team was very important.

Wayne: What about working with
kids on the production of films?

Jayne: In the first year with the
dance group we did a film come
PowerPoint on different musicals.
So basically we chose, I think it
was 7 musicals, musicals that
were made into films, so things
like ‘Chicago’, ‘Flashdance’

Analysis Continued

5, 6, 7, 8....” She was a
choreographer before she taught.
The level of poise and precision
of her Year 10 class inspired me.
Hers is no dance class, she goes
straight to a rehearsal. They are
not treated as students, but
dancers. Like direct teaching
methods in a language, students
learn through immersion in the
culture. Rehearsals are executed
with structured intensity. Every
move is repeated in an effort to
achieve precision. ‘We’ll do this
until we get this right’. Fingers,
feet, posture all observed in
order to create kinaesthetic
unison- the right bodily
expression. Expectations are high
and students are receptive to the
discipline.

Students in this class used their
knowledge of cinema and song to
create for the Boscars an homage
to music in film. For this to work,
skill needed to be high. There
were no words, no conversation
to convey the story, solely
Conversation continued

‘Grease’ etc. and they all basically provided their own costumes and we made some footage of them doing various things in that genre and then we put it to that music. So they had something to show for what they had done as well.

Analysis Continued

movement to convey meaning and feeling. Dance seems a sensual art form. Although the significance of the achievement is underplayed here by the teacher, the achievement was recognised on the night.

Wayne: What do you think they learnt from that?

Jayne: I think a lot of stage production, a lot of things about working in front of the camera and responsibility. Little things like making sure they've got their costume on the right day, and again costume design, hair and make-up. Mainly the production side of things. I think.

In film production time and space is professional stuff. There were detailed, sometimes heated discussions amongst students on camera angles, transitions, special effects, audio adaptations. All tools used to convey a desired emotion, thought or statement. This was done, not to satisfy their own artistic needs but for the artistic product. These were real filmmakers at work.

Wayne: And what about working with the hosts? Some of the other staff I have interviewed said the choice of hosts was controversial.

Jayne: MMM, Yep

Wayne: Is there a reason why you choose particular kids over others?
Conversation continued

Jayne: I think you have to choose the right kid for the evening, in that you need to choose students that are going to sort of bring a happy medium. They are going to take it seriously, but also keep the evening light-hearted and they are not going to be afraid of having a little bit of a joke and if they muck up, they are going to keep going and the audience is going to laugh with them. So I think that rather than going for the students that are wonderful speakers or the really popular ones. You find someone in the middle. So the students are going to enjoy watching their performance. The staff and the parents will enjoy it, and at the same time they are being respectful of how they deliver things. And I think also finding students that want to do it as well. It is a very big thing, getting up in front of 200 or 300 people and host. So we need to make sure that they are comfortable doing that. But I think it is best to choose students out of that mould. Rather than students who are always running assemblies, always class captains, giving someone else a go.

Analysis Continued

The tone set by the hosts at the Boscars is imperative to its success. Organisers aim to keep it light-hearted and humorous. The formal pomp of school performance is abandoned for jokes, gold statues and glitter. Away with the expected anointing of established star students. In with the new surprising new talent. Go with risk. Trust the talent.

Dewey said “To educate is to delight”. By this measure, many in the audience, as well as on stage, were educated at the Boscars that night.
Wayne: And what do you think they get out of it?

Jayne: Those students? I think, especially the first year hosts, a lot of confidence. One in particular, was a little bit naughty in his classes but he got a lot out of it. His confidence grew. He matured a lot. And in the second year, we had a female and a male host. I think that they were just so rapped to be a part of it. It was such a big thing, you know, we only chose 2 students out of Year 10. It is such a major honour for them. And it is something great that they can put in their résumé as well and they’ll remember forever.

Wayne: So how did the idea come about? And why put on something like this?

Jayne: I think it was mainly from you. You’re very passionate about filmmaking. And I guess we put our two talents together. Your filmmaking skills and my choreography. And I guess my experience with production in general, on how to put on an evening. So we thought we’d draw

The Boscars is a product of a synergy of talents. It is a mix of passion, interests and skills designed and implemented by a core team of 3 teachers: the director, producer and choreographer.
Conversation continued

On both our strengths and put it on together. I guess the idea came out of those films being made by you in your LOTE classes and no one got the chance to see them. And we tried, I think, a lunchtime to show them but the attendance was poor and the students thought: 'Well that was wonderful' but that was it. So I guess we tried to give the students something to work towards, whether they were going to win the award for best film, best director, best actor etc. But basically the idea came about that we would have a film festival. We wanted to start quite small. But even the first year it became quite big. And then we had the idea that because I was teaching Year 10 Dance, that they could do the opening number, and they could be the Opening Ceremony. That’s where the idea of the Boscars came. The ‘Boscars’, you know the Brockton Oscars came about. So we thought we’d have the big opening number. And then we decided it would be purely run by the students on the evening. The only thing we do is basically run the sound and the lighting. Students lead. And it was mainly

Analysis Continued

So often as educators, we get students to complete a task that does not go anywhere, that does not do anything. Artistic teaching demands an audience otherwise it lacks authenticity. This contradicts the very purpose of producing art. Film is to be viewed.

Despite everyone treading slowly through the unchartered territory, the anticipation of greatness came early on. For a school where attendance at student performances was relatively poor, for this, ticket sales rocketed. Something was happening.

We encouraged each other to take the necessary risks.
Conversation continued

to showcase their talents, whether it was making their films or doing their dance or hosting or being Boscar Girls, whatever it was, that was the aim of it. That's how the main idea came about. Is that clear?

Wayne: Yep, so if you think back to 2006, the first Boscars and you were planning it. What hopes did you have?
Jayne: Before hand?

Wayne: Yep

Jayne: I guess we just basically wanted it to run smoothly. Like I said, we wanted a forum to showcase student work. I don't really think we thought it was going to be as successful as it was. It really took off. It was something that we knew deep down was good but working with children, you never really know what they are going to do. [Laughs]

Wayne: Do you think that is the success of it? You know it never happened before, then happened in a major way.
Jayne: I think so. I think it happened with such a big bang. A

Analysis Continued

In schools, innovations are met with apprehension and hesitation. We trod carefully not to create too much expectation-oversell. There is also a necessary humility that occurs when you talk about your work with students. Perhaps this all stems from wanting so much for them to succeed, but not usually being able to make it happen.

On occasions the risk is 'no risk'. For students, it's a total and
Conversation continued

lot of other programs start slowly and they build up to something that is great. Where this kind of took off, putting the pressure on us. We started off so well, so now we have a standard to maintain. But I think also for the students, for them, you know the next year, they wanted to be involved, they wanted to make films, they wanted to do the dance, they wanted to be hosts, they wanted to be Boscar girls. So for the students it also gave them something to look up to. It gave them something to look forward to by the time you are in Year 10.

Wayne: So what do you feel happened as a result of the Boscars?

Jayne: I think the culture within the school and the culture definitely within Year 10 changed. I think a lot of students were almost a little envious they weren’t involved, because unfortunately it was a select group of students that were involved. It depends on whose class they were in whether or not they make a film. Or whether or not they have talents on dance or hosting or

Analysis Continued

euphoric celebration. They felt a deep sense of achievement and pride resulting from hard work. For teachers, there is a tension. Along with pride there is further apprehension. The external pressure of once something works, we as a school have to make it bigger and better. We feel we need to include more students, seek avenues of ritualising success. We as professionals need to celebrate things for what they are, long before looking at what they could be.

Success breeds enthusiasm. There was a levelling effect taking place. All students, despite their year level or elective were talking about it, celebrating it. They were not simply congratulating each other for a job well done, the students wanted to be a part of the bigger thing. To create solid bonds and revel in joint success.
Conversation continued

something else like that. I guess there was a bit of envy from students. They wanted to be involved. Apart from wanting to be involved they also from their peers were getting a lot of positive feedback. That was extremely good for them.

Wayne: Did it have any impact on you either personally or professionally?

Jayne: Absolutely. Personally I think it was something that, even though I have been involved in productions and that, it was different. It was something that we enjoyed doing and wanted to keep doing, which is important. I guess professionally as well working with you was great. We learn different things from each other. I guess from a technical side as well professionally I think my skills were enhanced a little bit. Definitely it’s something that will go down as one of the better things that I have done in my career, for sure.

Wayne: Did it have any impact on your working with kids?

Jayne: I don’t think so. I think as a

Analysis Continued

Personally, the Boscars had a rejuvenating effect. Breaking the routine of trends, it instilled a feeling of attachment. There was also a professional development aspect to this event, teachers not only sharing their creativity, ideas and skills but also their visions for what schools should and can be.

The positive repercussions were decisive and assured. For Jayne and I, the Boscars was critical to our professional satisfaction.

Jayne has choreographed several
Conversation continued: teacher, no matter what we do we have to draw that line. And I guess because I have done other extra-curricular activities with students I already had that sort of thing sorted. But I guess also because they are in Year 10, they are not babies anymore, so you are treating them like adults and giving them some responsibility, so it’s not too hard to find that happy medium with the kids.

Wayne: You mentioned before about other curriculum initiatives that had happened at the school and they may not have taken off as well as the Boscars. Do you know why?

Jayne: I guess a lot of it has to do with the types of kids that choose to do things. For things to become a success there has to be a shift, and it takes a little while for some of those kids that might not necessarily try things, to want to do things. But I think also we did not have that culture to get up and try. You know have a go. Whereas now I think we do. And I guess to be honest, it’s like anything. You and I were very dedicated and we put in our own time and we

Analysis Continued: successful dance programs at the College, such as: The Rock Eisteddfod, Dance Electives a Year 9 and 10 elective, and a school musical production. Jayne’s ability to build a physical rapport with students is internalised from her training and experience. It is embodied in her everyday teaching of dance. They were not children. She treated them as aspirant dancers.

This shift in student culture is needed in order to engage children. It has both social and academic roots. Students need to participate in activities in order to feel connected, however, school performance needs to cater for a range of dispositions in the college population. School performance for Brockton has a new stage with the new Performing Arts Centre. The Boscars established a less formal atmosphere of support and
Conversation continued

wanted it to work and it wasn’t something that we just thought ‘Oh we’ll just throw it on’. We wanted it to be a success. We wanted the kids to get the most out of it so I guess a lot of our passion came out as well.

Analysis Continued

safety, where students could rehearse their roles. It was set up to attract a variety of groups, not solely the academic. It appealed to the dancer, thespian, writer, fashionista and IT minded students alike. That was us, Jayne and I too. That is what appealed to us. The intimate, boutique ensemble, more than the huge production that can’t be left in the hands of the kids.

Wayne: What type of impact do you think it had on student learning?

Jayne: I think, definitely in LOTE we were getting to that point in Year 10, when students did not want to learn the language. They didn’t really care what they were doing in LOTE. I think this gave them something else to do. It almost disguised the language. They didn’t actually know that they were learning Italian or French while they were doing these films because you made it out like it was so much fun to make these films. Then they actually realise that, ‘Well hey, I am actually speaking in another language’. So I think the impact on them definitely gave them a bit of One merit of this show is the creativity of assessment. The festival is simply a platform to demonstrate how they know as much as what they know. It encompasses intense intellectual rigour with artistic expression. It provided students a goal when many thought ‘Why are we doing this foreign language?’

Filmmaking is the opportunity to transport yourself to another place. The context of language use was real and purposeful. The language was no longer strange. No one even asked. They became conscious that they were
Conversation continued

a purpose in their language learning. It gave them something to look forward to. They knew that if they got you or myself then they got to make a film. So I guess that gave them something to look forward to. I guess for the dance students as well. Confidence, and if you want to do something in performing arts, performing in front of a crowd is so important. So I guess it gave them another platform.

Wayne: And in the 2nd Boscars, there were also films from the History/Geography and Media departments. Was the evidence of student learning obvious in them?

Jayne: I think so, I think on different levels. It’s like anything. There are going to be fantastic high-class films and there is going to be some mediocre but I think that definitely overall the students’ work was purposeful, it was meaningful. So I think that did have an impact on their overall learning in each particular subject.

Wayne: If you had to choose one thing that stood out for you what would it be?

Analysis Continued

speaking another language as it was rehearsed and they felt proud of it. As actors embody their roles, a realistic situation is constructed around them. With the arts, place, time and space can all be transformed.

As with any curriculum project, there were variations in achievement. Some acted better than others, some had researched more thoroughly and some had involved editing. Overall, the scripts were socially sophisticated: complex, open, democratic and ironic.
Conversation continued

Jayne: I think it was the pride in the kids. It was the pride that they took in their work. I think that even those kids in the production who just came and watched the Boscars that weren’t necessarily involved in the performance side of things, when their film was nominated for a Boscars, the place nearly erupted. That was fantastic because I think for so long at our school kids have not been proud of their work and I think that they are genuinely proud of it now. And it wasn’t just about winning the Boscars. It was about recognition and it was about their teachers being there, watching them and it was about their parents being there. I think it was pride for me. And for me personally, just seeing the whole thing come together with the kids, they were just brilliant. They were fabulous.

Wayne: Is there anything that you think could be improved?

Jayne: I think that the way the night runs is smooth. I mean, the old argument ‘if it’s not broken don’t fix it’ and I think everything runs fine. I guess the only thing for me is the actual rehearsal time.

Analysis Continued

Ownership of the Boscars is indisputable. Teachers gladly hand it over to the kids. It is student work. Each student had his/her piece of the performance. Some acted, some hosted. Some danced, while others held cameras. The profound audience reaction, the eruption described was due to the total enveloping pride, being a part of it. A sense of being in the moment equally by student, teachers and parents.

The time it takes from other commitments to do it properly.
and what not. I guess it’s just something we just have to sit down and sort out. You know, I guess we’ve both got multiple roles within the school. So you have to fit everything in. You know, you need to give it enough time, you don’t want to just throw something together without giving it sufficient time. So I guess maybe just that. But I think it’s always very well planned out, there is nothing left to chance and the kids are always well prepared. So I guess as long as we are prepared to give up our time, that’s the way it goes.

Wayne: Where do you hope to see it head in the future?
Jayne: Ok, I guess we’d like to open it up to other faculties, even further to enter films. Even from a performance side, it would be great to see some more performances, rather than just the opening number or the opening of Act 2, after interval. Maybe some other speciality acts or something like that. But I actually think it’s the type of ceremony that we don’t want to go on for 3 hours...
Conversation continued

and 30 mins. I think it lasts long enough, it’s the ideal time. More student involvement, more staff involvement...more. When I say staff involvement, just come and watch it, more than anything. Just be proud of the kids’ work. Just come and pat them on the back and say well done. That means more to them than teachers helping out on the day or anything like that.

Wayne: Were there any difficulties in getting the Boscars up and running?

Jayne: At times we had our challenges with the students. But that was more students being students and I guess us wanting everything to be perfect straight up. I guess other challenges were also relying on others to finish off films and meeting deadlines. That was difficult at times. That made our job difficult. Especially with wanting to get the evening prepared and if you don’t have the films to do that, then it makes it very difficult.

Wayne: Anything else you want to

Analysis Continued

Boscars, as felt by students is not felt equally by the staff. There is a discrepancy in perceptions. While students feel it brought everyone closer together, some teachers were disengaged. Even in times of pure celebration, it was ‘not their thing’.
Conversation continued

say about it?

Jayne: Apart from me winning a 
Guild award ...No. That’s all, Thank 
you [Laughs]

Wayne: Thanks Jayne

Jayne: No worries Wayne

The following e-mail arrived for Jayne from Ken Thompson former 
Principal following the performance:

’The huge amount of work that went into last night was...what can I 
say...just great. Dedicated educators (teaching and support staff) 
backing the students, and didn’t they fly! The dance sequence was 
excellent. I was amazed at how many routines of different styles had 
been learned so well. A perfect start.’

Reprise:

After reading Wayne’s analysis of our interview I felt very proud of the 
work we have achieved. Through our work with the Boscars we were 
able to develop relationships with students on different levels, many 
of which have been maintained. As teachers we are always looking to 
develop our students and develop ourselves professionally and I 
believe that the Boscars allowed us to do this. It is also refreshing to 
work with staff members who have the same goals as I do and are in 
this profession for the students. I really enjoyed reading celebratory 
research about what we are doing that is right in school, instead of 
always reading about what we are doing wrong. That is so important.
The Director: Wayne
I started working at Brockton in 2004 as a French and Italian teacher. During my time at the college, I have coordinated various programs concerned with developing and innovating the curriculum at the college and its primary feeder schools, such as: Innovations and Excellent Initiative and the Select Entry Accelerated Learning Program. In 2007, I began teaching Media and visual literacy to students with special needs. I accepted a position at another college at the end of 2008. I have used film as a technique for language learning for the past 9 years.

Jayne: Can you describe your experience of the Boscars?

Wayne: Well, the Boscars is the highlight of my career so far. It was an amazing experience both personally and professionally. To see kids excel to such an extreme, in a way that I had not seen as a pure language teacher. It was great to work with colleagues on something that we had never done before. A huge risk, but really exciting. It was a great celebration of learning, of students’ attitude towards the college, students’ attitude towards learning a language. It was fantastic.

The Boscars represents an alignment between the ideal and the reality with students engaged in their learning, speaking the language and expressing themselves. My curriculum aspirations were realised. Reality and identity against the typical pressure of contrary forces present in secondary schools.

Jayne: Who was involved?
Wayne: Well, I guess there was The project made great demands
Conversation continued

myself. Well...hold on. I don’t
guess there was myself. [Laughs].
There was myself. And I guess I
was the one that came up with the
concept of it. And although I’m no
I.T guru or anything, but I had
made films with kids before. And I
just thought that in the past we
had burned them onto DVD and
the students took them home to
their families, but it never had a
real audience. So I came up with
the idea of having an awards
ceremony. There was also yourself
as choreographer, it was perfect
that you had a Year 10 dance class,
we were aiming it at Year 10 and
we’d had conversations about
giving them purposeful
assessment. You know, we always
talk about what’s the point of just
dancing in the dance studio where
no one is looking at you. So I guess
we were the creative two. Then
there was, and luckily to balance
us out, there was Diane, an
amazing humanities teacher. With
her role at the school of
Innovations and Excellence
Coordinator at the time, she really
pulled us into line, which was
fantastic. You know, I didn’t know
anything about ordering things

Analysis Continued

on teachers’ skill. We had to
courage, direct, inspire and
guide each other and our
students. We had to support
everyone to take a risk.

The Boscars could not have
worked without the high-degree
of cooperation. Given the
complexity and novelty of the
endeavour, there was high risk of
role and personal conflicts.
However, this was true collegial
collaboration. The synergy of
personal and professional
strengths; the creative, the
pragmatic and the technological.
and paying invoices etc. It was so important. All I wanted to do was to make films and make sure it all worked perfectly. It was great that there were three people that really balanced each other out. Not that there weren’t difficult time [laughs]. But those difficult times came from, we did not know what on earth we were doing.

Jayne: *It was all new territory.*

Wayne: New territory. So for then for it to turn around and be the massive success that it was. And I’m not just saying it was a massive success because it was my brainchild or whatever. It was huge.

Jayne: *So having said that, when you originally came up with the idea. How did you envisage it? What were your hopes?*

Wayne: I always knew the films would be good because we had made them in previous years. The night was the unexplored territory. And the night for me was the exciting part. But then again, if you talk to the kids about the Boscars they talk about the whole process. They don’t see it as
Conversation continued
just that night. And I guess sometimes we do. But they'll talk about their brainstorming ideas, their storyboarding, deciding the genres etc. and so it's a whole process for them. The hope that I had was that people would come. If you look at our school, we don't often invite the community in, or we haven't in the past invited the community in for lots of positive things. You know, we have parent and teacher interviews and all of that stuff. And things at our school are often pretty light on in terms of audience numbers.

Jayne: And I think that normally we just get people to come on a voluntary basis, where this time they had to book and buy tickets. They had to be organised.

Wayne: That's true. And although the tickets were something trivial, two dollars, when you put a monetary value on something it becomes a little more valuable. So my hope was bums in seats, for lack of a better term. You know, the kids deserved an audience for everything they did. You know, their films were amazing. Their French was awesome. With the

Analysis Continued
Imagination and creativity was stimulated within a discipline framework.
night itself, I didn’t have low expectations. But we did take a risk. We took a risk on some of the students that we chose to do some of the roles. And we’ve had conversations about this, we did that deliberately. You know as a Year Level Coordinator, that sometimes school just is not that great for some of our students. So we wanted them to have one awesome experience in Year 10 before some of them left.

Jayne: And even now you see, especially with the two boys that were hosts the first year round. They still talk about it.

Wayne: Absolutely, and lots of kids from that year came to the second one. And they’ll come again this year. A great experience, and everyone in their educational career and everyone in their teaching career needs [Jayne interrupts]

Jayne: Deserves

Wayne: Yes, deserves a positive experience. But it’s just unfortunate that in teaching, if we don’t make those experiences, then they aren’t going to happen.

Children can assume different identities in different circumstances. We wanted to provide a new opportunity at the college for students to assert agency and talent.

Traditional school structures are not conducive to performance of this nature. A large amount of personal time was required. Dedication and passion were key
Conversation continued

The system of teaching and the structure of schools do not appropriately support this stuff. We did all of this in our own time.

Jayne: So obviously due to that there was a limited amount of staff helping. So what was the reaction of people after? How was staff?

Wayne: There was definitely some negativity before the event. I mean, filmmaking at our school in non-multimedia a subject has always been controversial here.

Jayne: Especially in a language class.

Wayne: In a language class, some felt it took away from the traditional curriculum. And that bothers me because....

Jayne: One would argue it enhances.

Wayne: You know as LOTE teachers, we are so wound up in topics. You know we do personal identity, then nationalities, then school, then family, then we do sport. And it’s so compartmentalised. When you

Analysis Continued

in bringing this into fruition.

The fear of the unknown. The bucking of the status quo. It moved staff out of their comfort zone. Is this education?

What does a language class look like? Must it be students at desks with books? There is a note of confinement to this belief; classes in classrooms at desks. We wanted to open the doors.

There is a strict sequencing of learning in secondary schools. Lacking agency, students are passively taken through a series of clearly defined topics, grammar conventions and sentence structures. The
Conversation continued

speak in a language it’s not like that. I’ve always thought that at the end of their LOTE learning, cause not all go on and do VCE. I think it’s important for them to have the opportunity to purely and freely express themselves in that language. It’s so important. They have never done that before. We’ve always given them, closed passages, guided conversations. Fill this out. Complete this dialogue. Answer this question. In LOTE, we’ve never allowed them to freely express themselves in any kind of artistic manner.

Analysis Continued

textbook at Brockton dictates.

Languages are lived and culturally embodied. They are tools for expression: of one’s thoughts, ideas, likes and hopes.

Jayne: I would argue, that because they have done all of these topics in Years 7,8 and 9. They have a breadth of understanding, of vocabulary.

Wayne: Yeah, for me it’s the perfect way to end off and enhance a language learning class or career.

Jayne: So what did you do specifically?

Wayne: Well, I came up with the idea. I sold the tickets. And that was a huge learning experience for me. You know, you come from Assisting colleagues with the Rock Eisteddfod made me think: Was it possible to bring that physical and emotional
Conversation continued

a performing arts background, but for me trying to get my head around seat numbers and VIP sections. Not allowing people to sit wherever they wanted. I had not even thought about that. We were lucky we did that, cause we sold out. Diane, another colleague very much wanted to make films with her humanities students. So I team taught with her for a while. I guess I was about the technical aspects of the evening, making sure the slides work, the films work. Which again was huge learning. We'd just sold out a 300 seat brand new theatre, but none of us had used it. We were flying by the seat of our pants, in there the night before making sure everything worked. However, with technology it doesn’t get any easier with time. In the second year, we went in the night before, checked everything, and then on the day there was no sound. We can never be too prepared. I guess, when people think of the Boscars, like with you and the Rock Eisteddfod, they think it’s my thing, but I absolutely could not do it without you and others.

Analysis Continued

collection felt by students into a LOTE class?

In the classroom we contributed a range of complementary skills and knowledge. Outside the classroom, these abilities were blended together by consultation and debate.
Jayne: But you were the initial creator.
Wayne: Artistic Director, I like to be called thank you [Laughs]

Jayne: So what has happened as a result of the Boscars?

Wayne: Well kids like learning a language much more. Absolutely. After both nights there was an absolute buzz. You know, I’m not going to say that it completely changed students’ lives. But I think in some circumstance, it gave kids who struggled through 4 years of school, who had been naughty, who had detention after detention. It gave them something positive, both to look forward to and something to look back on.

Jayne: It gave them purpose.
Wayne: Yeah, it did give them purpose at school. And it gave them applause, some of those kids have never had that before. The hosts, some of the dancers.

Jayne: It gave some of them a reason to come to school.
Wayne: Absolutely.
Jayne: I know that some of the dancers, before there were a lot of absences. But when it came to this, they were here.

Wayne: They were there on the night. They were there in their costumes. They were there for rehearsals. I think it showed staff and students what was possible. I don’t think it has gone around and completely changed our curriculum. But I think it has changed the school culture. It has made some disconnected kids connected. You know, and there were kids in it, who have always been in everything. They were in the Rock Eisteddfod. They were in the musical. But it brought those types of kids together. The workers and the not so hard workers. By the end of it, they had both produced a fantastic piece of works that they were mutually proud of.

It is not my goal to romanticise what happened. The impact was not universal. Rather, I suggest that it opened eyes. It exposed potential and the possibility of change.

The Boscars combined the benefits of a performance with the attainment of learning outcomes.

Jayne: And this was a different type of performance for most. It was getting up a displaying your work.

Wayne: Which is something you don’t often get to do in a language classroom.

There are restrictions of an ordinary classroom. The geography of conventional classrooms inhibits artistry and
Jayne: No.

Wayne: Learning by exhibition. It made language learning purposeful. It gave them a format to self-express. We don’t often ask teenagers what they want or what they think. You know, the teen issues come out in the films. The bullying comes out, the love triangles come out. In ways, their film works are semi-autobiographical. They are all symbolic of teenage life. And that’s important.

Taking learning beyond the classroom walls diminished the sterile aesthetic associated with student learning.

Within the narrative of their cinema, students made considerable investments of self.

Jayne: So why do you think this has happened, the change in student culture?

Wayne: That’s an interesting question. You know, we originally pitched it at Year 10 because we had integrated units at all other lower year levels. And they were good. Kids liked them, but there wasn’t this level of success. But why? I think, it’s got to do with originality. I don’t know of any other school around that does it. I think a lot of it has to do with the venue that we are lucky enough to have. A 300-seat theatre with

Through discussion, students established their groups and defined their roles. They conceived their ideas and followed through an autodidactic process. It was an emotional investment which increased the sense of ownership. The Boscars provided aesthetic education. It aspired to a truth that students had not previously known. The viewing of their cinema, the appreciation for their art, created
Conversation continued

projector, sound system, opening red velvet curtains has a professional essence about it. When they got to walk down the red carpet. When they were awarded $9 gold statues. Kids were running up to me saying I keep it on my shelf near my bed. It’s real. It’s purposeful. It gave them applause. There was such appreciation in that room, even for the, let’s face it, more dodgy of films. They’re not all cinematic epics. I think a lot of it has to do with, kids can relate to films. They watch a lot of them.

Jayne: It’s something they are interested in.

Wayne: And it’s very much in their consciousness at the moment. I know when I start this process with my class and I ask them who has made a film. No one put their hand up. But then I said hold on, who has ever filmed something on their phones, or posted something on YouTube. And they all had. Film making, in its most amateur form, is very much in their world. And so all we are doing is taking something from in their world, in amateur form and formalising

Analysis Continued

a magic; something very much outside their normal experience.

Multimedia technology is extremely accessible to students. Utilising and harnessing their interest in multimedia, we created a 21st century classroom. An era in which they could relate.
Conversation continued

Continued

somewhat. Giving it that formal instruction. So bringing something from their world, combining it with our curriculum. For this, we don’t change our curriculum much, they still have to do their verbs, they still have to write in past tense. But it’s just another avenue.

Jayne: It also made a bit of healthy competition between them.

Wayne: Absolutely. But I also saw an amazing amount of fairness with the kids. When kids here play sport, or down ball here they get really ‘I won’. But there was a great fairness with this. They could articulate why ‘The Making of Grease’ won Best Film or why ‘Puzzilla’ won most creative. A sense of fairness, which I admire. It brought out a maturity that I had not seen in our kids before.

Jayne: Ok, so why the Boscars?

Wayne: Many of the things we just spoke about. Filmmaking is very much in their consciousness right now. You can film a film on anything these days. Everyone can make one. Another reason I came

Analysis Continued

The process of learning developed a mutual understanding and appreciation of cinema. The experience of filmmaking allowed students to become appreciative critics of the work of others- connoisseurs.
Conversation continued
up with it was I found teaching Year 10 LOTE a hard slog. I found that I was tired of topics, verbs, listening assessment, fill this out. I was tired of that and I found they were too. I wanted to get them to express themselves in a subject that is not usually that expressive.

Analysis Continued
For me, the Boscars was rejuvenating. It stimulated all our intellectual passions. It engaged both students and myself in their language learning.

Jayne: No, it’s not very expressive to say I am tall.
Wayne: And I wanted them to start using sophisticated language. You know some of the scripts we got were 11 pages long, all in French. That’s thousands of words. The most we ever get kids to write in VCE is 300. The level of language they used far surpassed our expectations. It brings an engagement. That’s for them. Why I wanted to do it? When we did our first Boscars, it was my 6th year of teaching. I was bored. And I see people in the school having their success. They have their successes. They coach a soccer team. You have the musical. I am not sporty and I can’t sing, but I can kind of make a film.

Jayne: You brought your talent and something you love to them.
Wayne: And I wanted to share my enthusiasm. I am no Martin Scorsese or anything, but I enjoy it. You know, and I wanted to enjoy things. I wanted to want to come to school. I wanted to want to teach Year 10 French. I am sick of the textbook. It’s not all about the kids. Selfishly, a fair bit of it was for me, professionally. Even the possibility of change is exciting. I like my job. I like the kids a lot. But I had been here for 3 years and was plodding along.

Jayne: Thanks for the interview Wayne.

Reprise:

I am trying to capture in this and other conversations the powerful, creatively open, problematic, independent, committed emotional and intellectual crafting, courageous and egalitarian qualities required in the student production and staging of the Boscars. I asked myself continuously whether I had met these rhetorical criteria. On rereading this conversation and others again, I am reconvinced that this discursive mode of reporting resonates. They are embedded and embodied accounts. They allow me to reassess the degree of fit, overlap or reinforcement between the reports as written and the basic belief system undergirding the alternative paradigm which we had chosen to follow. How intimate is teaching as a profession!!
The Audience: Chrissy - School Counsellor

Chrissy has been at the college as the ‘Head of Student Services’ for 6 years. Along with her welfare team, she has developed and implemented many programs for staff and students relating to school connectedness, emotional and social wellbeing.

Wayne: Can you please describe your experience of the Boscars?

Chrissy: Sure, I thought it was absolutely fantastic. I just went to watch the Boscars. It seemed to me to be a real culmination of the hard work by the teachers and students involved. The students just seemed stoked and absolutely so proud of their achievements on the night. The quality of work was outstanding and just really showcased the skills of the kids. The organization of the night was really fantastic, it just ran really smoothly.

Wayne: Had you ever seen pride in student work like that before here at Brockton?

Chrissy: I would say that this is an exception. I think that in a lot of cases the learning is done in a classroom. It’s very much the

The Boscars presented a different perspective on learning to the school community. It forged a new style of learner; active, engaged
Conversation continued

teacher talking at students and students are expected to take that in. You know verbally, that’s a lot of what a teacher provides. I think this was a way of getting kids to apply knowledge to something that they really enjoy, making movies, using ICT, technology. This is an exception for me. I had never seen anything like it at Brockton before this. I think that has a lot to do with the practical aspect of this. Using IT skills and getting kids to showcase what they can do, to apply to their learning.

Wayne: When you talk about the pride they displayed, can you give any specific examples?

Chrissy: Absolutely, the smile from ear to ear on every student's face that night was amazing. I felt very excited to be there and that I was a part of something pretty special. But specifically I had counselling kids prior to the Boscars who I had spoken to during counselling sessions and they were saying that the Boscars were coming up, they were excited, they were a part of it, that I should go, that they really

Analysis Continued

and proud.

Distance from the tradition concept of knowledge. This was curriculum targeted and tailored for the students’ predispositions: practical, kinaesthetic, and animated.

Performance excitement anticipated, the physical symbols of joy and pride were immediately visible to the counsellor. The audience personalised the experience. The atmosphere was inclusive. The sense of achievement, ownership and inclusiveness in school activity rare for some of these students. The disengaged, often troubled student extending an invitation to
Conversation continued

wanted me to see it, the standard of work that they had achieved. And then I was able to follow that up after the Boscars with a few of my counselling kids, who were absolutely so stoked afterwards. They were excited about how formal everything was. That there was a red carpet, that they got to walk down it. They got to win awards. That they were so special. That they were acknowledged for the things they had done at the school. I had specific examples and I guess just how happy they looked on the night.

Wayne: Did it change the way they felt about school?

Chrissy: Absolutely. I think anything where kids are involved and are acknowledged for things within the school changes their perception, increased sense of belonging, their engagement. Feeling like they really belong to the school and contributing positively.

Wayne: Did it change the way you thought about Brockton?

Chrissy: Absolutely, working day-

Analysis Continued

the significant other they trust and value to be a spectator in their educational lives. An anticipation of greatness felt here. Traversing the carpet into the theatre; students felt fame, appreciation, the adulation of others. They had a successful identity. They were making their educational debut to the applause of an adoring crowd, in true Hollywood style.

Chrissy knows all too well that positive acknowledgement is something not all student experience. Not all students receive academic awards, not everyone displays exceptional sporting prowess.
Conversation continued

to-day as a school counsellor and a teacher I think it’s very easy to get caught up with, you know, the day-to-day job. And it’s a stressful a job. And things like this highlight that kids learn so much more at school. They learn how to relate to each other, how to work together to produce outstanding work. It definitely affected me that night, I was very proud, especially of my counselling kids who often don’t get the opportunity to shine in a school setting. I think that some kids, like who have learning difficulties, intellectual difficulties, social difficulties this is an opportunity that they used to shine in a school setting and that’s pretty important.

Wayne: So is the key element opportunity?

Chrissy: Absolutely, they were given the opportunity to do something pretty cool, pretty amazing, to make a movie. I think that for kids, it is exciting in itself and also just to bring something interesting to a subject that can often be a little bit dry, LOTE. Kids often talk about it being

Analysis Continued

Qualities of character were tested and developed; confidence, curiosity, humility, motivation, satisfaction and patience. Chrissy is aware of the intricacies of personal, intellectual and social development. The crucial value of learning collaboratively, of sharing a fused horizon. A powerful discursive model of learning, conversationally embedded.

Students show how they can operate on themselves. To reposition themselves in the local moral order. Recognition of teacher innovation, in particular the transformation of the LOTE curriculum at Brockton through a special student project. Perceptions of the difficultly of
Conversation continued
really dry, they don’t enjoy it. So
having something practical where
they could use their IT skills,
which kids these days are just
amazing at that kind of thing.
They were able to show off their
skills and incorporate it into their
learning.

Analysis Continued
language overturned. It changed
the perception of LOTE, from an
extraneous academic discipline to
one that encompassed students’
intellectual passions.

Counsellors are privy to
information, disclosures, feelings
etc. Students are safe to confide
their likes, their dislikes, their
dreams and aspirations. These are
stories teachers need to hear.

Wayne: What did you think about
the films themselves?
Chrissy: They were so cool. They
were fantastic. Some of the
stories were so creative. They
were humorous. They showcased
talent and lack of talent, which is
sometimes funny. I thought they
were great and they were very
different. There were films that
were funny but there was stuff
that was a little bit more
interesting and a little bit more
dramatic. I thought they were
fantastic.

Generally, it was the human
touches to the films that appealed
the most to Chrissy. Expression
and honour, rather than mere
practice or attention to
disciplining rules allowed
students to show themselves. The
films were visual embodiments of
their personalities, their values,
their fears, their humour. The
films are something in which the
audience could learn from. They
were biographies in which offered
the audience an insight into the
mind of their creators. An
experience relished by the ever
grateful spectators.
Wayne: We’ve spoken about the effect it had on individual students but do you think it had any impact on the college as a whole?

Chrissy: There was definitely an excitement, you know in the lead up. I could feel it around the school. You’d be walking around and kids would be talking about it. They had a real sense of purpose. It was really interesting to see. I think that you are right in what you said before in that there was nothing like this before. It changed the culture of the school. I’m just trying to put my finger on what. But there was definitely an excitement before hand. Kids had a sense of achievement and pride. It just seemed that there was a kind of feeling around the college.

Wayne: We have spoken about student and the college, what about staff? Did it have an impact there?

Chrissy: Absolutely. I think the staff get an opportunity to see exactly what the kids can do. And just how far their skills can be applied to their learning. I think it excited a lot of teachers to use more practical applications to...
Conversation continued

learning. Using some more hands-on tasks and assignments in the classroom.

Analysis Continued

a powerful catalyst for change amongst those teachers predisposed to it.

Wayne: What expectations did you have before coming to the festival?

Chrissy: I thought it would be, you know, lots of fun. We would get to see some films that kids had made. I honestly did not expect to see that standard that I saw. I did not expect the professionalism of the kids. Just the organization of the night. From what I can remember the kids were presenting the awards, the kids ran the whole night. That was unexpected. I did not think the kids would be capable of doing something so professionally. It was just amazing. It just surpassed all my expectations. It looked fantastic. It was organised just so well. The standard of the work and of the films was just fantastic.

Wayne: What effect did it have on teacher/student relationships?

Chrissy: I think anything where kids feel a sense of achievement led to better relationships amongst teachers and students.

The delight of the audience was not simply an empathetic response to the excitement of the kids’ feat. Something superior beyond expectation was achieved. It had value above and beyond the educational. Skilled and disciplined expression was evident. Peers congratulating peers; an autonomy rarely allowed in schools. A new respect for the ‘non-academic’ student was sensed.
Throughout the night, I know the kids thanked yourself and Jayne many times. And you can just tell that the kids were extremely grateful for the support they received. They were stoked when they were up with their acceptance speeches. And it clearly showed that they got a lot out of it and they felt supported by the teaching staff.

Wayne: What types of things did they get out of it?

Chrissy: I think learning how to work together with other kids in subjects to produce an end result. There would be a lot of organization skills. There would have had to have been a bit of team building with other kids as well. They would have had to all been assigned tasks. So really doing a project with other people. How to allocate roles to everybody, they would have to have done that. For some of them, they would have had to learn IT skills. Some of them would have been proficient in it probably. Acting, editing. They would have had to go away and write the script. And also the language...
Conversation continued

stuff, the LOTE stuff, they would have had to learn stuff in their language and apply it to the films. So I think it just covers a whole bunch of things. And also the professionalism, to be able to stand up on the night and give acceptance speeches and run the night.

Wayne: Are they skills the Brockton student needs?

Chrissy: Absolutely. Absolutely. I think that what we are expecting from kids is, you know, to sit in a classroom and learn what teachers teach them. I think that these kids, in this demographic need a lot more practical assignments, a lot more practical tasks where they can learn the things that I just mentioned earlier.

Wayne: What stood out for you?

Chrissy: The kids blew me away. I didn’t expect the standard that they produced. The humour that they brought to the scripts. It was just amazing. Yeah, the student achievement for me. But I guess

Analysis Continued

develop student social learning. It taught a new formality, one which was unfamiliar. The community embraced it. It became part of their sense of self and their newly constructed surroundings in the Performing Arts Centre.

She points to students’ experience in schools as curriculum which is void of the personal; a curriculum which lacks their agency. As educators, we need to design curriculum which addresses the specific needs of the students. She points to the Boscars as curriculum of place that both engages and empowers, building their sense of belonging, increasing their sense of achievement.

The comments suggest the need for celebration is universal. Just as students need an opportunity to celebrate achievement, so does Chrissy as the school counsellor. She values seeing those students
Conversation continued

that’s got a lot to do with my role in the school as well. It just blew me away. I don’t get the opportunity to see that very often. The kids that come to see me are usually in trouble, not doing well, unhappy at school. And so to see them achieve and to come back and talk about it was very fulfilling for me, quite selfishly. [Laughs]

Analysis Continued

in a new environment; a positive one. Most of the interactions Chrissy has with students are in the counselling room after the student has been withdrawn from class; a negative tone prevails. This moment of celebration and adulation is as gratifying for her as it is for the students on that stage. The Boscars is a symbol of hope and optimism.

Wayne: I know you can’t give too specific an example because of your role as school counsellor, but with talking to kids, can you recount any ways that they acknowledge the way it changed how they felt about school?

Chrissy: Well in counselling, after they had participated in the Boscars, I’d actually ask them things like ‘So how do you think you went?’; ‘Did you enjoy yourself on the night?’ and they would answer things like ‘It was fantastic, I was so excited’ or ‘I was so glad that that person won’, like even in categories where they were nominated when another person won, they would say positive things, like ‘Their film was so cool’, ‘It was the best
film, it was better than ours’, ‘I am so glad he won or she won’. For me speaking to those kids after the Boscars, I had to delve that little bit deeper into it about what it meant for them. And they were saying that it was just so cool to do something at school that just not pen and paper and that I can do. For those weeks that they were doing that, they really wanted to be here. Just in the counselling sessions, they would come in and go ‘Miss, Miss this is what I did today. We’re getting ready for it, I’m so excited’ or ‘I’m so nervous, I’ve got to present this’ or that. They just seemed engaged. They wanted to be here. And that’s not always the case for kids I see throughout the year.

Wayne: When you spoke before about students being happy when others won. Do students at Brockton ordinarily have that fairness?

Chrissy: I am not sure I can answer that. I’m not sure I can generalise. But I do think that would have to have been instilled and encouraged in them by the

The Boscars quickly became part of their educational experience. A positive occurrence in which students could draw from, learn from, paving an increasingly connected and collaborative future at the school.

The Boscars was a collaborative endeavour. None of this would have worked if at the outset a rubric had been written by the teachers to compare the films.
Conversation continued

teachers that they were working with. I’m not sure, maybe you could answer that more than me. But I’m sure that within the classroom while that activity was happening that the teachers were saying that hey, may the best film win. How good is this film? Is it just a good as yours? Is yours more funny, you know, this is more dramatic. This is what they have done really well. This is what you have done really well. For some kids it’s probably their personality to have that kind of fairness, but I think it’s probably a reflection of the teacher encouraging that in the kids as well.

Wayne: Do you think that enthusiasm is momentary? Now it’s been a year do you think it still affects the way they feel about school or do they go back to the routine or book, pen, paper, teacher?

Chrissy: Well I think we need to have more of these sorts of projects, activities, nights so that kids can have that experience at school regularly. I think it can wear off. I think it lasted for a brief recognition cannot
Conversation continued

while, they were buzzing for weeks afterwards. But I think more teachers should use those types of activities and opportunities with kids to allow them to shine. So they feel engaged throughout the year and not just, you know, March every year for a little while.

Wayne: Thank you so much.
Chrissy: My pleasure.

Analysis Continued

withstand the arduous daily grind that some students perceive school to be. The constraints of school life can impose ritual practice but expression and honour will prevail in each performance.

Reprise:

Reading over the interview reminded me of the enormous sense of accomplishment and pride reported by staff and students at the time. I believe the Boscars represented innovative, collaborative, individually targeted and inclusive learning. The Boscars managed to successfully engage and encourage all students, not just the academically inclined. The author’s analysis of our conversation provided a clear representation of underlying themes in my responses.
Robert: The College Principal

Robert came to Brockton as the College Principal at the beginning of Term 4 2006. Since his arrival, he has actively supported the development of strong arts and performing arts programs at the school.

Wayne: Can you describe your experience of the Boscars?

Robert: I came to the Boscars just after they had had their first year. I was appointed the principal, if I’ve got it right, it occurred the year I was first principal but I had to go interstate. But I saw all the preparation for the Boscars and all the excitement. And then I actively participated in promoting it to the primary schools when we had a paired down version of the Boscars. I guess I’ll head straight to my judgement of it. I thought it was a brilliant thing because it hit almost all the key bases. It had good curriculum content. It had cross-curriculum interest. It maintained student interest. It got student leadership of activities. It involved parents appreciating the curriculum of the school. It was a brilliant selling point for us with primary schools on a clear educational concept. And I believed it enhanced language.

The project inspired early on. It ignited the students’ creative abilities. The instruction and reconstruction of knowledge was blended with technology, creativity and expression. Outcomes were achieved. The learning was not cosmetic or peripheral, but central and radical. Robert is unambiguous in the importance of such learning in a LOTE class.
Conversation continued

Wayne: Before you saw your first Boscars, what expectations did you have for the evening?

Robert: I’m generally cynical and I probably didn’t think it would be as successful as it was. All right, that is my nature and I guess I always warn myself. I start with fairly low expectations.

[Interrupted by phone call]

Where were we? Look I have fairly low expectations. I brace myself for things not being super-successful because I could tell that it was aspiring to all those things that I talked about. But what it actually had when I came to see it was such a sense of fun, and such a sense of student pride. That it had translated a potential into a reality. That’s probably the nicest way of putting it. Ok?

Wayne: When you were in the audience, can you describe that?

Robert: Well, there was a vibe. And the vibe was almost like one at the Rock Eisteddfod or the musical production. There was a sense of anticipation. There was a sense of pride amongst the kids.

Analysis Continued

There is a lack of individualism and agency in the prototypical school performance. Performance is a misconception in many traditional assemblies.

Attained aspirations. The convergence of ideals and reality seldom occurs in schools.
there. There was a fun atmosphere. It just felt joyous. I know that is a bit of a corny word probably. It was a warm night, there was an ‘everyone was in it together’ feeling. Even when people fumbled over some of their words, you know ‘Quelle horreur!’ even though my accent just then was just as bad as theirs; you know it was quite funny. Just a nice tone. I think a lot of parents came along dutifully thinking they had to just do this for their kid, cause they love their kid but found that they were enjoying the show. When it got to the humorous ones, some of those films were very funny. The murder mysteries were quite hilarious.

Wayne: Did you learn anything about the Brockton student?

Robert: I think probably I did. I’m not sure if it was the first, I’d have to look back. But it was one of the first times I had seen a kid really come out of themselves. It probably was. I am not sure if you remember but there were a lot of teachers who were sort of lacking confidence in how to deal with

The emergence of personalities through humour is what stands out for Robert. The students giving it a go. Even if their performance was not perfect, it still deserves applause. Students made great strides in their personal development. Awkward, misplaced feelings transformed into unity and connection.
Conversation continued

Kids. Now that obviously wasn’t you with those kids, but not everyone felt empowered to deal with the kids because they thought that they were generally negative and needed to be controlled rather than you started on the assumption, which you should be congratulated for, a bit like Jayne with the Rock Eisteddfod or any of the other ones, the kids have potential if you just allow them to show it. Ok? And I think that showed kids could do it. And kids that you would not have expected, the boys. The boys willing to come out of their comfort zone. Our boys are actually relatively gentle. I was looking at some of them in the dance class today. They are willing to do apparently non-masculine things.

Wayne: As the leader of the college, where do you see the Boscars fitting in terms of curriculum?

Robert: Ok, well there is almost a perfect gel there. As you are probably aware from what I say and what we write, I believe that if you develop a whole individual

Analysis Continued

This account illustrates how possibilities may be opened for teacher and student agency, even under rigid role-rule constraints.
Analysis Continued

and you make school exciting and fun, then a lot of your discipline problems evaporate. I’m a strict disciplinarian in many ways but I still believe in that idea of if it’s fun and enjoyable and the teacher’s got that warm relationship with the kids then you don’t have to exercise that right you have to discipline. So when you look at the package, you know, if you were a parent looking for a school and you knew that there was a Rock Eisteddfod and a school musical production and you knew there was choir and there was dance through to VCE level and you knew there was now inter-school debating. It’s all part of a performance art culture. And I’ll be honest, it’s part of my desire to make the school something that a discerning parent would choose, and a parent of girls would choose. This is the performing arts, even though we are always encouraging boys to go in, traditionally these do market better slightly towards girls. And our school was at one stage getting up to 62-63% boys and this year it’s something like 54%

Success breeds more success, creativity more creativity. Once we discovered and developed the student talents, things began to happen elsewhere. It changed the politics and social space of the college. It created a positive atmosphere of mutual trust, constructively and creatively established as a community.
Conversation continued

boys in which shows the success of the marketing.

Wayne: *What impact do you think the Boscars has had on the college?*

Robert: I think it had a warm bonding experience on the teachers involved. I think they felt part of a team and it enhanced their own self-respect. The same thing with the students, they felt valued as individuals. They had been able to mix with other students that they might not have had the opportunity to mix with on a social level. We can’t ever quantify how that works, but I’m sure it works. I’m sure it works with making them more positive with the next situation that’s traumatic. It’s given me one more thing that I can buzz with the teachers and students that they can do. When you have one success, it makes it easier for another teacher to have their success with the swimming or the athletics, having everyone on the same side. I am aware, and I am not sure if it’s part of this but it was a contentious issue within your faculty. I tried to point out the benefits of this to the people involved.

Analysis Continued

Events require critical agents. Teachers with the vision, commitment, faith and relationships to conceptualise, plan and orchestrate the show, often in the face of many difficulties. Overcoming these hurdles unified and validated the curricular aspirations of the staff involved.

Not everyone was on board in my own language department. There was a xenophobic response to this production; the fear of the unknown. Was it too far removed from what a foreign language
Conversation continued

that would have thought this was more a waste of time in the sense that it drew away from the traditional full curriculum. I think that they’ve become increasingly open to that idea. Now, whenever you have extracurricular things, you waste some, or not waste you use up some traditional time and you’ve got to think is this adding to the total benefit. You know. Is the love of language and the concentration on that going to overweight the time, are you going to lose the traditional type of grammar or whatever. And I think it is worthwhile, I think more people are seeing that it is.

Wayne: I agree with you on the curriculum aspect. Do you think there is a hidden curriculum?

Robert: Of course, originally the concept is enhancing your language skills, enhancing your multimedia skills. But obviously the real advantage of what I was talking about before is that self-confidence, their overall

Analysis Continued

classroom should look like?

The Boscars team held particular concepts of teaching and learning. These ideals were absorbed and translated into practical activity that challenged colleagues who held other assumptions of moral agency. We saw ourselves as teacher-artists, working to a process of performance rather than a more passive cultural acquisition model of curriculum and teaching. There is now a different paradigm available for teaching French at Brockton. Another discussion can be had. I was reacting to restraints on my teaching.
demeanour, the way that they associate themselves as part of a group, as part of a school, that sense of camaraderie, self-respect. They’re the hidden benefits. But they’re not really very much hidden cause they’re pretty much upfront. You don’t have to be Einstein to think of these now. Unless there are other one’s I’m missing?

Wayne: Where do you think it should head?

Robert: Well, you’ve got a problem here. It’s successful but you’ve got to continually think of new ways to refresh every idea. If you’re a Rock Eisteddfod, you’ve got a new life because you’ve got a new production, new dance steps. The school production, they have a new theme, new acting, new casting. If you’ve got debates, you even got a new debate, a new level of understanding. Now you’ve got to think where can I take this. Now, we or you branched out by getting the acceleration class doing a film piece where they did research on the Grand Prix, whether the Grand Prix was a good thing or
Conversation continued

not. That was a good and balanced exercise. It was good for the acceleration class and that moved it out of its traditional Year 10 focus. You’ve either got to expand that in some way or draw other people into it, other faculties into it. Maybe there’ll be a convergence of other things we do. The data projectors we have in all rooms. Maybe we’re exporting it back in some way. So we are showing it in rooms rather than taking it into assemblies. That might enable you to have much more.. I actually can’t think what it is. My management style is more I’ll just release people to come up with ideas rather than think of the ideas. But if you don’t change it a bit, it’s only got a couple of years before it becomes stale. And then there’s your own enthusiasm, whether you can keep it up or whether you want to move on to your next project.

Wayne: Do you have any other comments? Anything else you’d

Analysis Continued

ultimately fostered in an environment where teachers have autonomy and influence over the curriculum and objectives. We need a larger view to see Boscars in its wider cultural and historical context. The significance of the Boscars for Robert was in the stimulus it offered to his campaign to roll out electronic media in the school.

Robert’s management style is one of taking up what people offer in the school to support the changes he wants and can attract funding for. Ownership is effective for curriculum change. The message is not so clear here. The emphasis is on staff passion, enthusiasm but you have to build on it rather than expect him to support anything as a finished piece of art. How am I to sustain my passion? The Boscars is only as useful as long as it has a future.
Robert: No, I just genuinely like it, Wayne. And I guess it helped me cause it was somewhat of a stalking horse for me. That I could use to demonstrate what I believed in. I just slipped in on the end of a winner. I had no part in it. I don't know whether it was you or Ken who originally set it up but it had nothing to do with me. I bet you if ask half of the people out there, they think it's something that happened in my time. It wasn't really.
Reprise:

Dear Wayne,

It is a pleasure to be invited to offer critical comment on your analysis of my comments in terms of educational philosophy and the learning which occurred.

I believe each of your comments is an accurate analysis or summary of my intent, with the possible exception of your third comment commencing “There is a lack of individualism ...”. I happen to agree with that comment and it is probably valid to draw that conclusion from an analysis of the whole of the interview but not from those specific comments.

I particularly agree with your comments beginning “The emergence of personalities through humour...” and “Success breeds more success...”. The comments are particularly incisive and telling points. Well done.

Thinking back on the benefit of the Boscars, I confirm all my previous views – it profoundly changed the way curriculum and new media were integrated and it was to the clear benefit of our students. An interesting side effect is the way other school interests are now being promoted with the media. Yesterday, some teachers produced a very funny promotion encouraging students to participate in ‘Brockton’s Got Talent’ and earlier the PE faculty promoted the sports carnivals in a similar humorous way. So the concept lives on.

Yours Sincerely,

Robert Lamb
Principal
Chapter 5: Conclusion

The Boscars was an opportunity to step outside habitual teaching conventions and constraints. The Boscars required, if not necessitated structural intervention.

‘Human action is rarely the result of the triggering of a causal mechanism or release of a pre-existing tendency. Human actions are active engagements in which people use tools to accomplish projects’ (Harré R., 1997, p.182).

Structuration created a courageous space where good teaching could occur. A space, where given the chance, fruitful and powerful moments were enabled, resulting in satisfaction and fulfillment- a great moment of teachability (Woods, 1993).

Teaching is a life of painful contemplation. How can I contemplate not doing Boscars again in the light of these conversations? It is expected of me. At times, my teaching is used to answer to the injustices that I have witnessed in the teaching of languages in the school. The Boscars was a deed-performance. In conversations recorded here with Terryn and Diane, memories of the Boscars accumulate a charged presence, hovering in the invisible medium of speech, and then disappear again into our memories, into the realm of invisibility and the unconscious, where they elude regulation and control. The intimate relationships between myself and Jayne and myself and Robert in particular serves as a pedagogical trope in the former and as an agential trope in the latter, that serve me in very specific ways. The relationships infuse history with my own subjectivity. I like to think, the personal memories of the actors in this study are a means through which they can, in fact, defy, alter or re-write histories that are devoid of the details left by persons or events or circumstances they have lost – the gloss on their hair, they way they moved through the room, said
“bonsoir” or held themselves together on camera. By bringing the words history and memory together to form the term historical memory, which I would apply to what is captured in this study, I believe we have performed the deed of answerability. History alone is immoral: events occurred, but memory is moral, what we consciously remember is what our conscience remembers. By seeking the details of the Boscars that are inscribed into the body, movement and community, the study challenges the communicative conventions and the allocations of power that circulate among the interlocutors of history. Communication conventions refer to dominant linguistic codes, criteria or intra-, inter-, and extra-textual relevance and what are considered to be appropriate educational strategies. When the conventions used to communicate in schools are drained of the mutually agreed stabilizing authority to which they are directed, we are better positioned to recognize and reconsider the moral basis of our cognitive outlook. The narratives composed by the speakers in this thesis are ‘countersongs’ to the official history of their education. But countersong is located in the world of parody, not necessarily comic and evokes or indicates another utterance, one that is antithetical to the dominant utterance. It incorporates the discourse it critiques, while at the same time underscoring difference and generating an ironic, critical distance. Vulnerability, a quality of the account in each voice here seems to come through incorporating the ideal other without establishing a critical enough – parodic distance between self and other. I have attempted in the conversations to call for scholarship and teaching that transforms lost opportunity into a form of historical memory. The study, I suggest, shows how research can do some work in transforming loss into meaning. Perhaps for the contributors to this research and the Boscars experience in general, who recognized the lost education and the potential to generate a recovery not of the Boscars, but of themselves as the persons who remembered. Several said in their postscripts that they found personal satisfaction in the objectification of their memory as history.
I want to evoke regard for memory. Memory of the Boscars is not a psychological faculty in the actors in this study. It is an essential element in the finite historical being of these people. Memory must be formed, for memory is not memory for anything and everything but when there is a change in the conventional discursive forms as we saw with Diane’s attention to detail, or Chrissy’s attention to their audience, or Rita’s attention to being as self.

This study arose 3 years ago when I was a French and Italian teacher at a school in the north-western area of Melbourne. It came at a time when our college had invested significant resources; time, staffing and money into the development of a more innovative, challenging and engaging curriculum. This was a chance to showcase student learning. It coincided with the exploration and implementation of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards. In light of this new educational frontier, we saw the Boscars as one answer to these newfound curricular and pedagogical considerations. For us, it was a synthesis between what we knew, what we had done and what we thought to be possible - a constructive trade off between the ideal purposes and practical realities. It seems to me now that:

‘the more closely the practical realities serve the ideal purposes, and the more completely they are realised, the purer the teacher’s sense of accomplishment’ (Woods, 1993).

3 years on and much has changed. Possibilities have been seen, boundaries to educational conventions have been pushed and success has been tasted. At the end of 2008, I changed school. The stark contrast between my previous and current workplace locale, from a working class outer suburb to the commonly termed ‘leafy green’ suburbs of East Melbourne has raised some questions. How much of the success of the Boscars was due to context? Can this success be replicated at my current school? Should my new colleagues and myself even try? Will they be interested? These questions are related.
My sense is a general ‘Yes’. Although the educational experience of my past and present students is very different, everyone needs a chance to shine. To be the hero in their own biography. Although the Boscars in the Brockton form may not hold significance in my new location, perhaps it is once again our job to find a significant need and pursue it through the performing arts.

Writing this account has been a confirmation so often desired yet omitted from deficit based contemporary research.

Jayne “I really enjoyed reading teacher research about what is right in school, instead of always reading about what we are doing wrong. That is so important”.

**The Boscars as an affordance**

The Boscars is a material disposition specifiable in human terms in many different possible ways. The focus of this study, through narrative, was the reconstruction of social realities. One component of the social order consists in the practical order and people in their locally proper places. The other component consists of the social arrangements for creating hierarchies of honour and status. This is the expressive order. We moved beyond the private performance in the accounts here to the expressive order but the Boscars can be understood in its full human significance only if its role in both these orders is understood. We observe how this critical event promoted the unification of self in the local moral order. This transformation could only have occurred through the personal. It was embodied.

*Rita: I learned to work well with other people. It built ..the confidence to speak in front of people, to perform in front of other people.*

There has been a ‘coming out’ as such, an emergent new self. A new self-consciousness has been psycho-socially constructed. Through
learning with others, students have re-discovered community and agency.

*Rita: Everyone was so happy with it. Everyone was excited. They were all so pleased and amazed, especially the parents. They were like 'I did not think kids at our school could do that!*

For students, the Boscars also afforded a different educational aesthetic—a lived curriculum.

*Terryn: At times I just wanted to kill people. [Laughs] Because there would be times when somebody wasn’t there. And actually coming up with the story was quite difficult. But then once we got on track it was pretty good.*

Digital art, unique and beautiful in its own right. They have made it, so it is theirs. Images of self are embedded in the film plots and moving images. There was a mystery about it, something well outside the normal classroom goings-on.

*Rita: I watch it [The Boscars] all the time. And I think, I can’t believe I did it. I amazed myself. I can’t believe that I could do something so...oh my god! I watch the whole thing from start to finish. Everyone put in such hard work it would not be fair to just watch my own performance. Everyone did such a great job.*

This has been an emotional unity a refinement in the art of learning. Hope, joy, excitement, surprise, anticipation, fear and pride all feature in their biographies.

*Terryn: At times it was stressful, but when we saw the final result, obviously it was all worth it. But we were very happy with it in the end anyway. So no matter what, if we didn’t win, we still found the process interesting and fun.*

For me, the Boscars was about affirmation, recognition and emancipation. Teachers can lose touch with meaning.
Wayne: Why I wanted to do it? When we did our first Boscars, it was my 6th year of teaching. I was bored…. And I wanted to share my enthusiasm. I am no Martin Scorese or anything, but I enjoy it. You know, and I wanted to enjoy things. I wanted to want to come to school. I wanted to want to teach Year 10 French. I am sick of the textbook. It's not all about the kids. Selfishly, a fair bit of it was for me, professionally. Even the possibility of change is exciting.

All too often a teacher's test mark is the only judgment made of a student's worth. Critical events like the Boscars afford other teacher judgments. They allow for other expressions of the 'I'. They realign the personal.

**The Promise of School-Based Research**

There has to be a space for celebratory research in education. With the surfacing of practitioner-based research, the question arises; where does this relatively new form of scholarship fit in the scope of education research? There is a dual bias here. Schools can distance themselves from practitioner research as it challenges current practice. Regarded as ‘out of touch’ in the staffroom, this research has nevertheless been popularized by systems, domesticated and appropriated as an implementation tool. In universities, school-based research suffers from an academic imperialism. Often deemed lacking in rigour, this style of research is limited in its perceived legitimacy. This epistemological stance means faculty too often fails to appreciate what makes this new scholarship rigorous in its own terms (Anderson & Herr, 1999).

A central but unacknowledged dimension of school-based research is the issue of whose questions get put on the agenda?
‘This issue stands at the core of many successful or failed research attempts. If the research questions are posed by outsiders, in many cases academic researchers, then the research outcomes often have little effect on the classroom practices of teachers’ (Groundwater-Smith & Mockler, 2005).

Teachers can and should be able to hear each other out; bureaucrats and/or academics can and should be able to engage with the profession in more liberating ways.

I felt perched to comprehend and uncover the sociology of place as perceived and described through my research participants. There is a unique connoisseurship in this work. There are exciting opportunities to locate nuances in hidden transcripts and contextual micro-politics.

This work has called upon me, as a writer, to engage in an important form of remembering, one that does not simply succumb to the lure of an “uncritical identification” in which I project an ensemble of disavowed identifications, tailoring the Boscars to be what I wanted it to be. By the same token, I have here to some extent relinquished my identity to the Boscars through some painful experiences. When I formally began this project 2 years ago I was determined to capture the reality of the Boscars and honour it by so doing. The conversational interviews required me to grapple with the politics, not only of interpretation and representation but also transference. Interpretation is always the exercise of power, while transference is the structuring of my authority as the director-teacher-researcher of the Boscars. To analyse my transference, I had to unmask my structuring, interrupt its efficient operation at times. To understand my transference in this research, I had to discover that the power in writing biographically and autobiographically exists in the insights that happened between the subjects. Transference became the whole engine of the analysis. What did you/I take away from this experience? Interpretation of what was said was hardly more than the
medium through which the transference was manifested. For transference to occur I had to enter fully into my illusions of what others made of the Boscars, including the Principal and what meaning school life had for them. There were feelings of loss of agency and feelings of falling to pieces in directing the Boscars and in writing this thesis. In those moments I operated out of fragments of and shards of self as teachers do, out of remembered strategies designed to cope with the particularities or facticities of the moment. I wanted to point to lost opportunities in the education of the students by showing them at their brilliant best. Out of the position of loss, came the symbols I drew upon to reproduce the vulnerability and fragility that loss brings about.

School can be a melancholic place for teachers. Teaching is often both a state of contemplation out loud and an unanswerable act. The Boscars was an answerable act. It called for us to take a step. It required a deed – performance, rather than to be lost in a state of contemplation. Melancholics betray the world for the sake of knowledge. They think about rather than act in the world, for the world offers relationships, which could be lost, spoiled or ended. The melancholic gazes into a bottomless pit of contemplation. To be lost in a world of contemplation, or to consume others in an effort to sustain meaning through their presence in our life, is to divide oneself as a teacher between two mutually exclusive worlds – one in which the acts of our teaching are objectified or idealised in test scores, and the other, in which we actually create, make things, live our lives, think. Teaching can be a fragile form of goodness. Lived in the chasm between our hopes and the daily realities it is, I think, usually better conceived as tragic than heroic. Self-reproach here is a dissatisfaction with my ego on moral grounds.
But I want to conclude with a reflection on the shadow past which the Boscars will be and already is for me and my collaborating performers in our lives. The shadow past is shaped by everything that never happened. Invisible, it melts the present like rain through limestone. A biography of longing for this again. It steers like magnetism, a spirit torque. This is how one becomes undone by a young couple speaking up to their audience side by side, that beautifully delivered parody, “this is for you .....”

By love that closes its mouth before calling a name.
Bibliography


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