

**Educational Legitimation and Parental Aspiration:
Private tutoring in Perth, Western Australia**

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Abstract

Private tuition is a well-established feature of the Australian education system. It is estimated to be a billion dollar a year industry. Furthermore, international research indicates that private tuition is ubiquitous worldwide. Despite its scope, the tuition industry in Australia receives little attention from academics, mainstream educators or government regulators. The study reported in this thesis sought to redress this oversight by conducting an in-depth investigation into the phenomenon of private tuition for primary-school aged children in Perth, Western Australia. The overarching aim was to develop theory about how private tuition impacts on the lives of the tutors, students and families involved in the tuition industry.

To achieve this aim this thesis presents case studies of five tuition providers who operate outside of school hours on private fee-paying bases. The qualitative data for the case studies comprise interviews with the key stakeholders, observations conducted in the field and documents gathered at the field sites. A total of 26 participants were interviewed, including administrators, tutors, parents and children. The data were analysed using grounded theory techniques modified to accommodate insights from Pierre Bourdieu's work on education. The findings are based on both case-by-case and cross-case analyses. In the early stages Bourdieuan concepts of cultural capital, habitus and field were used to inform the analysis. The concept of legitimacy arose as a key theoretical theme during the data analysis and became the pivotal component of the emerging theory, resulting in the theory of legitimating claims.

This thesis provides original insights into the experiences of the key stakeholders engaged in the private tuition industry. In particular the thesis explores the relationship between the legitimating claims made by private tutors and the propensity of parents to respond favourably to those claims in order to address their aspirations for their children. This central relationship has implications for theory, policy and practice in both the specific field of private tuition and the wider field of mainstream education. Furthermore, as is often the case with qualitative research, this thesis raises issues that suggest numerous fruitful avenues for future research.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own work and does not contain work that I have published, nor work under review for publication. I certify that this dissertation does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma at any university. Except where otherwise acknowledged this thesis describes my own research and analysis.

This thesis has been prepared in APA style.

Jenny Davis

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

| | |
|--------|---|
| ABS | Australian Bureau of Statistics |
| ACARA | Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority |
| ACBO | Australasian College of Behavioural Optometrists |
| ADD | Attention Deficit Disorder |
| ADHD | Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder |
| ANTA | Australian Natural Therapists Association |
| ATA | Australian Tutoring Association |
| DETWA | Department of Education and Training – Western Australia |
| GATE | Gifted and Talented Education |
| GST | Goods and Services Tax |
| HSC | Higher School Certificate |
| IEP | Individual Education Plan |
| ITAS | Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme |
| LOTE | Languages Other than English |
| NAPLAN | National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy |
| NCLB | No Child Left Behind |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| PISA | Programme for International Student Assessment |
| SAT | Scholastic Aptitude Test |
| TIMSS | Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study |
| TRB | Teacher Registration Board |
| WALNA | Western Australian Literacy and Numeracy Assessment |
| WACOT | Western Australian College of Teaching |

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Chapter One: Introduction

Introduction

In 2010 the *Education Review*, an Australian education newspaper, published an article entitled “A Private Practice,” written by Darragh O’Keefe. The article referred to private tuition in Australia as “a giant elephant in the room.” The article estimated that private tuition was a billion dollar industry in Australia yet it was “grossly under researched”, “rarely, if ever, acknowledged by the mainstream” and “without any regulation, standards or complaints mechanism.” Little has changed since 2010 and the tuition industry continues to expand with scant attention from academics, mainstream educators or government regulators. This thesis reports an attempt to redress this oversight by conducting an in-depth investigation into the phenomenon of private tuition in Perth, Western Australia. The overarching aim was to develop theory about how private tuition impacts on the lives of the tutors, students and families involved in the tuition industry.

This thesis examines the phenomenon of private tuition provision for primary school-aged children. The thesis constructs detailed case studies of five tuition providers operating in Perth, Western Australia. As intimated in O’Keefe’s article there is a dearth of research dealing with private tuition in the Australian context. However, worldwide there is a growing body of research dealing with the phenomenon. There are two distinct bodies of research that examine private tuition provision and there are two corresponding definitions of the phenomenon. The first body of research deals with “shadow education”, a term coined in the early 1990’s (Marimuthu et al. 1991; Stevenson & Baker 1992) and developed in recent years largely through the work of Mark Bray (1999, 2006, 2011). The second body of research deals with “supplementary education” and consists of work conducted largely in the United States and Canada (Gordon, Morgan, O’Malley & Pontiell, 2007). The two terms overlap and will be used interchangeably throughout the thesis. Therefore, it is pertinent to compare the definitions of these two terms in some detail at the outset of this project.

Shadow/Supplementary Education Defined

The term shadow education has emerged over the last 20 years as a powerful metaphor for private tutoring (Baker, Akiba, LeTendre & Wiseman, 2001; Bray, 1999, 2006;

Stevenson & Baker 1992; Watson 2008). According to Bray shadow education is an appropriate metaphor for tutoring for the following reasons:

First, private supplementary tutoring only exists because the mainstream education system exists; second, as the size and shape of the mainstream system change, so do the size and shape of supplementary tutoring; third, in almost all societies much more attention focuses on the mainstream than on its shadow; and fourth, the features of the shadow system are much less distinct than those of the mainstream system. (2009, p.4)

Shadow education includes such diverse teaching practices as one-on-one tutoring, small group tuition and large scale tutoring such as some programmes in Hong Kong that operate through closed-circuit television (Bray, 2006, pp.518-519). It may deal with a range of academic subjects. The term originated within the field of comparative education and much of the literature is concerned with mapping the scope, prevalence and nature of shadow education in a variety of countries throughout Asia, Africa and Europe (Bray & Suso, 2008; Bray, 2010a; Bray 2011; Kwok, 2010; Paviot, Heinsohn & Korkman, 2008; Silova, Budiene & Bray, 2006; Smyth, 2008; Tanner et al., 2009). The distinguishing features of shadow education are that it occurs outside the parameters of the mainstream classroom and that the tutor makes financial gain from the tutoring.

The term supplementary education is most commonly used in literature dealing with private tuition in the United States of America. It is a broader, more encompassing term than shadow education and has been defined as follows:

We define supplementary education as the formal and informal learning and developmental enrichment opportunities that are provided for students outside of school and beyond the regular school day or year. Some of these activities may occur inside the school building but are over and above those included in the formal curriculum of the school (Bridglall, 2005, p.41).

Supplementary education has been divided into two categories, explicit and implicit supplementary education interventions. The explicit category includes; academic tutoring, advocacy, expeditionary learning (e.g. excursions), guidance services, remediation, Saturday academy, test preparation, sociocultural interventions, spelling bees, study skills, subject matter clubs, weekend and summer academies and is more akin to the definition of shadow education. The implicit category includes; decision-making, family talk, indigenous and hegemonic acculturation, nutrition, parental employment, parental modeling, reading and travel (Gordon, Bridglall & Meroe, 2005).

The implicit category deals with aspects of the culture of the family that have a positive effect on educational attainment. It includes elements that enhance a child's ability to engage successfully in the formal schooling system.

This project overlaps with the two fields of research into shadow education and supplementary education. The tuition providers included in this study all operate primarily outside of school hours and exclusively outside school premises. All the providers operate on a for-profit basis. These elements adhere to the definition of shadow education. However, by including the parents of the children tutored as participants in this project, the findings also include the wider family contexts within which the decision to engage private tutors occurs. Hence there is relevance to the field of supplementary education where the implicit education that takes place in the family setting is also an important factor.

The research reported in this thesis has led to the development of an alternative conceptualisation of the field as bespoke education. Bespoke education explains the phenomenon of private tuition in an Australian context by foregrounding the role of parents in shaping their children's education. The concept of bespoke education claims that the phenomenon of private tuition is community driven and involves parents tailoring their children's schooling experiences by engaging private tutors to meet specific needs. Bespoke education acknowledges the strong link between private tuition and processes of school choice and entails blurring the boundaries between public and private education. Bespoke education recognises private tutors as legitimate educators and describes how education is tailored or customised to meet individual students' needs with varying degrees of cost and intensity.

Rationale of the Study

As stated earlier there is a dearth of research dealing with shadow or supplementary education, particularly in an Australian context and particularly taking an in-depth approach to the subject. Bray (2010b) identified this issue in his article that addressed methodological issues in the field of shadow education when he stated:

Many gaps remain, however, both in the geographic coverage and in the specific themes addressed by researchers (p.11)

This thesis is an attempt to address these gaps by providing empirical evidence of the phenomenon of private tuition in an Australian setting and by using qualitative research to provide an in-depth analysis of the phenomenon of private tuition.

The existing corpus of research into shadow or supplementary education in Australia is severely limited. It consists of a handful of published articles and an unpublished conference paper. An oft cited work is the unpublished conference paper presented by Watson (2008) that compared Australian Bureau of Statistics figures on the household spending of families in the two most populated states of Australia, Victoria and New South Wales. Her paper included consideration of the since discontinued government-funded tuition programme An Even Start. She found that there was a lack of “conclusive evidence” that private tutoring was effective in improving students’ learning. Nonetheless Watson concluded that:

Supplementary private tutoring is now a worldwide phenomenon and further research is needed to understand the role and influence of international trends and market-based ideologies on Australian education policy (2008, p.12).

This thesis addresses this need by conducting in-depth case studies of private tuition providers in Perth, Western Australia and situating them within the Australian and worldwide context.

Kenny and Faunce (2004) published an article dealing with the effects of coaching clinics on student achievement in New South Wales. They found that the effects of private coaching on students’ educational attainments were negligible. In fact, they concluded that:

The extravagant claims made by coaching colleges for improving academic achievement are unwarranted (Kenny & Faunce, 2004, p.125)

In terms of the present study Kenny and Faunce’s conclusion raises the question of why private tuition is thriving if it is largely ineffective. This thesis will examine the features of the families that engage in private tuition, identifying the features that predispose them to become involved in private tuition, thereby addressing this question.

Working in a West Australian context Forsey (2011) reported on results of a project that investigated supplementary education that operated in the remote mining town of Karratha in the Pilbara region. The supplementary education programme consisted of a

partnership between a local catholic high school (St Luke's Catholic College) and the North West Shelf Venture that Forsey described as "a conglomerate of companies that constitutes Australia's largest oil and gas resource producer" (2011, p.21). The project was called the "Karratha Education Initiative" and aimed to retain families in the region by improving high school graduation results. While initially successful, Forsey observed that the programme quickly languished and he questioned whether it would have a long term impact on schooling in the Pilbara. Interestingly, Forsey positioned this project within the wider context of a developing culture of school choice and observed that a cynical view of the funding programme that supported the Karratha Education Initiative would be:

that the state is really aiming at encouraging schools into partnerships with private bodies to help defray the cost of education (2011, p.21)

It is pertinent to pose the question of whether the Australian Government is seeking to divest some of its responsibility by encouraging the private sector to become involved in education provision. However, the project Forsey describes differs from the tuition by providers included in this thesis as the project came under the auspices of the school. In this thesis the tuition providers operate independently of mainstream schooling.

Finally, Naidoo has published two articles describing a supplementary education programme. The programme consists of a homework centres located in the western suburbs of Sydney. The centres provide homework support for African refugees. The centres match the definition of a supplementary education programme because they operate outside of school hours and offer tutoring (Naidoo, 2008, p.148). However, Naidoo does not position her work in the context of shadow or supplementary education and instead focuses on the refugee status of the students assisted by the programme. Accordingly she situates her study within the field of refugee studies. Interestingly, Naidoo (2008) draws on Bourdieu's work to inform her analysis, concluding that:

The Refugee Action Support Program, by giving refugees the opportunity to learn the language of power, thereby allows them to move beyond their adversities to acquire some form of cultural and symbolic capital that could be converted to economic capital. For example, the after school homework tuition programme (economic capital) is traded for academic credentials (cultural/symbolic capital) that will then be converted back into economic capital on the job market (pp. 270-271).

It is significant that Naidoo finds relevance in Bourdieu's work for her analysis of an after school tuition programme. This resonates with the theoretical underpinnings of this thesis, as will be explained in the following section.

However, before considering this study's theoretical framework it is important to reiterate that this thesis aims to address a lack of in-depth research into private tuition in the Australian context. As has been noted, only a handful of researchers have investigated the issue of shadow or supplementary education in Australia. By canvassing the views of administrators, tutors, parents and children engaged in private tuition for primary school-aged children, this thesis will make a significant contribution to addressing the lack of research into shadow or supplementary education in Australia.

The Central Aim and Theoretical Framework

This study aims to contribute to the field of shadow and supplementary education by developing theory regarding how private tuition impacts on the lives of the tutors, students and families involved in the tuition industry. The study is qualitative in nature and consists of five detailed case studies of private tuition providers operating in the Perth metropolitan area. The case studies are interpretive because primacy is given to the perspectives of the study's informants on their everyday experiences. In this sense the social and the individual are inseparable (O'Donoghue, 2007). This study falls within the interpretivist paradigm because the theory is developed via negotiation between the researcher and the researched; furthermore this knowledge is always context specific. While this study gives priority to the perspectives of the study participants, the theoretical framework is also informed by Bourdieu's work on education.

Much of Bourdieu's research focused on education as a key site of socialisation (Dillabough, 2004). Throughout his work Bourdieu emphasised that theory needed to be embedded in empirical studies and he offered conceptual tools with which to generate theory tied to specific settings. Accordingly:

Bourdieu argued for a methodology that would bring together an inter-dependent and co-constructed trio – field, capital and habitus – with none of them primary, dominant or causal. Each was integral to understanding the social world and the three were tangled together in a Gordian knot that could only be understood through case-by-case deconstructions. (Thomson, 2008, p.69)

Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, field and capital will be employed throughout this study as mutually constitutive elements of the educational practice of private tutoring (Maton, 2008). Habitus attempts to describe how our way of being, thinking or acting is a product of our personal history and the social contexts that shape us; in other words at any given time the way we choose to act, or more precisely the way we evaluate our options, is informed by our prior personal experiences and the social structures that have come to bear upon us throughout our lives. Habitus is both unique to the individual and likely to have common characteristics amongst individuals with similar backgrounds. In this research, habitus refers to the dispositions of the participants in tutoring including the parents, tutors, administrators and children engaged in the tutoring programs (Reay, 2004). According to Bourdieu, the arena in which interactions between participants occur is the social field, a construct that positions social actors in relation to one another and the institutions that they engage with. Hence, the field refers to the relations between the participants in the tutoring programmes and the social contextual factors that impact on these relations (Naidoo, 2004). For Bourdieu capital is more than an economic phenomenon and includes cultural and social capital. This means that it is not only material goods that individuals or groups acquire but non-material assets such as social status, influence and education. The unifying characteristic of all capital is that it enables individuals or groups "to *buy* positioning in the field" (Grenfell, 2008, p.223). Therefore, in this study capital denotes the social and economic advantage that accrues to engagement in the tutoring process (Moore, 2004).

Habitus, field and capital are components of a relational theory with each element impacting on the others; hence, social action is viewed as strategic and interaction can be likened to a game. The extent to which social actors have a "feel for the game" can be likened to the degree to which habitus and field are compatible (Maton 2008, p.54). The ability to play the game effectively has consequences for the participants' ongoing acquisition of capital. In the field of education, private tutoring represents a phenomenon in which various players act strategically, according to the tendencies formed by habitus to enhance their capital and thereby improve their standing not only in the education field but ultimately in wider economic and social realms. The main aim of this research is to investigate the lived experiences of participants in private tutoring. Bourdieu provides thinking tools that include his concepts of habitus, field and cultural capital that will enable a more in-depth analysis of the study participants' perspectives.

Research Methods

As stated previously this study consists of five, detailed, qualitative case studies of private tuition providers in the Perth metropolitan area. The project's methodological rationale resonates with Punch's position:

The case study aims to understand the case in depth, and in its natural setting, recognizing its complexity and its context. It also has a holistic focus, aiming to preserve and understand the wholeness and unity of the case. (Punch, 2005, p.144)

The research canvasses the perspectives of administrators, tutors, parents and students engaged in the selected tutoring programmes that provided literacy and numeracy instruction for both remediation and extension purposes. The case study tradition seeks to draw out the complexity of the case through constructing rich descriptions of phenomena under study (Herriott & Firestone, 1983; Sturman, 1999). This includes considering the context of the data and contradictions embedded in the data. As Stake points out "the qualitative case researcher tries to preserve the multiple realities, the different and even contradictory views of what is happening" (1995, p.12).

Accordingly, each case is introduced and described in detail separately before cross case analysis takes place. The cases were constructed through data collected in the form of semi-structured interviews, documents and onsite observation.

Interviews were conducted with the key stakeholders, including administrators, tutors, parents and children. The documents gathered included promotional materials and written testimonials. Observations conducted at the various locations where tuition was conducted took into account the milieu created by foyer displays and semiotics such as furnishings, room arrangements and allocation of space. These data gathering techniques ensured that rich and nuanced descriptions of the five cases were constructed.

The data analysis processes combined techniques from grounded theory with the theoretical framework informed by Bourdieu's and Passeron's work. In other words grounded theory coding was modified to accommodate an analytical framework developed from Bourdieu's and Passeron's work on education. This study used several techniques from grounded theory including open coding, memoing and clustering (Strauss, 1987; Charmaz, 2006). The coding progressed through two stages. The first

stage consisted of open coding whereby common themes were identified in the data. The second stage consisted of coding conducted within a Bourdieuan framework and included the key concepts of habitus, cultural capital and field (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). These categories provided an overarching framework and emergent themes were grouped accordingly. From these categories interrelated propositions were formulated that generated the theory about the impact of private tuition on the lives of the study's participants.

Scope of the Study

This study had 26 participants, including five director/tutors, three tutors, one teaching assistant/administration officer, seven parents, one grandparent, six children and three alternative therapists. The participants comprised five distinct case studies; thus as a foray into an under-researched phenomenon this is a relatively small scale, in-depth qualitative study. All cases were located within the Perth metropolitan area and all operated as outside of schooling tuition providers that charged private fees for their services. The study has local relevance because of the aforementioned lack of research into private tuition in an Australian setting. The study has international relevance because it provides analysis of the issues that predispose families to seek private tuition and the strategies tutors employ to secure clients, taking it beyond simple issues of prevalence and effectiveness.

Structure of the Thesis

This introductory chapter argues that this present study addresses a distinct lack of research into private tuition in an Australian setting. The chapter has also outlined the theoretical underpinnings of this project and the research methods used to generate theory about private tuition provision. The following chapter describes the background and context of the phenomenon of private tuition in an Australian setting, taking into account the history of private tutoring and the educational policies that impact on contemporary tuition providers. Chapter Three reviews the existing international and Australian literature on the subjects of shadow and supplementary education, identifying the dominant themes and concerns of previous research in this field. Chapter Four then deals with the methodology of this study. Chapter Five presents the five case studies included in this project individually and in detail. Chapter Six conducts a cross case analysis of the providers' perspectives based on the data collected from the administrators and tutors of the five cases and results in the development of the first

proposition. Chapter Seven produces the second proposition through cross case analysis of the consumers' perspectives based on parents' and children's' data. Chapter Eight discusses the findings of the thesis in detail and presents the theory generated about the phenomenon of private tuition. Chapter Nine is the final chapter and includes the implications for policy, practice and future research, highlighting the unique contribution of this thesis to knowledge about the educational phenomenon of private tuition for primary school-aged children.

Chapter Two: Background and Context

Introduction

This chapter contextualises the phenomenon of private tuition by exploring issues of history, government regulation, school policy and two significant features of the wider Australian education scene. This chapter begins with a brief history of private tutoring internationally and locally; the following section addresses government regulation of tutoring in Australia, including examples of Commonwealth schemes that provide funding for private tuition, describing how various State and Territory schools' policies in Australia address the issue of private tutoring. The chapter concludes with a brief consideration of two current educational issues in Australia that impact on this thesis, namely the growth of school choice in Australia and the introduction of nationwide standardised testing in the form of the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN).

History and Global Scale of Private Tutoring

Private tuition, as a mode of education, predates the development of mass schooling. Gordon and Gordon (1990) charted the history of tutoring in European countries, describing how tutors provided the earliest modes of formal education in Ancient Greece and Rome. They argue that throughout the Middle Ages the Church dominated the field of tutoring through the work of monasteries and convents. Gordon and Gordon (1990) chart the employment of private tutors in the United Kingdom for the education of the children of royalty and nobility from the year 1200 onwards. They observe that throughout the Enlightenment period “affluent families used a residential tutor to instruct their sons in the classics” and governesses provided education for young children and girls (1990, p.149), which continued with employment of nannies, governesses and tutors within family homes during the 19th Century. They assert that the development of compulsory school attendance laws led to a decline in the employment of tutors in the home. Gordon and Gordon argue that the consequent resurgence of private tuition in the 1960s, as a supplement to formal schooling, occurred because:

Parents often perceived the school as not responsive to either the specific academic needs or motivational needs of their children (Gordon & Gordon, 1990, p.316)

In a more recent publication, Gordon, Morgan, O'Malley and Pontiell report that in America private tutoring in 2002 was a 5-8 billion dollar industry and estimate its continued growth to a level of 8-12 billion (Gordon et al., 2007). Hence they establish its position as a significant and enduring feature of the educational landscape in America. They describe the resurgence of public interest in private tutoring as “revolution.”

Furthermore Gordon et al. (2007) report that in 2006 the US government spent an estimated 2 billion dollars on Supplemental Education Services. This funding initiative arose from the 2001 *No Child Left Behind Legislation* which sought to address the issue of “failing schools” (Koyama, 2010). The policy included the option of providing *Supplemental Education Services* to children attending schools that consistently fail to reach national academic benchmarks. One aspect of the *Supplemental Education Services* involved referring individual students to private tuition providers, with subsequent tuition fees paid from Government funds. This policy initiative resulted in a body of research into the effectiveness and appropriateness of channeling the US Government’s education funding into the private tuition industry (Burch, Steinberg & Donovan, 2007; Heinrich, Meyer & Whitten, 2010; Koyama, 2010; Zimmer, Christina, Hamilton & Weber Prine, 2006)

This rise of the private tuition industry in the United States is mirrored in the countries of Asia, Africa, and Eastern Europe, indicating that private tuition is a truly global phenomenon. A recent marketing report projects that the global market for private tutoring will reach US\$102.8 billion by 2018 (Global Industry Analysts, 2012).

The comparative studies conducted by UNESCO, spearheaded by the work of Mark Bray, charted the scope and prevalence of private tutoring practices worldwide (Bray, 1999; Bray & Kwok, 2003; Bray 2006; Bray & Suso, 2008; Bray, 2009; Bray, 2011; Silova et al. 2006). The list of countries represented in this body of research is extensive and according to an early UNESCO publication included Brazil, Cambodia, Egypt, Guinea, Hong Kong, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Mauritius, Morocco, Myanmar, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Tanzania and Zimbabwe (Bray, 1999, pp.24-25).

In some Asian countries private tuition has reached unprecedented levels. For example, in South Korea private tutoring is ubiquitous with 87.4% of primary school students

reported to access private tuition in 2009 (Lee & Shouse, 2011). The practice of private tutoring in South Korea grew during the 1960s and the government developed concerns that the level of spending was disproportionate and placed Korean families under financial strain. Consequently, in 1980 the government attempted to address these concerns by imposing bans on private tuition. The bans proved ineffective and were lifted in 2000 indicating the government's acceptance of private tuition as an enduring feature of the education field in South Korea (Lee, Lee & Jang, 2010).

Japan is another example of the prevalence of private tutoring in Asia. Dierkes (2010) asserts that:

By all accounts, shadow education plays a central role in the contemporary Japanese education system (p.25).

In Japan *juku* schools provide outside of school tuition in large class settings. Dierkes observes that there are no reliable statistics to quantify the scope of private tutoring in Japan due to a stigma associated with the existence of *juku* schools. Nonetheless, he reports that estimates of the rate of attendance vary between approximately one third and two thirds of all Japanese school students (Dierkes, 2010). Dierkes (2010) describes the “*juku*-boom” of the 1970's as a crucial period in the growth of the private tuition industry in Japan. Of particular interest in the Australian context is the fact that Japan is the birthplace of the Kumon tutoring franchise. According to the Kumon website, the Kumon method of tuition was founded in Japan by a high school mathematics teacher, Toru Kumon, to assist his son in 1954. The website reports that in June 2012 Kumon tuition was available in 47 countries with 4.37 million student enrolments. Kumon centres operate in every state and territory of Australia, including over 30 centres in Western Australia (Kumon 2012).

In Canada researchers have been examining the rise of private tuition in the form of franchises. They have found that through the development of franchises the private tuition sector is diversifying as it applies the business logic of the franchise model to education service provision (Aurini, 2004; Aurini & Davies, 2004). Furthermore, they note that some Canadian centres eventually develop into private schools indicating that private tuition can develop to take on the role of primary educator (Aurini, 2004; Aurini & Davies, 2004). There is evidence in the US that government funding is flowing to private tuition companies who administer “online public schools” that provide free education delivered entirely through children's home computers with parents acting as

“learning coaches.” These companies provide education for all levels of schooling from kindergarten to Year 12 (K12, 2013). This development in the USA gives further credibility to Davies’ and Aurini’s (2004) assertion that in some cases private tuition providers may expand their businesses to become mainstream education providers.

Private Tutoring in Australia

There is evidence that in colonial Australia, as was the case in 19th century Europe, wealthy families employed private tutors, in the form of governesses, to educate their children at home (Matthew, 2011; Windschuttle, 1980). As was the case in Europe the development of a comprehensive system of public schooling saw the decline of the governess in cities such as Sydney, but they continued to play crucial roles in the education of children living on isolated rural properties (Matthew, 2011). As this thesis will demonstrate the practice of private tuition has reemerged in contemporary Australia as a strategy used by parents to make up perceived shortfalls in the mainstream schooling system.

In the current Australia education system school attendance is compulsory for all children aged from 6 to 15 years old, unless they are officially registered as receiving home schooling. In 2013 the schooling system in Western Australia includes a non-compulsory preschool component that is made up of kindergarten. Compulsory schooling in Western Australia commences at preprimary and continues until Year 7. Years 8 to 12 comprise the secondary school years (although Year 7 is in the process of relocating to the secondary school). This study is concerned with the private tuition of children engaged in the primary school level of education. The tuition may be for extension, remediation or maintenance purposes.

The majority of the parents included in this study used tuition for remediation purposes. The main strategy mainstream schooling uses to address the remedial needs of children in the classroom are Individual Education Programmes (IEPs). Devised by the classroom teacher, the IEP’s are school-based plans that establish learning goals and teaching strategies tailored to meet children’s specific needs. Teachers conduct regular meetings with parents to discuss the progress of each child’s IEP. The frequency of IEP meetings and reviews are negotiated at the individual school level. An IEP does not attract additional support services or funding.

This thesis asserts that parents are choosing to address issues of remediation outside the established school system by employing private tutors for their primary school-aged children. However, it is very difficult to chart the development or determine the prevalence of private tutoring in Australia due to the lack of statistical data and quantitative research on the industry. Nonetheless there are indicators that researchers have used to gain insight into the scope of the phenomenon. Baker, Akiba, LeTendre and Wiseman (2001) reported on international trends in the engagement of students in extra lessons outside of regular schooling using data from the Third International Mathematics and Science (TIMSS) data. TIMSS data enable researchers to make international comparisons of student achievement in Mathematics and Science. According to Baker and his colleagues just below 20% of Australian students in Year 8 engaged in private tutoring for Mathematics according to TIMSS data from 1994-95 (Baker et al., 2001). This is a ratio of one in five households with school-aged children represents a significant portion of the Australian population, especially taking into account more recent indicators that the field of shadow education has grown considerably since 1995.

Another factor that indicates the scope of private tuition in Australia is the expansion of the tuition franchise industry. There are several private tuition franchises operating in Australia, including Kumon and Kip McGrath. According to the Kumon website, the first Kumon centre was established in Australia in 1984 and the business has since grown to include over 280 centres Australia-wide, with over 30 centres in Western Australia (Kumon 2012). The Kip McGrath franchise originated in Australia with the first centre opening in 1974 in New South Wales. The franchise has grown to include almost 650 franchises in 20 countries around the world, including 11 franchises in Western Australia (McGrath, 2012). These two examples demonstrate the unprecedented growth rate of the private tuition franchise industry and are indicative of growth in the wider field of shadow or supplementary education.

In the main there is very little government regulation of private tutoring in Australia. The laws that do impact on private tutors are the Working with Children Checks or Police checks that consist of pre-employment background checks. These checks are legislated for by individual state and territory governments in Australia and there is no nation-wide framework governing their implementation. In Western Australia every person who works directly with children is required to undergo a Working with

Children Check and attain a Working with Children Check identification card. This entails an individual gaining certification of suitability to work in a child-related field that is valid for three years and includes ongoing monitoring of the individual's suitability. Specifically the check is a screening for previous convictions of crimes against children and the ongoing monitoring means that:

if a relevant criminal offence is committed during the validity of the check, or if the individual is subject to relevant work-related disciplinary procedures, the administering authority may inform employers of the offence, and alter or withdraw an individual's entitlement to work with children (Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2012).

This legislation is the only Government initiative that regulates the employment of private tutors in Australia.

There is no Australia-wide legislative framework for the private tutoring industry but there is a national Code of Conduct devised by a nationwide professional association. The Australian Tutoring Association (ATA) was founded in 2005 as an Australia-wide representative body for tutors and tutoring organisations. The association devised a "Code of Conduct" that all of its members must abide by. Membership of the ATA is voluntary and the association exercises no regulatory powers. The establishment of the ATA attests to the growth of the industry throughout Australia. The ATA's stated aim is to:

Represent tutors and tutoring organisations, act as a lobby group and raise the standard of tutoring in Australia (ATA, 2012).

The ATA produces regular press releases on issues pertinent to the tuition industry, advocates regulation of the private tuition industry and lobbies for government support and recognition of the industry.

The Commonwealth Government of Australia has funded private tuition through two schemes that seek to address areas of educational disadvantage. The first was the Indigenous Tutoring Assistance Scheme (ITAS) which targeted the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population. The second scheme was the more widely applied An Even Start programme. ITAS was a scheme funded by the Commonwealth Government that provided individual tutoring in a range of academic subjects for indigenous students at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels of schooling (Department of Education, Science and Training, 2004). The Commonwealth funding has been adjusted and

currently caters for only tertiary and vocational education, primary students are catered for at the state level of government (Department of Industry Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education, 2013). An Even Start was a more recently introduced scheme funded by the Commonwealth Government since May 2007 that has since been reviewed and disbanded. This scheme provided \$700 of vouchers for individual or small group tuition in literacy or numeracy for children who did not reach national benchmarks on standardised testing (Watson, 2008). The testing was conducted in Years Three, Five, Seven and Nine of schooling (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, 2009). These programs are indicative of Government acknowledgement that there are situations where supplementing mainstream schooling with private tuition is an appropriate educational strategy.

Private Tutoring in Perth, Western Australia

It is difficult to determine the rate of growth of the private tuition industry in Perth, Western Australia. Anecdotally, the tuition providers in this study concurred that the industry is experiencing steady and ongoing expansion. In her study of Canadian tuition businesses Aurini (2006) argues that:

Yellow page listings are highly effective in mapping the growth of businesses that rely on consumer environments since most established businesses use them for basic advertising purposes (p.94)

Accordingly the growth of the private tuition industry over a 20 year period, from 1992 to 2012, in Perth will be examined by comparing the growth in the number of businesses advertising in the Perth Metropolitan Yellow Pages with the rate of estimated growth of the Perth population as reported by the Australian Bureau of Statistics over a similar period.

Private tuition businesses advertised in three categories within the Perth Yellow Pages Business Directories over the 20 years between 1992 and 2012. The categories were *Tuition-Educational*, *Coaching-Educational* and *Educational Consultants*. In 1992 advertisements for tutors appeared under the categories of *Coaching-Educational* and *Educational Consultants*. By 2012, the category of *Coaching-Educational* had changed into *Tuition-Educational* and the category of *Educational Consultants* had remained unchanged. Private tutors advertised under either or both categories. The following tables chart the growth of the industry. The first table depicts the increase in the number

of advertisements over the 20-year period from 1992 to 2012. The second table depicts the population growth for the Perth Metropolitan area over a similar period. Consequently the growth of the tuition industry can be correlated to population growth.

Table 2.1: Growth in number of advertisements 1992-2012

(Source: Perth Yellow Pages 1992 and 2012 editions)

| | Adverts for Coaching 1992/ Tuition 2012 | Adverts for Educational Consultants | Total Adverts |
|------------|--|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| 1992 | 36 | 44 | 80 |
| 2012 | 94 | 67 | 161 |
| % increase | 161% | 52% | 100% |

Table 2.2: Population Growth of Perth Metropolitan Area 1990-2010

(Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2012 Year Book)

| Year | Estimated Population |
|------------|----------------------|
| 1990 | 1,613,000 |
| 2000 | 2,291,000 |
| % increase | 42% |

Table 1 indicates that there was a 100% increase in the total number of advertisements related to the private tutoring industry. In other words, the number of adverts doubled over the 20-year period. Interestingly, the number of adverts in the *educational coaching/tutoring* category rose at a much higher rate than in the *educational consultants* category, indicating that the specific category of private tutoring has experienced proportionately greater growth. Over a similar period Perth's population grew by 42%, so even taking this growth into account, the rate of increase in the number of tuition businesses advertising in the Perth metropolitan area is substantially greater than the rate of population growth.

A caveat must apply to the Yellow Pages data. The change in the number of advertisements could be indicative of changes in the popularity of the Yellow Pages as a marketing tool. Yet with the rise of the Internet, the rate of advertising in the Yellow Pages could have been expected to fall rather than rise. In this scenario the rates of growth evident in Table 1 would be conservative estimates of the growth of the private

tuition industry. Indeed, one of the directors of a tutoring franchise interviewed for this study described the Yellow Pages as an expensive and largely ineffective marketing strategy. This director stated that maintaining a presence on the Internet was a far more successful strategy. Nonetheless she did continue to use the Yellow Pages, supporting Aurini's assertion that established business use the Yellow Pages. Overall, the need to rely on a source such as the Yellow Pages to chart the growth of the private tutoring industry in Perth is indicative of the lack of reliable statistical data on this phenomenon. There is a glaring lack of raw information or established research regarding the scope and prevalence of private tutoring in major Australian cities.

In 2011 the ATA made a press release claiming that Australian parents spend billions on private tutors each year (ATA, 2011b). The press release used census and government figures related to employment to estimate the size of the private tutoring industry. The press release reported a 38% rise from the numbers of tutors in the 2006 census compared to the number of tutors recorded by the Commonwealth government Jobs Outlook data of 2011. Specifically, 26,050 people classified themselves as tutors or private teachers in the 2006 census while the Jobs Outlook data of 2011 found that over 36,100 people identified tuition as their main employment. From these figures the ATA concluded that the industry was worth billions by calculating an average weekly wage for tutors as \$441 per week and extrapolating that the wages represent approximately 30-35% of the annual costs of running tuition businesses. However, these figures should be treated with caution as many private tutors work on a part-time basis. The figures are imprecise and further highlight the difficulty of gaining reliable indicators of the scope and growth rate of the private tuition industry in Australia.

Schools' Policies regarding Private Tutoring in Australia

The main educating bodies in Australia are government-funded schools. Therefore it is pertinent to consider how schools' policies address the issue of engagement with the private tuition industry. Perusing state and territory education department policies on their respective websites yielded the following insights. Mainstream schools' policies that impact on private tutoring in Australia differ from state to state but basically fall into three categories. The categories are policies regarding student welfare, policies regarding Departmental staff engaging in private employment, and policies regarding use of Departmental resources. Policies regarding student welfare mainly require volunteers and visitors (including tutors) to school to gain background checks similar to

the Working With Children checks described earlier. Policies regarding private employment (including as private tutors outside of school hours) for departmental staff stress that the private employment must not entail a conflict of interest. Policies regarding school resources stress that photocopying, internet usage and school facilities should not be used in the pursuit of private business interests. Furthermore some policies mandate that when school premises are used for private financial gain then a fee should be charged.

Interestingly, only WA has a policy dedicated solely to addressing the relationship between private tutors and mainstream schools. The policy authorises school principals to “organise or manage” private tutors to supplement the school’s educational programmes, during school hours. The policy stresses that student achievement is the “province of teachers” and that schools must not use private tutors to “abrogate” their responsibility for the education of their students. Through this policy the WA Department of Education concedes that there will be shortfalls in schooling provision for some students, as the policy states:

It is recognised, however, that schools do not always have the necessary resources to present educational programs to meet the full range of needs of all students. In such cases, the principal may consider requests from parents to grant approval for students to attend private tutoring programs during school hours.
(DETTWA, 2013a).

The policy also states that private tuition conducted after school and off school premises is not an official school activity and therefore is not covered by the policy. This policy demonstrates that it is assumed that parents will take the initiative to engage private tutors and that the Education Department in Western Australia concedes that schooling cannot meet all children’s educational needs and at times supplementing schooling with private tuition is necessary.

During the investigation of this issue of how various education departments across Australia deal with children receiving private tuition during school hours several policy officers were contacted by telephone. A policy officer in Darwin expressed disbelief that the practice of removing children from regular classrooms to attend private tuition during school hours occurred at all in the Northern Territory. After making further inquiries the same policy officer later conceded that the practice did occur and that the issue was managed at an individual school level. It is certainly the case that the tuition

providers included in this study conducted the majority of their tuition before and after school hours. Nonetheless, four out of a total of five providers in this study had a minority of primary school-aged clients who attended private tuition during mainstream schooling hours.

School Choice and Private Tuition

The growth of the private tuition industry has occurred within the context of a developing culture of school choice. The issue of school choice in Australia most commonly deals with parents choosing to send their children to government schools, Catholic schools or independent schools. This section will establish that practices of school choice are on the rise, then give brief consideration to key issues that have implications of private tutoring in Australia. The section will conclude with examples of overlap between the fields of research school choice and private tuition.

There is compelling evidence that in recent years the issue of school choice has become a prominent feature of the schooling system in Australia. In a 2004 report on school choice Beavis found that:

Between 1993 and 2003, government school enrolments in Australia increased by 1.2% while enrolments in non-government schools increased by 22.3% (p.2).

Making comparisons over a longer term, Le and Miller (2003) used Australian Bureau of Statistics data to compare the growth of attendance rates between government schools, Catholic schools and independent schools from 1970 to 2000. They found that the overall number of students attending school over this period increased by 17.3%. However the growth was uneven across the three types of schools. Le and Miller (2003) reported that government school enrolment increased by only 4.1%, Catholic school enrolment increased by 29.9% and independent school enrolment increased by a staggering 210% (p.55). These figures support the assertion that in Australia there is a growing culture of school choice. Forsey (2008) concurs with the finding that the culture of school choice is growing in Australia. He asserts that many parents feel that they have “no choice but to choose” (Forsey, 2008, p.73). Although the statistics indicate that the majority of the shift is away from government schools into the private sector, Forsey (2008) observes that in some cases choice involves moving from independent or Catholic schools to government schools.

The impetus for the developing culture of school choice has been driven, in part, by governmental policy (Angus, 2003). In the 1970s the Federal Government established policies that guaranteed ongoing funding for the private sector of schooling (Angus, 2003; Campbell, Proctor & Sherrington, 2009; Forsey, 2008). This policy development has been described as occurring within “a neoliberal framework” (Angus, 2003, p.118). This framework values individual choice and market driven approaches to the provision of school services. Campbell, Proctor and Sherrington (2009) note that within this political framework the role of the parent has changed as follows:

...a redefinition of the good parent-citizen whose knowing participation in the market as an informed chooser of schools is supported by government. In recent times, failure to engage in such knowing participation is often condemned as ‘lack of caring’ and, indeed, even ‘irresponsible parenting’. An older model of the good parent-citizen, one who trusted and supported government education and its aim of providing fair educational opportunity to all, has been displaced (p.4)

Critics warn that this policy approach erodes educational equity and the quality of the public education system. However the development of the notion of a responsible parent as one who makes choices about their children’s schooling validates parents who decide to supplement their children’s schooling by employing private tutors.

The other driver of the impetus for school choice is parental aspiration. The recent rise in school choice in Australia has been characterised as a middle class phenomenon that is often accompanied by a loss of faith in the public school system (Campbell et al. 2009; Forsey, 2008). As Campbell et al. (2009) explain:

It is this link between the middle class and schooling, the ever-increasing dependence by middle-class parents on schools for the securing of safe futures for their children, that makes the current conditions of choosing schools in an ‘educational market’ so interesting and so full of anxiety, aspiration and strategic planning for such families (p.16).

It will be demonstrated in this thesis that the field of private tutoring is another key element of the developing ‘educational market’ in Australia that resonates with mainstream issues of school choice.

Andre-Bechely’s (2005) study, “Could it be Otherwise?” investigates parental motivations for school choice that operate within the public schooling system in the United States of America. Andre-Bechely links school choice to issues of gender as she

observes that the work of decision-making related to school choice is often undertaken by mothers (Andre-Bechely, 2005). This observation has also been made by other researchers addressing the issue of school choice (David, West & Ribbens, 1994; David, Davies, Edwards, Reay & Standing, 1997; Forsey, 2008). The present study addressed the issue of gender by investigating which family member engages in the three part process of first selecting a tutoring programme for young students, secondly undertaking the work of getting children to and from tutoring and finally supervising the extra homework that results from the tutoring programme.

Campbell et al. (2009) analysed how parents negotiate the issue of school choice in Australia. As stated earlier, the issue is examined as a particular concern of the middle classes. Their study aimed to explore the “two sides of choice; aspiration and anxiety” (Campbell et al., 2009, p.3). They discuss private tutoring in a chapter that describes selective high schools in Australia. Selective high schools are government schools that conduct examinations to select students for enrolment on the basis of special academic or Arts-based aptitudes. The authors note that enrolling children in private coaching schools for tuition is one of the key strategies parents use to gain admission to selective schools. Private academic coaching is characterised as,

...not so much about effort to overcome educational deficits as to supplement cultural capital that immigrant families bring with them. Family strategy is thus to send often unwilling children to coaching colleges for one or more years. The selective entrance tests are intensively practiced. And the strategy is very often successful (Campbell et al., 2009, p.122).

The study found that non-immigrant families also used coaching for their children yet were more ambivalent about its use. Accordingly, despite the success of the strategy the authors describe it as “oft-despised coaching” and reported that at least one parent considered it to be a form of cheating. This is an example of private tuition supporting mechanisms of school choice.

Internationally researchers in Canada and Japan have analysed private tuition as a manifestation of school choice. Dierkes’ (2008a) research links shadow education and school choice in the Japanese setting, describing shadow education as a 30 year old mechanism of school choice in Japan (Dierkes, 2008a). Dierkes’ study focuses on shadow education in the form of *juku* schools which are evening classes in academic subjects that run for profit (Dierkes, 2008a). The research seeks to determine whether

shadow education, as an example of educational choice, results in a diversity of educational offerings as promised by proponents of competition in schooling (Dierkes, 2008a). Dierkes finds that the result is not a range of pedagogical approaches informed by different conceptions of learning but rather that:

While the shadow education system is rife with choice of different delivery techniques and formats, it appears not to have produced much variety in terms of a fundamentally different educational philosophy. (Dierkes, 2008a, p.241)

Juku schools are very different from the one-on-one tutoring programs that this project focuses on. However Dierkes' study is relevant for raising the issue of whether choice and competition amongst educational services results in diversity. The present study makes comparisons of the educational philosophies of the various tutoring programmes involved.

Davies (2004) directly links the decision to engage in private tutoring with issues of school choice in Canada. He links an increase in private tutoring to parental anxiety about children's futures, stating that parents are "seeking strategies to enhance their children's competitiveness" (Davies, 2004, p.234). Davies examines the literature to hypothesise about characteristics that could be expected to influence positively the decision or desire to engage in tutoring (Davies, 2004). These parental characteristics include higher socio-economic status, busy parents seeking after school care, intensive parenting, dissatisfaction with public schools, adherence to conservative politics and neo-liberal beliefs (Davies, 2004). Based on survey data, Davies discounts political orientation, the desire for after school care and socio-economic status factors as significant factors. However he does note that socio-economic status may not be significant in the desire to engage in tutoring but rather in the ability to realise that desire (Davies, 2004).

Of particular interest to this project is Davies' (2004) finding that it is not parents who are busy and seeking extra child support after school hours but more often parents who are intensively involved in their children's education who seek tutoring. This concept of intensive parenting refers to parents who "place a great premium on education, value a cognitively stimulating environment for their children and closely monitor their children's activities" (Davies, 2004, p.238). The present study explored whether this concept of intensive parenting is a significant feature of West Australian families that

engage in private tutoring. Finally Davies finds a correlation between parental desire for private schooling and the tendency to engage in private tutoring. Accordingly, “private tutoring and private schooling are different points on a continuum of choice, differentiated by cost” (Davies, 2004, p.237). In the present study, the issue of affordability was another feature of the phenomenon of private tutoring as an aspect of educational choice that was investigated in the West Australian setting.

National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)

The recent introduction of annual nationwide standardised testing is a significant feature of the Australian educational landscape that impacts on the provision of private tuition. This section describes the NAPLAN testing regime and the method of reporting the test results. The major claims of the advocates of the testing system are presented, followed by the major criticisms of the system. The section concludes with discussion of whether the testing regime has introduced high stakes testing into the primary school setting in Australia.

The NAPLAN tests were first administered in 2008. They consist of standardised tests in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy. The tests are conducted in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in all government and non-government school across Australia. The individual students’ test results are measured against national benchmarks and families receive printed reports of the test outcomes for their children. Furthermore, the results are collated at an individual school level to form a school achievement profile. The aggregated school results are published on the “My Schools” website.

The “My Schools” website enables parents and the wider community to compare school achievement levels. My Schools primarily displays the NAPLAN data but also provides other information about the schools, including:

a measure of socioeconomic status for the school, total enrolments at the school, the gender mix at the school and the attendance rate at the school. The data are made available, however, in the form of school average data: data on the individual student are not available to the public (Miller & Voon, 2011, p.148).

In other words the website which is administered by the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) combines NAPLAN results with other social and economic data that are collected from parents at student enrolment (ACARA,

2012). The website enables comparison of schools with populations that possess similar socioeconomic profiles. The development of NAPLAN and My Schools represent significant educational reforms in Australia.

Researchers report that advocates of NAPLAN and the My School website expect several positive effects of the reforms. Supporters of NAPLAN testing have reportedly claimed that it leads to greater accountability and transparency in schooling (Graham, 2010; Preston, 2010; Reid, 2010; Thompson, 2012; Wu, 2010). Proponents of the reforms also argue that they provide rich sources of data for analysis of education in Australia (Ladwig, 2010; Miller & Voon, 2011). Some research indicates that the introduction of NAPLAN testing has led to greater consistency across the curriculum and collaboration amongst teaching colleagues in schools (Thompson, 2012). Finally the testing regime facilitates the identification of individuals and schools that are struggling academically and thereby enables the direction of schooling resources to the students who need them most (Polesel, Dulfer & Turnbull, 2012).

One major criticism of NAPLAN is that it creates stress for teachers and students. Furthermore critics claim that testing systems such as NAPLAN lead to narrowing the curriculum and foster practices of teaching to the test (Polesel et al., 2012; Reid, 2010; Thompson, 2012). It has been argued that the specific NAPLAN testing gives unreliable results due to a significant margin of error in single test scores (Wu, 2010). Hence the tests do not provide an accurate representation of a student's capability (Thompson, 2012). Finally it has been claimed that NAPLAN testing leads to less, rather than more, inclusive classrooms (Polesel et al., 2012; Thompson, 2012).

Australian researchers have described NAPLAN as high stakes testing, as Polesel et al. (2012) argue:

the publication of the results of the NAPLAN program on the My School website, with the associated media coverage, means that NAPLAN may too be labeled as a high stakes testing program (p.4)

The public reporting of the NAPLAN results and the use of NAPLAN to address issues of public accountability for schools are central to the definition of it as a high stakes testing regime. However this claim is contested. It has been noted that NAPLAN differs from high stakes testing regimes overseas because it does not determine "grade

promotion” for students and, unlike in the US, schools are not threatened with closure on the basis of the test results (Polesel et al., 2012, p.6).

One prevalent definition of high stakes testing is that it plays a determining role in children’s academic and vocational futures. Accordingly exams that determine entry to selective schools or university would be deemed high stakes and NAPLAN would not. In fact, international research into shadow education finds a correlation between the presence of high stakes testing in countries such as South Korea and Japan and high rates of the employment of private tutors. Comparative studies of shadow education that include Australia claim that one reason Australia’s rate of private tuition is lower than countries in South East Asia is because the education system does not feature high stakes testing. In this study it was therefore pertinent to investigate whether the parents and children included in this study perceive NAPLAN to be high stakes and whether NAPLAN plays a role in the decision to employ a private tutor.

Conclusion

This chapter argued that private tutoring has a long history and is an enduring feature of the educational landscape. The organisational context of this project has been examined by describing how government regulations and school policies impact on private tutoring, finding that the practice receives minimal attention from legislators and policy-makers. Finally, this chapter considered two current educational issues that have relevance to the current project. The first issue is the increasing trend towards school choice and the second issue is the introduction of the Australian NAPLAN and My Schools reforms. Therefore, this chapter situates the practice of private tutoring within the wider Australian educational scene. The next chapter presents a literature review that locates this research project within the context of international and Australian research on shadow or supplementary education.

Chapter Three: Literature Review

Introduction

Private tuition is a complex, worldwide phenomenon. As explained in the previous chapter, it has a long history; however, until recently it has received little attention from education researchers. Indeed, the growth of private tuition has caught many mainstream educators by surprise. It is a grass roots movement that has evolved in response to parents' desires to attain educational advantage, or cultural capital, for their children. As was demonstrated in the preceding chapter, private tuition is an educational phenomenon that has no central administration, little government regulation, no government infrastructure and no mandated standards for qualifications. In other words it does not arise from within the mainstream schooling structures and is often treated with suspicion by researchers as it is administered by private business interests, hence its adherence to the liberatory goals of mass schooling cannot be assured. Consequently, as will be demonstrated in the following pages, researchers frequently question whether private tutoring entrenches or ameliorates educational inequality.

This chapter deals with the existing literature by outlining two bodies of research that conceptualise private tutoring as an educational phenomenon. The two conceptualisations are shadow education and supplementary education. Shadow education resides within the field of comparative education and deals only with tuition that occurs outside of schooling and is undertaken for profit. Supplementary education is a more sociological concept and takes a wider view of the phenomenon by including tuition that occurs in the school setting and on a voluntary basis and by considering the elements of family life that foster education. Following a review of these two bodies of research, an alternative conceptualisation of the field as *bespoke education* that foregrounds the guiding role of parents in shaping their children's education will be proposed and explained. Finally the chapter will focus on the local scene, highlighting the paucity of studies that deal with private tuition in the Australian context and proposing that the concept of bespoke education best describes the Australian manifestation of private tuition. In doing so, this chapter will establish the justification for the current project that consists of in-depth, qualitative analysis of private tuition provision in an Australian setting.

The term shadow education was first used in the early 1990's (Marimuthu et al., 1991; Stevenson & Baker, 1992), then developed by the work of Mark Bray (1999, 2005, 2006, 2009, 2010a, 2010b, 2011) in the field of comparative education. Research into shadow education has been conducted in many different countries throughout Asia and Europe. The term supplementary education originated in North America and is more sociological in its approach. Hence the chapter is organised geographically. The first section briefly deals with the concept of shadow education and focuses on South East Asia, highlighting the cases of South Korea and Japan as exemplars of this phenomenon. The second section deals with shadow education in countries throughout Asia, Europe and the former Eastern Bloc. The following section focuses on Canada and is followed by a discussion of research into private tuition conducted in the United Kingdom. The next section discusses supplementary education in the United States of America. The notion of bespoke education is then explained. The chapter concludes with a section dealing with research conducted in Australia and applies the notion of bespoke education to this setting.

Throughout the chapter it will be argued that the fields of shadow and supplementary education have emerged as significant features of education with implications for policy makers and governments. Furthermore, the chapter will demonstrate that private tuition is a well-established and enduring feature of education worldwide. This chapter will consider the attention researchers give to the role of shadow or supplementary education in the perpetuation and/or amelioration of educational inequality. The chapter will argue that alongside its private business interests, the phenomenon is community driven and involves parents tailoring their children's schooling experiences by engaging private tutors to meet specific needs. Consequently the term bespoke education will be introduced to describe this process. The chapter will demonstrate that private tuition provision has become an important issue for educationalists worldwide, yet has received scant attention in the Australian setting.

Shadow Education in Asia

Shadow education is a relatively new field of research, originating in the work of Stevenson and Baker (1992) and developed through the work of Mark Bray (1999, 2005, 2006, 2009, 2010a, 2010b, 2011). Bray uses the terms shadow education and supplementary tutoring interchangeably. However, he favours the term shadow education, as discussed in Chapter One, and describes it as a metaphor for tuition that

takes place outside the normal school setting. Bray's definition is specific and limited to for-profit tuition. Applying this definition in the Australian setting divorces the field from wider trends of school choice, privatisation of education and extracurricular activities that indirectly support children's academic achievement. Furthermore, the term shadow education has negative connotations, implying the field is insubstantial due to its reliance on mainstream schooling for validation. Nonetheless, the field of shadow education raises many issues pertinent to the current project and warrants further consideration.

As stated earlier, the field of research into shadow education is comparative in nature.

Accordingly Bray observes that the tutoring phenomenon is:

a fascinating and instructive focus for comparative study of education. It is instructive to note not only the patterns of change but also the variations in different cultures, locations, socio-economic groups and levels of education (Bray, 2010a, p.70).

Many studies are descriptive and concerned with the scope and prevalence of tuition. Several of the studies on shadow education were facilitated by Bray's (2009) work at UNESCO with the goal of uncovering educational inequalities. Findings include financial strain on families seeking to engage tutors, corrupt teaching practices by teachers moonlighting as tutors and the potential undermining of the mainstream schooling system (Bray & Kwok, 2003; Bray, 2006; Bray & Suso, 2008; Bray, 2009; Bray, 2011; Silova et al. 2006).

Research on private tutoring in South-East Asia, where shadow education is ubiquitous, examines how governments and policy makers have responded to increasing levels of shadow education (Byun, 2010; Lee et al., 2010; Tan, 1995). Korea and Japan are exemplary cases of shadow education in South East Asia. In Korea, for example, in 1980 the government banned private tuition; however, this ban proved to be ineffective and the restrictions have since been lifted (Lee et al. 2010, p.101). Korea has a very robust shadow education system that is immutable to government intervention. According to 2009 figures, an estimated 87.4% of families invested in private tuition for their primary school-aged children (Lee & Shouse, 2011, p.212). Researchers continue to address the issue of government policy responses to tuition in South Korea (Byun, 2010; Lee et al. 2010).

A recent study of Korean shadow education addresses the issue as a cultural phenomenon. Lee and Shouse's (2011) study draws on data from a 2004 nationwide Korean baseline survey entitled *Korean Education and Employment Panel* conducted by the Korean Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training. The baseline survey provides data on features of students' backgrounds and their families' spending on education services. Lee and Shouse's research investigates whether students' prestige orientation is a significant determinant of family spending on shadow education. The authors determined a student's prestige orientation by ranking the status of the university that the students aspired to attend. Using the survey data Lee and Shouse sought to discover whether shadow education was becoming institutionalised; that is, whether it had a symbolic role as much as a functional role in achieving the educational goals of the students and their families. They investigate whether a climate exists that prompts:

feelings of uneasiness or fear at the thought of not participating and thereby lead to greater demand for private tutoring services beyond their relative academic value (Lee & Shouse, 2011, p. 214).

The study sample consisted of 1,780 secondary students across 100 schools. The Korean secondary schooling system is divided into vocational and academic streams. This study was limited to students attending the academic stream; hence the sample is limited to those students with academic aspirations, which may distort the findings, particularly as the key variable is prestige orientation. It would be reasonable to expect that students who have successfully entered the academic stream of secondary schooling would aspire to attend prestigious colleges and universities.

The study reported mixed findings which the authors described as "complex and nonlinear" (Lee & Shouse, 2011, p.220). The authors concluded that the factors motivating Korean families to engage in shadow education were varied and linked to complex cultural and social factors. These factors were beyond the scope of their study that sought to draw links between a limited set of variables (student ability, family background and school quality) and spending on shadow education. However one firm finding of Lee and Shouse's study was that prestige orientation was strongest among low achieving students in low achieving schools, and as these students were the least likely to gain admission to prestigious colleges or universities, the study found that "shadow education participation might serve for some as a symbolic or status-oriented

exercise as distinct from whatever academic gains it may produce” (Lee & Shouse, 2011, p.220). In other words shadow education in Korea may be an institutional myth or “a practice deemed good or legitimate beyond its functional value” (Lee & Shouse, 2011, p.220). However, another interpretation could be that families of low achieving students in low achieving schools are cognisant of the shortfall in their achievement levels and therefore invest heavily in shadow education in their attempts to address the issue. Korea has been dealing with shadow education as a ubiquitous and problematic feature of their education system for several years. Access to detailed data and level of national interest in the issue makes nuanced consideration of the social and cultural implications on a large-scale possible. Lee and Shouse find that shadow education is an enduring feature of Korean education that is likely to prove immutable to government policy shifts that aim to reduce its prevalence.

Shadow education has also been a dominant feature of Japan’s education system for many years. In Japan, *Juku* schools are a common phenomenon. *Juku* schools are large scale, run-for-profit evening classes that provide academic coaching for school children. The practice has spread beyond Japan and in Australia the Kumon tutoring company offers services that are based on the Japanese model. Dierkes (2008a) examined *enmasse* tuition in a study that linked shadow education and school choice. Dierkes described shadow education as a 30-year-old mechanism of school choice in Japan (Dierkes, 2008a). Furthermore, he sought to determine whether shadow education, as an example of school choice, resulted in a diversity of educational offerings as promised by proponents of competition in schooling (Dierkes, 2008). Dierkes found that the result was not a range of pedagogical approaches informed by different conceptions of learning, but rather that:

While the shadow education system is rife with choice of different delivery techniques and formats, it appears not to have produced much variety in terms of a fundamentally different educational philosophy. (Dierkes, 2008a, p.241)

Dierkes notes that *juku* schools are not regulated as educational institutions. He observed that because *juku* schools follow market logic they provide an excellent exemplar of school choice processes. Dierkes found that the processes of school choice do not necessarily result in a wider spectrum of educational services. However, at the same time he argues that the dispersed and unregulated nature of the *juku* schools industry makes it difficult to draw firm conclusions about the industry. During his

discussion of *juku* as a manifestation of school choice, Dierkes cited a survey of parental satisfaction with education that found that “over 70% of Japanese parents indicated that ‘cram schools’ were doing a better job educating their children than public schools” (Asahi Shimbun, cited in Dierkes, 2008a, p.236). This citation raises a core issue for this thesis about the trust that develops between private tuition providers and parents, often at the expense of parental trust in publicly funded education. Dierkes moves beyond the narrow definition of shadow education to address educational issues such as school choice that pertain to mainstream schooling.

In his subsequent research Dierkes expresses reservations about using the term shadow education and uses the specific term *juku* instead, as he believes that in recent years *juku* schools have “emerged from the shadows to some extent” (2010, p.26). Dierkes visited 35 *juku* schools to conduct qualitative research that consisted of field observations and interviews with the owner-operators of the businesses. The study is largely descriptive and presents the common features and viewpoints of owner-operators of *juku* schools. Dierkes noted that the owner-operators felt slighted by the education establishment due to the lack of research conducted in *juku* schools and the lack of consultation by educational policymakers with the owners of the *juku* schools. Nonetheless the owner-operators of the *juku* schools believed they made a “critical contribution to the education of Japanese youngsters” (Dierkes, 2010, p.28). The study’s sample is limited to the owner-operators and therefore contains no data on student or parent perspectives. As was the case in the current project, Dierkes did not face any difficulties gaining access to willing study participants and found that the owner-operators were keen to become involved in the research. As will be argued in subsequent chapters, this may be because private tuition providers, such as the owner-operators of *juku* schools, view involvement in educational research as an important strategy to gain validation as legitimate educators.

Shadow Education Worldwide

Researchers have investigated shadow education in many countries across the continents of Asia, Africa, North America and Europe (Aurini, 2004; Ball, 2010; Bray & Suso, 2008; Bray, 2010a; Bray 2011; Davies, 2004; Gordon et al., 2005; Kwok, 2010; Paviot et al., 2008; Silova et al., 2006; Tanner et al., 2009). In other words shadow education has become a worldwide phenomenon. For example, Baker and LeTendre (2005) made this finding by analysing the Trends in International

Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) data. TIMSS collects information on maths and science achievements in 40 countries and includes questions about study undertaken outside of the mainstream classroom. Baker and LeTendre assert that the rise of shadow education is an institutional phenomena linked to the worldwide spread of mass schooling. Specifically they argue that:

The widespread prevalence of shadow education and intensity of its use in the schooling processes by students and families dramatically underscores the degree to which state-supported mass schooling dominates socialization and the ability of families to place children in adult roles and statuses (Baker & LeTendre, 2005, p.65).

One of the pervasive issues raised in reference to the worldwide state of shadow education is whether tutoring is primarily sought to provide remediation for struggling students or as an academic enhancement for capable students, providing a competitive edge (Bray, 2006; Dang & Rogers, 2008; Lee, 2007). Baker and LeTendre found that tutoring as remediation is driven by mounting pressure worldwide for all children to achieve academically “regardless of their abilities and interests” (Baker & LeTendre, 2005, p.54). The need for competent students to gain a competitive edge relates to the accrual of social capital through engaging in private tutoring. These are key issues that inform the research questions of this thesis.

However, the predominant issue in the literature pertaining to shadow education is whether tutoring entrenches social inequality. According to Bray, “prosperous families with the necessary resources can invest in greater quantities and better qualities of tutoring than can their less well-endowed neighbours” (2006, p.526). Thus, whether engagement in tutoring as a feature of schooling ensures perpetuation of the status quo becomes a question of social reproduction. Twenty years ago Stevenson and Baker (1992) observed that tutoring was thriving in countries where competition for future educational and associated employment opportunities was most intense. Governments respond to this issue of tuition entrenching educational inequality in various ways, from a *laissez-faire* approach, to attempted bans, such as described earlier in Korea. Some countries attempt to incorporate private tuition into the mainstream education system. In the case of the Singaporean government for example, funding was provided for members of the Malay ethnic group to access supplementary tutoring to overcome perceived educational disadvantage (Bray, 2009). The governments of the United States of America and Australia have also provided funding for private tuition providers

to assist students who are struggling academically in schools (Burch et al., 2007; Heinrich et al., 2010). This represents attempts to employ private tuition to redress educational inequalities. In addition the government-funded tuition schemes indicate that the boundaries between public and privately funded education have become blurred in some countries in recent years.

Bray attempts to link private tutoring with increased academic success; however, the combined findings of the studies he reviews are contradictory and inconclusive. For example, studies conducted in a wide variety of countries including Mauritius (Kulpoo, 1998), Greece (Polydorides, 1986), Germany (Mischo & Haag, 2002) and Kenya (Buchmann, 2002) have all found a positive relationship between private tutoring and academic achievement. On the other hand, studies conducted in Egypt (Fergany, 1994), Korea (Lee, Kim & Yoon, 2004) and Singapore (Cheo & Quah, 2005) have found little correlation between private tutoring and academic achievement. However, as Bray notes, syntheses of this scope fail to differentiate between different forms and quality of tutoring which can range from one-on-one teaching to mass lectures and may be provided by tutors with varying degrees of expertise (Bray, 2006). In other words the diverse and diffuse nature of private tutoring makes it very difficult to draw universal conclusions about its effectiveness. Large-scale quantitative studies that seek to answer questions about the effectiveness of private tutoring are almost universally limited by their inability to control for the variable quality of the tuition providers. Nonetheless researchers concur that private tuition is a significant, enduring educational phenomenon that warrants ongoing study.

Some research suggests that the prevalence of tutoring in Asian countries is linked to cultural issues. Lee and Shouse (2011), as described in detail earlier, investigated the importance of the cultural aspect of “prestige orientation” in establishing private tuition as a key component of education. Others highlight the influence of Confucian philosophy and the associated importance given to the role of effort in educational success as significant contributors to the prevalence of tutoring in Asian countries (Bray, 2006; Rohlen & LeTendre, 1996). There are others who debate the significance of the Confucian philosophy. Zhou and Kim (2006) highlight how cultural factors such as Confucianism combine with structural factors amongst immigrant Chinese communities in the US. Jensen (2012) claims that Confucianism alone does not explain the recent exponential growth in educational attainment throughout Asia. In the case of

Japan, Dierkes (2010) notes Confucianism is not a major cultural trait impacting on attitudes to education. Concomitantly, researchers speculate that in countries of Western Europe a reticence to engage in out of school tutoring may be due to cultural aversion to the perceived impacts on children's quality of life and cultural belief in the importance of ability as opposed to effort in making academic gain (Ireson, 2004; Silova et al., 2006). As stated earlier, the phenomenon of private tuition is varied and complex and furthermore involves the interaction of several key players including tutors, parents and students. This complexity challenges those who ascribe the rise of tuition to simple causal factors such as Confucianism. This debate indicates the need for in-depth analysis of the relations between the key stakeholders engaged in private tuition. The current project addresses this need.

The rise of tutoring in former Eastern bloc countries is perceived to be linked to the collapse of socialism and associated rise of capitalism, as teachers seek to supplement low salaries in the new market economies (Silova et al., 2006; Bray, 2006). Silova et al. (2006) produced a report that monitored shadow education in Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Georgia, Lithuania, Mongolia, Poland, Slovakia and Ukraine. The report surveyed the prevalence of private tutoring in these countries and questioned whether it was a driving force for social stratification. The researchers surveyed 8,713 mainly university students about their experiences with private tutoring at secondary school. They found private tutoring had both "desirable and undesirable dimensions" (Silova et al., 2006, p.18). The positive aspects included the provision of additional income for tutors and the deepening of human capital. The negative aspects included the financial strain on families, the pressure that additional study placed on children and the exacerbation of social inequalities. The report recommended that the governments provide greater regulation of the private tutoring industry and increase teachers' salaries to diminish their need to supplement their incomes with private tuition. The potential for teachers to become corrupted through engagement in private tuition is often mentioned in the comparative literature of shadow education (Biswal, 1999; Bray, 2003; Bray & Lykins, 2012; Dawson, 2009; Dawson, 2010; Dierkes, 2010; Heyneman, 2009; Mori & Baker, 2010; Paviot et al., 2008). This fear of corruption in shadow education is related to the issue of whether it compounds educational inequality. In this case the fear is that mainstream classroom teachers will offer after school tuition for a fee and withhold essential lessons during class time to extort tuition fees from the families who can afford to pay. This fear is indicative of the suspicion that teaching which takes place outside

of the established schooling system will not adhere to the liberatory and emancipatory goals of mass schooling.

Shadow Education in Canada

Canadian studies position the rise of private tutoring as a component of the trend towards privatisation in education in that country (Aurini, 2004). As with the Japanese case, Canadian studies link private tutoring to research into school choice (Aurini & Davies, 2004; Davies, 2004). Of particular interest to this thesis is the link Davies (2004) makes between the decision to engage in private tutoring and issues of school choice in Canada. He links an increase in private tutoring to parental anxiety about children's futures, stating that parents are "seeking strategies to enhance their children's competitiveness" (Davies, 2004, p.234). Davies hypothesised that several parental characteristics could be expected to influence the decision or desire to engage in tutoring (Davies, 2004). These characteristics included higher socio-economic status, busy parents seeking after school care, intensive parenting, dissatisfaction with public schools, adherence to conservative politics and neo-liberal beliefs (Davies, 2004). To test his hypotheses Davies used data collected from a random sample of 514 Canadian parents of school-aged children who answered survey questions about education, tutoring and school choice. Davies found that political orientation, the desire for after school care and socio-economic status factors did not significantly influence parents' decisions to engage in tutoring. He concluded that socio-economic status may not be significant in the desire to engage in tutoring but rather in the ability to realise that desire (Davies, 2004). Davies finds a correlation between parental desire for private schooling and the tendency to engage in private tutoring. According to Davies, "private tutoring and private schooling are different points on a continuum of choice, differentiated by cost" (Davies, 2004, p.237).

Of particular interest to this thesis is Davies' finding that it is not parents who are busy and seeking extra child support after school hours, but rather parents who are intensively involved in their children's education who seek tutoring. This concept of "intensive parenting" refers to parents who "place a great premium on education, value a cognitively stimulating environment for their children and closely monitor their children's activities" (Davies, 2004, p.238). Davies builds on Lareau's (2000, 2002) notion of "concerted cultivation" which applies to parents who carefully structure their children's lives to inform his concept of intensive parenting. Davies' work is pertinent

for acknowledging the central role of parents in the process of engaging in private tuition. This element of his research resonates strongly with the current project because parents are included as key strategists and stakeholders in the employment of private tutors for their children. Furthermore Davies situates private tuition within the wider context of the rise of school choice, an observation that resonates with the current project.

Aurini's (2004, 2006) Canadian research is qualitative and analyses the phenomenon of private tutoring in some depth. This is in contrast to the majority of the work on shadow education that is more descriptive and quantitative, addressing issues of scope and prevalence. Aurini focuses her research on private tuition providers as business entities (Aurini, 2004, 2006). In her earlier work Aurini (2004) examines the growing legitimacy of private tuition providers in Canada. The study consists of semi-structured interviews, onsite observations and document analysis. Aurini finds that educational entrepreneurship draws legitimacy from the emerging culture of "intensive parenting" and "educational customisation" in Canada (Aurini, 2004, p.479). Aurini (2004) notes that the lack of regulation of the tuition industry, particularly in the area of teaching qualifications is eroding educational professionalism. Aurini (2004) contributes to debate concerning the effects of private tuition on equality in the education with her finding that:

Contrary to the spirit behind public education, these services may promote rather than reduce, inequality since only the wealthiest and savviest parents are able to tap into their advantages (p.483).

Aurini's (2006) later work delves into the business identities of private tuition providers. She examines how private tuition providers are engaged in "legitimation projects" to validate their practice (Aurini, 2006). Aurini draws on institutional theory to advance her argument. Aurini's work foregrounds the business identity of private educators. In doing so Aurini overlooks the relationship between private tutors and mainstream educators, particularly the potential desire of private tutors to contribute to, and draw legitimation from, mainstream schooling. In contrast, Diskin's (2010) US-based research, found that private tutors identified primarily as educators rather than as business people. Dierkes (2010) notes that many private tutors in Japan enter the industry in pursuit of a fulfilling and meaningful career. Aurini's work focuses specifically on franchise-based learning centres in Canada (2004, 2006). To reiterate, by narrowing her research and concentrating on the notion of private educators as

business entities Aurini overlooks the potential and desire of private tutors to contribute to mainstream education.

Private Tutoring in the United Kingdom

There is evidence of the use of private tutors in England as early as the 18th Century, indicating that private tuition is not a recent phenomenon but rather an unexamined one (Gordon & Gordon 1990). In the contemporary context, researchers in the UK have found that supplementary tutoring is increasing as parents attempt to give their children a competitive edge, particularly to enable entry into preferred secondary schools (Ireson, 2004; Russell, 2002). Increasing use of private tutoring is linked in mainstream media to the rise of standardised testing and the publication of league tables (Russell, 2002). The main concern is that private tutoring exacerbates class differences and is therefore a mechanism for social reproduction. Researchers argue that the children whose parents can afford extra tuition achieve higher academic results and therefore access a better education (Ireson, 2004).

Tanner et al. (2009) investigated the provision of private tuition in England. The report was commissioned to inform the introduction of a national policy to provide government-funded one-on-one tuition for children aged 7 to 16 years struggling with English and Mathematics. The report states that in England:

Private tutors have operated in a largely hidden market and little systematic information has been available on the extent of tutoring or the nature of the private tuition market (Tanner et al., 2009, p.7).

Accordingly, the report describes the existing scope and features of the tuition industry. The research methods employed included constructing a database of private tuition providers based on “web presence”, structured telephone interviews with 130 tuition providers and 17 in-depth interviews with individual tutors (Tanner et al., 2009, p.3). The research groups tuition providers into five categories and describes features such as cost, duration and mode of delivery of tuition. The report also describes the features of the tutors themselves and how they recruit students. The study found that tuition was unevenly distributed throughout England with greater prevalence in London and the south-east and in cities including Manchester and Birmingham with less availability in the north of England. The report is descriptive in nature. Two of the researchers, Ireson and Rushforth have conducted further research into private tuition in England.

Ireson's (2004, 2011) work describes the scope of private tuition in England. Her work details the phenomenon and investigates the issue of effectiveness. Ireson finds that private tuition exists on a relatively small scale in the United Kingdom. Furthermore her findings on the issue of effectiveness are inconclusive. Ireson's conception of the field spans the private and public sectors of education, blurring the boundaries of the phenomenon of shadow education. Ireson (2004) argues for specificity in distinguishing different forms of tutoring and educational support, surmising that the variation in the effectiveness of tutoring for academic attainment may be due to the diverse nature of the services provided under the umbrella of private tutoring. Nonetheless Ireson (2004) observes that one advantage of tuition is its ability to be "tailored to the needs of the student as it allows the tutor to develop a good knowledge of the student's strengths and weaknesses" (p.112). Throughout this thesis it will be demonstrated that the field of private tuition is varied and diverse and that the ability to tailor education to suit individual need is a key component of the field.

Ireson and Rushforth (2005) addressed the issue of effectiveness by examining the impact of private tuition on General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) exam results. They found a modest, positive impact of private tuition, particularly in mathematics results. They also found there was a greater effect for boys than for girls. However, Ireson and Rushforth acknowledge that the results may be affected by the inability to control for variations in the quality of tuition provided for the students. In more recent work Ireson and Rushforth (2011) found that parents employ private tutors strategically at key transition points in their children's education, not only at the time of the GCSE's but also when children are moving from primary to secondary schooling.

Of particular interest to this thesis is Ireson and Rushforth's (forthcoming) investigation of the psychological factors that incline parents to engage private tutors for their children, They conducted questionnaires to collect quantitative data from 1170 parents in England and conducted interviews with 58 parents. Ireson and Rushforth (forthcoming) argue that in addition to contextual factors there are psychological factors that incline parents to engage private tutors for their children. Accordingly, they examine the level of parental support for homework tasks and correlate this with the tendency to engage private tutors. Findings include that parents who believe that individual striving influences achievement (in other words, those parents who believe in

personal effort) are more likely to engage tutors. They find that the elements of financial cost and lack of student willingness to attend tuition inhibit the tendency to employ a tutor. The parent questionnaires were distributed by the researchers but parent responses were self-selected as parents had to choose whether to return the results. Hence there was a bias in the parent sample favouring parents with higher levels of education. Nonetheless this work makes an important contribution to understanding the dispositions of parents who choose to engage private tutors for their children. The most pertinent finding for this thesis is the observation that a relatively small group of parents described as “intensive educators” are most inclined to engage private tutors. This group of parents provided extensive homework support and engaged multiple types of tuition (after school, during school vacation and school enrichment activities) for their children. This finding concurs with Davies’ (2004) and Aurini’s (2004) work on intensive parenting and is of central importance to this thesis.

Smyth (2008, 2009) conducts sociological quantitative research on the effectiveness of private tuition in Ireland. Smyth’s consistent findings are that private tuition has no effects on academic achievement when the results are correlated with issues of social class, study habits and attitudes to learning. As Smyth notes:

In sum the apparent positive effect of (high levels of) involvement in private tuition merely reflects the characteristics of the students taking such tuition (2008, p.473).

On the other hand Smyth does concede that her research only considers tuition in general and does not consider the effects of tuition on achievements in specific academic subjects. Furthermore, Smyth’s research confronts the same problem as similar studies that seek to use quantitative data to determine the effectiveness of private tuition; that is, an inability to control for variation in the quality of the tuition provided to the students. It is possible that private tuition is just one strategy among a plethora of elements that act together to provide students with academic advantage, or privilege.

Ball (2010) also takes a sociological approach and addresses the relationship between private tuition and educational inequality in the United Kingdom. However he is less skeptical about the effectiveness of private tuition. Ball posits the argument that focusing only on schools to address educational inequality may be inadequate. He argues that academic capital is accumulated from three sources, the school, the family and the education market. The education market encompasses private tutoring,

parenting courses, extra curricular activities and clubs, educational toys and software and even therapies designed to address learning difficulties. Ball argues that two discourses combine to create the current educational climate. The first is a discourse of standards that commodifies a student as an *ability*. According to this discourse, advantages bestowed on children by families and enrichment activities are interpreted as ability or 'legitimate competence' inherent to the student. The second is a discourse of active parenting that commodifies parents and families as consumers and investors in cultural capital with the result that:

The state and its schools can no longer be trusted on their own to deliver social advantage and social reproduction which effective, choosing parents expect (Ball, 2010, p.160).

The implication for the education system in the United Kingdom is that:

There is a conceptual and very practical shift from education as an intrinsically valuable, shared resource which the state owes to its citizens, to a consumer product or an investment for which individuals who reap the rewards of being educated (or their families) must take first responsibility (Ball, 2010, p.160).

Ball draws on secondary sources to inform his argument. He refers to research into how parents prepare their young children for school by engaging in structured educative activities. He concludes that education is losing its sense of civic responsibility in favour of a market-driven approach that has the potential to exacerbate social segregation. His argument is akin to research into supplementary education that is prevalent in the United States of America that takes a broad view of private tuition as one aspect of supplementary education. Ball's work is contradictory as it concurrently critiques private tuition yet argues for an incorporation of the strategies of the parents who engage in private tuition into mainstream attempts redress issues of educational disadvantage. The broad definition of the phenomenon used by Ball makes it difficult to gain analytical purchase and specify the effects of private tuition and associated parental strategies on children's academic achievement.

Supplementary Education in the United States of America

While the terms shadow education and supplementary education are often used interchangeably, there is a subtle difference in definition. The term supplementary education originated in research conducted in the United States of America and takes a far wider view of the field. Bridglall (2005), a US educational researcher, defines supplementary education in the following terms:

We define supplementary education as the formal and informal learning and developmental enrichment opportunities that are provided for students outside of school and beyond the regular school day or year. Some of these activities may occur inside the school building but are over and above those included in the formal curriculum of the school (Bridglall, 2005, p.41).

In the above edited book (Gordon et al., 2005) the field is divided into two categories, explicit and implicit supplementary education interventions. The explicit category includes; academic tutoring, advocacy, expeditionary learning (e.g. excursions), guidance services, remediation, Saturday academy, test preparation, sociocultural interventions, spelling bees, study skills, subject matter clubs, weekend and summer academies and is more akin to Bray's definition of shadow education. The implicit category includes; decision-making, family talk, indigenous and hegemonic acculturation, nutrition, parental employment, parental modeling, reading and travel. The supplemental education researchers take it as an established fact that out-of-school enrichment activities benefit children's academic outcomes, whether those activities involve explicit or implicit education. They refer to research that demonstrates that:

high-achieving students tend to spend at least 20 hours a week outside of school engaged in productive formal and informal learning (Bridglall, 2005, pp39-40).

These researchers suggest that students may be gaining far more than the nuts and bolts of literacy and numeracy when they engage in private tuition. They identify several possible secondary effects of involvement in supplementary education. Students learn that their parents value education highly because they are willing to make a financial sacrifice to pay for private tuition. Students access educated role models and mentors through being involved in private tuition. Students gain a sense of control over their circumstances, in other words a sense of personal agency, by addressing school difficulties with out of school learning. Students gain general study skills and experience personal growth and development through the enriching educational experiences they have outside of the classroom. As Bridglall observes:

Much of what we see in these extensive supplements to the education of some of our most privileged members of the population is directed not only at improved academic content mastery but the development of attitudes, appreciations, dispositions, and habits of mind. (2005, p.60).

This work by Gordon, Bridglall and their colleagues has a sociological aim to increase academic achievement for ethnic minorities, particularly children of colour and poverty.

As stated earlier, the research takes a far wider definition of supplemental education when compared to the works on shadow education and this makes it very difficult to examine the outcomes of supplementary education. This work does not problematise effectiveness and instead draws on a plethora of studies conducted in the US that demonstrate the effectiveness of one-on-one and small group tuition then generalises these to apply to all manifestations of supplementary education. Instead the problem relates to unequal access to supplementary education and the role parental disposition plays in gaining such access.

The influence of the theories of Bourdieu and his colleagues is evident in the previous quote that refers to “attitudes, appreciations, disposition and habits of mind,” (Bridgall, 2005, p.60), clearly drawing its veracity from the Bourdieuan notion of habitus.

Furthermore the book includes a section on human or social capital that differentiates between several forms of capital, including cultural, financial, health, human, personal, polity and social (Gordon et al., 2005, pp.21-26). The group conceives of such capital as the “availability of education-related resources” (Gordon, et al., 2005, p.20). In the concluding chapter, the notion of polity capital is highlighted in the following terms that are worth quoting at length:

One of the most intriguing varieties of capital is Bourdieu’s (1986) conception of “polity capital”. We use the term to refer to sense of membership in and by the social order as reflected in social commitment, social concern and participation. If I do not feel that I belong in the group, I am not likely to take the group’s standards and values seriously. If the group does not consider that I belong, it is not likely to take my needs or my development seriously...Unfortunately, all children do not have easy access to this important resource. The irony is, of course, those children who are most lacking polity capital are also likely to be those most in need and hardest to reach. It is the under resourced families and those most alienated by the hegemonic culture that are least likely to utilize or be reached by supplementary education. It is these families who seem to have the least awareness of available resources (Gordon et al., 2005, pp.326-327).

Accordingly the book argues that it is important for those without polity capital to learn from those who are academically the highest achievers and to emulate their practices. Furthermore, it is the duty of educators and policy makers to facilitate these practices by introducing effective explicit and implicit supplementary education to these disenfranchised children. In other words, they argue for an incorporation of supplementary education into mainstream schooling.

One of the earlier studies on supplementary education in the US focuses on a heritage centre or Saturday school that provides out-of-school educative enrichment activities for African American children (Morgan & Ezekiel, 1995). A more recent article investigates the history of faith-based and ethnic minority schools in the US as a form of supplementary education (Myers & Grosvenor, 2011). These schools developed to ensure children learnt about their cultural and religious heritage yet they also support students' academic achievement. The US research also investigates supplementary education in the context of explaining the academic success of students from families that have immigrated to the US from Asia (Byun & Park, 2012; Zhou & Kim, 2006). As stated earlier, this body of research casts a very wide net that makes it difficult to isolate the influence of any single strategy on academic advancement.

Zhou and Kim's (2006) work examined how cultural and structural elements combine to create a climate within which supplementary education flourishes. They conducted multiple case studies of programs including "ethnic language schools and after-school establishments" that provide support to students from the Chinese and Korean immigrant populations in the US (Zhou & Kim, 2006, p.6). The concept of social capital is a key element in their argument. They propose that the cultural factor of Confucianism values combines with social structures found within Asian immigrant communities to create the conditions conducive to academic success, as they note:

Ethnic resources and social capital generated by the system of supplementary education have played a crucial role in helping the children of Chinese and Korean immigrants graduate from high school and gain entry to prestigious colleges in disproportionately large numbers (Zhou & Kim, 2006, p.24)

Zhou and Kim take the position that educational policy makers should emulate the programs described in their work and try to use the same strategy to address the academic needs of disadvantaged immigrant communities. As they conclude:

A key policy implication of this study suggests that public schools alone may not be sufficient to ensure immigrant children's educational success, and that a wider range of after school services are badly needed, particularly in low-income urban communities (Zhou & Kim, 2006, p.25).

Zhou and Kim share the view of other researchers who believe that the strategies of supplementing schooling have the potential to redress issues of educational

underachievement for students from less privileged backgrounds (Ball, 2010; Gordon et al., 2005).

Ethnic and racial differences are further examined in articles that focus on Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) preparation strategies - a form of supplementary education that is particular to the US (Buchmann, Condrón & Roscigno, 2010; Grodsky, 2010). The SAT is a high stakes multiple-choice examination that determines entry to tertiary level education in the US. Buchmann, Condrón and Roscigno (2010) make the general finding that families from higher socioeconomic backgrounds are more likely to engage private SAT preparation services. Researchers conclude that these findings of correlation between higher socioeconomic status and increased engagement in supplementary education services indicate that supplementary education has a role in perpetuating conditions of social privilege. They make the additional finding that ethnic and racial minorities are more likely than the white majority to engage such services. Alon (2010) concurs and further finds that African American students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds combined with lower levels of academic achievement comprise the group most likely to engage in private SAT preparation. He speculates that affirmative action initiatives have a causative role to play in this process because affirmative action broadens the opportunities this group has to gain access to higher education and therefore motivates them to engage in private test preparation.

The US government has responded to the perception that private supplementary education entrenches privilege by incorporating out-of-school support services into public policy. Accordingly:

The government has started providing for supplementary education services to improve the academic achievement of low-achieving students in public schools that fail to meet academic needs. (Lee, 2007, p.1213)

Lee's quantitative study was based on Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) data, from reports on testing and survey results on maths and science education across 40 countries (2007, p.1207). Lee drew on data from the reports that correspond to a survey question about the use of tutoring conducted after school hours to supplement mathematics education. He compared the use of private tuition in the US and Korea and found that US students used tuition primarily for remediation, while in Korea high achieving students used tuition for enrichment purposes. The author

conceded certain limitations in the research, namely that the data did not differentiate between different forms of tutoring, applied only to the subject of mathematics and surveyed only after school tutoring hence overlooking tutoring that occurred during school breaks. Hence Lee supports the assertion of this thesis that private tutoring is a diffuse and varied phenomenon that defies simple analysis. Nonetheless he concluded that

Private tutoring may function as a “double-edged sword” as it can provide remediation for those with limited educational opportunities or a need for individual remediation yet it is also used as an enrichment service to enable already high-achieving students to further excel in tests for college or university entrance (Lee, 2007, p.1228).

Rather than simply decry the use of private tutoring to entrench educational inequality, Lee acknowledged a tension between tuition as a force that potentially both advanced and hindered educational equality for different groups in the community. Furthermore he acknowledges the blurring of the boundaries between private and public education that has occurred with the implementation of government-funded supplementary education services.

Two unpublished theses deal with supplementary education in the US. Diskin’s (2010) work deals with explicit supplementary education and consists of qualitative interviews with nine private for-fee tutors. The thesis explores whether the tutors perceive themselves as involved in business interactions or the transmission of social capital in the form of a “value-laden” education service (Diskin, 2010, p.152). Diskin anticipated that the tutors would be more attuned to their identities as business operators but instead found that the tutors give greater emphasis to their roles as educators. Diskin uses the work of Bourdieu (1998), Coleman (1988) and Putnam (1993) to define social capital and finds that according to their theories relationships are “assets” and because education enhances relationships, it provides an asset (Diskin, 2010, p.41). Diskin’s work deals directly with the issue of what motivates private tuition providers. It questions whether private tutors can be part of the liberatory goals of mass schooling or whether business sensibilities will prevail. In fact the beginning hypothesis was that tutors would identify primarily as business people. This is indicative of a prevailing distrust evident in the literature on shadow and supplementary education of the motivations of private tuition providers. The finding that private tutors identify strongly as educators, rather than business people, challenges the prevailing view. Diskin also

gives considerable attention to the motivations and desires of the parents who engage private tutors; however, it must be noted that these perceptions are reported second-hand by the tutors, who are the only informants consulted for the study.

Southgate's (2009) thesis consists of quantitative research based on statistics gathered for the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) that began in 2000 and is conducted by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) every three years. The program assesses student achievement in Mathematical Literacy, Problem Solving, Reading Literacy and Scientific Literacy across more than 70 countries, including the US and Australia (OECD, 2003, 2009). Since the 2003 study questions about students' engagement in supplementary or shadow education have been included in the survey. Southgate focuses on the US and like Lee (2007) argues that supplementary education has the potential to either entrench or redress educational inequality. Southgate concludes that in the US, in its current, unregulated form, shadow education is more likely to perpetuate social stratification. As Southgate states:

Shadow education is more than a path to skill building as human capital theorists argue; it is a structure of social reproduction. This form of schooling under serves students who are traditionally disadvantaged in education. Parental influences of social background and particularly cultural capital widen the division between the classes. Nations that do not understand how shadow education reproduces social class divisions and those that take a laissez-faire political stance will suffer from private industry controlling the stratification process. Instead, those who already benefit from cultural and economic advances will control the sorting process. Educational meritocracy is challenged by shadow education. Therefore it is important to be aware of monitor and regulate shadow education to ensure an equitable education among all children (Southgate, 2009, p.177).

Southgate makes a strong argument for government regulation of the private tuition industry; however, it is worth noting the experience of South Korea that it is a phenomenon that proves immutable to government policy initiatives. Indeed, it is a diffuse and varied community-driven educational initiative that potentially draws its credence from the fact that it operates as an alternative to government-funded and regulated education services.

Recently the US has attempted to address the concern of researchers such as Southgate by embracing supplementary education through the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) scheme that provides at its core "supplemental education services" (Burch et al., 2007,

p.115). Academically low achieving students are able to access individual tuition, funded by the Government and in some cases provided by private tuition companies. This has led to a body of research that questions the efficacy of supplementary education in the context of whether the services funded by the NCLB scheme represents Government funds prudently spent (Burch et al., 2007; Heinrich et al., 2010; Zimmer et al., 2006). The US Government's decision to embrace tutoring is mirrored in the tutoring provided by the Australian government through the indigenous tutoring program and An Even Start tutoring program as described in the previous chapter. As stated earlier government provision of supplementary education services in the US and Australia represent a blurring of the boundaries between shadow or supplementary education and mainstream schooling such that a new conception of the field as education is needed.

Bespoke Education

The notion of bespoke education addresses three key elements of the foregoing discussion of shadow or supplementary education. These elements include the strong link between private tuition and processes of school choice, the blurring of the boundaries between public and private education provision and the pivotal role of parents who are intensively involved in their children's education. Acknowledging these elements requires a reconceptualisation of the field that brings private tuition out of the shadows and into the light, recognising private tutors as legitimate participants in educational provision. Briefly, bespoke education is tailored or customised education that can be differentiated along lines of cost and intensity.

The term bespoke originates from England and is most commonly used to describe individually tailored men's suits. The Macquarie Thesaurus includes the following synonyms for bespoke; "commissioned, on order, custom-built, custom-made, customized, made-to-measure, made-to-order, specially made, tailor-made and contractual" (Bernard, 1986). The etymologist Michael Quinion states that the term denotes the opposite of "off-the-peg", "off-the-rack" or "ready-made." Although it originally applied to men's tailoring, according to Quinion's website in recent times the use of the term has expanded to apply to the following goods and services:

jewellery, cars, beer, banking services, specially recorded music in films, guided tours, wedding cakes and furniture (Quinion, 2008).

While the term bespoke most often refers to the manufacture of goods, the use of bespoke to describe banking services and guided tours indicates that it can also apply to a service such as education. Quinion also notes that the term bespoke has “a hint of Anglophile pretentiousness.” Despite this reservation the term, applied to education, has potential to encompass the variety of individually-tailored educational opportunities available through the employment of private tutors.

The term bespoke education also denotes other forms of educational tailoring. For example, families who decide to engage in processes of school choice by enrolling in a private fee-paying school, a religious school, a selective state school or a school outside their usual catchment area are tailoring their children’s education. Families who participate in government-funded school support services are tailoring their education. Families who address learning issues through engaging in therapies such as physiotherapy or occupational therapy are tailoring education. Finally the concept of lifelong learners acknowledges that for some individuals the process of bespoke education continues long after formal schooling is complete. Taking this perspective repositions private tutoring within wider educational phenomena rather than positioning it as merely an add-on to mainstream schooling.

It has often been noted that private tuition is the preserve of those who can afford it, yet there is a scale of intensity with bespoke education that ranges from the most expensive to the more affordable options. The most expensive option is enrolment in elite private schooling combined with private tuition and therapies. The moderate level of cost and intensity consists of occasional short-term tuition in specific subjects in which students struggle to achieve while attending government-funded schools. Government-funded options are the low cost option and include tutoring voucher schemes trialed in Australia and the US. Even home schooling is included in bespoke education as parents reject the mass schooling model altogether and choose to tailor their children’s education by providing schooling in the home setting. In this regard engaging in private tuition is positioned alongside processes of school choice. Furthermore it bridges the divide between in and out of school education.

For young children, such as those included in this study, the notion of bespoke education foregrounds the role of the parents as they seek to individualise their children’s experiences with mass schooling. The work of Lareau (2002), Davies

(2004), Aurini (2004) and Ireson and Rushforth (forthcoming) laid the groundwork for this aspect of bespoke education when they discuss issues such as “concerted cultivation”, “intensive parenting” and “intensive educators.” These parents are actively engaged in their children’s education both within and outside schools. They schedule extra curricular activities to support their children’s educational development. Engaging private tutors to support their children’s schooling is a key parenting strategy for these families. The notion of bespoke education evokes the image of the parent tailoring or customising their children’s education to achieve optimal outcomes.

Research in the Australian Setting

The Australian research into shadow or supplementary education is scant and diverse. The research includes private tutoring, private coaching clinics, an industry-partnered tuition scheme, a government-funded tuition scheme and homework centres for African refugees. This spectrum represents the wide variation that exists in the field of tuition. This variation in Australian studies encompasses publicly-funded and private tuition, but focuses largely on issues of prevalence and effectiveness. The notion of bespoke education will be applied to the Australian studies in an attempt to unify the diverse field and to highlight the pivotal role of parents in the proliferation of tutoring in Australia. At a national level, the Australian Tutoring Association (ATA) has released preliminary findings of an online survey into private tuition but beyond this industry-based research only a handful of academic publications deal with shadow education in Australia. The research does not easily gel into a body of knowledge and attests to the varied and elusive nature of the phenomenon.

As explained in the previous chapter, the ATA was established in 2005 to provide advocacy and professional support to the private tuition industry. The ATA administered an online survey, releasing its preliminary findings in August 2011. The survey is open to any parent in Australia and addresses several key areas including: cost, frequency and type of tuition; age of the child tutored; methods of sourcing a tutor; benefits of tuition and; opinion on the issue of cooperation between tutors and schools. The preliminary findings relate only to those families that elected to participate in the survey and include the following:

1. Average age of commencement is 10 years; 62% of the total cohort commences tuition before the age of 12. Two spikes in tuition identified at ages 10 or 11

- (coinciding with the transition from primary to secondary education) and 16 or 17. The second spike coincides with the senior high school years 11 and 12.
2. Spending per week: more than \$51 (56%); more than \$91 (21%).
 3. Preferred mode: face-to-face tuition in a 1-on-1 setting (57%). Other options included small groups, classes, lectures and online tuition.
 4. The overwhelming majority of parents surveyed concurred with statements that tuition improved children's confidence, supported schoolwork and met the individual needs of their children.
 5. Support for tax deductibility of tuition fees (89%). Support for school recognition of and cooperation with private tutors (92.7%)
- (Dhall, 2011, press release).

These represent the interim findings of the survey and it should be noted that the survey was conducted by an industry advocacy body rather than an independent researcher. Furthermore, the sample of participants self-selected and all participants engaged private tutors for their children. Therefore the survey represents only the views of active supporters of private tuition and could be described as partisan. The survey does not provide any information on the prevalence of private tuition in Australia.

The press release that reported the survey findings concluded with a call for the inclusion of tuition fees in the Australian Tax Education Rebate and a return to the tuition voucher system that operated in conjunction with the An Even Start scheme, arguing that both initiatives would increase low-income earners access to tuition for their children. In this regard the ATA is supporting the blurring of the boundaries between publicly-funded and private education. Accordingly the practice of tuition would move out of the shadows, enabling a greater proportion of the population to tailor their education, hence moving towards a model of bespoke education. Finally this survey implicitly supports what appears to be an emerging tenet of bespoke education: recognition of the intensive engagement of parents in tailoring the education of their children. The survey sampled the views of parents. Therefore the ATA acknowledges the pivotal role of parents in the perpetuation of private tutoring by canvassing their experiences, views and opinions.

Louise Watson (2008) in an unpublished conference paper also addresses private tutoring at a national level. Watson provides a national overview of private tutoring and

compares the prevalence of tutoring in the two states of Australia with the highest populations (Victoria and New South Wales). Drawing on statistical data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics the paper reports that:

The wealthiest households (those in the top twenty percent of the income distribution) spend double the amount of an average household on private tutoring. (Watson, 2008, p.12).

This finding indicates that the issue of social equity in education due to differential access to private tutoring, as discussed in the international context, is relevant to the Australian setting. This finding supports the concept that bespoke education is most common among by the more privileged members of Australian society. As is the case in the United Kingdom, Watson finds that the levels of spending on private tutoring in Australia are modest but increasing. Furthermore Watson makes a statistical link between spending on private tuition and spending on private education, finding that those who spend more on schooling also spend more on private tutoring, providing a link between issues of private tuition and school choice that is evident in the Canadian research. This draws private tutoring into wider educational processes of bespoke education indicating that parents who engage in private tutoring are also more likely to tailor their children's mainstream schooling.

Watson turns to structural factors to explain the prevalence of private tutoring. By comparing the two states of Victoria and New South Wales she found that tutoring was more prevalent in NSW perhaps due to the presence of 'high stakes decision points' within the education system, namely, the Higher School Certificate (HSC) examinations that determine university entrance and the use of public examinations to determine entry into 27 academically selective high schools. In Victoria, university entrance is determined by a combination of school-based assessment and examination and there are only two academically selective high schools (Watson, 2008).

Watson engages in the blurring of the divide between government-funded and private tuition that characterises bespoke education when she considers Australia's nation-wide governmental support for private tutoring through the An Even Start voucher programme. Although the scheme has been disbanded, Watson's key observations are interesting. First, the "provision of government funded private tutoring programs builds on a community acceptance of supplementary education" (Watson, 2008, p.9); second, the program circumvented the state government education systems that administer the

mainstream of schooling in Australia (Watson, 2008). However the apparent sidestepping of the state education systems is less clear-cut than it first appears. The scheme was fully enmeshed in the state systems as many mainstream teachers took up the roles as tutors and it often fell to the individual school deputy principals to administer the scheme. Hence the borders between public schooling and private tutoring became indistinct.

Finally, Watson raises several issues related to the implementation of An Even Start tutoring. She finds there was variation in the take-up rates among eligible students, general lack of accountability in the structure of the scheme, lack of evidence for sustainable gains through the tutoring, lack of long term monitoring of students engaged in the tutoring, and issues of inadequacy of supply of tutors, particularly in rural and remote areas (anecdotal evidence suggests this was also an issue in the Perth metropolitan area). Furthermore, as the programme developed the state became more prescriptive in terms of tuition content and caused many private providers to drop out of the scheme because the mandated content did not allow them to follow their own programmes. In conclusion Watson argues that An Even Start was a low cost, market solution to an educational policy problem. Watson describes An Even Start as an example of the neo-conservative government's preference to outsource services and attempt to find solutions to educational issues relying on only limited government intervention (Watson, 2008). In other words Watson positions government initiatives and structural features of Australian schooling system as the key determinants of the prevalence of private tuition.

Nonetheless, Watson's paper briefly considers the role of parents in the perpetuation of private tuition. The paper considers whether parents engage tutors for the children for remediation or enrichment purposes. However the inclusion of parental motivation is fleeting and only implicitly acknowledges the role of parents in the growth of private tutoring in Australia. The only parental characteristic considered in the paper relates to household wealth with the general finding that wealthier households spend more on private tuition and private schooling. In this sense the paper falls short of apportioning parents a central position in perpetuation of private tutoring as argued by the notion of bespoke education.

A West Australian anthropologist, Martin Forsey, has researched supplementary education within the context of a broader interest in issues of school choice (Forsey 2010; Forsey et al., 2008). He reports on a research project that evaluates a partnership between a catholic school and a mining company in the Pilbara region in the remote northwest of Western Australia. He finds that parents are driven by anxiety and feel compelled to engage in processes of school choices that apply both to the decision to send their children to private or public schools and to the decision to engage in supplementary education programmes (Forsey, 2011, p.23). Forsey concludes the Pilbara project is unlikely to be successful in the long term due to its reliance on the perpetuation of short-term funding grants. This programme is an example of bespoke education with a clear social engineering agenda. The aim of the programme is to retain families in the mining towns of the Pilbara during their children's final schooling years because due to concern about the quality of rural educational services many families return to the Perth metropolitan area for the crucial final years of high school.

Forsey expresses a similar skepticism about supplementary education in his qualitative work on the effectiveness of private tuition for gaining university entrance. In a forthcoming publication Forsey presents the results of interviews with 10 first year university students and asks them to reflect on whether their engagement in supplementary education while in high school was a significant factor in eventually securing a university placement. He finds that the students' perceptions are varied and inconclusive. He suggests that educationalists need not be overly concerned that supplementary education contributes to educational inequality because its effectiveness is questionable (Forsey, 2010). It must be noted that Forsey is working with a very small sample and that qualitative research on this scale is ill equipped to retrospectively answer questions about the effectiveness of private tuition. Nonetheless, his informants had all successfully achieved entry to an elite university and their subjective assessments of the influence of private tuition on their academic achievement should be considered with caution.

Some of Forsey's informants criticise the quality of the tuition they received. At least one student switched tutors in an attempt to gain effective academic support. Hence, Forsey's work finds evidence for the assertion of quantitative researchers (eg. Kenny & Faunce, 2004) working with large samples who suspect that their inability to control for the variable quality of tuition leads to inconsistent findings on the issue of tutoring's

overall effectiveness. Nonetheless Forsey's work has findings that support the notion that the processes of bespoke education apply to the Australian setting. He describes a wide variety of tutoring that includes one-on-one tuition with an experienced teacher, volunteer-led intervention programmes, the government-funded An Even Start scheme and a programme supported by a partnership between the private mining industry and a Catholic high school. Furthermore, Forsey's paper demonstrates that families were strategic and often persistent in supplementing schooling to pursue educational aspirations, in this case university admission. They were unwilling to accept standardised, off-the-rack, government-funded schooling to meet their needs. In other words they actively adjusted the schooling experience thereby tailoring education at attain their goals. Hence Forsey's paper demonstrates the principles of bespoke education in practice, although Forsey speculates that the effects of tuition were often related to emotional succour rather than academic advancement.

As in Watson's paper, the parental role is alluded to but not fully explored. Forsey briefly describes one student who commenced English tuition for extension purposes in Year 5. He explains this as a possible manifestation of "concerted cultivation" by the student's parents. In terms of his overall findings the students often expressed ambivalence about their tutoring experiences, which suggests that the driving force for continuing in tuition was beyond the students' control. In this scenario the parents were the most likely advocates for ongoing tuition. This supports the notion that the parental role is a key component of bespoke education.

Kenny and Faunce's (2004) quantitative study investigates academic coaching at both the primary and secondary levels of schooling in New South Wales. This study examines the effects of coaching on academic performance in end-of-year high school examinations, entry into selective academic high schools and the award of academic scholarships for high schools. The study consists of a sample of 1,724 school students from Year 4 to Year 12 in a single school. The researchers acknowledge two major limitations in their methodology: the inability to control for the quality of the coaching provided by private tutors; and the inability to assign students randomly to coaching or control groups. Overall the study finds that coaching has little effect on academic success; rather, "IQ remained the best predictor of academic performance" (Kenny & Faunce, 2004, p.125). This finding echoes Rohlen and LeTendre's (1996) assertion that

while Asian cultures favour effort as the determining factor in academic success, Western countries such as Australia favour ability as the dominant factor.

In terms of Kenny and Faunce's findings most of the preliminary effects of coaching are negated by the application of the effects of IQ on academic achievement. This may well be simply because IQ is a consistent measure when compared to coaching that can be of variable quality. There are nonetheless very interesting elements in this study. The study sample consists of students at a single, independent, girls' high school. In other words it was a single-sex, fee-paying private school. This represents a privileged population that has engaged in processes of school choice. The study found that 65% of the school's students engaged in out-of-school academic coaching, or private tuition, at some stage of their school career. Comparing this figure with Southgate's (2009) estimate, based on 2003 PISA statistics, that less than 20% of Australian students engage in private tutoring places the extent of private tutoring in Kenny and Faunce's study into perspective. This supports Watson's finding that the wealthiest households spend proportionately more on private tutoring in Australia. It also supports the assertion that families who engage in private tuition are also likely to tailor their education through engaging in school choice as argued by the concept of bespoke education.

As stated earlier Kenny and Faunce (2004) acknowledge their inability to control for the variation in the mode and quality of the tuition accessed by the students as they state:

It is possible that some of the effects of very good coaching, however defined, may have been lost when combined with poor or inappropriate coaching (p.125).

Kenny and Faunce conclude that the "extravagant claims" of coaching clinics are unwarranted. Furthermore they conclude that the positive effects of coaching on test-taking skills are an issue because they may enable students who do not necessarily possess high academic abilities to gain admittance to academically selective high schools and courses of study. In other words the authors imply that students who gain admission through the support of coaching in test-taking skills may be doing so illegitimately.

The particular issues for bespoke education in this article are briefly dealt with and largely unexamined by the authors. There is evidence in the article that families are

strategic in their use of coaching. In other words they choose coaching for particular reasons. Those whose children have higher IQs focus on coaching for competitive exams. Those whose children struggle in particular subjects engage in coaching only in those areas of specific need. Kenny and Faunce also briefly consider the role of parents in the decision to engage in coaching. When reporting whether students enjoy their coaching experiences they concede:

Many students do not attend coaching voluntarily, but rather, at their parents' behest (Kenny & Faunce, 2004, p.124).

This glimpse of the role of parents in the decision to commence and continue with private tutoring supports the notion that parents take a pivotal role in bespoke education. Although this article purports to criticise the effectiveness of private tuition in terms of attaining academic excellence, there is ample evidence that private tuition is effective in addressing the strategic goals of dealing with competitive examinations and keeping pace with peers in areas of academic struggle.

Finally, in the Australian context, Naidoo (2008, 2009) has researched the provision of supplementary education services in the form of homework centres in Western Sydney. These centres, part of a project called the *Refugee Action Program*, provide homework support for African refugee high school students in small group settings. The tutors are pre-service teachers studying at the University of Western Sydney, working under the supervision of experienced classroom teachers. The programme is jointly funded by the university and the Department of Education. Naidoo is interested in the social benefits that accrue to engagement in the homework centres for both the students and the tutors. Naidoo conceptualises her work as related to the field of research into refugee experiences rather than supplementary or shadow education. However, in the most recent article, Naidoo employs a Bourdieuan theoretical framework. Applying the concepts of symbolic violence, cultural capital and habitus to the analysis, Naidoo finds that:

Programs like the Refugee Action Program are making a conscious effort to change the individual habitus of the refugee student so that they can achieve educational success (Naidoo, 2009, p. 271).

Naidoo's work canvasses only the views of the tutors and their supervising teachers. The students and their families are not interviewed for the research, hence the data on the effects of the programme are reported second-hand. The research does, however,

contribute to the notion that bespoke education in Australia is diverse; the programme is government-funded and operates with a clear social justice agenda as it aims to assist refugee students adjust to the requirements of the local schooling system and ultimately achieve academic success.

From the preceding discussion it is clear that the body of research into supplementary, shadow or bespoke education in Australia is limited. Only a handful of researchers have addressed the topics of private tuition, academic coaching and government-funded programmes that constitute the field. The major, national survey was conducted by an advocacy body for private tutors - the Australian Tutoring Association and portions of the research are unpublished and Naidoo does not situate her research within the field of supplementary or shadow education, preferring to locate her work within the field of refugee studies. This leaves ample room in the field for the research presented by this thesis.

This overview of the local research establishes that bespoke education is a valuable conceptualisation for the Australian context. The education practices included in the literature are diverse and include one-on-one private tuition, coaching clinics and homework centres. Within the Australian literature there are clear links between private tuition and school choice indicating that a propensity to tailor education reaches to the very core of schooling. The key component of bespoke education is the role of the parents. In the existing Australian literature there are glimpses of the role of parents indicating it warrants further investigation. Indeed, the parental role in the engagement of private tutors is a central theme explored throughout this thesis.

Conclusion

Shadow or supplementary education has become an emergent field of educational research worldwide. Studies deal with the phenomenon in South-East Asia, Eastern Europe, The United Kingdom, Canada and the United States of America. Many of the studies are comparative and aim to explicate the unique features of shadow education in a specific country. Other studies have strong sociological underpinnings. A strong theme throughout the literature is the implications of shadow education for the provision of equal educational opportunity for all children. Some researchers emphasise shadow education's role as a vehicle of social reproduction that perpetuates inequality. Some researchers emphasise shadow education's potential to provide

educational enrichment to disenfranchised groups thereby overcoming inequality. Others emphasise the potential for both forces to operate simultaneously. In Australia only a handful of researchers have engaged with these issues. This thesis will provide insight into the lived experiences of key stakeholders engaging private tutors in Australia, hence addressing a geographical gap in the literature and providing a nuanced consideration of the relationship between parents and private tutors within which bespoke education thrives.

In the Australian context the term bespoke education acknowledges the key role of parents in tailoring their children's the education. In this regard the term is more apt than either shadow or supplementary education. Shadow education is a very specific term that deals primarily with out-of-school private tuition. Supplementary education takes a broader view of the phenomenon but fails to fully acknowledge parents' key roles. Bespoke education occurs in a wide variety of educational service; is closely related to processes of school choice and foregrounds the role of parents. A propensity to engage in processes of school choice is a hallmark of bespoke education because parents are actively involved in their children's education and take guiding roles in shaping their children's everyday schooling experiences. In this chapter the term is applied primarily to the Australian setting but it resonates strongly with research conducted in Canada and the United Kingdom (Davies, 2004; Aurini, 2004; Ireson & Rushforth, forthcoming). The notion of bespoke education is built on the concept of increased parental determination of children's schooling experiences and the response of educators who tailor their teaching to meet parental specification. The term acknowledges that the majority of those who engage in bespoke education come from wealthier, more privileged backgrounds. While it is primarily a movement that arose outside of mainstream education structures, in some instances government-funded and community-run programmes use the principles of bespoke education to afford educational opportunities to less privileged children and thereby advance a social justice agenda.

Finally, many of the studies reviewed in this chapter employed quantitative, survey-based research methods. With the few notable exceptions (Dierkes, 2010; Forsey, 2010; Ireson & Rushforth, forthcoming; Aurini, 2004), the existing corpus of research overlooks the perspectives of the key stakeholders: namely the tuition providers, parents and children engaged in the phenomenon. Instead the research focuses on issues of

prevalence, effectiveness and policy initiatives. Furthermore the variation in the content of tuition programmes; the modes of tuition and the tuition providers is rarely dealt with in depth. The qualitative case study methods employed in this thesis facilitate a detailed and nuanced depiction of the phenomenon of private tuition, coupled with an in-depth analysis of the perspectives of the key stakeholders.

Consequently, the following chapter describes the methodology used in this thesis to address the study aims by investigating one manifestation of bespoke education, that is, the relationship between private tuition providers and parents who engage tutors for their children.

Chapter Four: Methodology

Introduction

As demonstrated in previous chapters, research into the phenomenon of private tuition is a rapidly growing but relatively new field of inquiry. This study aims to contribute to the field by developing theory about the ways in which private tutoring companies establish their educational legitimacy and how private tuition impacts on the lives of the tutors, students and families involved in the tuition industry. It will provide detailed, qualitative case studies of five private tuition providers in Perth, Western Australia. The study seeks to provide understanding of the phenomenon through conveying the views and experiences of key stakeholders including tutors, parents and children. This chapter firstly outlines the research design. The study is located within the interpretivist paradigm, taking a socially critical perspective informed by Bourdieuan theory. The study rests within the interpretivist paradigm because the key themes emerged from the participants' perspectives. The findings are presented in the form of case studies: the rationale for and the relevance of the approach taken will be argued in this chapter. The second section describes the methods of data collection and analysis used in this study. The data is analysed in two tiers; initially using open coding techniques from grounded theory and then from a socially critical perspective informed by the work of Pierre Bourdieu. The third section explains the principles of trustworthiness and ethics applied in this research project. Finally the original contribution this thesis makes to research methods and design in this field of study are briefly outlined.

This chapter aims to provide a clear and open depiction of the research process (Silverman, 2010). Accordingly the choices, decisions and adjustments made in the course of the research design, data gathering and data analysis are described. Punch (2009) states that in regard to research methods:

There is a continuum of possibilities, which is about prespecifying versus unfolding structure in the research. It applies to research questions, design and data. (p.33).

This continuum describes the degree to which the structure of the study is predetermined and the degree to which it develops in the course of the study. This chapter will clearly identify structural aspects that were predetermined and the subsequent accommodations and changes that were made as the research progressed. Through this chapter it will

become apparent that the key features of the research process were openness and flexibility.

Research Design

The research questions

The research questions were informed by the work of Bourdieu and his colleagues. The questions drew on three key ‘thinking tools’ from Bourdieu that have been elaborated on in the literature review (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). The key concepts were habitus, cultural capital and field (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). The research questions formed the basis for the questions posed during the semi-structured interviews with the study participants. The questions were:

- What paths do stakeholders take to become involved in private tutoring?
- What are the stakeholders’ aspirations concerning involvement in private tutoring?
- How does private tutoring impact on the lives of the children and parents involved?
- How do stakeholders perceive success in relation to private tutoring?
- How do stakeholders’ position private tutoring vis-à-vis the interconnected social fields of home, family and school?

These research questions were informed by the review of the literature and theoretical themes drawn from the work of Bourdieu. The first question represents an attempt to tease out some of the aspects of habitus that led participants to choose involvement in private tutoring (Maton, 2008). The second and fourth questions concerning aspirations and perceived success relate to the Bourdieu’s notions of social and cultural capital (Moore, 2004). The questions about the impact on participants’ lives and the wider educational community represent an attempt to position literacy tutoring vis-à-vis the interconnected social fields of home, family and school (Naidoo, 2004).

The qualitative paradigm

This study takes a qualitative approach. According to Nagy Hess-Biber and Leavy (2011):

Qualitative researchers are after meaning. The social meaning people attribute to their experiences, circumstances, and situations as well as the meanings people embed into texts and other objects are the focus of qualitative research. Therefore at the heart of

their work, qualitative researchers try to extract meaning from their data. The focus of research is generally words and texts, as opposed to numbers (p.4).

Quantitative research, by comparison, is primarily concerned with statistics and surveys. Quantitative research is often aligned with positivism whereas qualitative research is often aligned with interpretivism (Howe, 1992). Denzin and Lincoln (2002) observe that qualitative researchers “are committed to the naturalistic perspective and to the interpretive understanding of human experience” (p. x).

The tradition of interpretive social science can be traced back to research conducted by a group of scholars referred to as *The Chicago School* at the University of Chicago between the 1920s and 1950s. *The Chicago School* was pioneering in its use of “field observation and intensive interviews as data-collecting techniques” (Strauss 1987, p.6). In addition *The Chicago School* “emphasised the necessity for grasping the actors’ viewpoints for understanding interaction, process and social change” (Strauss, 1987, p.6). This study follows in this tradition by relying heavily on intensive interview data and aiming to portray participants’ views on the phenomenon of private tuition.

Situating the study within an interpretivist paradigm presupposes that:

meaning is constructed via the interaction between humans or between humans and objects. Therefore, meaning does not exist independent of the human interpretive process. Researchers working from interpretive traditions value experience and perspective as important sources of knowledge (Nagy Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011, p.17).

Within the interpretive approach, primacy is given to the perspectives of the informants on their everyday experiences. In this sense the social and the individual are inseparable (O’Donoghue, 2007). The interpretivist asserts that knowledge is negotiated between the researcher and the researched; furthermore this knowledge is always context specific. Accordingly when conducting research within the qualitative paradigm taking an interpretive approach, “emphasis is also placed on the researcher as human instrument who develops not just rigorous skills but also empathetic understanding and personal creativity in the investigation and documentation of complex social life” (Saldana, 2011, p.30).

Interpretive case study

This study consists of interpretive case studies. Merriam (1988) notes:

Interpretive case studies, too, contain rich, thick description. These descriptive data however are used to develop conceptual categories or to illustrate, support or challenge theoretical assumptions held prior to the data gathering (pp.27-28)

In this study, each case is described in detail, providing a rich description and interpretive account of each tuition provider. In subsequent chapters cross-case analysis is employed to develop theory about the phenomenon of private tuition. Together, these two tasks employ interpretive case studies to create understanding of private tuition provision for primary school aged children.

In describing interpretive case studies, Willis (2007) notes:

The focus is on understanding the intricacies of a particular situation, setting, organisation, culture or individual, but that local understanding may be related to prevailing theories or models (p.243).

In this study the focus is on understanding the phenomenon of private tuition from the perspective of the key stakeholders including the tutors, parents and children engaged in tuition. This section of the chapter describes the salient features of case study in more detail, including the importance of rich description. The subsequent sections describe the process of data analysis, explaining how the themes identified in the perspectives of the participants form the basis for propositions that lead to the development of theory; in this sense theory is “grounded” in the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Insights gleaned from the research of Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) are combined with the more open, grounded approach to theory generation. In other words the process of grounded theory analysis is modified to accommodate an analytical framework based on the work of Bourdieu and Passeron (1990).

The main advantage of the case study is its potential to provide a detailed depiction of the phenomenon under consideration, as Punch (2005) notes:

The case study aims to understand the case in depth, and in its natural setting, recognising its complexity and its context. It also has a holistic focus, aiming to preserve and understand the wholeness and unity of the case. (p.144)

This project canvassed the perspectives of administrators, tutors, parents and students engaged in selected tutoring programmes. The case study tradition seeks to draw out the complexity of the case through constructing rich descriptions of phenomena under study (Herriott & Firestone, 1983; Sturman, 1999). This includes considering the context of the data and contradictions embedded in the data. As Stake (1995) points out “the qualitative case researcher tries to preserve the multiple realities, the different and even contradictory views of what is happening” (p.12).

Punch (2005) identifies three types of case study. Intrinsic case study involves understanding one particular case for its own sake. Instrumental case study involves examining one case to shed light on an issue or to refine a theory. Collective, multiple or comparative case studies involve extending an instrumental case study to encompass several cases in order to gain insight into a “phenomenon, population or general condition” (Punch, 2005, p.144). This project used multiple case studies to investigate the phenomenon of private tutoring. Nonetheless each case study has maintained its intrinsic value. Therefore this study provides detailed understanding of each programme examined, for its own sake, but also draws out the common themes and experiences across cases in order to develop understanding of the phenomenon of private tutoring. The commonalities and contradictions identified across the cases led to the development of propositions that built theory about private tutoring.

There are three distinguishing features of the case study method. They are the importance of an holistic approach, the use of thick description, and the key role of the researcher as an interpretative instrument. Case study method ensures that because the research is “anchored in real life situations, the case study results in a rich and holistic account of the phenomenon” (Merriam, 1988, p. 32). In this thesis private tuition is the phenomenon under investigation and the holistic approach entails consulting a variety of stakeholders, combining their interview data with observations carried out in the field and documents gathered in the field. This builds a multi-faceted and detailed rendering of the phenomenon of private tuition. However, there is a caveat that case study accounts, despite the holistic approach taken, can only ever portray a partial account; “a slice of life” (Merriam, 1988, p.33).

A key facet of the holistic approach is the use of thick description, as Merriam (1988) explains:

Thick description is a term from anthropology and means the complete, literal description of the incident or entity being investigated (p.11).

This thesis devotes the following chapter to the description of the salient features of the five cases included in the study. Merriam also notes that the researcher is the “primary instrument of data collection and analysis” and warns that researchers should be careful of allowing bias to affect their studies (1988, p.34). In this project critical readers, including colleagues and key informants, provided critical feedback to check for bias at all stages of the writing process.

Case study research is often considered to be of most value in the preliminary stages of research. In other words, it is used to generate issues and hypotheses that can then be verified or discounted using survey or statistical studies. Therefore case studies “play an important role in advancing a field’s knowledge base” (Merriam, 1988, p.32). Research into private tutoring is a fledgling field of research; hence case study research is appropriate to build foundational knowledge (Bray, 2010b). The case study approach of this study will generate rich questions about private tuition for future investigation.

Criticism of the case study method focuses on two key themes, the lack generalisability (Punch, 2009; Sturman, 1999) and the presence of subjectivity or bias (Sturman, 1999). Flyvberg, a strong proponent of case study methods, has directly addressed these two areas of critique. Critics claim that it is difficult to make generalisations based on a single case or a few isolated cases, regardless of how “in-depth” that case is. According to this view, general or “context-independent knowledge” is superior to concrete or “context-dependent knowledge” (Flyvberg, 2004). Flyvberg argues that detailed description found in a case study makes a valuable contribution to social science that matches the rule-governed observations of large statistical studies. Furthermore, he asserts that “formal generalisation is overvalued as a source of scientific development, whereas ‘the force of example’ is underestimated” (Flyvberg, 2004, p.425). It is in response to these criticisms that case study researchers stress the importance of *thick description*, thereby providing detailed knowledge about the case under scrutiny (Merriam, 1988).

Critics also claim that case studies are too subjective and influenced by the researchers’ biases (Merriam 1988). The experience of researchers who employ case study methods

shows that often the data collected directly challenges and contradicts the initial notions held about the social situation under study because the data collected is so detailed. A strength of the method is its ability to “close-in on real-life situations and test views directly in relation to phenomena as they unfold in practice” (Flyvberg, 2004, p.428). The issues of generalisability and subjectivity were addressed in this project through the use of techniques that ensure the trustworthiness of the study including the use of an audit trail, triangulation of data and application of Bourdieu and Wacquant’s (1992) principle of reflexivity to the research project, as described in later sections of this chapter. The first task of the research process was sample construction. The following section describes this process, highlighting that when dealing with real-life situations it is important to remain flexible and open to change.

The sample

Interviews were conducted with the key stakeholders involved in the phenomenon of private literacy tutoring, namely the administrators, tutors, parents and students. The participants were recruited through contact with private tuition providers. The sampling procedure was initially purposive, with participants selected “in a deliberate way with some purpose or focus in mind” (Punch, 2005, p.187). The original aim was to conduct four case studies, each consisting of six stakeholders, creating a sample of 24 participants. Each case study was envisaged to consist of an administrator, a tutor, two parents and two children. The study targeted programmes that provided one-on-one instruction to primary school aged children seeking remediation in literacy. Independent providers and those associated with a business franchise model (for example the Kip McGrath Tutoring Centres) were to be included. Both boys and girls receiving tutoring were to be included.

The eventual sample consisted of five cases instead of four and the number of participants in each case differed. The new sample provides a deeper, more varied depiction of the tuition industry. One case consisted of only a single participant, the tutor/administrator. In this case the tutor was reluctant to provide introductions to parents and children but was happy provide an in-depth interview herself. The largest case consisted of 12 participants. In this case the director/tutor was very keen that the perspectives of parents and children be included in the study and took action to facilitate interviews with several of her clients. In these circumstances it was crucial that the sensitivity of the tutors was respected and responded to flexibly. Furthermore, due to the

enthusiasm of the director/tutor in the largest case, a whole new category of participants emerged. This new category was made up of associated therapists and included a behavioural optometrist, a kinesiologist and a naturopath.

For the purposes of this study the new category of participants will be referred to as the associated professionals. These participants referred children to the tuition centres and the tuition centres reciprocated by referring children to the associated professionals. Occasionally the associated professionals shared premises with the tutors; however most had their own consulting rooms. One of these professionals referred to their field as “complementary education” in that it exists alongside the mainstream education field but provides an alternative approach in much the same way as the complementary medicine industry does vis-à-vis mainstream medical doctors.

To summarise, the original study design envisaged a sample that consisted of four identically structured cases as follows:

CASE – Private Literacy Tuition provided in a one-on-one teaching situation.

Participant 1 – Administrator/tutor

Participant 2 – Parent 1

Participant 3 – Child 1

Participant 4 – Parent 2

Participant 5 – Child 2

The eventual sample was far more varied. On approaching tuition providers, it became apparent that not all provided literacy tuition exclusively. Often numeracy tuition was offered alongside literacy tuition. There is literature that argues for a conceptualisation of numeracy as an aspect of literacy, instead of conceiving of them as “distinct sets of basic skills” (Chapman & Lee, 1990, p.277). Therefore it is not surprising that some tuition providers focused on both literacy and numeracy.

There were two other accommodations made to the sample. First, it was anticipated that all tuition companies would provide remediation exclusively; however, on entering the field it became apparent that some companies included extension as well as remediation. Secondly, the assumption that all tuition would be provided in a one-on-one teaching situation proved incorrect; tutors offered a range of services including

teaching conducted in individual, paired and small group settings. Providing an in-depth depiction of the scope of the private tutoring industry by presenting a varied sample of providers was prioritised over the constraints imposed by the initial conception of the sample. The eventual sample consisted of five cases, comprising 26 participants, as presented in Table 4.1 (pseudonyms are employed for the business names and for all study participants):

Table 4.1 – Study Participants

| | Tuition as therapy | | Franchised Centres | | Teacher |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Title | Waterford Literacy Clinic | Premier Education Services | Lee Colbourne Centre | Moreno Tutoring | Sandi Venner |
| Director/ Tutor | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Employees | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Parents/ Guardians | 3 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 1 |
| Students | 2 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 1 |
| Associates | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Totals | 8 | 2 | 12 | 1 | 3 |

Applying principles of openness and flexibility to the task of constructing the sample for the study therefore resulted in a more accurate depiction of the diversity of the tutoring industry.

Comparing the cases

Detailed comparison of the five cases included in this study further highlights the advantage of taking a flexible approach to sample construction. Several key features of the cases are presented to illustrate the depth of the data gathered as a direct result of taking a more open approach. The following tables summarise the salient features of the five cases. Table 4.2 depicts the history and personnel of the programmes. Table 4.3 depicts the services offered and programme structures. Table 4.4 depicts the costs and relationships with parents, schools and other professionals.

Table 4.2 – History of programme and personnel

| | Established (Years ago) | | | Number of Staff | | | Number of Students | | | | WACOT | | Teaching Experience of staff | | |
|--------|-------------------------|-------|-----|-----------------|------|-----|--------------------|------|--------|------|-----------|------------|------------------------------|-----------------|-----------|
| | <10 | 10-15 | >15 | <5 | 5-10 | >10 | <5 | 5-10 | 10-100 | >100 | All staff | Some staff | Varied | Minimum 5 years | >20 years |
| Case 1 | | | √ | | √ | | | | | √ | √ | | | √ | |
| Case 2 | | √ | | √ | | | | √ | | | √ | | | √ | |
| Case 3 | √ | | | | | √ | | | | √ | | √ | √ | | |
| Case 4 | √ | | | | √ | | | | √ | | | √ | √ | | |
| Case 5 | √ | | | √ | | | √ | | | | √ | | | | √ |

Table 4.3 – Services offered and programme structure

| | Subjects | | | Remediation/ Extension | | | Group Size | | | Session Times | | | |
|--------|----------|----------|-------|------------------------|-----|------|------------|-----|--------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|----------|
| | Literacy | Numeracy | Other | Rem | Ext | Both | 1:1 | 2:1 | Small Groups | Before school | During school | After school | Saturday |
| Case 1 | √ | √ | | √ | | | √ | √ | | √ | √ | √ | |
| Case 2 | √ | | | √ | | | √ | | | | √ | √ | |
| Case 3 | √ | √ | √ | | | √ | √ | √ | √ | | √ | √ | √ |
| Case 4 | √ | √ | √ | | | √ | | √ | √ | | √ | √ | √ |
| Case 5 | √ | √ | | √ | | | √ | | | | | √ | |

Table 4.4 – Costs and relationships with parents, schools and other professionals

| | Feedback | | Cost | | | | | | Homework | | School links | | Makes referrals | |
|--------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|----|-----|-----------------------|----|-----|----------|----|--------------|------|-----------------|----|
| | Formal Written report | Informal verbal reports | Free Assessment | | | Cost per session (\$) | | | Yes | No | Strong | Weak | Yes | No |
| | | | Yes | No | N/A | <50 | 50 | >50 | | | | | | |
| Case 1 | √ | √ | | √ | | | √ | | √ | | | √ | √ | |
| Case 2 | √ | √ | | √ | | | | √ | √ | | | √ | √ | |
| Case 3 | √ | √ | √ | | | √ | | | √ | | | √ | √ | |
| Case 4 | √ | √ | √ | | | √ | | | | √ | | √ | | √ |
| Case 5 | | √ | | √ | √ | | | | | √ | √ | | | √ |

The programmes range from the well established that have been in operation for over 15 years to the relatively new businesses that began within the past five years. The staffing levels range from a single tutor working alone with only two clients, to a thriving franchise that employs over 10 tutors and caters for well over 100 children. Common to every case was the requirement that the teachers employed in the programme have WACOT registration. The West Australian College of Teachers (WACOT) is a professional association that provides teacher registration. All teachers must have a WACOT registration in order to teach in either public or private schools in Western Australia. All tutors included in this study were WACOT registered teachers, despite the fact that this is not a mandatory requirement outside of formal schooling. All of the education assistants had the West Australian ‘Working With Children Check,’ a requirement for all adults who work with children that involves a police background check to ensure there is no history of convictions relating to the mistreatment of children. The tutors’ levels of teaching experience across the cases varied; however, in all cases the directing staff members were experienced teachers, each with at least 20 years of experience in the teaching profession.

The services offered and the structure of the tuition programmes also differed (see Table 4.3). All of the cases covered at least literacy and numeracy; however, the two franchises offered further services such as test-taking and study skills. Three of the cases offered purely remedial education. Two of the cases, the franchises, offered both remediation and extension. None of the cases in this study focused solely on extension; in every case remediation was the primary educational service offered. Group sizes varied from individual to paired to small group tuition. None of the cases provided tuition on a large group basis; all professed to providing individually tailored tuition. The majority of the cases operated primarily outside of school hours; only one case routinely withdrew children from the classroom. Only the two franchises provided Saturday tuition sessions.

Finally the impact on the families and relations with the children’s school also varied across the cases (see Table 4.4). Four of the five cases provided written reports based on formal assessments of the children. The one case that did not formally report to parents was the primary school teacher who tutored after school. She relied on assessment conducted in the school setting. The two franchises provided free

assessments while the remaining two cases charged a considerable fee for testing and assessment. The cost of the tuition sessions and required homework commitment also varied across the cases and these variations will be explained in greater detail in future chapters. Only the primary school teacher working from home had strong links with her client's school. Three of the five cases reported associations with other professionals from the complementary education field.

This brief comparison of the five cases illustrates the wide variation found within the tutoring industry as exemplified by the research sample. In subsequent chapters, the case studies will be presented individually to retain the unique character of each tuition provider. In addition, cross-case analysis will occur to draw out both common and conflicting themes embedded in the data. To explore this depth and variety several qualitative data collection techniques were used. They included semi-structured interviews, field observations and document gathering.

Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection

Semi-structured interviews, field observations and document gathering were the three sources of data for this study. The bulk of the data was collected through semi-structured interviews. Many of the interviews took place in tuition centres and on those occasions detailed field observations and notes were made. Two types of documents were gathered. The bulk of the documents gathered were produced independently of the study; a few were produced at the request of the researcher (Merriam, 1988). Gathering from a variety of data sources ensures a more holistic depiction of private tuition. According to Nagy Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011), "case study always necessitates the use of multiple methods and data sources" (p.265). The multiple methods of data collection used in this study will be described in the following sub-sections.

Guiding questions

The guiding questions for the semi-structured interviews were developed from the following research questions:

- What paths do stakeholders take to become involved in private tutoring?
- What are the stakeholders' aspirations concerning involvement in private tutoring?

- How does private tutoring impact on the lives of the children and parents involved?
- How do stakeholders perceive success in relation to private tutoring?
- How do stakeholders' position private tutoring vis-à-vis the interconnected social fields of home, family and school?

As discussed earlier, these guiding questions were informed by the review of the literature and theoretical themes drawn from the work of Bourdieu. In the early stages of the interview process the theme of legitimacy arose as a key theme. The tutors in particular spent considerable time establishing their value as educators. On returning to the work of Bourdieu it became apparent that legitimacy or pedagogical authority was also a key issue in his work on education (Bourdieu & Passeron 1990). In this sense the data collected in the field entered into dialogue with the theoretical framework informing the interview questions. This ongoing dialogue yielded richer and more in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of private tuition. Therefore, even at the earliest stages of data collection, the ability to respond flexibly to emerging themes was a key feature of this study.

Semi-structured interviews

The primary technique for data collection in this study was the semi-structured interview; based on the research questions, yet open enough to generate diverse responses from the participants. This was congruent with the qualitative nature of the case studies, as Stake (1995) observes:

Qualitative case study seldom proceeds as a survey of the same questions asked of each respondent; rather, each interviewee is expected to have had unique experiences, special stories to tell. The qualitative interviewer should arrive with a short list of issue-oriented questions. (p.65)

The interviews were conducted at a time and place convenient for the participant and were audio taped with the participant's permission, and transcribed for analysis. Interviews were conducted in tuition centres, consulting rooms, participants' homes, the researcher's home and a coffee shop. The interviews were conducted throughout 2010. Each interview with an adult participant was of between one and two hours' duration. The interviews with children were considerably short, typically between 20 and 30 minutes' duration. In two cases follow-up interviews were conducted with parent participants of approximately an hour's duration to clarify themes that arose in the

initial round of interviews. Children were interviewed with the consent of parents and all participants were informed of the aims of the research and able to withdraw their consent at any stage of the project. While these interviews provided the bulk of the data they were combined with on-site observation and documents.

Observational data

According to Nagy Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011) “direct observation in a case study occurs when the investigator makes a site visit to collect data” (p.268). In this study the majority of the interviews were conducted at the centres where the tuition took place. This afforded opportunities to make detailed notes describing the tuition centres. The observations took the form of narrative field notes describing the learning environments. The field notes were filed with the interview transcripts of the case they described. The observational notes became important in the triangulation of data collected through the interviews, particularly on issues related to the milieu of the tutoring centres.

Document gathering

Merriam (1988) differentiates between documents produced independently of the study and documents produced at the request of the researcher (p.118). This study features both types of documentary data. The documents that were produced independently of the study were collected during the visits to the tuition centres. They included tutoring materials, qualifications, achievement certificates, newspaper clippings, written testimonials, promotional documents, work samples and school reports. These documents provided important contextual data on the nature of the tutoring programmes and perspectives on children’s academic progress. They were key items in verifying how tuition centres legitimate their practice.

The children included in the study produced documents at the request of the researcher. The children were asked to complete a simple drawing or writing activity during their interviews. They were asked to produce a drawing, or a written paragraph depicting their conception of a ‘good tutor’. The drawings and text generated by the children provided data on their perspectives about the features they valued in a tutor. In addition this provided an important rapport building activity between the child and the researcher. Punch notes that such documentary data is important for triangulation and can be used “in conjunction” with interview data (Punch, 2005, p.184). Triangulation is discussed later in this chapter.

Data analysis

The data analysis employed grounded theory coding modified to accommodate an analytical framework developed from Bourdieu's work. This study utilised several techniques from grounded theory including open coding, memoing and clustering (Strauss, 1987; Charmaz, 2006). The coding progressed through two stages. The first stage consisted of open coding. The second stage consisted of coding conducted within a Bourdieuan framework and included the key concepts of legitimacy, habitus, cultural capital and field (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). These categories provided an overarching framework and emergent themes were grouped accordingly.

This two-tiered approach to data analysis combines top-down and bottom-up theorising.

It is worth quoting Gibson and Brown (2009) on this approach:

Much of the time, researchers use some preformulated theoretical and conceptual schema and commitments to classify, characterize and make sense of the social world – we call this 'top-down' theory. In other instances, researchers describe themselves as *creating* theory through their research, of generating and clarifying concepts through the analysis of data i.e. 'bottom-up' theory. These terms are not intended to set up a dichotomy of practices, but merely to describe two aspects of research. Social science typically involves *both* of these practices – a specification of theoretical ideas in relation to an existing body of work, and the working out of these ideas in relation to data (p.15)

In this study the techniques borrowed from grounded theory provide the bottom-up theorising and the framework developed from Bourdieu's work provide the top-down theorising. Grounded theory advocates, Corbin and Strauss, acknowledge the usefulness of a theoretical framework but add a caveat urging researchers to remain open in their approach to the research task:

a previously identified theoretical framework can provide insight, direction and a useful list of initial concepts. However, a researcher should remain open to new ideas and concepts and be willing to let go if he or she discovers that certain imported concepts do not fit the data. The importance of 'remaining open' is essential even for experienced researchers (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p.40)

Openness and flexibility have been key elements throughout the entire research process, as evidenced by the sample construction and by the use of open coding to initially engage with the data.

Open coding

The first step in the data analysis applied open coding to the data, including interview transcripts, field notes and documents. Open coding is a technique of grounded theory. As a methodology, grounded theory “emphasises the need for developing many concepts and their linkages in order to capture a great deal of the variation that characterises the central phenomena studied during any particular research project” (Strauss, 1987, p. 7). Strauss (1987) describes the benefit of open coding in the following terms:

Open coding quickly forces the analyst to fracture, break the data apart analytically, and leads directly to excitement and the inevitable payoff of grounded conceptualization (p.29)

In the first stage of analysis, interview transcripts were coded line by line. Single words and phrases were noted in the margin of the interview transcripts to break the text down into useful concepts and themes for analysis. Field notes and documents were coded in tandem with this analysis, as codes and themes emerged. In Figure 4.1 an excerpt from the transcript of an interview with a parent illustrates how the first level of coding proceeded.

Figure 4.1: Interview 1.4

| Line number | Transcript | Themes/codes |
|--|---|--|
| <p>220 221 222 223 224 225 226 227 228 229 230 231 232 233 234 235 236 237 238 239 240</p> | <p>P: Well it's a hundred dollars a week here, or just over, that's expensive but that's because it's a split family – her father's paying for that, so I mean it's come out in other ways but that...I've had the effect of missing out but it's just one of those things. Financially you can do without it. I'll do anything. I'm more driven I think. I was the one who stresses and gets, not so much, I don't believe in putting pressure on children. I just believe that if a child, the most fundamental things, if you can't read and write then you're going to be in a lot of strife and if you can't spell I just think that that's just...Literacy is just so important and for the confidence of the child. And for her peers too, it's all affected. The whole thing's affected and instructions, you know, the teacher giving instructions. Does she understand? Does she comprehend the Instructions given to her? Does she comprehend what's written, you know, 'Read that – do you understand?' Well, if you don't understand, how in the heck are you going to be able to perform it, you can't. So I'm very, I was very proactive in that I worried about it, I stressed about it and I did something about it.</p> | <p><i>*Financial cost</i> <i>*Family b'ground</i> <i>*Financial sacrifice</i> <i>*Desperation/whatever it takes</i> <i>*Mum driving force</i> <i>*Overscheduled child? (parent conscious of pressure)</i> <i>*Core business/literacy</i> <i>*Self-esteem</i> <i>*Socialisation</i> <i>*Fundamental issue</i> <i>*Improve school life</i> <i>*Core business/literacy</i> <i>*Proactive parent</i> <i>*Parental anxiety</i></p> |

Modified coding

Following the initial open coding task, the grounded theory coding process was modified to accommodate the analytical framework developed from Bourdieu and Passeron's (1990) notions of legitimacy, habitus, cultural capital and field. The themes identified in the transcripts through open coding were grouped under headings drawn from the Bourdieuan analytical framework. Each theme was referenced according to the relevant case, transcript and line number to enable direct access to the source data. The analytical categories focused on how tuition practitioners legitimated their practice, the paths that led the participants to engage in tutoring, the perceived social advantage gained through engagement in tutoring and the place tuition occupied in the participants' wider understandings of schooling and education (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). Identification of these key issues did not preclude the possibility of other significant factors emerging in the course of the study.

As stated earlier, openness and flexibility were key components of this research. Accordingly, at this stage of analysis, a miscellaneous category was added for themes that did not easily fit any of the existing categories. Furthermore, *in vivo* themes of proactive parents, lost children and tuition as a safety valve all became key elements that emerged from the data (Strauss, 1987, p.30). *In vivo* codes are codes that are "derived directly from the language of the substantive field: essentially the terms used by actors in the field themselves" (Strauss, 1987, p. 33). Strauss explains the importance of *in vivo* codes:

in vivo terms have a very vivid imagery, inclusive of much local interpretative meaning; they have 'grab' for the participants. And they are seldom forgotten by readers because their terms are colourful. They also have much analytic force since the actors do use them with ease and with sufficiently precise meaning (Strauss, 1987, p.34).

Throughout the process of coding, Bourdieuan themes were combined with the themes that emerged from the data, as Merriam observed; "the process is one of flexible interaction between phenomenon and theory" (1988, p.60).

In Figure 4.2 an excerpt from Case One illustrates the modified coding.

Figure 4.2: Responsibility for learning (habitus/field)

[Bourdieuian category]

Proactive parents

| [Group theme heading] | [Transcript No./Line No.s] |
|--|----------------------------|
| -parents letting system down | 1.2/137-146;208-211 |
| -Dick and Dora story | 1.2/218-235 |
| -parents seek help outside school | 1.3/215-216 |
| -issue is owned by parent | 1.4/69-70;83-89 |
| -parent searches for one-on-one | 1.4/88-89 |
| -asks teacher how teach, frustrated | 1.4/135-137 |
| -proactive parent | 1.4/239-240 |
| -whatever it takes | 1.4/464-466 |
| -resentment that parent must act | 1.4/276-278 |
| -parent runs learning activities pre-schooling | 1.8/42-43;54-63 |
| -provide private schooling | 1.8/43-45 |
| -stimulate child | 1.8/45-52 |
| -parent suspect issue early on | 1.8/80-82 |
| -rundown of various tests parent facilitated | 1.8/176-188 |
| -parental frustration and anger | 1.8/193 |
| -we've (parents) got to resolve this | 1.8/285-286 |
| -parent passes info between school and tutor | 1.8/682-691 |
| -parent conflict with math tutor | 1.8/700-709 |
| -considering tuition to extend sibling | 1.8/847-850 |
| -changing school to meet needs | 1.8/850-851 |
| -parent told can wait for Catholic Ed intervention or 'take the bull by the horns and do it yourself' | 1.9/28-32 |
| -accept if want 1-on-1 have to get it independently | 1.9/123-126 |
| -parent has detailed knowledge of child's learning profile | 1.9/159-169 |
| -parent very engaged in classroom | 1.9/208-209 |
| -research to choose programme | 1.9/361-372 |
| -if parent not intervened, ADD or behaviour issue | 1.9/389-391 |
| -no end point, will still need tuition in high school | 1.9/462-467 |
| -parent as warrior for throughout schooling | 1.9/467-478;564 |
| -if you don't ask the questions you get nothing | 1.9/542 |
| -parent conduit between school and tutor | 1.9/560-562 |
| -parent prepared to partially fund specialist teacher in school | 1.9/586-593 |
| -teacher sees no problem, parent fights | 1.9/608-615 |
| -parents urge tuition | 1.10/43-47(pg3) |

Clustering

After the first two tasks of coding were complete, the categories and themes were reorganised using a clustering technique. Charmaz (2006) explains this technique:

You write your central idea, category, or process; then circle it and draw spokes from it to smaller circles to show its defining properties, and their relationships and relative significance...The configurations of clusters provide an image of how your topic fits together and relates to other phenomena (p.86-87)

The task of clustering centred around two key ideas. The first idea was legitimacy and related primarily to the data collected from the tutors. The second idea was related to data collected from the families and dealt with the interplay of the issues of habitus, cultural capital and field.

Memoing

Alongside clustering, memo writing was used to develop the analysis of the data. Charmaz (2006) describes memo writing as “conversing with yourself” (p.72). Memos consist of written notes that capture the researcher’s insights into the data throughout the data collection and analysis phases of the study. In this thesis memos advanced the analysis of the data and formed the basis of the later chapters dealing with theory generation.

Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of the study was ensured through several strategies. Raw data were stored securely and organised carefully. An audit trail was constructed. Data was triangulated. Ethical considerations were given careful attention. Finally, following Bourdieu, the construction of this study was considered reflexively.

Transcription and storage of data

Raw data were stored securely at all times. Interviews were recorded on mini-discs and subsequently transcribed. Each transcription was given a case number and an interview number. Each line of the transcription was numbered. Observation notes were coded and filed. Documents were filed with the interview transcriptions of the case they adhered to. Storing data in an organised and methodical manner facilitates analysis, ensuring that data can be easily retrieved and reconfigured for use in analysis and theory generation. In case study research it is important that the researcher closes in on real-

life situations; this task is made easier when raw data are well-organised and easily accessible.

Audit trail

An audit trail has been described as a “residue of records stemming from the inquiry” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.319). In this study every line of each interview transcript was given an identifying number. For example the number 1.8.909 refers to Case 1, Interview 8, Line Number 909. These numbers adhere to the raw data throughout the construction of codes and subsequent analysis. Therefore it is possible to trace themes and codes back to their sources in the interview transcripts. Similarly, clustering diagrams and hand-written memos were all stored, dated and filed to create a coherent path through the process of data analysis.

Triangulation

Triangulation was a key strategy that ensured the trustworthiness of the project (Stake 1995). According to Sturman (1999) triangulation “may involve the use of different data sources, different perspectives or theories, different investigators or different methods” (p.110). Bassey (1999) defines triangulation as a process that:

brings together data from different sources, or from the same source but by different methods of enquiry, or by using different observers, and makes analytical statements, which credibly illuminates these features. Triangulation is a term taken from surveying, where it is a means of accurately pinpointing a place. In social science research it means trying to strengthen confidence in a statement. (p.76)

In this case it was different data sources, different perspectives and two bodies of theory that provided the credibility of the study methods. Triangulation took place by consulting five different literacy programmes; including a variety of stakeholders; and drawing on multiple data sources throughout the study. The project was informed by the theoretical work of Bourdieu and combined with grounded theory that emerged from the data.

Ethics

Prior to the commencement of the study, The University of Western Australia approved the research proposal in accordance with the requirements of the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*. During the data collection phase of the project

every study participant signed a consent form that detailed the aims and methods of the research and guaranteed that the anonymity of the participant would be protected. Parents of the children interviewed in the course of the study signed consent forms on their children's behalf. All participants were advised that they could withdraw their involvement at any stage of the study. At the beginning of the data collection phase, the names of the participants were changed to pseudonyms and fictional company names were created to protect the identities of the study informants. The interviews were audio-recorded on mini-discs and the original discs were stored securely throughout the project.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity is a major concern in Bourdieu's and Wacquant's work and has been defined as "the inclusion of a theory of intellectual practice as an integral component and necessary condition of a critical theory of society" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p.36). This is not to be confused with the concept of reflexivity that foregrounds the subjective experiences of the researcher. According to Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992):

Far from trying to undermine objectivity, Bourdieu's reflexivity aims at increasing the scope and solidity of social scientific knowledge, a goal which puts it at loggerheads with phenomenological, textual and other 'postmodern' forms of reflexivity. (pp.36-37)

Bourdieu and Wacquant also state "social science is reflexive in the sense that the knowledge it generates is "injected back into the reality it describes" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p.37). Therefore it is important for researchers to remain cognisant of their work as embedded within the wider field of academic knowledge and to consider not only how their work interacts with its context but also how the academic and political context impacts on their work. In this study this is most apparent in the emergence of legitimacy as a major theme of the study. As outlined in previous chapters, private tuition is emerging globally as a significant aspect of the wider field of education. Representation and incorporation into an academic study (such as this PhD project) is one way of legitimating private tuition as an educational practice. Accordingly, tutors were keen to establish and justify their legitimacy as educators and perceived their inclusion in this study as a means to that end. However, rather than weaken the study, their willingness to be engaged in the research process has enriched the data. Furthermore, the tutors' interviews have made explicit the elements that they perceive to constitute their educational legitimacy. In mainstream schooling these

elements are often implicit and therefore the study also sheds light on the wider field of school education.

Conclusion

This study consists of five qualitative case studies conducted within an interpretivist paradigm. As stated earlier, thick description is an important component of case study methods. The next chapter presents the five case studies included in this research. The salient features of each tuition provider are described in detail. The major informants for each case are introduced. The five cases are grouped according to their similarities and differences. All three data sources, interview transcripts, observational notes and documents, were combined to create the case studies that comprise the chapter. The cases were selected purposively to cover a range of tuition services. The first businesses approached provided tuition on a one-on-one basis. After two examples of this mode of tuition were recruited, franchised tuition businesses were approached to provide a second mode of tuition. The final example of the moonlighting teacher was recruited, providing a third mode of tuition. This deliberate selection process ensured that a range of tuition providers were included in the study.

The subsequent chapters provide cross-case analysis of the themes in the data and it is in these chapters that the theory about private tuition is generated. Through the combination of Bourdieuan concepts with emergent themes from the data, propositions are formulated and the relationships between these propositions are explicated. The theory is constructed through detailed coding, note taking and memoing of the raw data. Throughout the process of data collection and analysis, principles of openness and flexibility were applied to ensure a rich, nuanced depiction of the phenomenon of private tuition for primary school aged children.

Few studies of private tuition take an in-depth multi-case study approach at the level of individual tutoring programmes; even fewer deal with programmes in an Australian context. The unique contribution of applying interpretive case study methods in this project will be to move the field of shadow or supplementary education beyond issues of scope or prevalence into the realm of the lived experiences of the participants in the phenomenon. Furthermore the two-layered approach to analysis whereby grounded theory techniques were modified to accommodate analysis informed by the work of Bourdieu and his colleagues yielded rich results.

Chapter Five: The Case Studies

Introduction

This study aims to generate theory about the ways in which private tuition impacts on the lives of the tutors, students and families involved in the tuition industry. As discussed earlier, the theory is informed by Bourdieu's concepts of pedagogical authority (or legitimacy), habitus, field and cultural capital. The data consist of semi-structured interviews, field observations and documents gathered from five tuition businesses in the Perth metropolitan area of Western Australia. This chapter presents the five case studies of businesses in detail to introduce the study participants and establish the context for the generation of theory presented in later chapters.

As discussed in Chapter Two: Background and Context, private tuition is a multi-faceted industry. This study comprises of five diverse examples of the industry. In this chapter, each example will be introduced and described in detail to facilitate an in-depth understanding of the scope of the study. Furthermore, the five cases are grouped into three categories based on similarities and differences between the ways the tuition businesses operate. Grouping the businesses in this manner highlights their key features. There are three categories, 'Tuition as Therapy', 'Franchised Tuition' and 'Moonlighting Tuition'. Categorising is a useful exercise to assist navigation through the detailed descriptive data included in this chapter. However, it must be noted that there is overlap between the categories and that all of the cases included in this study share the defining features of bespoke education as introduced in Chapter One. As argued in Chapter Three, this term best describes the Australian manifestation of private tuition.

The first category is 'Tuition as therapy'. There are two case studies in this category; the *Waterford Literacy Clinic* and *Premier Education Services*. These businesses have distinctive titles and produce glossy brochures advertising their services. They provide individualised tutoring, primarily delivered in a one-on-one teaching situation. They both feature strong underlying theories of learning, conduct detailed assessments, based on their underlying theories and feature similar price structures and styles of programme delivery. These businesses provide the most expensive services included in this study. Weekly fees range from 50 to 150 dollars per week, in addition to an assessment fee of over 300 dollars. They both claim provide a substantial educational intervention that is

superior to standard tuition. They both operate independently of any overarching organisation. The two businesses in this study differ in size. The first is a thriving business with over 100 clients, providing a full-time income for the two owners and part-time income for seven employees. The second is less successful, with the owner struggling to earn a viable income from her business.

The second category is “Franchised Tuition”. There are also two case study examples, the *Lee Colbourne Centre* and *Moreno Tutoring*. These businesses both operate from shop front premises. They offer free initial assessment and provide individualised tutoring, primarily delivered in small group settings. They operate under the umbrellas of large interstate tutoring franchises. The overarching franchises provide standardised business models, promotional materials and teaching materials. Their pricing structures are similar, with fees of less than 50 dollars per week. They each feature a strong director who conducts all the assessments and plans the programmes. The first example is a well-established and very successful business with over 300 clients. The second example is a newer business that is growing steadily.

The third category is “Moonlighting Tuition”. There is one example, a teacher who is employed by a school on a relief basis during school hours and who provides tuition after school hours. Tuition is delivered in a one-on-one situation. She closely follows the mainstream school curriculum. Her business operates from her home, on an informal basis, without promotional brochures or even a business title. The fee is 40 dollars for a weekly session of 45 minutes’ duration. She has only two clients.

In the following pages the five cases are presented. Each description follows a uniform structure to facilitate comparison between the cases. The headings chosen to organise the descriptions cover the history of the case, the physical tuition setting, the structure and pricing of the tuition programme, personnel, marketing strategies, links to mainstream schooling, and referrals to other professionals. The history of the programme, the physical setting and the structure of the learning programme have implications for the ways that the tuition provider establishes educational legitimacy. The sections describing personnel introduce the staff, students and families engaged in the programmes. The sections dealing with marketing strategies, links to school and other professionals begins to explore the ways that the programme is positioned vis-à-vis wider fields of schooling and educational intervention. The uniform organisation

structure offers opportunities to highlight significant similarities and differences between the cases.

The final section of each case study focuses on how the case differs from the others. Accordingly the final heading is different in each case. The final section of each case description deals with unique elements that dominate the data gathered in that specific case. The unique issues dealt with in these sections include passion for teaching, business acumen, diversity, self-direction and ongoing tuition. The aim is to depict the variety of the cases and the range of issues evident in the data therefore providing rich description and a more nuanced understanding of the scope of the study.

Case One – Tuition as Therapy

Waterford Literacy Clinic - when tutoring is not tutoring

This case deals with a suburban centre that provided predominantly literacy but also some numeracy instruction for primary and high school children. In the process of collecting data for this case, four practitioners of the teaching methods used in the clinic were interviewed. Three staff were directly associated with the *Waterford Literacy Clinic* and one was the co-founder of the techniques used at Waterford, who ran a similar clinic at a different location. In every instance the practitioners stressed that they did not consider themselves to be engaged in the task of tutoring but in providing a more fundamental educational service. It was expressed most succinctly by Robert Groom, one of the founders, who asserted that the method was not tutoring but “an educational therapy based on scientific, neurologically based interventions”.

This quote goes to the heart of how *Waterford Literacy Clinic* legitimated its practice. The programme followed a structured theory of neurological development and the lessons were informed by the underlying theory. Staff members were trained by the clinic’s directors, Helen and Kate, who were in turn trained by the founders of the teaching method. Despite the staff’s disavowal of the tutoring label, this case was included in this study of private tutoring businesses because in several key aspects it met the criteria of an out-of-school tuition service: the clinic was independent of mainstream schooling; instruction was provided on an individual or paired basis; and all courses of instruction were individually tailored to meet the specific needs of the child. The business operated successfully for several years and to contextualise the programme it was important to understand the history of its development.

History

The *Waterford Literacy Clinic* is the focus of this case; however, it grew out of association with another business, *Springside Clinic*. The directors of the *Waterford Literacy Clinic* were two women, Kate and Helen, who met as teaching colleagues in a primary school. While still employed in the primary school they attended a professional development course conducted by one of the founders of *Springside Clinic*, Dr Robert Groom. Helen referred to this initial professional development course as a “life-changing experience”. Helen referred an acquaintance to the *Springside Clinic* and was impressed with the results. This led to Helen and Kate undertaking further training in Groom’s methods and gaining experience under the tutelage of both the founders of *Springside Clinic*, Dr Robert Groom and Dr Barbara Selwin. Eventually Helen and Kate were trained in the clinical assessments associated with the *Springside* methods and this led to them establishing their own clinic (*Waterford*) while still working closely with the founders, since “breaking away” from Springside 16 years ago.

The founders of *Springside* were academics, a married couple, with qualifications in education and neuropsychology. Their centre operated from rooms at the back of their home overlooking beautiful gardens and was established over 25 years ago. Initially Barbara relinquished her university post to concentrate on establishing the centre and Robert continued in his position at university and worked only part-time at the centre. Eventually they both gave up their university careers and focused full-time on their literacy business. The decision to locate their business in a home environment was deliberate and Robert stated that they believed a shop front setting would be “off-putting” for the clients. The founders expressed great passion for their work and Robert said that from the very early stages he believed they had established “something significant”. Throughout their careers, Robert and Barbara trained many teachers in their methods and ran *Springside*: a thriving clinic. Yet Helen and Kate were the only teachers they trained who went on to establish a business of their own; *Waterford Literacy Clinic*.

Setting

The *Waterford Literacy Clinic* differed from *Springside* by operating from business premises rather than from a private home. The business was located in a converted cottage and, although it was not a private residence, there was still a home-like, relaxed ambience in the setting. Helen identified this relaxed atmosphere as a key element of the

centre's success. The ambience was cultivated through the physical layout of the teaching space, the presence of a pet dog and the interactions between staff and students.

The basic structure of the home was unchanged and every available room was used for teaching. The former kitchen was the central space in the building and teaching took place at a large table in the centre of the space. Two rooms towards the front of the home, a former lounge room and bedroom were also used as teaching spaces. There was a third teaching room opposite the kitchen and a small teaching room at the back of the house. There was even a workspace set up in what appeared to be the former laundry. A photocopier sat outside the bathroom and the toilet was located outside through the back door. The front rooms and middle room featured whiteboards on the walls. The fireplace was still in one of the front rooms and an old stove still stood in the kitchen. The clinic was very busy and at nine o'clock on a weekday morning operated at full capacity, every available working space was occupied. In most instances a teacher worked with a single student. In a couple of rooms there were two children working with one teacher. The house hummed with industrious voices.

A small dog wandered from room to room as the children worked. He sat by different students who would occasionally reach down and scratch him behind the ear or stroke him on the back. The dog was not originally a feature of the centre. He was injured by a car some time ago and could not be left to convalesce at home alone. Consequently he was brought into the clinic daily. His presence was considered beneficial by the staff and once he recuperated his owner continued to bring him into work with her. Helen referred to him as a "working dog". The business owners stressed that his involvement helped give the clinic a more welcoming, home-like atmosphere.

Helen and Kate stated that it was important that the centre had a less formal tone than that of the typical school setting. Helen said that she knew her work was effective when the children interacted with her in a less formal manner, as she said:

We know we've been a success when they start coming in and they're a bit cheeky and they crack jokes and they'll take risks and just have more confidence in what they can do.

Initial testing and programme

On entry to the programme, either Helen or Kate tested children. The testing provided the basis for the individualised teaching programme that was also designed by Helen or Kate. The initial testing and drafting of the learning programme cost \$350. Helen explained that the testing identified the child's areas of weakness based on a model, which she described as a triangle. Written language was at the apex, supported by a base of oral language and beneath that a foundational base of "neurological aspects". Dr Robert Groom, one of the founders, explained that the testing correlated to activity in the interior parietal lobe area of the brain. He did not claim that this region of the brain caused reading. He did claim that it had "the prerequisites for the development of reading, writing, spelling and numeracy." Dr. Groom and Dr. Selwin identified 17 variables related to literacy acquisition. They developed assessment tasks related to each variable. This testing was used at the *Waterford Literacy Clinic* where repeated assessment was recommended every six months, at a cost of \$350 each time. The clients did not always take this up.

Intervention and cost

Sessions for primary school aged children were of one hour's duration at a cost of 50 dollars per session. Literacy instruction consisted of two sessions per week. The cost to the parents of the primary school aged children was 100 dollars each week. Numeracy instruction consisted of a one-hour session per week, also at a cost of 50 dollars per session. These weekly fees were in addition to the initial 350 dollar fee for the assessment and programme. Two of the families included in this study focused exclusively on literacy instruction for their children at a cost of 100 dollars per week. One family elected to focus on both literacy and numeracy for their daughter. This consisted of three sessions per week, two focused on literacy and one on numeracy, with a total cost of 150 dollars per week. According to Helen, the average duration of enrolment at the centre was 12 months. Helen stated that it took six months to see significant changes, then six months to consolidate the gains made in the first six months. However one of the students included in this study had been attending the centre for four years. Sessions were conducted before, after and during school hours.

Helen and Kate expected their students to complete daily homework tasks related to the programme. Helen stressed that it was not the length of time spent on homework that

mattered but the consistent, daily practice that was paramount. Spelling, revision of oral language tasks and reading were the foci of the homework.

Staff

At the time of this study there were nine teachers working in the clinic including Helen and Kate. Helen and Kate owned the business and taught full-time, the remaining seven teachers were employed on a part-time basis. Helen and Kate taught children in pairs whereas all of the part-time staff taught in one-on-one situations. The children taught in pairs were matched in age, ability and educational need. Charlotte, one of the children interviewed for this study stated that working with her paired buddy was a highlight of her involvement in the clinic.

As noted previously, Helen and Kate devised the teaching programmes for all of the part-time staff to follow. They also conducted assessments and wrote programmes for a few teachers working outside of the centre in country locations. All staff members were required to have WACOT registration and at least five years of teaching experience. All of the teachers underwent training provided by Helen and Kate, who were themselves trained by Robert and Barbara. Helen and Robert were formally interviewed for this study. Kate and Barbara were consulted less formally through incidental conversations.

Fiona, one of the part-time staff members, was also formally interviewed for this study. Fiona had taught for 35 years in the Education Department schooling system as a mainstream classroom teacher. She resigned due to personal circumstances. Her resignation was complex. She had taken leave to care for an ailing family member. On re-entering the school system she found the Education Department unsympathetic to her situation. Fiona had previously taught with Helen and Kate in a school. She stated that working with them in their business was a far more supportive option than continuing in the Education Department. Interestingly, Fiona stated that it took her some time to adjust to working in an arrangement where the parents pay directly for the tuition. She said that she put a lot of pressure on herself, wanting to show positive results in the children's progress. Fiona also stated that the work was extremely rewarding and that she loved "seeing children blossom." Fiona observed that the teaching was "very structured" and closely followed the programming devised by Helen and Kate. Conversely, she observed that there was scope to incorporate the use of her own

teaching resources and experience, provided they were compatible with the programmes planned by Helen and Kate.

Clients

The centre catered for primary and secondary school students but the focus of this study is on the primary school students. Clientele were drawn from state schools, elite private schools, Catholic schools and independent schools. All primary school aged children required remediation; there was no extension component to the programme. At 100 dollars per week for literacy instruction it was an expensive programme. Helen, Kate and Fiona all remarked that the families tended to be affluent. Nonetheless, Helen stated that in some cases families had “made it a priority so they will go without something else to be able to afford the tuition.” Kate mentioned that on occasion they took on “one or two pro-bono cases” but did not explain on what basis these cases were chosen. Three client families were interviewed at different locations for this study. The children included were: Charlotte, aged 10; Lauren, aged 12; and Jay, aged 10. They were all full fee paying clients.

Charlotte and her mother, Robyn were interviewed separately at the clinic. Charlotte had been attending the clinic since June of 2009 and the interviews with her and Robyn took place in March of 2010. This was a split family where the father provided the financial support for the programme while the mother managed the logistics of getting to and from the clinic. Charlotte was an only child who resided primarily with Robyn, her mother. During Charlotte’s first two years of formal schooling there were no indications of any learning difficulty. It was not until Year Two that her literacy issues were identified. While Charlotte was in Year Two she was also enrolled in a franchised tutoring centre outside school hours. Charlotte’s mother became dissatisfied with the franchise model and stated that it did not suit Charlotte’s needs. Through the recommendation of Charlotte’s classroom teacher in Year Three, she was referred to the *Waterford Literacy Clinic*. Charlotte attended her local state primary school and Robyn had plans to enroll Charlotte in an elite private girls’ school for high school.

Lauren’s mother, Yvonne, was interviewed in the family home in June 2010. Lauren had been attending the *Waterford Literacy Clinic* for the past seven months. Yvonne was a stay-at-home mother who handled the logistics of getting her daughter to and from the clinic while the father, David, worked full-time. There was also a younger

sibling, Brendan, in the family. The family migrated from the United Kingdom in 2008. Lauren's early schooling years from Reception (Kindergarten) until Year Five were spent in the United Kingdom. Although her parents suspected there were literacy issues during her preschool years, it was not until Year Three that a classroom teacher formally acknowledged her issues. Lauren received in-school tutoring throughout Years Four and Five at a private school in the United Kingdom. An unqualified classroom assistant, rather than a teacher, provided this support. Yvonne expressed serious doubts about its efficacy and stated that communication notes from the classroom assistant often contained spelling errors. On arrival in Australia, Lauren's learning issues persisted. Following extensive investigation, including assessment by the Dyslexia/SPELD Association in Perth, Lauren was assessed at the *Waterford Literacy Clinic*. Yvonne described the conflicting emotions of relief and distress that she and her husband David experienced when they received the results of the assessment:

They sat down with us when we got the first report and they said, 'Lauren will never have an academic career'... We were devastated... because we still held out this hope, I don't know, in our heads she'd gone to university and I remember the day. We both cried. We were so upset but it was really good for us. They were really good to us because, in saying that and being the first people to say that to us, and the only people to say that to us. It just allowed us to accept the situation as it was and to just be able to move forward with it.

At the time of the interview, Lauren was attending the *Waterford Literacy Clinic* for three sessions a week (two literacy sessions and one numeracy session). As was the case with Charlotte, Lauren attended her local state primary school and the family planned for her to attend an elite private girls' school for her secondary years.

The final family consisted of Jay, his mother Cindy, his father Tony and two older siblings, both sisters. Cindy and Jay were interviewed separately. Cindy was interviewed in a coffee shop and Jay was interviewed in the family home. At the time of the interview Jay had been attending the *Waterford Literacy Clinic* for four years, with only a six-month break halfway through Year Three. Jay began schooling at the local Catholic primary school and in Year Three moved to the local state school. In this family both parents worked full-time. Jay's literacy issues were identified at the beginning of Year One. At that time Jay was enrolled in the local Catholic primary school. His parents were advised that they could wait six months for specialist

intervention through the Catholic Education Department or they could, in Cindy's words "take the bull by the horns" and seek private intervention. They decided to pursue private tutoring. According to Cindy, the decision to attend *Waterford Literacy Clinic* was strongly influenced by the clinic's close proximity to their home. Cindy stated that she expected Jay's enrolment in private tuition to be constant throughout his school life. His family plans to enroll him in the local state high school. Cindy had already been to the high school to meet with the principal despite his high school entry being three years away.

Marketing

According to Helen and Kate, their business was marketed in two ways. The most important way was word-of-mouth. A less important avenue was local advertising. Word-of-mouth consisted of recommendation and referral; parents of the children enrolled in the clinic recommended the clinic to friends and acquaintances. Helen also listed school psychologists, classroom teachers, pediatricians, clinical psychologists and speech pathologists as professionals who referred families to the clinic. Helen and Kate conducted limited advertising through the local newspapers and nearby school newsletters but expressed doubt about the value of this form of marketing. The business had grown steadily and was operating at full capacity. Helen described further expansion as entailing a "quantum leap" that she and Kate were not prepared to take. They believed further expansion would take them away from hands-on teaching and they were not interested in changing their roles.

Links to school

Helen characterised the link to classroom teachers as being quite weak. She observed that "not a lot of teachers actually ring us to find out what the programme is." Helen also reported that some teachers felt threatened by the programme. Helen stated that NAPLAN (the Australia-wide standardised testing programme) had been good for business as it graphed children's abilities quite clearly. Consequently there was an influx of students following the dissemination by schools of students' NAPLAN results. From 2007 until 2009 parents could apply to *An Even Start*, which was a federally funded scheme for money for private tuition. Families were eligible if their children's NAPLAN results were below set benchmarks for their year level. The *Waterford Literacy Clinic* accepted clients who used vouchers from the *An Even Start* programme. Eventually the administrative and teaching content requirements for the *An Even Start*

programme became too inflexible to be adapted into the *Waterford Literacy Clinic's* programmes. Helen reported that several clients who began as *An Even Start* students stayed on at the clinic as more long-term clients.

Referrals

As previously mentioned, often clients referred friends and acquaintances to the clinic. Furthermore, a number of clients were referred to the clinic by pediatricians, school psychologists, classroom teachers, clinical psychologists and speech pathologists. Charlotte was referred to the clinic by her Year Three teacher. Jay's mother, Cindy, referred Lauren to the clinic. Sometimes the clinic referred children to other specialists, not employed by the clinic. Cindy recounted that her son, Jay was referred by the literacy clinic to a research academic at The University of Western Australia for further testing. The assessment conducted at UWA cost \$1,000. Helen and Kate attended the university assessment with Jay and Cindy. Cindy described the UWA academic as a "legend" in the field of literacy assessment. Helen and Kate subsequently adjusted Jay's programme according to the findings of the assessment conducted at the university.

Passion and commitment

Throughout this case the staff placed strong emphasis on the quality of the programme provided by the clinic. For the staff, the quality of the programme was evident in the strong underlying theory, the high calibre of the staff and their passion for teaching. In her interview Helen affectionately described Robert and Barbara, the founders of the methods they utilised at the clinic, as "absolute mad professors about their work." In his interview, Robert referred to the depth of experience that he and his wife shared, noting that they had "one hundred and five years of educational experience" between them and that they had "loved every minute of it." As stated earlier, Helen, Kate, Fiona and the founders all concurred that they were not merely tutors, but were educators. Robert, one of the founders even cited the fact that his clinic's services had been made GST (Goods and Services Tax) exempt, as an indication of the programme's legitimacy. Robert said:

You would think someone would recognise us in the school system. Well, Alan Carpenter (a former WA State Premier) did, he made us an extension of the educational programme. We didn't have to charge GST which was a very kind thing. We were vetted very carefully.

Parents also exhibited great commitment and passion, referring to the sacrifices they were prepared to make in order to keep their children in tuition. For example, Cindy stated, “if I had to sell my car or borrow \$50,000, it would be done”. Cindy’s son, Jay, had been enrolled at the *Waterford Literacy Clinic* for four years and Cindy estimated that the cost was \$6,000 a year. Cindy stated that she expected tuition to be an ongoing feature of Jay’s school life, and that she saw her role as a campaigner or “warrior”. She explained as follows:

I don’t see that there’s going to be an end point and I would see us still using *Waterford Literacy Clinic* when he went into high school. I see that it’s also a campaign that you have to be a warrior for.

Charlotte’s family had investigated several intervention options at considerable monetary cost before enrolling in the *Waterford Literacy Clinic*. Charlotte had been to a behavioural optometrist to address eye-tracking issues. A hearing test had diagnosed a central auditory processing disorder. The Dyslexia-SPELD WA centre had diagnosed dyslexia. Charlotte’s grandmother, a qualified teacher, had provided spelling tuition. Charlotte’s mother, Robyn, continued to investigate intervention options for her daughter. Robyn reported that she often discussed new therapies with other parents and followed up her discussions with Internet research. Robyn stated her belief that it was important:

...that you don’t give up and that you don’t think, ‘Oh she’ll never get it,’ and then you don’t try. I think that’s the wrong attitude as well. And they (staff at the *Waterford Literacy Clinic*) don’t do that, they don’t go, ‘She’ll never get it. We’ll give up. We won’t bother.’ They go, ‘She’s struggling. She’s very, very slow at getting it but we’re getting there.’ You know? I think they offer that sort of hope.

The staff member, Fiona, relayed the story of a family who traveled 45 minutes through peak hour traffic to attend the clinic by eight o’clock in the morning every week. Fiona also said that prior to enrolling in the centre, this same mother had searched the Internet to purchase *Nip* and *Fluff* reading books. *Nip* and *Fluff* were two characters in rote-learning style reading books that dominated literacy instruction in Australian primary schools for many years. This parent tracked them down because they were the books she had learnt to read with 20 years earlier. The parents interviewed in this case were very proactive in the education of their children.

Case Two – Tuition as Therapy

Premier Education Services - making it pay

This case deals with an owner-operated business that provided literacy instruction for primary school aged children. The owner, Carol, was the founder of the business, devised her own teaching methods and trained others to follow her methods. Carol was interviewed in May 2010. At the time of the interview Carol had only one part-time employee. However, this employee was pregnant and Carol expected her to leave the business. Carol was struggling with the issue of how to expand her business into a more financially rewarding enterprise.

Carol was a qualified teacher with many years of experience dealing with learning difficulties. Her business, *Premier Education Services* offered tuition on an individual basis. Her tuition targeted literacy acquisition and involved extensive initial assessment. Carol's business was similar to *Waterford Literacy Clinic* because it operated independently of any overarching organisation. It also had a similar price structure, catered exclusively for remediation and drew legitimacy from a strong, underlying theory of literacy acquisition.

Carol also liaised with an optometrist, Steven. He practised mainstream optometry from a store in the local shopping centre. He used his office to provide vision therapy for children with learning issues. Steven described his professional relationship with Carol as entailing "co-referring". At times Carol referred children to Steven for vision therapy. Steven was the only other participant interviewed for this case.

History

Carol's career began interstate. Carol was a three-year trained primary school teacher and spent her early career teaching in a mainstream classroom in Victoria. Carol completed her Bachelor of Education specialising in Special Education and gained experience working as a Learning Difficulties Coordinator in a primary school. Around this time she commenced Master of Education studies in the field of Learning Difficulties, and joined *Learning Difficulties Australia*, a professional organisation based at the University of Melbourne. Through this organisation Carol gained referrals of children with literacy issues whom she tutored in one-on-one teaching situations. When she moved to Perth, Carol was no longer able to receive referrals from *Learning Difficulties Australia* as the organisation did not provide referrals in Western Australia.

Carol has maintained her membership despite the fact that she cannot receive referrals, stating that her continued membership of *Learning Difficulties Australia* gave her “professional credibility”.

Carol relocated with her family to Perth and established an independent tutoring business. The business expanded and Carol trained and employed teachers to work with her. At its peak, the business provided tuition for 20 students yet in Carol’s words was still “a very tiny, little business”. A key reason that Carol established her own business was that she could work from home. At the time it enabled her to care for a sick family member. The family member recovered and, at the time of the interview, Carol was running her tuition business only one day a week. There was one teacher in her employ who tutored after school hours. Carol also worked outside of the home two days a week at a school providing support for children with learning difficulties. Another day was spent providing professional development for teachers in spelling lessons based on the techniques Carol had devised. This left one day in the week that Carol described as “a housewife day.”

Setting

Tuition took place in a single storey suburban home. Entry to the house was a hallway that led to a formal dining area and adjacent living area. The living area was sunken. The dining area was raised and provided the teaching space. There was a large dining table, children sat at the table with a semi-circular vinyl mat in front of them. The tutor sat alongside the student. One wall comprised of foldaway doors. These opened to reveal cupboards and a computer workstation. The cupboards contained a multitude of teaching resources and files related to the tutoring. It was like a foldaway classroom that instantly transformed a domestic meals space into a learning environment.

Initial testing and programme

Carol specialised in what she called “literacy processing issues”. She actively screened the children at the first point of contact with the parents. She would not work with children who had other learning difficulties. Once Carol ascertained that the children were suited to her intervention, she would conduct a detailed assessment. This assessment consisted of both standardised and diagnostic tests and took place over two sessions of one hour’s duration each. The assessments targeted phonological awareness, reading fluency, reading rate, word recognition, spelling tests and writing skills.

Finally, Carol spent an hour-long session with the parents explaining the written assessment report. The three-session assessment cost \$395.

Carol placed great emphasis on the objectivity of her assessment process and stressed that all the content of the written assessment was “factual”. The assessment provided the foundation for the intervention. Based on the assessment, Carol made specific recommendations, tailored to the needs of the child, setting goals and planning a programme to develop the child’s literacy skills. The programme, which targeted phonological awareness, reading skills and spelling skills, was founded on a theory of English orthography. This theory divided English orthography into three layers. Accordingly, Carol theorised that children read and spelt words differently at each of the three layers. As she stated:

The strategies for dealing with one syllable words are different to the strategies for dealing with two syllable words and different to the strategies for dealing with three. So I can’t teach them the strategies for two syllable words unless they’ve got their head around the one syllable words.

In the *Waterford Literacy Clinic* and *Premier Education Services*, different theoretical models informed teaching practices but both businesses featured locally developed pedagogies. *Premier Education Services’* underlying theory was based on language structure, whereas the *Waterford Literacy Clinic’s* theory was based on neurological structure. In both cases, the theories informed the teaching methods and provided educational legitimacy for the programmes.

Intervention and cost

Carol’s intervention was presented to parents as a 10-week package. The package consisted of ten weekly hour-long sessions. The cost was \$80 per session, grouped into two payments of \$440 each. To quote from *Premier Education’s* information sheet:

The first installment of \$440 is payable prior to the commencement of the first teaching session. The second installment of \$440 is due prior to the commencement of teaching session 6.

The 10 sessions included nine teaching sessions and a final session of review and feedback to the parents. Included in the fee was a kit of strategies for the child to use at home and school in support of his or her specific learning goals. These fees were set in

July 2008. Carol was considering increasing her fees but unsure whether a fee increase was a wise move.

The duration of the intervention varied. Carol noted that in some cases the initial 10-week intervention 'kick started' the child and no further involvement was required. In other cases a second 10-week package followed directly after the first. Alternatively, the child would take a break after the first 10 sessions and return to the programme at a later date. In some instances children had attended for four or five consecutive years for a 10-week package each year. Carol conducted a review assessment and reported to parents at the end of every 10-week package. At this review Carol recommended whether the student should cease or continue tuition.

Carol stated that she was "big" on homework. She required a commitment of 15 minutes a day and described the tasks as "short, sharp bursts" of activity. Carol expected parents to engage with children in the homework tasks and admonished parents, "this isn't like you're going to hand over responsibility for your child to me. You have to work as well". Carol provided teaching aids for the homework and stressed that the homework activities, particularly for spelling, were tactile rather than simply lists of words for rote learning.

Staff

At the time of the interview there were two staff members. Carol was the owner of the business and conducted all of her tuition on one day of the week, during school hours. Carol employed one part-time staff member to teach children outside school hours. Carol conducted all of the assessments, reported to parents and devised all the teaching programmes. The part-time staff member followed individualised teaching programmes that were devised by Carol. In other words Carol was the founder of the business, the theorist of the teaching methods and the main practitioner.

Clients

Carol was adamant that she only took on children as clients who had literacy processing issues. By referring to the child's educational history and conducting her initial assessment, Carol would determine whether a prospective client would benefit from her intervention. Carol also made general observations about the families she worked with.

Her first observation was that they were all able to afford the programme implying a level of affluence amongst her clients. Carol also noted:

Types of parents? Well your classic kids with learning difficulties usually have a parent that's had a learning difficulty and it's not linked to IQ so they're very clever people who as soon as they've left school have gone into a trade where they've become incredibly successful. So they're not your local 'work for somebody' plasterer. They own the whole business or are engineers or accountants. They are very intelligent people who know that their child can be taught...and know that their kids will be OK but they just have to get this level of literacy.

Through these comments Carol had a strong sense of parental motivation. Parents were presented as successful, motivated people who acted decisively when educational issues arose for their children. Carol also noted that some children had long histories of intervention that ranged across a number of services including private tuition, vision therapy, occupational therapy and speech pathology.

Marketing

The main way *Premier Education Services* attracted clients was through word-of-mouth. Carol observed that she would experience a of "run" of clients from a single primary school as parents spoke to each other about the business. A local speech therapist, occupational therapist and optometrist also referred clients to Carol. Formal advertising was restricted to producing a glossy brochure that did not have any systematic distribution.

Links to school

Carol reported limited contact with the schools that her clients attended. This was a two-way issue. Carol did not want the classroom teachers to interfere and potentially try to dictate the private tuition content. Conversely, Carol stated her belief that mainstream teachers were wary of her and her programme. She stated that in her view teachers were not going to like dealing with:

someone who works with kids at home sitting in their trackie. They don't know me. They don't know how I work.

This sense of distrust from private tuition providers towards mainstream teachers was evident in most of the cases included in this study. The only exception was the case of the moonlighting teacher and will be discussed in more depth later in this chapter. As was the case at the *Waterford Literacy Clinic*, NAPLAN provided a source of clients.

Carol observed that when the NAPLAN test scores reported by schools were lower than expected parents would ring her for an assessment.

Referrals

Carol received referrals from three distinct professionals, a local speech pathologist, a local occupational therapist and a local optometrist. Carol co-referred with the optometrist, Steven. Carol and Steven, provided distinct, but in their opinions, complementary interventions. Steven and Carol had been associated for eight years. Steven's primary business was mainstream optometry and his client-base for behavioural optometry was small with a maximum of 10 children each year. Steven estimated that he would "inter-refer" between five and eight children with Carol each year. He also referred children to speech therapists and occupational therapists, depending on their perceived need. Carol had also posited the notion of establishing small group therapy in partnership with Steven as a possible way to expand her business.

Steven provided intervention based on behavioural optometry. Steven described the difference between regular optometry and behavioural optometry in the following terms:

I think in essence we don't look at just the eye and how the eye itself is performing. You look at it as part of the entire entity and you not only do that but you consider what other circumstances, be they genetic, be they environmental, be they educational, and how they impact on somebody's performance in the visual sense.

The intervention took a more holistic approach to vision and consisted of a 10 week course, typically clients completed two consecutive courses. Each course cost \$1,000. Children met individually with Steven for half an hour once a week and completed daily eye exercises at home. Steven and Carol did not run their interventions concurrently. Carol stated that she would not take on a client who was already engaged in another intervention, whether in behavioural optometry, speech therapy or occupational therapy. Instead, she recommended that they completed the other intervention, and then engaged with her.

Business acumen and job satisfaction

Throughout Carol's interview, there was tension evident between her desire to build a career based on the style of teaching she loved and her desire to run a profitable

business. Carol expressed love for her field of expertise and stated that she most enjoyed teaching in a one-on-one situation. Conscious that the cost to the parents of this mode of delivery was already quite expensive, Carol was unsure how to increase the financial return of her business. Carol compared the service she provided with that of a speech therapist but observed that her fees were not commensurate with that of a therapist.

Carol speculated throughout the interview about strategies that would increase the profitability of her tuition business. She considered setting up a group intervention in conjunction with Steven, the behavioural optometrist. She expressed a need to engage a business manager. Carol also speculated about setting up a shop front business premises but lamented that such a move would take her away from “hands-on” teaching. Carol had visited a small business advisory centre and devised a business plan.

Carol expressed doubts about her ability to expand the business. She stated that she was not very “business oriented”, citing the fact that parents often had to prompt her to invoice them. She also described getting into trouble from her accountant for the money she spent on new resources. Her roles as a primary school’s support teacher and a presenter of professional development courses were more lucrative for Carol than her tuition business. Yet Carol preferred the work in her own business, as it was “more rewarding”. Of the day spent providing tuition, Carol remarked, “this has become like a hobby. I don’t know how to make money.” Nonetheless, individual literacy instruction remained her preferred profession and she observed, “I think I will always do this... I love my field. I love doing my work.”

Case Three– Franchised Tuition

The Lee Colbourne Centre - dealing with diversity

This case describes a thriving tuition business that operated under the umbrella of an Australia-wide franchise. The *Lee Colbourne Centre* catered for a diverse group of clients and provided a diverse range of services. Clients ranged from preschoolers to adults. The centre catered for families from a wide range of socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. Three staff members and four families were interviewed for this case. The three staff members included the director of the centre (Jacqui), one of her tutors

(Alice) and one of her teaching assistants (Amanda). Jacqui liaised closely with a naturopath and a kinesiologist who were also interviewed for this study.

As stated earlier, the business was a franchise. The overarching organisation provided a business plan, teaching programmes and promotional materials. Jacqui's business clearly followed the Australia-wide model of a *Lee Colbourne Centre*; even the centre's décor reflected the colours of the company logo. Numerous brochures and posters from the franchise were on display in the centre's foyer that served as a waiting room. Jacqui stated that she often followed the teaching programmes provided by the franchise, particularly for primary school-aged children. She also stressed that she sometimes supplemented the standard programmes with her own teaching materials.

History

Jacqui founded her tuition centre in 2002. Jacqui's teaching career began in mainstream schooling in the 1980s. Her initial qualifications were in teaching and psychology, and she was also qualified in teaching children with special needs. The early years of her career were spent providing education support in Education Department schools. Jacqui took leave from the Education Department to start a family and while on leave ran a private kindergarten. Hence prior to establishing her tuition centre she had extensive teaching and business experience. Following the death of her husband from illness, Jacqui had friends who recommended the *Lee Colbourne* business model to her. Jacqui expressed initial reluctance because her children were still quite young. However on further investigation she said that, "I quickly realised that it was exactly what I needed."

Jacqui's first *Lee Colbourne Centre* was located in rented premises in a large warehouse. Jacqui stated it consisted of:

115 square metres so we sort of swam around there to start with
and it was fairly grotty but we developed that very steadily.

At that first location the business grew to cater for over 100 children. Following the move to a second premises, the business grew to cater for over 300 clients, both children and adults. The second premises consisted of six small office spaces. Jacqui bought the premises and renovated the space to create two large teaching rooms and two small offices. The centre operated six days a week, mainly outside school hours. Jacqui had 20 staff in her employ, consisting of 12 teachers and eight teaching assistants.

Setting

The centre was located in a small complex of business premises on a busy road. Entry to the centre was via a glass door that was decorated with the company logo and a list of subjects taught at the centre. The tuition centre featured two teaching rooms, two small offices, a waiting area, a kitchenette and a small bathroom. Jacqui's office space was in a corner of one of the teaching rooms, partitioned off from the waiting area. The front door opened into the waiting area, or foyer, furnished with a table, chairs and a shelf of children's books. The walls of the waiting area were adorned with framed certificates that charted the business' growth. There were also framed copies of Jacqui's qualifications, her WACOT registration, an excellence in teaching award from 1999, the business' registration certificate and the Australian Tutoring Association membership certificate. A notice board in the waiting area displayed *Lee Colbourne* brochures and clippings from the local newspaper of articles about the centre.

The two teaching rooms were arranged similarly. Computers on desks lined the walls creating individual workstations; in the centre of each room there were two large tables. Children worked independently at the computers while tutors supervised and provided assistance when children put up their hands. At the central tables children worked with tutors more intensely, in either one-on-one or small group situations.

Jacqui did not use either of the small office spaces herself. A desk, filing cabinet, photocopier and shelves located in the corner of one of the teaching rooms served as Jacqui's office. One of the small offices was rented to a child psychologist who Jacqui referred clients to. This psychologist was one of three professionals who worked closely with Jacqui. The other two were a naturopath and a kinesiologist. At the time of the interviews, the kinesiologist was using the second small office space to run short consultations with the clients referred to her by Jacqui.

Initial testing and programme

The *Lee Colbourne Centre* offered free initial testing. This included the assessment, feedback about the assessment and planning of an individualised teaching programme based on the results of the assessment. Jacqui conducted the initial assessments for all of the children and adults enrolled in the centre and planned the first teaching session for every client. After the initial session, the tutors took on the programming task and

Jacqui provided support as required. Clients were reassessed at six monthly intervals to chart their progress.

Jacqui described the teaching programme as “individualised within a group setting”. In other words the programme content was individually tailored to suit the client but was delivered in a small group setting. For primary school-aged children the ratio was a maximum of five children to every teacher. The programmes drew heavily on the teaching material provided by the franchise, which Jacqui described as a “very powerful” resource. Jacqui noted that the founder of the franchise did not approve of supplementary materials being used; nonetheless, Jacqui did supplement the programmes with her own resources. Jacqui explained that the franchised material “forms the core, it just makes life so much easier if you follow the programme.”

Intervention and cost

The centre operated on the basis of ongoing enrolment in weekly sessions that followed the school calendar. The cost was 48 dollars for a weekly session of one hour and 20 minutes’ duration. Discounts applied in a few situations: paying for a 10-week block attracted a discount; enrolling siblings or enrolling in a second weekly session also attracted discounts. The vast majority of the intervention took place outside school hours. The timetable consisted of 80 minute sessions after school on weekdays and all day on Saturdays. Every weekday there were at least two after school sessions. The first session ran from 4pm until 5.20pm. The second session ran from 5.40pm until 7pm. Three evenings each week a third session ran until 8.45pm. The centre also ran 80 minute sessions all day on Saturdays during school terms.

Jacqui stated that English and Math’s tuition were the mainstays of the business. In both cases she observed that the emphases were on the development of foundation skills such as spelling, reading, comprehension and times tables. As she commented in relation to math’s tuition:

We don’t follow curriculum as such. I get this question a lot, ‘How closely do we follow school curriculum?’ We teach skills. Children need to learn times tables, they need to learn basic facts, they need to learn processes for fractions, so once we assess and work out what it is a kid needs, we work on that. Now I don’t care if he’s in Year 10, if he doesn’t know his times tables then we need to work on those times tables.

Jacqui qualified these comments by observing that for older primary school students and secondary students there was scope to “work alongside” the school programmes. Yet even for students at the upper levels of schooling she stated that the main focus was on identifying and teaching the basic skills or “building blocks” that were missing from the child’s repertoire.

To reinforce the basic skills taught at the centre, homework was set for the students. Jacqui estimated that on average she expected students to complete 15 minutes of homework each day. Jacqui emphasised that she was careful not to overburden the students with homework tasks and that not all of her students actually completed the set tasks. Furthermore, she observed that some parents requested so much homework for their children that “it verged on cruelty.” Jacqui recalled parents who wanted their children to complete an hour of homework each day.

The *Lee Colbourne Centre* focused primarily on remedial English and Mathematics tuition but also offered a wider selection of educational tuition. The business offered Physics and Chemistry tuition for secondary students, extension programmes for high achievers, study skills training, life coaching and English as a Second Language instruction. In this way it operated as a “one-stop education shop”, providing a wide range of services to a varied clientele.

Staff

The staff at the centre consisted of a director, tutors, teaching assistants and an administrative assistant. Jacqui was the director and she was present at the centre during every teaching session. Jacqui also conducted all of the initial assessments and wrote the initial programmes. Jacqui employed 20 staff members, made up of 12 qualified teachers and eight assistants. All of Jacqui’s tutors were fully qualified teachers with WACOT registrations. Two of the tutors had qualifications at doctoral level. Seven assistants provided purely education support. The eighth assistant provided education and administrative support. Three staff members were interviewed for this study.

Jacqui was formally interviewed twice in the course of data collection. One tutor, Alice, worked during every session every week. Alice, an experienced teacher who had completed qualifications at a doctoral level, was interviewed for the study. Alice began

as a primary school teacher but her career was interrupted by two years of illness in 1986 and 1987. Since the late 1980s Alice had taught at the secondary and tertiary levels of education. Eventually she entered private tutoring centres and was employed by two different directors of *Lee Colbourne Centres* before meeting Jacqui. Alice had been working with Jacqui since 2006.

Finally, Amanda was interviewed. Amanda was an assistant who provided teaching and administrative support as a part-time job. She was a full-time university student. Amanda was also Jacqui's daughter and during her secondary schooling years had attended the centre as a student. Her interview provided information from the dual perspectives of a former client and of a staff member of the centre.

Clients

The bulk of Jacqui's clients were school students requiring remediation in English and Mathematics. Jacqui described these students as "a core of struggling children" who were "easily catered for" by the franchise's programme. At the other end of the spectrum Jacqui enrolled students she described as "exceptionally bright" who required extension programmes. In between these two groups were the students Jacqui described as "average kids who want to get better." Jacqui was also prepared to take on students with pronounced learning difficulties, including children with autism or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) diagnoses. When dealing with these children Jacqui drew on her years of experience in the field of Special Education.

Jacqui's clients were also from a range of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. There were children from wealthy backgrounds who attended private schools. There were also children from families of lower socio-economic status who, according to Jacqui have more disposable income because they often do not have mortgages to pay. A few students lived in foster care and their tuition fees were subsidised by a government agency. Therefore, Jacqui's clients represented a wide spectrum of the population of the Perth metropolitan area. This wide spectrum also applied to the students' cultural backgrounds. There were families from Anglo-European, Indian, Chinese, Iranian and Indigenous backgrounds enrolled in the centre. Representatives from four families were interviewed for this case. All of the interviews were conducted at the tuition centre. The children included were Jacob aged five, Jessica aged 12, Layla aged 12 and Sean aged 12.

Jacob and his mother Vicki were both interviewed. Vicki was a full-time parent and her husband was employed full-time. Jacob had a younger sister, aged 2. Vicki anticipated that her daughter would also attend the tuition centre during her early schooling years. Jacob was the youngest student enrolled in the centre. He attended once a week for academic extension in both English and Math's. Jacob had been accelerated from pre-primary into Year One at a local Catholic school. He was originally enrolled in a local state school; however, Vicki said he was bored and under stimulated in that environment. Vicki likened his experience with the state school to a "jail sentence" and a "detention camp". After Jacob enrolled in the tuition centre, Jacqui recommended the local catholic school to Vicki. Vicki changed Jacob's school and reported that he became more engaged in and excited about school after the change. Jacob had several extra-curricula activities as well. He was enrolled in cricket, karate, swimming lessons and Yamaha music lessons in addition to his Saturday session at the *Lee Colbourne Centre*. Vicki was very proactive in her approach to parenting and stated that she enrolled him in various activities to meet his needs:

He may always need it [tuition] and if he always needs it that's part of it. Same as he goes to karate and he does his swimming. We take care of his physical body, he's enrolled in his cricket that he wants to do. So we take care of that part, this [tuition] has to take care of his mind.

Jeff was the only father interviewed for this study. His daughter, Jessica, had been attending the *Lee Colbourne* for only a few weeks at the time of the interview. She attended for one session a week and received tuition in Math and English. In explaining his motivation for enrolling Jessica in tuition, Jeff observed:

I think she's quite clever but she doesn't like to push it if you know what I mean. She'd like to coast along. With her going to high school next year I thought it could be good for her to get a bit of prompting, pushing. Because I think these guys here will probably push more than what the school would.

Jessica attended her local state school. She had two adult siblings and lived with both of her parents. Jeff recounted Jessica's ambition to work with animals, either as a veterinarian or in a zoo. Jeff voiced his suspicion that Jessica would need to top marks to gain admission to veterinary science and that this anticipated need contributed to his decision to enroll her in tutoring. However, Jeff's focus was also on Jessica's current schooling needs, as he said,

At the end of the day, if I can make her schoolwork easier for her to do and less stressful for her to do then it's going to be worth it.

Julia was a grandmother who was the primary carer for her granddaughter, Layla. Their household consisted of just the two of them. Julia and Layla were indigenous and Julia stated that racism had impacted negatively on both Layla's and her own schooling experiences. Julia's schooling experiences were very negative. Consequently she gained the majority of her formal education when she was aged in her forties. Julia stated that she wanted to see Layla have an easier path to higher education. Layla, at the age of 12, had already changed schools once to avoid racial teasing from her peers. Julia stated that Layla had started to fall behind the rest of her class in Math, which prompted the enrolment at the *Lee Colbourne Centre*. As Julia observed:

I think if you don't nip the problem in the bud when they first start to have problems that they can fall behind and then there's a big lot of catching up to do. I don't want that. I want her to be ahead.

Julia expressed high educational aspirations for Layla and a hope that Layla would attend university. On the other hand, she professed to accept whatever Layla decided to do:

...if she just said, 'Nanny, I want to sweep roads.' As long as she's happy and content. But I think she's going to need a challenge in her life to keep her going.

Sean, a Year 7 student, had been enrolled at the centre since Year 3. He was interviewed with his mother, Lynn, in September 2010. According to Lynn, Sean was enrolled in the centre as a direct consequence of negative schooling experiences. During Year 3 he had a classroom teacher whom Lynn described as "awful". In response to this experience, Lynn and her husband surmised:

Because what we thought was that he'll [Sean] probably always get teachers that he doesn't get on with or who don't like him but that doesn't mean to say his schoolwork has to suffer, so my main reason [for enrolling Sean in the centre] was so he could keep up in class and it didn't matter what his teacher was like, whether she was good, bad or indifferent.

Sean had two older sisters, who both received tuition during their secondary schooling. Lynn said it had been difficult to find private tutors for the girls and that Sean's ongoing enrolment at the *Lee Colbourne Centre* would meet this need for him, as she said:

Because he's been going through it [tuition] steadily, it'll just be continued. It won't be a last minute panic, 'Where are we going? Is it any good?'

Tuition had been a feature of Sean's education for four years at the time of the interview and Lynn anticipated that it would be ongoing for the rest of his school years. Sean received tuition in English and Mathematics. Through the centre, in 2010, he entered a national math's competition and won the times tables challenge. Sean was enrolled in the centre in 2006 for remediation; however, by 2010 he was continuing tuition for the purposes of extension.

Representatives from four families with children enrolled at the *Lee Colbourne Centre* were interviewed for this study. They reflected the diversity of the client population. Two boys and two girls were included, ranging in age from five years old to 12 years old. They attended for extension and remediation education. The duration of their tuition at the time of the interviews varied from a few weeks to four years. The families were also culturally diverse: Jacob's parents were from New Zealand; Julia and Layla were Aboriginal; Lynn was from a non-English speaking background. The standout feature of the clientele of the *Lee Colbourne Centre* was diversity.

Marketing

One of the key marketing elements for the families interviewed in this case was the location of the centre. The four families all lived in close proximity to the centre. The centre advertised in the local newspapers but the director stressed that she only used advertisements on the front page. Jacqui also contacted the local newspaper to inform them of news items that relate to the centre. For example, an article that reported on Sean's win in the times table competition was printed in the local paper. The centre also advertised in the Yellow Pages; however, Jacqui stated that this was a very expensive way to advertise and she doubted its efficacy.

Jacqui expressed greater faith in the efficacy of the Internet in relation to marketing. As she said:

I'm online whenever I can get it because everybody seems to – even if they look up the Yellow Pages they will then go to the website. Every call I'm getting it's referring to some aspect of my website.

The centre had its own website and was linked to the website for the overarching franchise. Jacqui claimed that the owner of the franchise paid a lot of money to gain high access on the Google search engine. In addition to the websites, Jacqui posted her regular newsletters on the Internet. Printed copies of the newsletters were sent home with every child enrolled in the centre and previous issues were available in the waiting room.

Word-of-mouth was also an important aspect of marketing. Jacqui observed that the “schoolyard gossip” was a major factor in terms of business reputation and described gaining new clients through recommendations from previous clients. In some cases this entailed younger siblings attending the centre and in other cases clients referred their schoolmates and friends to the centre. Sean reported that at least two of his school friends were attending the centre because he had recommended it to them. Jacqui also stated that some classroom teachers referred children to the centre.

Links to School

Jacqui described her business’ role as supplemental in the following terms:

...we pick up those basic skills that teachers knock their heads against the walls with.

Jacqui produced a letter of introduction and information package that explained to teachers how the centre operated and invited teachers to contact the centre. However, the package was only sent to classroom teachers with the parents’ permission.

According to Jacqui not all parents wanted the mainstream teachers to be involved in the tuition. Conversely, not all teachers responded to the package by contacting the centre.

None of the parents interviewed for this case facilitated contact between the school and the tuition centre. Jeff and Lynn, two of the parents interviewed for this case expressed their belief that it was not necessary for classroom teachers to be informed about their children’s tuition. Vicki explained that Jacob’s state school teachers, including the school’s deputy principal were openly hostile to the idea of Jacob receiving out of school tuition; subsequently Vicki enrolled Jacob in a Catholic school recommended to her by Jacqui. Julia stated that Layla had only been enrolled in tuition for a month at the time of the interview and had moved schools in the interim. Julia had not yet

notified the new school that Layla was receiving tuition but stated that it “would be good for the two to be working together.”

Alice, the tutor employed at the centre, reported that as students progressed into the upper secondary years, her tutoring followed the school curriculum more closely. She stressed that foundational skills were still the major focus but in addition she asked secondary students about their programmes at school and tailored tuition to match those programmes. In this sense Alice described her role as “complementing and supplementing what the teachers are doing at school.”

As with the previous two cases, NAPLAN generated business for Jacqui. She observed that “when NAPLAN is approaching we get a rush of people in a panic to train their kids for NAPLAN.” The panic Jacqui observed in both parents and children worried her. She described NAPLAN as “a flash in the pan” and not truly indicative of children’s educational capabilities.

Referrals

Jacqui had a small network of people to whom she referred students. The network comprised of a naturopath, a kinesiologist and a psychologist. The naturopath operated from consulting rooms located several kilometres away from the *Lee Colbourne Centre*. The kinesiologist generally used consulting rooms in a separate location to the centre but once a week hired one of Jacqui’s small offices to consult with children who attended the centre. The psychologist rented the other small office in Jacqui’s building and therefore conducted her practice on-site at the tuition centre.

Alan was the naturopath to whom Jacqui referred clients. His intervention focused on dietary management and supplementation. He advised clients to cut artificial additives from their diets and to identify food allergies. He also used mineral and vitamin supplements. Alan identified problems of allergies, gut inflammations and mineral deficiencies that theoretically impacted on children’s abilities to learn effectively. Jacqui and her other family members consulted naturopaths to deal with their own health issues. Jacqui reported that she most often referred children with concentration issues, including children diagnosed with ADHD or Autism, to Alan.

Rebecca was the kinesiologist associated with the centre. During her kinesiology studies, Rebecca worked for Jacqui part-time at the centre as a tutor. Earlier in her career she had run her own tuition business and before that was a mainstream teacher. Rebecca's intervention used a combination of brain gym activities and rhythmic exercises. Rebecca explained her intervention as "working with the neurological development of children and you're doing it by movement." Rebecca both accepted referrals from Jacqui and referred children to Jacqui. Jacqui stated that she was able to ascertain very quickly whether a new client should be referred to Rebecca. Jacqui said she referred children who demonstrated issues of cross-dominance, problems crossing the midline, low reading ability and spelling difficulties to Rebecca.

Alan and Rebecca were interviewed for the study. Wendy, the psychologist, was not. Jacob's mother, Vicki, recounted that Jacob had been referred to Wendy. The referral related to behaviour Jacob was demonstrating at home, rather than in tuition. Alan, Rebecca and Wendy were not directly engaged in education but Jacqui used their interventions to complement her work, as Rebecca stated:

It's interesting the complementary industry that's developing around education, just as it did around health. So somewhere there's something not right in the way the system's working.

Dealing with diversity

This case provided an example of a tuition business that provided a wide range of services and dealt with a wide range of students. The business provided remediation and extension for primary school aged children, offering tuition in secondary Math, English, Chemistry, Physics and study skills. The business liaised with a network of services such as naturopathy, kinesiology and psychology to deal with issues that impacted on children's abilities to learn. Jacqui, the director, determined the breadth and scope of the business. Jacqui approached the task of providing tuition as a problem-solving exercise; when a client presented Jacqui with an educational issue, Jacqui had a number of options to address that issue. In this sense she provided a one-stop education service to supplement or complement her clients' mainstream education.

Jacqui's clients were incredibly diverse. They ranged from pre-primary students to adults, including students who ranged from well below average to well above average in terms of educational achievement. Some of Jacqui's clients were average students seeking above average grades at school; some of her clients were diagnosed with

specific learning difficulties. Families catered for by the centre came from a wide range of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. Unlike the previous two cases that only dealt with specific issues, it would be a rare occurrence for Jacqui to turn a potential client away without offering some form of tuition at her centre.

Case Four– Franchised Tuition

Moreno Tutoring - doing it her way.

This case describes the *Moreno Tutoring* centre. Like the previous case, this centre operated under the umbrella of an Australian tutoring franchise based interstate. In the previous case the director supplemented the teaching materials provided by the franchise. In this case the director devised her own curriculum. She used the business model provided by the franchise but designed all of the teaching programmes and materials herself. Subsequently, she described her teaching service as unique; unlike any other available throughout Western Australia.

The centre had over 100 primary school-aged students enrolled. It provided tuition in numeracy, literacy and test-taking skills. Five part-time staff worked closely with the director and provided the tuition. The centre had been established for less than five years at the time of the interview with its director, Elaine.

History

The centre was established in 2006 and began as a centre offering both secondary and primary school students tuition in English and Mathematics. The business grew steadily and since 2007 had operated at full capacity with waiting lists for admission. Towards the end of 2009, the secondary school tuition split from the primary school tuition and moved into the adjacent premises. Elaine was the director of the centre for primary school tuition and the data for this case was collected through her interview.

Elaine originally trained as a pre-primary teacher in Perth, WA. After two years of mainstream teaching, Elaine returned to study and gained qualifications in Special Education and subsequently taught at a school for hearing impaired students in Perth. Elaine's career was disrupted by moves to Darwin and then South Australia. During her time away from Perth, Elaine gained experience teaching in upper primary and high school classes. She also worked as a consultant providing support to teachers in the areas of literacy and numeracy education. Elaine also worked as a regional officer

supporting students with disabilities. Her career was then disrupted by the illness of a family member and Elaine spent five years caring for her sick child. When Elaine returned to Perth and attempted to restart her career, she was told that she could not get a teaching job unless she underwent supervision. Elaine rejected this option and contemplated leaving teaching until she attended a seminar about the *Moreno Tutoring* centres and decided to enter business as a provider of private tuition.

Setting

Physically, the *Moreno Tutoring* centre resembled the *Lee Colbourne Centre*. As with the *Lee Colbourne Centre*, entry to *Moreno Tutoring* was via a glass door featuring signage with the company logo and a list of subjects taught at the centre. The centre was also located in a small complex of business premises on a busy road. Inside the centre, one wall was lined with computers on desks and there were three tables scattered around the centre of the room. The centre was smaller than the *Lee Colbourne Centre* and featured one teaching room rather than two. Elaine had an administration desk in one corner of the room and near the entry door there was a waiting foyer.

Elaine stressed that the tone of the centre was a key element in its success. She stated that the centre was a very positive place and that engendering a supportive atmosphere was absolutely critical to its operation. Elaine described how the staff at the centre celebrated children's achievements and how the children enjoyed attending tuition. Elaine relayed that parents noticed and commented on the "buzz of learning" that emanated from the centre.

Initial Testing and programme

In the area of testing and programme planning, *Moreno Tutoring* was similar to the *Lee Colbourne Centre* in one key aspect. Initial testing was free and included written and verbal reports on the results. Elaine conducted all of the testing and reporting. She said that the initial testing was not only cost free but also obligation free. After the initial testing, if the parents decided to go ahead with tuition, Elaine planned an individualised teaching programme for the child. In 2010 this entailed planning for over 100 students every week.

Although the teaching programmes were individually tailored to each student, they were delivered in small group settings. Elaine employed tutors to assist in the delivery of the

programmes while she planned the lessons and supervised the teaching. The *Moreno Tutoring* franchise provided teaching materials but according to Elaine it was not mandatory to use the materials provided. In fact, Elaine stated that she did not use any of the franchise's teaching materials but rather drew on her own experience and resources to devise the teaching programmes.

Intervention and cost

Like the *Lee Colbourne Centre*, *Moreno Tutoring* operated on the basis of ongoing enrolment in weekly sessions that followed the school calendar. After 15 sessions children were assessed and their programmes adjusted accordingly. For primary school children the cost was 45 dollars per session for a 70-minute lesson. Fees were paid on a weekly or fortnightly basis, or in five-week or 10-week blocks.

According to the centre's information sheet, the centre provided two types of classes for primary school-aged students: the *Primary Tutoring Classes* and the *Early School Year Classes*. The *Primary Tutoring Classes* were organised on small group bases with eight students working with three staff members. The sessions provided remediation in basic Mathematics and English skills. Most sessions operated outside of school hours and ran for seventy minutes. On weekdays there were two after school sessions and two sessions on Saturday mornings.. The centre operated until 10 past six on a weekday. The bulk of the teaching occurred during these sessions. Elaine offered more intense tuition in her *Early School Year Classes*.

The *Early School Year Classes* also cost forty-five dollars per session but were of one hour's duration. According to the parent information sheet published by the centre:

These classes are for students who have not yet achieved the basic understandings and skills of reading, writing and mathematics, although they have attended school for a period of time.

The *Early School Year Classes* provided tuition with a ratio of two students to one teacher. Through these classes, Elaine was able to cater for children with a range of special needs including vision impairment, autism, dyslexia, dyspraxia and ADHD. Some of these classes were offered during or overlapping school hours and children were withdrawn from school to attend.

In addition Elaine offered short-term programmes teaching test-taking skills. These programmes operated over a single school term and were designed to prepare students for scholarship examinations or the Gifted and Talented Extension (GATE) programme offered by the Education Department. The test-taking skills programme focused on extension rather than remediation.

Elaine's centre differed from the *Lee Colbourne Centre* in one key aspect. Elaine did not set any homework for the children at her centre. She deemed homework unnecessary because her tuition achieved good results based solely on the learning activities provided during the tuition sessions. Elaine also expressed concern that setting tuition homework would place unnecessary strain on families. As she observed:

We don't need homework. What we do is successful without homework and because we come across a range of schools, but more importantly, families are very busy now. Kids do a lot after school. You have both parents working. We're not here to make families' lives harder. We're here to change outcomes for students.

Staff

The staff consisted of the director, Elaine, and five part-time staff members in her employ. As stated earlier, Elaine was a teacher with extensive experience working in mainstream classrooms and providing support for students with special needs. Her five part-time teachers were all registered with WACOT. Elaine provided two days of training for her part-time staff members and provided ongoing training and support. Elaine stated that it was not sufficient for a teacher to be fully trained and WACOT registered if they wanted to work for her. As Elaine said:

The most important thing is that they first have to like children, which many teachers don't, and they also have to have an affinity with where the children are in terms of their self-esteem and the impact this has on the parents especially when children first start at our centre.

Clients

According to Elaine, the majority of her clients were disengaged from learning because of negative classroom experiences. Accordingly, Elaine professed a belief that addressing issues of low self esteem due to lack of success in school was a priority in her tuition centre. Elaine described the children in the following terms:

...most have tuned out and it takes us quite a while to get them tuned in to what they need to be doing because school's just got

too hard or it's just not a pleasant place for them to be, or they don't feel successful. So most kids have just tuned out and they just go through the motions without really learning.

Elaine also expressed her belief that her centre provided support to whole families, not just the children attending the centre. She noted that when parents approached her they were often very frustrated by their experiences with schools. When discussing clients Elaine slipped between referring to the students and referring to the parents, or families, of the students. She explained the link between tuition and family life:

I think the benefits are we support the whole family so we will talk to them about schooling. We are a neutral place that they can come and go through their problems...It's also beneficial because we change families. Instead of having a child that may be, because of low self esteem, difficult at home. They change to becoming lovely little children again and can be a positive member of the family. So we support parents and we support them.

Marketing

Elaine did not advertise her centre. All of her business was gained through word of mouth, spread mainly through parent networks, although some classroom teachers recommended Elaine's centre to their students. Elaine expressed her belief that demand for tuition remained constant and that the success of any single tuition business relied upon its reputation, as she said:

I think once parents as a network find a tutoring place that is good and it meets their needs and it's successful, then demand on that tutoring centre increases dramatically but I don't think the actual degree of tutoring ever changes, the demand ever changes.

Links to School

Elaine professed to operate her centre in support of schools. She was adamant that the service provided by her centre was not a substitute for mainstream schooling. Elaine expressed understanding that classroom teachers lacked enough time to address every child's needs. She also expressed a belief that many teachers felt threatened that parents sought assistance outside of the school system in a centre such as *Moreno Tutoring*. Elaine made particular mention of the antagonism that school principals had shown towards her. When teachers were willing to have contact with the tuition centre, Elaine sent copies of her written reports on children's initial and subsequent assessments.

As in the previous cases, NAPLAN had generated business for Elaine. However she expressed reservations about the degree of pressure her students experienced to perform well on NAPLAN and, as was the case for Jacqui, Elaine expressed doubts about whether NAPLAN provided a true indication of children's abilities. On the positive side, Elaine stated her belief that NAPLAN caused mainstream teachers to teach explicitly basic writing skills and grammar and she described such teaching as "a much better way to go."

Referrals

Elaine mentioned parents and teachers referring new clients to the centre. She made no mention of referring any of her clients onto other therapists, or of receiving referrals from other professionals such as speech therapists or occupational therapists. In this sense Elaine's centre was more self-contained than the *Lee Colbourne Centre* that was involved in a network of inter-referrals.

Doing it her way

The director, Elaine, dominated this case. In part this is because Elaine was the only informant for the case. Nonetheless, Elaine conducted all the testing and wrote every lesson for each of the one hundred children enrolled in the centre. Elaine trained her staff and liaised with parents and teachers. Elaine preferred to draw on her own knowledge and professional experience rather than rely on the teaching materials provided by her franchise. Elaine took a very engaged, hands-on approach to running her tuition centre. The centre had grown steadily under her leadership and was operating at full capacity. Future growth may well require Elaine to reassess her ubiquitous role in the centre.

Case Five – Moonlighting Tuition

Sandi Venner - an ongoing concern

The final case deals with a teacher who provided relief teaching at her local primary school and tutored two children from the same school after school hours. Her business operated in her home on a very informal basis. This case differs from the previous four cases because the links between the tutor and the school are very strong. Three informants were interviewed for this case. They included the tutor, one of the children tutored and one parent of the tutored child.

Over the course of data collection for this study several informants noted that children engaged in tuition often had long histories of intervention aimed at improving their educational achievement. Charlotte from the *Waterford Literacy Clinic* is an obvious example of this phenomenon. In this case, the parent (Karin) interviewed provided a detailed history of the interventions that her child (Roy) had experienced. An annal of these interventions will be included in this case description to introduce the notion that for some children tuition does not have a clear end point. In this case, Karin anticipated that for Roy private tuition would be a constant feature of his schooling experience.

History

Sandi, the tutor in this case, had a lengthy career as a mainstream primary school teacher employed by the Education Department of Western Australia. She taught full-time for ten years after graduating from college then left work to have a family. Sandi subsequently returned to the workforce and eventually left full-time teaching in favour of relief teaching. In 2010, at the time of her interview, Sandi estimated that she had been providing relief teaching at her local primary school for between five and seven years. She had a teaching career that spanned 35 years of experience in primary school classrooms.

According to Sandi private tutoring was not a role that she actively pursued for herself. In 2007 Sandi was invited to take on a role as *An Even Start* tutor. As outlined in Chapter Two, *An Even Start* was a federally funded programme that provided 12 hours of tuition vouchers to students who fell below national benchmarks in Australia-wide standardised tests of literacy and numeracy. Sandi was the only teacher at the school willing to take on the tutoring role. In Sandi's case *An Even Start* tuition was provided during school hours, in a school classroom and was delivered in small group settings.

Sandi noted that when parents became aware that she was providing small group tuition in the school, they approached her to provide private tuition after school hours. According to Sandi she took on private tuition students only because parents approached her and asked her to help them. Interestingly, Sandi stated that she preferred the one-on-one tuition that she provided in her home to the small group tuition provided at the school. Sandi said that although she had very few students at the time of her interview this was due to her commitment to her relief-teaching role at the school.

She speculated that on retirement from classroom teaching she may increase her tuition role.

Setting

Sandi provided private tuition in her single-storey suburban home. As she explained:

I work in the meals area. It's central and there's a table where there's nothing around so they (the children) can't fiddle. As it is they're moving the ruler and moving the rubber.

Sandi stressed that she preferred teaching from home because there were fewer distractions and interruptions to break the children's concentration.

Initial Testing and programme

Sandi did not conduct any initial diagnostic testing. Instead she gained access to testing conducted at school and consulted with her students' classroom teachers to determine her tuition goals. The fact that she was able to access school records indicated that her links to the school were very strong. She was the only tutor in the study that had direct access to school test results.

Intervention and cost

Sandi charged 35 dollars for a weekly 45-minute tuition session. All sessions took place after school hours between 4.30 and 6.00pm. Tuition fees were paid weekly in cash. The sessions followed the school term, breaking for school holidays. Tuition was provided on an ongoing basis until either Sandi informed the parents she had achieved her tuition goals or until parents decided to terminate the tuition arrangement.

Sandi did not set homework as she said she believed that families were very busy. However, she did say that she would love to be able to ask children to complete tasks at home between tuition sessions. Instead she reported that she tried to pack as much teaching into her tuition sessions as possible.

Staff

Sandi was the only staff member in this case.

Clients

At the time of the interview, Sandi had two clients. One boy needed numeracy tuition and one boy (Roy) needed literacy tuition. Sandi identified concentration difficulties as

common issues in the children requiring tuition. One of Sandi's clients, Roy, and his mother, Karin, were interviewed. Roy was initially tutored by Sandi at school as part of the *An Even Start* programme. When that programme finished, Karin asked Sandi to continue providing literacy tuition on a private basis. Sandi was Roy's second literacy tutor and he had also received speech and occupational therapy during his early school years. To better understand the path Roy traveled that led to literacy tuition it is pertinent to briefly list the various interventions he had before working with Sandi. Furthermore, tutors and parents from the other cases in this study mentioned the long histories of intervention that some children had experienced prior to their engagement in tuition. Therefore, presenting Roy's history as an annal of interventions is helpful to illustrate how one child ended up in private tuition.

Figure 5.1: Roy's annal of interventions

1999 Roy born prematurely at 33 weeks gestation.

2000 Surgical procedure to correct a floppy larynx.

2003 Roy attended kindergarten. He underwent speech therapy and had a 10-week block of occupational therapy. He was assessed by an audiologist who found no hearing issues. In September the kindergarten staff conducted a 'Students at Educational Risk' meeting with Roy's parent and staff from his future primary school

2004 Roy attended preprimary. Speech therapy continued with the speech therapist conducting sessions in the school setting, withdrawing Roy from class. He underwent a second block of occupational therapy and the school staff and parents conducted a 'Students at Educational Risk' meeting in November.

2005 Roy attended Year 1. He underwent an assessment by a clinical psychologist who concluded that there were 'no reported concerns.' He underwent assessment by a developmental optometrist who referred him to an ophthalmologist. The ophthalmologist concluded that Roy's vision issues were anxiety related. He attended 12 sessions of occupational therapy with a private provider. In October the school conducted another 'Students at Educational Risk' meeting. In December Roy's pediatrician recommended that Roy enrolled in private literacy tuition.

2006 Roy attended Year 2. This year the school conducted a 'Student at Educational Risk' meeting in March. School assessment forms for an ADHD rating were filled out by his classroom teachers and interpreted by a clinical psychologist. Early in the year formal testing conducted by the psychologist reported that Roy did not suffer from ADHD but that he was unable to register on the Holburn Reading Assessment and that he was working at an early Year 1 level. The report concluded that: "He will require ongoing support for quite a while." From September until December of 2006 Roy was withdrawn from school and received private literacy tuition from a specialist operating from her own business premises.

2007 Roy attended Year 3 and a family friend volunteered to provide reading tuition. Roy completed WALNA testing this year and fell well below the benchmarks in all literacy components.

2008 Roy attended Year 4. Roy's parent met with his class teacher in February. He took part in *An Even Start* tuition group during school hours and on school grounds with Sandi Venner from September 25th until November 27th. His parents consulted a pediatrician who concluded: "He does not appear to have significant ADHD features although borderline inattentive features."

2009 Roy attended Year 5. He continued tuition with Sandi Venner addressing literacy issues. This ongoing tuition took place in Sandi's home on an individual basis and was the subject of this case study.

In discussing these years of intervention, Karin expressed her frustration that despite numerous assessments the results were always inconclusive. Roy was never diagnosed with a specific learning difficulty. Karin also expressed her perception that there was "no light at the end of the tunnel" and hence she expected extra tuition and support to be ongoing features of Roy's school life.

Marketing

Sandi did not advertise or produce any printed information about her tuition services. She had very few clients and in every instance parents who knew Sandi through her work at the primary school had approached Sandi and asked her to tutor their children.

Links to school

Karin supported the close link between Sandi and Roy's school, stating that schooling and tuition should "go hand-in-hand." Karin expressed a desire for the tuition sessions to reinforce what Roy learnt at school. As she said:

I want them to work together, so we've got basically the more people on board, the more people working towards the right goal.

Sandi reported that she drew on her existing relationships with the children and their classroom teachers to enhance her tuition. She accessed testing conducted at school to inform her programming. She consulted with the classroom teachers concerning her tuition goals. She stated her view that children worked well with her and parents trusted her because of their previous relationships with her at the school. This was the one case in which the links with the children's school were described as strong and the relations always reported as positive.

Referrals

Karin did not refer her clients on to other professionals and did not receive referrals from other teachers or professionals. All of her business was gained through her link to the local school.

An ongoing concern

The tuition in this case is described as an ongoing concern for two main reasons. The first reason is because Sandi provided her service in a continuous manner. When clients began tuition the endpoint was not anticipated. Sandi did not conduct testing at set intervals and the decision to terminate tuition was made according to the subjective judgments of Sandi and the children's parents. Tuition was not presented as a course of intervention with a set structure or boundaries.

The second reason was because of the experiences of Roy and his parent, Karin. Despite a long history of educational intervention, there was no clear destination for Roy. As his mother said:

There is no light at the tunnel for us. It's not like I can say, "we'll do this for twenty weeks and that will fix it." It is going to be an ongoing thing.

Karin expressed her acceptance of the necessary role of tuition in Roy's schooling even as she expressed doubts about tuition's efficacy. As she said, 'I worry that when he sits there and he does his tutoring, he walks out the door and I have this horrible feeling it just goes straight out of his head.' Nonetheless Karin persisted in pursuing tuition for Roy, primarily because she said she saw him improve at school when in tuition and secondarily because she perceived a direct link between school achievement and later life opportunities. As she explained:

I want him to have choices. If he can be in class, do the work, get through, and say "I have the choice to drive the garbage truck or be a teacher" rather than have someone say "You'll never amount to anything but driving a garbage truck."

Conclusion

This chapter introduced the cases and informants that constitute this study. It presented the five interpretive case studies. The study covers a wide range of services and includes many different clients. The tuition providers have been grouped into three categories to help organise the detailed data collected in the course of the study. This chapter also introduced the main informants for the study, a diverse group of administrators, tutors, parents and children. A small group of complimentary education providers were also interviewed. This group consisted of a behavioural optometrist, a naturopath and a kinesiologist. The data gathered from these informants was organised into five case descriptions. Each description followed a uniform structure to facilitate comparison between cases. This structure dealt with the main features of the cases including costs, clients, staff, programme, testing and links to schools. The final section of each case study differed and focused on unique aspects of the cases.

The final sections dealt with the strongest elements of each case. In the first case, that of the *Waterford Literacy Clinic*, the standout features were the passion of staff for the teaching methods used in the centre and the commitment of parents to gaining positive educational experiences for their children. This is not to say that these elements were

not evident in the other cases, rather that it was expressed most forcefully and frequently in this case. The second case was *Premier Education Services* and the dominant issue was the director's dilemma of providing quality tuition on an individualised basis and running a profitable business. This dilemma was resolved in other cases through the use of small group tuition or by training employees to expand the business. However, Carol's dilemma highlighted an issue that faces all teachers who establish their own tuition businesses; that is, the tension between profitability and the provision of quality tuition.

The director of the third case, the *Lee Colbourne Centre*, addressed the issue of profitability by providing individualised tuition in a group setting and employing several employees to enable business expansion. As a result, at the time of the interviews, the centre had over 300 students enrolled. The standout feature of this case was the diversity of services offered and clients catered for. The director took a very adaptable and proactive approach to her business. Her business operated as a one-stop shop for schooling support services. *Moreno Tutoring* was the fourth case. The centre also provided individualised tuition in a group setting. The ubiquitous role of the director was the key feature of the centre's operation. She was directly involved in every aspect of the centre's operation. Strong leadership in all cases was evident throughout this study but was the dominant feature of *Moreno Tutoring*.

The tutor in the fifth case was also directly involved in every aspect of the tuition business. However, she had no employees, no promotional materials and very few clients. This case featured a relief-teacher from mainstream school who conducted tuition as a sideline business. The most salient feature of this case was the experience of one of the clients, Roy. Roy had a long history of educational interventions and according to his mother, tuition would be an ongoing feature of his schooling experiences. Roy's experience illustrated the experience of many children who access a range of services in their efforts to advance their education.

Throughout these descriptions emergent themes were identified and will be systematically explored in the following chapters. The following chapters aim to generate theory from the data collected for the study. The theory will be generated from the themes that emerged in the interviews. These themes are organised under broad theoretical categories related to the work of Bourdieu and deal with issues of

educational legitimacy, habitus, cultural capital and field. The discussion will explore: the nature of tuition providers; the experiences and motivations of families that become engaged in tuition; and the relation of tuition to the wider realms of mainstream schooling and alternative educational intervention.

Chapter Six: The Legitimizing Claims

Introduction

The previous chapter introduced the five case studies presented in this study. The main interview participants, the tutors, parents and children, were introduced. The case studies were described in detail and the major features of each tuition programme were highlighted. This chapter and the chapter to follow present the findings of a cross-case analysis in the form of theoretical propositions. This chapter focuses on the tuition providers and the following chapter focuses on the families engaged in tuition.

This chapter deals with the issue of how tuition providers establish and maintain their educational legitimacy. Legitimacy emerged as the key theme across all the cases. Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) observed that as educators became more closely enmeshed in state education, specifically, as their salaries were provided by government agencies, their need to establish educational legitimacy diminished. However, private tuition providers are not in the employ of government agencies. So whereas issues of educational legitimacy are implicit in mainstream schooling, they are made explicit in the field of private tuition. Bourdieu explained the situation of government teachers in the following terms:

The illusion of the absolute autonomy of the educational system is strongest when the teaching corps is fully assimilated into the Civil Service so that, with his (sic) salary paid by the State or the university institution, the teacher is no longer remunerated by the client, like other vendors of symbolic goods (e.g. the corporate professions), nor even by reference to the services rendered to the client, and so finds himself (sic) in the conditions most conducive to the misrecognition of the objective truth of his task. (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, p.66)

Clearly, private tuition teachers are remunerated by their clients. Hence tuition providers are very conscious of the services rendered; in the following pages they describe the services they provide, highlighting the positive aspects of tuition and making their educational credentials quite explicit. It is noticeable that when highlighting the positive aspects of private tuition, tutors concomitantly highlight the shortfalls of mainstream schooling. Bourdieu and Passeron (1990, p.22) note that “the monopoly on the dominant cultural legitimacy is always the object of competition between institutions or agents.”

Tuition providers find themselves in competition with the system that they profess to support. If schools were providing an adequate educational service then there would be no need for the service of private tuition. Therefore it is not surprising that tuition providers highlight the shortfalls of the mainstream schooling system.

This chapter proposes that tuition providers substantiate claims to educational legitimacy in three ways:

- The quality of services offered by the tuition provider;
- The shortfalls of mainstream schooling; and
- The individualised nature of the tuition service.

The tendency to critique the mainstream creates complex and at times contradictory relations with mainstream schools. At the same time that providers express a desire for acknowledgment by and incorporation into the mainstream, they require the mainstream to be deficient, opening space for the services that private tuition provides. To explore the development of this proposition, the chapter is divided into three sections, all dealing with how tuition providers legitimate their practice. The first section describes the positive features of private tuition services that the providers highlight throughout their interviews. The second section deals with how tuition providers critique mainstream schooling. The third section describes how tuition providers tailor their services to address individual needs.

Providing a Quality Tuition service

The Lee Colbourne foyer as an example of legitimation

On entering the foyer of a *Lee Colbourne* tutoring centre it was immediately apparent how the business was legitimated. Certificates, newspaper clippings and promotional materials were prominently displayed. Legitimation was drawn from several sources including: affiliation with an overarching franchise; credentials attained within the mainstream of educational provision; and testimonials from satisfied clients.

Affiliation with the overarching franchise was the most prominently visible feature of the centre. The furniture and décor reflected the colour scheme of the business franchise's promotional material. Printed franchise material was displayed on bookshelves and on wall displays. This material covered information for parents about the services provided by the centre. *Lee Colbourne* teaching kits for use at home were

advertised on the shelves. The *Lee Colbourne* training certification was prominently displayed, as was the certificate registering the business name. *Lee Colbourne* achievement award certificates charted the growth of the business over a seven-year period. This affiliation with an overarching franchise gave the centre a professional business identity within the tuition industry.

Credentials from several authorising bodies were also on display in the foyer. This included: the teaching qualifications of the director; an award for teaching excellence from the Department of Education; and a WACOT registration certificate. These certificates covered attainments that were gained within the mainstream of schooling. In this way the centre drew on qualifications necessary for teaching in a mainstream school to provide legitimacy, despite the fact there was no legal requirement in Western Australia for private tutors to hold such qualifications.

Finally, materials that attested to the effectiveness of the tuition business were prominently displayed. These included newspaper clippings, written testimonials and newsletters. Newspaper clippings from the local press were displayed on notice boards. One article profiled the director as a local business leader, another reported on the achievement of a student from the centre in a nationwide mathematics competition. Folders containing testimonials were available for perusal. These testimonials were written by parents or students and expressed praise for the services provided by the centre. The testimonials specifically described the benefits gained by the children attending the centre. Newsletters that described the accomplishments of the centre were regularly distributed to parents and published on the Internet.

In the *Lee Colbourne Centre* the elements that legitimated the business were highly visible and immediately apparent. This was not the case in all of the tuition providers; some instances of legitimation were more subtle. Nevertheless, the main proposition of this chapter is that all tuition providers included in this study followed the pattern of emphasising both the positive aspects of their tuition and the shortfalls of mainstream schooling. Across the five cases, it will be argued that the positive aspects of tuition identified by the tuition providers clustered around four main elements. These elements were: the validating relationships with authorising organisations; the unique features of the teaching programmes provided; the programmes' abilities to meet children's

specific learning needs; and the location of tuition providers outside the mainstream system of schooling.

The role of authorising organisations

Even though there was no State or Federal requirement for tutors to hold even basic teaching qualifications, there were several professional organisations that provided credentials for the tuition providers. Every director of the tuition centres included in this study stressed that their tutors all had West Australian College of Teachers (WACOT) registration. In 2012 WACOT was replaced by the Teacher Registration Board (TRB) which is a professional association for teachers at both levels of compulsory schooling – primary and secondary. Teachers pay a yearly fee and meet requirements in terms of teaching qualifications and ongoing professional development in order to maintain their WACOT or TRB registration. Membership is mandatory for all teachers working in WA schools. There is no legal requirement for teachers working outside schools, providing private tuition, to gain and maintain registration; nonetheless, in all five cases included in this study, the teachers providing tuition were WACOT registered.

University qualifications were also important credentials for the tuition providers. All of the tutors were qualified teachers. Two of the tutors held PhD qualifications. Three of the directors had completed higher degrees in Special Education. Teaching experience was also an important factor. The *Waterford Literacy Clinic* would only employ teachers with at least five years' teaching experience. The directors of the tuition centres all had many years of experience teaching in mainstream schools before establishing their tuition businesses. Qualifications and experience gained within the mainstream were often referred to as important aspects of the quality of the tuition provided. This is an example of the conflict in the data as there is tension between tutors who legitimate tuition by emphasising the shortfalls of the mainstream while concurrently drawing on experience and qualifications gained in the mainstream to verify educational legitimacy. Furthermore, the moonlighting tutor, Sandi, drew legitimacy from her ongoing involvement in the mainstream of schooling. She stated that parents and children put faith in her abilities because they knew her through her role at the local primary school.

Some tutors also referred to their membership of professional associations as elements that legitimated their practice. For example, Carol from *Premier Education Services* described her membership of a Melbourne-based organisation called *Learning Difficulties Australia*. She stressed that higher qualifications in the field of learning difficulties were a membership requirement. Carol stated that her ongoing membership “just gives me that professional credibility.” The two franchises were members of the Australian Tutoring Association (ATA). In the case of the *Lee Colbourne Centre*, the ATA membership certificate was displayed in the foyer alongside the other education and business credentials.

Some tutors expressed disappointment that tuition was not properly recognised by Government agencies as an integral component of children’s education. They referred to the fact that computer-based tuition was tax deductible but face-to face tuition was not. As Carol said:

What I’m really concerned about is the Government will give an educational rebate for these Maths computer games, with no teaching, of up to \$5,000 and textbooks and new computers but most people I know that have those fail because there’s not a one-on-one teacher to break down the tasks.

Robert, of *Springside Clinic* (the founder of the methods used at *Waterford Literacy Clinic*) also expressed a desire for acknowledgement by Government agencies. As reported in the previous chapter, Robert expressed pride over the acknowledgement of his literacy clinic by the then WA premier, Alan Carpenter. Consequently the clinic was identified as a core educational programme and was exempt from charging Goods and Services Tax (GST). Although this story indicates that official recognition does occur, it was the exception in the experience of the tutors in this study. Furthermore, despite the tax concession, Robert stated that there was little effect in terms of incorporation into mainstream schools. Interestingly, Helen and Kate first met Robert and learnt about his tuition methods through a school-based professional development course when they were still teaching in the mainstream. Helen described the experience as “life-changing.” She expressed disappointment that in her view school-based professional development had become less focused on input from outside the system. Helen stated that schools were more concerned with in-house issues such as outcomes-based education documents generated within the Education Department of WA. The desire for recognition by mainstream schooling is indicative of a strong belief held by the tutors in the quality and relevance of the services they provide.

The quality of the programme

Throughout the interviews, providers stressed the uniqueness and effectiveness of their programmes. One provider used the word ‘different’ four times in various contexts to describe her tuition programme. As will be explored in this section of the chapter, each provider described the services they offered and the personnel who delivered the services in ways that accentuated their uniqueness. This arose, at least in part, from the need to distinguish themselves from the services provided by mainstream schools and from each other, particularly as parents were paying directly for the tuition service. As Helen stated:

I would say they (parents) query less and less having to pay an independent fee; they don’t query it at all because there’s really nothing within the school system that matches what we do.

Later Helen reiterated the point, claiming that “we provide a niche that’s not provided by the educational system at the moment.” According to the tuition providers the quality of their programmes dwelt in three distinct areas: the underlying theory upon which the tuition intervention rested; the special characteristics of the staff engaged in the tuition; and the regime of testing used by the programme. Common to all three areas was the assertion that tuition programmes cater to individual need.

Two of the tuition providers, *Waterford Literacy Clinic* and *Premier Education Services*, employed teaching techniques informed by specialised theories about how children acquired literacy. *Waterford Literacy Clinic* adhered to theory developed by Dr. Robert Groom of the *Springside Clinic*. According to Groom his theory was concerned with the treatment of dyslexia; the theory was neurologically-based and concerned coordination of the left and right hemispheres of the brain with particular emphasis on section of the brain known as, in Groom’s words, the “inferior parietal lobule which is tucked over the ear.” *Premier Education Services*, on the other hand, employed a theory that was concerned with language structures, or orthography. Carol adhered to the theory that English orthography was multi-layered and that instruction in literacy needed to progress developmentally from the simpler to the more complex layers to be effective. The staff of *Springside Clinic*, *Waterford Literacy Clinic* and *Premier Education Services* regarded these underlying theories as fundamental to the crafting of their distinctive programmes.

In contrast, the two franchises, *Lee Colbourne Centre* and *Moreno Tutoring*, focused on skill development rather than a unified underlying theory of literacy development. They stressed that their interventions were individualised and responded to children's learning needs. In a similar manner, the moonlighting teacher, Sandi, also focused on "the missing chunks" in her students' basic literacy and numeracy skills. In both approaches, whether the theory was related to underlying causal factors or more focused on basic skill acquisition, all of the providers drew legitimacy from the notion that their approach to learning was carefully thought out and applied to the specific needs of the children they tutored.

Tutors stressed that simply being qualified to teach, or having a theory about teaching, was not sufficient and that a passion for teaching was essential. Tuition providers placed emphasis on their special qualities and those of the staff employed in their centres. Passion for teaching was often cited as a standout feature of the staff. Elaine of *Moreno Tutoring* stated that her staff liked children and that this was not always the case with classroom teachers. Sandi stressed that she "still gets a buzz" when children learn, despite the fact that she has been teaching for over 30 years. Several tutors stated their enthusiasm for watching children learn, as Alice observed;

My greatest pleasure is seeing the light in these kids' eyes. It's just seeing them go, 'I can do it.' You know? 'I've seen that, I get it, I can do it!' And just to see the confidence and the self-esteem that comes. Just seeing that self-respect, the self esteem, the sense of (pause) not conquest it is such a masculine word (pause) sense of achievement when they can do something and they've mastered something that they didn't think they could do. For me a lot of it is showing them what they can do when all they're seeing is what they can't do and when that happens, and it happens so regularly, that's my greatest pleasure. And the pay is very secondary.

Another way of expressing commitment and passion was through tutors stressing that they were engaged in the core business of education. In these instances, tutors wished to be acknowledged as educators. Helen stated a desire for classroom teachers to acknowledge that her tutors were "actually fellow teachers." Carol also expressed frustration that classroom teachers did not understand her abilities and she speculated that they viewed her as:

Someone who works with kids at home sitting in their trackie but they don't know me. They don't know how I work.

Related to this identification as an educator was reluctance by most of the tutors to be identified as a businessperson. As Alice noted in the quote above, her pay was a “secondary” consideration. Similarly Helen stated that for her business to expand further it would entail a “quantum leap” that would take her and her business partner, Kate, away from “hands-on teaching” – a step that they were not interested in taking. Even Carol, who expressed a desire for a more lucrative business model concluded that she would always be engaged in tuition, regardless of the financial reward because as she simply stated, “I love my field, I love doing my work.”

On the other hand, Jacqui, as the director of a thriving franchise centre, had a strong business sensibility. She hired out her business premises to associated professionals and had expanded her services to cater for educational extension. Nonetheless, she insisted that the staff she hired were experienced and qualified teachers. Furthermore, Jacqui implied that this was a requirement of her franchise model:

We as Lee Colbourne people insist on staff being experienced and certainly trained. I will not employ a non-qualified person to teach, except at the top end. I do have PhD Engineer who teaches physics, chemistry and maths. He is very highly skilled and very highly experienced and he’s fantastic. I make an exception there but I would not employ a non-teacher.

Hence, the calibre of the staff employed in the tuition centres was a key element in establishing the quality of the intervention provided by the tutors. In some instances the tutors went further and implied that there was an almost mystical quality that set some educators apart.

If you’ve got the skill and the organisational ability you don’t even need a degree at university. There are people who have got it and you see that coming through with our students from different unis and things. Some have it and some are never going to get it. (Sandi)

Testing was another key feature that tutors referred to as an indicator of the quality of the tuition programme. Testing was described as an objective measure that played a dual role. Initial testing enabled the tutors to identify and subsequently address students’ individual needs. Regular testing provided feedback on the progress being made by the student through tuition. Tests were treated differently by the different providers. The franchises provided testing free of charge, the *Waterford Literacy Clinic* and *Premier Education Services* charged a fee and Sandi used school test results. Sandi still referred

to testing as an integral part of the process of identifying children's needs; however, she accessed testing conducted in the school rather than conducting her own assessment.

At the *Waterford Literacy Clinic*, testing was conducted every six months for a substantial fee. The testing reassessed tasks that were determined by Robert Groom as being indicative of neurological processes that under-gird the acquisition of literacy. Yvonne (one of the parents from the *Waterford Literacy Clinic*) described the effect of periodic testing in the following terms:

I think the thing the *Waterford Literacy Clinic* gives you is that real sense of scoring where they (the students) are and scoring where they've moved to and you know it's been successful in an objective sort of way. Rather than in a qualitative sort of way. I think that tutors that are working independently of that, I'm not convinced how much good (pause) They can try and be really helpful. I think there are a lot of helpful amateurs out there. I suppose the thing I've got in the *Waterford Literacy Clinic* is I suppose I trust them to be professionals in the area of dyslexia.

For parents like Yvonne, regular testing was an objective measure that provided evidence of progress, and indicator of expertise and hence money well spent.

As discussed earlier, a theory of literacy acquisition informed the teaching at the *Waterford Literacy Clinic*. The same theory informed the testing regime. The theory provides the teaching goals, strategies and assessment. This creates an integrated, self-validating system that explains how literacy learning occurs, the strategies required to address literacy difficulties and the tests that measure the effectiveness of the literacy interventions. It is an entire educational package.

Quality relationships

According to the tutors, several factors contributed to the quality of the relationships in the tuition programs including: the quality of the relationship between the tutor and the child; the structure of the tuition classes; and the atmosphere in the tuition centres. Tutors not only described their own arrangements as optimal but also actively compared their arrangements with those found in schools and in competing tuition centres.

Throughout the interviews, the tutors stressed that their relationships with their students were quite informal, congenial and positive. Sandi stated that:

I've genuinely liked the kids I have tutored too, which, there was one that I thought could be a bit of a problem but it turned out we got along really well.

Sandi was surprised that her relationship with a child who was difficult in a whole class setting was more positive in the tuition setting. For Alice the fact that children didn't use formal titles and surnames for the tutors set the tone of the relationship:

The kids call me Alice...that creates a different environment. I act like an assistant or an Auntie and that's how they treat me and so that enables, that environment enables a different kind of learning.

Alice surmises that the informal tone of her relations with the students facilitates a more effective learning environment. Tutors frequently cited positive relationships as key elements in the success of their tuition intervention. Helen links relaxed relationships with the ability to take risks, she links the positive relations to improvements in students' self-esteem:

We know we've been a success when they start coming in and they're a bit cheeky and they crack jokes, and they're just, they'll take risks and just have more confidence in what they can do.

Every tutor referred to the improvement of self-esteem as an important aspect of private tuition. They stated that enhancing children's confidence, happiness and independence were core elements in their programmes. In some cases the tutors stated their primary aim, even more so than academic achievement, was to lift children's self esteem. As Fiona observed of students requiring remediation:

They've often failed. The younger ones perhaps don't perceive that yet but the older ones do and my aim in the first six months is perhaps not to move them along as much as to see them confident, happy – to succeed a little bit.

In some cases the tutors believed that engaging in private tuition resulted in a complete personality change for the children, as Elaine stated:

Instead of having a child that may be, because of poor self esteem, difficult at home, they change to becoming lovely little children and can be a positive member of the family.

Jacqui described how positive feedback led to "a complete turnaround" in the behaviour and personality of some children. Furthermore each tutor was able to describe success stories from their clientele. In some cases these stories referred to success in mainstream

schooling, but often the success story stressed the transformation of the children's personalities and abilities to relate positively to family and peers. The strongest statement linking student self esteem to tutoring rather than mainstream schooling came from Elaine:

We celebrate their learning, both here and at school. Because often children come to me and they're damaged in terms of their self esteem. They never got a positive comment or anything like that at school. They come here and they feel really good about themselves.

For Elaine, and the other tutors, the structure of the tuition programme fostered the children's positive experiences and implied that negative experiences in the school setting had led to low self-esteem for the children seeking tuition. The tuition providers concurred that a positive atmosphere in the tuition centre was a key element of their practice.

Helen, of the *Waterford Literacy Clinic*, stressed that her centre was a positive learning environment at all times. She stated, "the atmosphere at the clinic is relaxed compared to school, relaxed but everyone is working hard." Helen's clinic featured the "working dog," described in the previous chapter, who wandered freely around the centre and sat by the children as they worked, giving the centre a more home-like ambience.

Sandi also stressed the importance of a relaxed atmosphere in tuition but went further to describe the tension that was sometimes present in school classrooms. As she stated:

I like the fact that it's fairly casual, it's more relaxed, not like being in the classroom situation where you have to growl at other kids or keep them working while you're trying to help them.

Sandi and Helen's views were typical of the directors and tutors interviewed for this study. Elaine said that the atmosphere was "absolutely critical." She described her strategies for engendering a positive atmosphere. Her strategies included "lots and lots of stickers, lots and lots of positive comments, lots and lots of getting excited, and we have lolly moments which they just die for." Lolly moments were occasions where Elaine rewarded children for outstanding learning achievements by giving lollies to individuals and groups. Elaine noted that the result of these strategies was an environment that featured a "buzz of learning." When asked how long the average child attended tuition, Elaine responded:

Some never leave, even when their students come up to and above their level because the kids just love coming and so do the parents. They find it such a positive place.

The significance of the relaxed atmosphere was that, according to the tutors, students felt they were in a supportive, welcoming setting. Tutors contrasted their setting with the harshness of the school environment. As evidenced in the foregoing discussion of programme features, including the underlying theories, testing regimes, teaching structures and enhanced self esteem, these features are elements tutors use to construct programmes that are comprehensive, distinctive and alternative to that provided by the mainstream. In focusing on these features, tutors claim real distinctions between themselves and mainstream schooling.

Outside the mainstream

Some tuition providers view learning in holistic terms and link individual capacity to learn with elements beyond the classroom, focusing on other aspects of child development. In fact, two of the tuition providers worked with alternative therapists. For these tuition providers the ability to refer clients on to alternative therapists enhanced their programme. One tuition centre director claimed to be able to ascertain whether a child required referral to the kinesiologist or naturopath at the initial assessment interview. It will be argued in this section that private tuition's position outside the mainstream of schooling enabled these partnerships. As stated in the previous chapter these therapists included a behavioural optometrist, a naturopath and a kinesiologist. The kinesiologist likened her service to complementary education in that it operated alongside but outside mainstream education in much the same relationship that complementary medicine has to mainstream medicine. Each alternative therapist differed in the intervention they provided. Nonetheless there were common threads that could be drawn across the three therapies. This section will describe each intervention in detail and then outline the common themes from the interviews with the therapists, focusing on how the therapists legitimated their practice.

Steven was a behavioural optometrist who liaised with Carol of *Premier Education Services*. According to the website of the Australasian College of Behavioural Optometrists:

Behavioural optometry is an expanded area of optometric practice. Behavioural optometrists have a holistic approach to the treatment of vision and vision information processing

functions. Functional vision efficiency is known to influence visual status. The way that you interpret what you see does not depend solely on how clear your eyesight is. (Australasian College of Behavioural Optometrists, 2013)

Accordingly Steven provided vision therapy for children referred to him by Carol. He conducted an initial 45-minute session where he assessed the child and then provided blocks of 10 half hour sessions to train the child in vision-related exercises. Each block of 10 sessions cost \$1,000 and no Medicare or health fund rebates applied to his services. He described his intervention in the following terms:

If I look at it in a really raw sense, we look at three key things. We look at their visual integrity. Do they have all the right bits for them to see, like a camera? Does it have a lens? Does it have film? Are all the bits there? The next thing we look at is visual efficiency and I guess if you look at the visual integrity part before I go on – that is the core of optometry, that is what most optometrists are looking at. Is the eye healthy? Can it see at a particular level? Is it short or long-sighted? What is actually, physically happening? Then the next thing you look at is the visual efficiency. You've got all the bits, now do they work effectively as a team? It's a mechanical thing but not necessarily, there's a lot of top-down processing involved in that. And then the very last thing we look at is the visual processing and how I often describe that is 'there's a tiger in the grass,' which children see just the grass? Which children understand the entire picture and see and understand the relevance of everything.

Following assessment of the three elements, parents were trained to complete a set of daily exercises with their children. Steven had great confidence in his therapy and believed that when his intervention was ineffective the failure was due to a lack of commitment from the parents, as he explained:

I tend to be very selective in the sense that I tell everybody how hard it is going to be, how much I want them to do and if they're not committed and they don't do it [the daily exercise] I kick them out of the programme. Essentially we're training the parent at home and telling them, "Look you can't expect your child to go away and do this in a corner. You've got to be the person that is driving this in a sense. Even though you have to allow them to learn because it is the skills they have to develop. You can't do it for them but you're there in the corner fighting with them." By and large they are pretty good at it.

Steven drew legitimacy for his interventions from his membership of a professional association, the Australian College of Behavioural Optometrists (ACBO). This body

runs state and national conferences and as Steven stated ran “a series of constant or continuing professional development.” Members were encouraged to complete a unit of behavioural optometry at the University of New South Wales. ACBO members in Perth formed a network and met regularly to provide ongoing professional development.

Steven met Carol when his own child required literacy tuition. It was through his own child’s learning difficulties that he initially became involved in behavioural optometry. Subsequently, he worked closely with Carol and they referred clients to each other according to the client’s perceived need. Steven observed that many of the children he worked with had been to a number of other therapists, such as occupational or speech therapists before coming to him. Steven advocated a coordinated approach to therapy. In regards to referring children to different therapists, he said:

I’m often at danger of feeling I’m throwing someone over a wall into another compartment and we’ve overlapped in those compartments. I often feel there’s a lot more scope to take on more of a case management approach. It is much, much harder to do. The more areas you are working in, the more complicated those interactions become but I certainly feel that working with one other professional in the way that Carol and I work together, it works well.

Rebecca, was a kinesiologist who, like Steven, trained parents to conduct daily exercise programmes with their children. Rebecca worked very closely with Jacqui of the *Lee Colbourne Centre*. Rebecca met Jacqui when she worked as a tutor in the centre while completing her studies in naturopathy and kinesiology. Her alternative therapy combined Brain gym and rhythmic exercises. Rebecca referred to several authorities in the field of kinesiology including Harald Blomberg, a Swedish psychiatrist (Blomberg & Dempsey, 2011) and Carla Hannaford (2005). Theoretically, Rebecca believed she was providing exercises to coordinate the left and right hemispheres of the brain. Many of her exercises were based on early childhood reflexes that she considered crucial to the healthy development of every child. Rebecca described her intervention as “working with the neurological development of children and you’re doing it with movement.”

Rebecca worked from consulting rooms in a chiropractor’s offices. She met clients for weekly hour-long sessions. At the time of the interviews, she was trialing working on-site at the *Lee Colbourne Centre*, providing half hour sessions to monitor children’s and

parents' progress with her exercises. Jacqui would refer children to Rebecca when they displayed evidence of cross-dominance and difficulties crossing the mid-line.

Rebecca was a trained naturopath as well as an educational kinesiologist. She undertook training at TAFE and Perth Academy. She maintained membership of the Kinesiology Association, the Educational Kinesiology Association and the Australian Natural Therapies Association (ANTA). Each association required ongoing professional development and training in order to maintain registration. The Working with Children check was also a prerequisite for registration. These associations gave Rebecca her professional credentials.

Rebecca believed it was changes in the way children were born and raised that led to the need for her interventions. She referred to the increasing rates of premature and caesarian births as causing problems with learning for children when they reached school age. Rebecca also believed that children spent insufficient time outdoors as she stated:

But it all comes back to the childhood development of running around, climbing trees, building up core muscles, because core muscles are just not being activated enough in children anymore.

Both Steven and Rebecca provided interventions for the children that involved parents conducting exercise programmes. Like Steven, Rebecca felt that lack of parent support was the key aspect when her intervention failed. However, she expressed this with insight into how fatigued parents can become. As she stated:

I've seen the difference between the parents who come here and do the activities and see just amazing changes within a couple of months. The children have so many difficulties, particularly a lot of prem babies, and it's hard because you could do so much to help them but the parents for their own reasons are not able to follow through... The fact that parents have such a busy life. Because of the level of difficulties their children have had. They've done speech therapy. They've done OT. They done all these different things and I think they are very tired by the time they get to me and they are very, very busy and don't have much time to spend 10 minutes doing the Brain gym.

The third therapist, Alan, was a naturopath and his intervention differed from that of both Steven and Rebecca. Jacqui referred students with significant concentration difficulties including students with ADD, ADHD or Autism to Alan. Alan worked from

his own consulting rooms and first met Jacqui when he treated members of her family for various health issues.

Alan's intervention involved a plethora of tests and treatments to address inflammation, allergies, food sensitivities, mineral or vitamin deficiencies and digestive disorders. Throughout his interview Alan referred to many possible tests that he would encourage clients to conduct, often through their General Practitioner. This included blood tests, urine tests, hair profiling and stool sample testing.

Alan was a member of ANTA who drew much of his legitimacy through referring to medical doctors who were interested in naturopathy. He provided the names of several doctors based in Australia and overseas who conducted research into issues such as "gut-derived inflammation." Alan explained the importance these medical doctors in the following terms:

At first I was asking a lot of advice from these people. I'd ring them up. I'd ring up some doctors too, particularly that were coming to seminars. One important doctor was Dr William Barnes, who was like a mentor at the time. I would always be asking people questions like 'what have you found? Is it working? What are the results?'"

Alan expressed his desire for more research to be conducted and for that research to be taken seriously to give alternative therapy greater legitimacy. As he stated:

I don't like the airy-fairy ideas that float around out there too. I think that discredits the alternative industry. It comes as crystals too, and everything, but I think there's a very real science if we start testing this and correlating it.

He even went further and called for greater regulation in his field in the following terms:

There has to be some sort of regulatory agency, I believe that, to get onto that it has to be qualified with results and research, to give this industry some credibility.

Alan's work was based around conducting tests and then devising treatments based on those test results. His treatments centred around two key strategies - dietary manipulation and mineral or vitamin supplements. The theory underlying Alan's treatments of children referred to him by the *Lee Colbourne Centre* was that digestive issues affected concentration and the ability to learn effectively.

While the three alternative therapies provided by Steven, Rebecca and Alan were quite different, there were some common themes in their basic principles and approaches. In each case the therapies were concerned with underlying issues rather than directly related to educational achievement. Rebecca said, “I work on their ability to learn, not actually getting them to learn as such.” Steven expressed a similar sentiment:

We’re not trying to teach people to learn to read; ...it’s about learning to learn rather than teaching them to learn to read.

Both Rebecca and Steven referred their students back to the tuition centres when they felt the students were ready to engage in formal instruction.

The three therapists all professed to take a holistic view towards their interventions. They investigated the history, lifestyles and diets of the children they treated. As Rebecca observed:

I guess because I am a naturopath [as well as a kinesiologist] I do a holistic approach so a lot of it is assessing the way that they walk and the way that they move.

Steven also took a holistic approach as he described in the following comments:

I think in essence we don’t look at just the eye and how the eye itself is performing. You look at it as part of the entire entity and you not only do that but you consider what other circumstances, be they genetic, be they environmental, be they educational and how they impact on somebody’s performance in the visual sense.

Alan also took a holistic approach to making a diagnosis, as he said:

You’d often think, is the child in a stressed environment? What’s the home life like? Well, what’s the diet like? You’ve got all these environmental factors. Is it not an appropriate environment or is it an organic disorder, an endocrinal disorder or is it just the way their brain functions? Are they just a more auditory learner?

Alan in particular stressed that all individuals are different. He called his style of treatment “differential diagnosis”. This meant he attempted to match the client to the appropriate therapy. He stressed the individualised nature of his practice in the following terms:

The main challenge is the differential diagnosis, like what test to recommend and based on what results. If it was diet I would do

mineral testing, if there's allergies with it as well you do the food sensitivity test. If something you try wasn't really effective you test another way.

He also experienced differential results:

In some cases it is like a veil has been lifted. In some cases you're back to square one...why is that person different to that one?

Alan said that he often felt like a teledex, making numerous recommendations to "try this, try this, try this". Taking a holistic approach requires detailed attention to the client, an in-depth history of past interventions, inquiring into diet and exercise habits, and a profile of school experiences. The next chapter will argue that this kind of intervention is highly valued by the parents in this study, as are the individualised programmes of intervention that are the result of this approach.

Both Steven and Alan referred to their search for the best therapy as being a search for the Holy Grail in their field. Steven said that the third element in his therapy, the treatment of visual manipulation skills was the Holy Grail of behavioural optometry, Alan stated that in the field of naturopathy:

Some things work, some things don't and I think that is the Holy Grail, seeing if there is a common thread.

However he was not confident that such a Holy Grail exists for naturopathy and stated:

In some cases where, with ADD in particular, you hear feedback from the teachers, from the parents, that there was more concentration – some mild, some moderate, some mixed results and you couldn't really govern which child was going to respond. It's really the Holy Grail for me to find out what, but there doesn't seem to be a pattern.

The shared element in their comments is the notion that they are on a quest, Alan also referred to his work as being "like a frontier". In their interviews the therapists stressed that by operating outside the mainstream they are able to search for solutions to learning issues that are not available in school classrooms.

Finally, skepticism of the mainstream was the shared element across the interviews with the alternative therapists. They were skeptical of traditional medicine and mainstream schooling. Alan often worked with children diagnosed with ADD or ADHD. He was

skeptical of the willingness of mainstream medicine to medicate children with these diagnoses. He stated a belief that such medication was overused and said:

The question is, is it an organic problem, is it an allergy problem, is it a genetic problem? That's where I think the whole ADD/ADHD research needs to go into and differentiate why the person or child is in this predicament. Rather than just being prescribed medication as the first step. My firm belief is, yes, I'm not against that medication, but, is that medication safe long-term? And if it is helping that child, why does this person or child find themselves in this situation.

Rebecca was skeptical of the rate of caesarian births that she said denied babies their “voyage down the birth canal which affects their reflexes and their development.”

Rebecca gave a strong critique of schooling, saying that schools expect too much formal learning too early:

One thing I've noticed with regards to children is the younger children are coming here and they can't write. Well excuse me, they are 4 and 5, why can't they? They can't sit still and listen to the teacher. Well, excuse me, why should you when the teacher should go outside and be moving and playing, getting them singing songs and learning in that way instead of expecting them to sit still. So we're actually bringing education down to younger ones before they are developmentally ready to learn which is 6 or 7 years of age.

Steven's critique of the mainstream focused on teachers dealing with learning difficulties. As he said:

I'm often amazed at why a primary school teacher feels so inadequately skilled to deal with learning issues. And you know, here I am from the vision and optometry perspective trying to get an understanding of learning issues and phonetic speech skills and how it relates to vision and saying there are a lot of areas that overlap and where you can help, whereas the teaching expert will throw up their hands and say, “I don't know what to do.” I'm thinking actually there's an awful lot you know how to do, your training is very well directed at what to do. I really don't quite understand why, you know the response from teachers, and whether it's a resource-based thing from schools, government backing?

A similar skepticism towards, or critique of, mainstream schooling was evident throughout the interviews with the tuition providers. This chapter argues that such critique is a key aspect of how private tutors legitimate the services they provide. The following section of this chapter explores this theme in detail.

Shortfalls of Mainstream Schooling

As is noted already, criticism of the mainstream of schooling emerged as a major theme in the interviews with tuition providers. Although all of the tuition providers critiqued mainstream schooling, it is important to note that this critique was secondary to the promotion of their tuition services. Their interviews provided far more information about the positive features of their programmes, as evidenced in the preceding section of this chapter. Nonetheless, this section of the chapter proposes that tutors identify shortfalls in mainstream schooling to open the space in the field of education for the services they provide.

When asked directly about the relationship between mainstream schooling and tuition, the tuition providers stressed that their services were supporting schools, although the relationship was often deemed problematic. As Elaine explained:

It's not a substitute, it's a support. What we're doing is supporting kids so that they can come up to their levels and then leave us. I don't want kids here for years and years. That's not what the tutoring is about. It's about getting them up to levels...we're very much a support service for schools. But not really schools, for families. No school can meet every child's needs in that environment so we really are supporting the students that they (the school) can't meet their needs.

Elaine provided only remediation; for those providers who also provided extension the children were more likely to be involved in ongoing tuition. All of the tutors described their relationship to schools as supportive. For example, Alice provided both remediation and extension through the *Lee Colbourne Centre* and expressed similar sentiments to Elaine:

I like the phrase *supplementary education*. I think that's what it is. I think that our task is to supplement what teachers do. Having been a classroom teacher for so long I am aware of the things that I couldn't get to. So now, as a tutor, I tend to focus on those kinds of things, which is finding the weaknesses, the fundamental blocks of learning that a child has missed out on...Looking more at the psychological and emotional needs of the children that the teacher in the classroom can't do. Looking more at the individual needs and letting children work at their own pace. So I tend not to replicate what's going on in the classroom but I offer an alternative...I see myself definitely as supplementary and complementary to the classroom.

Both Elaine's and Helen's comments stress that they are supporting schools but also refer to the inability of schools to meet the needs of all the children in their care. Helen,

of the *Waterford Literacy Clinic*, also stated that her service provided an alternative not available in mainstream schools, as she said:

We're looking at the neurological underpinnings and we really back up what's happening in school programmes...it's support of school. I think we provide, I know we provide a niche that's not provided by the educational system at the moment...yes, we just support what's happening in the school system.

Sandi, the moonlighting teacher, had the closest relationship with a mainstream school. She communicated with the classroom teachers regularly and accessed test results conducted at school, yet even Sandi referred to an inadequacy in the mainstream that she was able to address through tuition. Hence, she expressed similar sentiments to Helen and Alice:

Being able to speak to the teachers I can liaise with them. So for me, I look at it as being supporting what they're doing in the class, or if I'm not doing that, if it's not pertinent, I can see for myself the problems they're having and work from there. Basically bridging the gap is what I would call it, plugging up those big gaps that are there for one reason or another.

Sandi continued and cited students changing schools or receiving poor teaching as the two most common elements that led to gaps in children's learning. The common theme across all the tuition providers' comments was that they provided support to schools because there was a shortfall that classroom teachers were unable to meet. As Jacqui described it, "we pick up those basic skills that teachers knock their heads against walls with".

Tutors speculated that a key reason difficulties arose in their relationships with schools was because school staff felt threatened when their students enrolled in private tuition centres. As Fiona observed:

A lot of teachers feel threatened by it. They think they're not doing a good job if the kid's got to go to literacy tuition so it's a bit difficult.

Robert Groom of *Springside Clinic* stated:

Schools don't trust us. It's not that they don't trust *Springside*. They don't trust anything outside the system and yet we provide a service that hardly anybody in the system can think up on their own.

Tutors often aspire to closer relations with schools, as is evident in Elaine's comments:

We will support schools but schools often don't allow us to support them because they view us as threatening or something, rather than we're really just here for the families.

In contrast, Elaine conceded that some individual classroom teachers did liaise with her and expressed interest in her programme. Indeed, all of the tutors referred to individual teachers who maintained contact with them and even referred clients to their businesses; however, the tutors also stressed that these individuals were in the minority. At the administrative level however, tuition was not incorporated into schooling, Elaine stated:

Rarely does it come from the school. Although now a few schools have seen the benefits. I am getting referrals directly but they're individual teachers that have taken time to contact me and go through what we do here. And most principals are against us, full stop!

Critiques of the mainstream advanced by the tutors rarely focused on individual teachers; rather they focused on systemic problems. These included issues of funding, class sizes, curriculum and NAPLAN. Furthermore, several of the tutors had experienced disrupted careers in mainstream classrooms and experienced a lack of support that led to them seeking a teaching career outside the Education Department. These disruptions included interstate moves, family illnesses and disillusionment with Departmental initiatives such as the introduction of Outcomes Education. Elaine experienced both interstate moves and family illness. She described her disillusionment in the following terms:

My daughter got really sick and I took 5 years off to look after her and when we came back to WA they told me I couldn't get a job unless I was, I went back and was under supervision. And I thought, "Bugger that, I know more than most of you know on a postage stamp!" so I wasn't going to teach again, that was it. Then this (tuition) opportunity came up and I thought, "No, that would be good."

The inability to deal with teachers who have a disrupted career is just one element of systemic failure that the tutors described. It raises the question of whether these experienced teachers would prefer to work within the schooling system or whether private tuition offered a more supportive and flexible teaching situation. Another systemic element identified by tutors was an inability to deal with children outside the norm, whether they were above or below average students. As Amanda, a young

woman who worked as an assistant at the *Lee Colbourne Centre* and who was only a couple of years out of school herself, stated:

When you're at school they only focus on the middle students. All the people at the bottom get left behind. People at the top either don't get enough work for them, or they just start mucking about because they've got nothing else to do.

Jacqui described a school's inability to address the needs of a student with autism:

Every little skill needs to be taught – he's autistic – they don't seem to be able to understand that at school so there's some terrible battles.

Alice described schools' inability to address the needs of children at either end of the academic spectrum:

I take several groups of kids whose main problem is they are too academically bright and they are bored at school. School is no challenge to them. They don't know how to fail. They don't know how to work. They are as lazy as. They're underachievers because there is nothing that makes them work up to their level. They need the stimulation, and the schools, schools by necessity teach to the average and so you get weaker kids who need repetition and a more careful, individually tailored explanation and coaching and then you get kids who need to come in and do what they want...I'm seeing kids whose primary problem is not academic, it's something else and because we have a more, it's not one-on-one but it's not far from it, we can address their specific needs, and then we also have the freedom to create the environment that we want and so we have less constraints, less curriculum constraints, less time constraints, that gives us more freedom and flexibility and when you get a team going that just works so beautifully together you get satisfied clients.

Tutors also criticised mainstream schooling for having the wrong focus. This applied particularly to curriculum issues but also to staffing of support programmes. In terms of curriculum, tutors criticised Outcomes Education, LOTE (Language Other than English) programmes and literacy programmes. The common theme across these disparate issues was the concept that the schools focused on the wrong priorities.

Carol stated that private tuition would always be required because the staffing of school support programmes is inappropriate and the application of support programmes is limited:

There'll always be a place for it (private tuition). I don't think our intervention in schools – those jobs in schools are often

given to the teacher who's got just a few hours or wants to work one day so they'll just give it to them. It doesn't necessarily go to someone who's trained in that role...Actually I think it will always need to happen because a lot of the children I get, they would be kids who I wouldn't work with in school. At the school I'd get the bottom three or four in each class and these kids (seeking tuition) would probably be in the bottom third stanine.

According to Carol not only are school support programmes inappropriately staffed but also they do not cover all of the children that require support. Carol acknowledged that schools do provide individual support programmes but questioned the credentials of the staff appointed to specialist support positions. Furthermore she asserted that the support programmes were too narrow and only addressed the needs of very weak learners and therefore did not deal with all of the children who required specialist assistance.

Helen compared her teaching in the tuition centre to classroom teaching, arguing that her teaching was more focused and efficient, as she said:

We do more in an hour with students than they do in a whole morning at school. There are at least four main tasks per session in an hour; we cover more in that hour than they get in three hours at school. Plus we correct mistakes immediately; children get direct feedback on their performance.

Sandi criticised the Outcomes Education approach to teaching and questioned the value of LOTE programmes in her interview. In fact, the introduction of Outcomes Education precipitated the demise of her career as a full-time classroom teacher, as she explained:

I don't teach full-time because I don't like – I am anti-outcomes definitely. When that started to come in I got out...it just wasn't prescriptive enough, especially in the Outcomes. It was too broad. Hence I don't choose to teach full-time because I don't approve of the way things are done.

Sandi's criticism of LOTE questioned whether learning a second language was relevant for children struggling with English literacy:

Personally I would prefer if those children who are struggling do extra literacy. Give them two sessions of 45 minutes a week on literacy instead of LOTE. Bring in a literacy specialist for those children.

In her comments, Sandi questions the value of an education programme based on Outcomes Education documents, claiming that the documents do not provide sufficient

clarity in terms of teaching content. She compared the documents to the mathematics syllabus materials produced in the 1980s that provided a clear progression of skills that teachers could “tick off” as they addressed each one. Sandi advocated excusing children with literacy issues from the system-wide requirement to study a second language, in favour of focusing on English language competency. On the issue of literacy programmes, different tutors also criticised the lack of formalised spelling programmes, the failure of the whole language approach to teaching, and the inadequacy of instruction in formal handwriting. However, one tutor, Helen, observed that the introduction of NAPLAN testing had, in her view, led to improvements in how schools taught literacy:

I tell you, what we've really noticed, there's been a couple of things in the last few years that we've been saying for years haven't been done. Like the teaching of grammar, now all of a sudden they've recognised the importance of that, sentence structure. As opposed to “put down everything you possibly can and I'll teach you to punctuate it later on,” because that doesn't happen. And handwriting, we identified that as a great area of need...handwriting's now been reintroduced. They're now teaching grammar, all the structures of our language and the practicing of it, because teachers are actually teaching to the test.

While these comments express support for the introduction of NAPLAN it is against the backdrop of long-standing problems that Helen identified in the way literacy had been taught in schools for many years. Elaine made a similar observation that the introduction of NAPLAN had resulted in more explicit teaching of spelling and grammar in the classroom. Furthermore, Helen also believed that the introduction of NAPLAN had caused an increase in the demand for private tuition, as she said:

NAPLAN's been good for us because that comes back to the reporting systems in the schools. The reports have become less and less informative, and less and less detailed and less controversial so the parents don't know where their kids are. So the NAPLAN has graphed quite clearly that, you know, they are in the bottom quartile or whatever and then we get great influxes.

Again, Helen's positive comment about NAPLAN was framed within a wider criticism of the system of reporting in schools, which was based on Outcomes Education. Not all of the tutors agreed with Helen and Elaine that NAPLAN had any redeeming features. There were far more criticisms of NAPLAN than there were endorsements from the tutors. The criticisms of NAPLAN clustered around four issues. First, tutors argued

that NAPLAN caused unnecessary anxiety for students, their parents and their teachers. Second, tutors argued that a single exam like NAPLAN did not give a true indication of a child's capabilities. Third, tutors criticised the link between school funding and NAPLAN results. Fourth, tutors criticised the amount of time schools spent preparing students for NAPLAN.

Fiona stated that the level of anxiety generated by NAPLAN was simply unacceptable, as she said:

The impact of NAPLAN is huge and not justifiable. Parents will talk in the playground as far as anxiety goes...I'd feel pretty upset if I was a parent and my child was at a school that didn't do very well but there were fabulous things happening at the school but that school will be labeled not good.

Jacqui described the level of anxiety that she observes in both parents and children:

When NAPLAN is approaching we get a rush of people in a panic to train their kids for NAPLAN. What worries me about NAPLAN is that panic. The panic that parents have and children have for achieving well on that test...I have a problem with it when I see the panic that it puts some of the children into. They go into this big freeze and you get a kid who would normally be average or above average and they do abysmally...it's a flash in the pan.

Elaine also identified the "enormous pressure" that NAPLAN puts onto children who are already struggling in school and described it as a quite traumatic experience for them. As she observed:

They tend not to perform very well, even on things they know how to do because they just drop their bundle at Question 1 so it doesn't give a true indication of those and I think that it puts a lot of pressure on parents because schools are now putting a lot of pressure on students about the results. The other thing I really, really dislike is that 6 months later they'll get a result that is a little dot on a line. I have parents come to me and say, "Look at the gap between this and this" and it's 6 months ago. It doesn't have any meaning for where their child is at at the time and it doesn't have any meaning because I don't know why they haven't achieved. I haven't been able to see anything. So I don't know whether they've marked it incorrectly, they've ticked it instead of coloured it in, haven't put it in the box. I don't know whether they haven't been able to understand the question or they've just misread the question. I can't interpret any of those results and nor can the parents without that additional information. So they're pretty meaningless results all told, but parents get very, very stressed.

Elaine goes further than simply critiquing the levels of anxiety engendered by the NAPLAN testing and questions whether the test provides a true indication of the children's abilities. Jacqui echoed this doubt about the validity of the test results in the following anecdote:

We had one little girl, a very, very bright girl in Year 3, who was working way above her level. The NAPLAN result comes in and Dad came in waving it around. The child was under benchmark in some areas and we just looked at it and went, "That's not your kid. That's not your child. Either they've mixed up those results or she was really sick that week because that's not your child." And he was worried because he wants her to be a doctor and was that going to affect her university entrance...but that child was two or three years ahead so what on Earth that test was measuring I do not know.

Both Elaine and Jacqui stated that poor NAPLAN results should be approached with skepticism and cast doubt on their validity. Yet parents often became very stressed when the results were poor so the results cannot be ignored by tutors. According to the tutors poor NAPLAN results also affected schools, not only because the results are published on the My Schools website but also because significant amounts of school funding were being determined according to NAPLAN results. As Fiona stated:

I think the My Schools website will cause anxiety even more because the Government are saying funding and all of that are depending on this one test, on one day.

Finally tutors critiqued the amount of time that schools were spending in NAPLAN test preparation. Two of the tutors stated that for the Year 3 testing some schools were basing their teaching programmes on NAPLAN preparation throughout Term Four of Year Two and Term One of Year Three, representing six months of dedicated preparation for a single test. In some cases tutors criticised the tendency to "teach to the test", however the tutors' views were divided on this issue. As noted earlier, two of the tutors stated that because teachers were teaching to the test the teaching of explicit literacy skills had improved in schools.

The establishment of NAPLAN and the related My Schools website was a major nationwide initiative in mainstream schooling. It is a dominant and unavoidable feature of schooling in Australia. This feature of schooling drew diverse but strong reactions from the tutors. The introduction of one-off standardised testing throughout the primary

years runs counter to the ideal of individualised programming and regular assessment that the tuition providers profess. Therefore it is not unexpected that the tutors should critique it so heavily. In particular, the tutors' conclusions that such testing provokes deep anxiety and fails to provide a true indication of an individual's achievement is not surprising and provides the tutor's with an explanation when their clients fail to achieve in NAPLAN testing.

Individually Tailored Instruction

At the heart of these critiques of the schooling system, is the claim that schools, unlike tutors, are unable to address individual need. The inadequacy of school funding is a key element that tutors say limits schools' abilities to address individual need. It is closely related to the issue of class size. Helen outlines these issues in detail:

Because of the lack of support in the school situation these days, so there's not the financial support, there's not the money put into having individual programmes in the school. I know there's the IEP as they call them, but in practicality for all the teachers, who've got the right reasons behind it, there are interruptions in a normal school day so you don't get the consistency. You know I am really in support of the teachers in the classroom because they don't, they can't provide the time needed to address every child's difficulty. And if they've got 30 children, well they can't do it. So the parents realise that you need to get some outside help. Yes, it's not going to be provided within the school system really, private or state.

Sandi expressed a belief that funding needed to focus on employing more teachers. She stated:

Money, it all boils down to money. Such a shame because it can be so easily fixed. Whack a few more teachers in each school and let the principal use those teachers as he sees fit. Employ me for five mornings a week, for example, put me in, give me to the Year 3s for one hour on a Thursday and give me the Year 2s, plug those gaps and do the support but it will always boil down to money.

Fiona and Helen both asserted that with a class of 30 students or more there was little scope to address individual need. The issues of funding and class size are closely related. Tutors who referred to class sizes of 30 students as a major shortfall of mainstream schooling concluded that this led to children becoming lost in the system. As Fiona observed of the students that need literacy tuition, "they're not independent workers so they get lost in the classroom". Helen reiterated the same difficulty:

We (at the tuition centre) check that they're reading all the time because that tends to get sort of lost, lost in the crowd at school. This fear of children becoming lost in the system was an even stronger theme for the parents in this study as will become apparent in the following chapter.

According to the tuition providers initial testing regimes enable tutors to identify and address specific needs in the children. The provision of individualised instruction is highly valued by parents (as will be explored in the following chapter) and for the tuition providers this was facilitated by initial testing. The initial testing and educational profiling formed the foundation of the tuition interventions. Carol described the relationship between initial testing and programme planning in detail in the following terms:

So we start off with the assessment and it is a thorough diagnostic assessment. A lot of the assessments are for children with learning difficulties. They are one-on-one assessments and then I write that up. I get a few details. I get reports that have already been done to see if I can get any information out of that. I do a big assessment. With literacy problems it is normally difficulties with phonological awareness, I do really deep, thorough assessment of phonological awareness. I use the assessment as a working document as well. I monitor progress and the report actually explains what each area is and why it is important. Some of the results are standardised so I explain what that means, some are diagnostic... I don't make something up; it's all actually factual. I don't say, "they appear to be" it's all very factual. Then the recommendations; which is that they would benefit from intervention in these areas and I identify the areas. So based on the assessment this is exactly what they need.

Accordingly, from the first contact with tuition providers the emphasis was on identifying children's specific needs and planning programmes to provide individualised instruction. The notion that tuition providers were well equipped to address individual needs was a strong element that legitimated the practice of private tuition.

A range of programme structures was employed by the tuition providers. This included one-on-one tuition, paired tuition and small group tuition. There were no large group scenarios included in this study. Tutors stressed that their structure provided the optimal learning experience for the children in their care. Two of the providers, Sandi (the moonlighting teacher) and Carol (*Premier Education Services*) used one-on-one

instruction exclusively. Sandi explained that “one-on-one even the most difficult kids I find are usually amenable to the task.” She compared it to her experience with the small group structure:

For An Even Start you could have small groups of up to five children but I was happier doing individual tutoring. Individually is definitely the way to go.

The *Waterford Literacy Clinic* mainly used one-on-one instruction; however, the two directors, Helen and Kate, taught children in pairs. They described the benefits of teaching pairs:

Pairs is the maximum and we found with the pairs they are still on their own programmes so there may be slight differences in their programme and you can cater for that when there is two of them, but basically they have to be a similar age and profile...they actually like being with another child so it makes them feel they're not the only one with a problem. They often buddy up.

Helen and Kate legitimate the practice of teaching in pairs on the understanding that the programme is individualised. Furthermore they argue that teaching in pairs reduces the stigma of attending tuition. Even the two franchises that provide small group tuition stressed that the teaching programmes were individualised. They argued that delivering an individualised programme in a group setting had clear benefits. As Elaine from *Moreno Tutoring* pointed out, she provided:

...point of need individual programming. We have eight students to three teachers all working on their own programme , whether it's Maths or English. We have one teacher to two students working with high need, younger or critical students, so they get a slightly higher ratio.

The *Lee Colbourne Centre* provided a similar range of services; as Jacqui explained, she provided tuition that was:

Individualised within a group setting. The scenario with the primary school aged children is you have a maximum of five students working with a teacher, each of them individual and working on their own programme , getting one-on-one help, as they need it.

Hence, even in small group settings, it was the individualised nature of the programme that the directors stressed to legitimate their tuition practices. Alice, a tutor at the *Lee Colbourne Centre* went further than the directors and argued that the small group setting was superior to the one-on-one situation:

You have a small group and I like that even better. Because for me I need to get the energy levels up and when I teach I am on full throttle and I just go. When I'm sitting down with one kid it tends to be low level; low energy levels. I perform much better when I've got a group. I also get group interaction. I find that some kids are intimidated being one-on-one with a teacher, whereas, if they have high access to a teacher and yet they have the safety of having a group around them, y'know, four or five kids is just fantastic. And when you come in here and you feel the vibe, the energy that's going on. It's so fantastic, it's just, you don't get that in a one-on-one situation.

Although Alice advocated a small group delivery of programmes, she also stressed that the programme content was individualised to meet children's specific needs. Alice's comments concluded with the observation that the atmosphere of the centre, "the vibe," was important. This contrast between valorising individualised instruction yet providing small group tuition to engender a positive learning environment represents a major tension in the data collected from the franchisees, and to a lesser extent from the *Waterford Literacy Clinic* as they provide some paired tuition. It is also important to note that providing tuition in pairs or small groups increases the profitability of the tuition service. Ultimately the tutors stressed the individualised nature of their service, regardless of whether the mode of delivery of the tuition was one-on-one, paired or even in a small group. Throughout the interviews the tuition providers often reiterated the that they were able to meet individual need whereas mainstream schools were not.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings of the data analysis in the form of a proposition addressing how private tuition providers legitimate their practices. The proposition is that tuition providers substantiate claims to educational legitimacy in three ways:

- The quality of services offered by the tuition provider;
- The shortfalls of mainstream schooling; and
- The individualised nature of the tuition service.

Tutors drew legitimacy from their qualifications and memberships of authorising organisations. These credentials were often gained within the mainstream system of schooling. The qualifications and credentials were a dominant feature despite the fact there is no regulatory requirement for them within the tuition industry. Tuition providers also drew legitimacy from the quality of their programmes, passion of their staff and ability to meet children's individual learning needs. Their positioning outside the mainstream enabled some tutors to explore alternative options not available within

the school system, such as behavioural optometry, kinesiology and naturopathy. Finally, tutors critiqued the mainstream, focusing on the inability of schools to meet individual needs due to systemic constraints. This chapter dealt with the perspectives of the tuition providers. The following chapter deals with the perspectives of the tuition clients, namely, the children and parents of the children who engage private tutors.

Chapter Seven: The Legitimate Consumer

Introduction

This chapter further generates theory from the case studies of families engaged in tuition. The previous chapter dealt with the perspectives of the tuition providers, including directors, tutors and assistants. The following pages present the parents' and children's perspectives, and develops a proposition about the elements that predispose families to seek private tuition. The bulk of the chapter deals with parent's perspectives because, for the tuition of primary school children, parents make the decision to seek tuition and they pay for the service. A brief section at the end of this chapter will deal with the children's views and explore how they relate to the parents' views.

This chapter develops the proposition that the predisposition of parents to seek out and pay for private tuition for their children is driven by one or more of the following factors:

- Optimism about their children's futures and a concomitant desire to maximize their children's future opportunities;
- Anxiety about their children's previous and/or current schooling experiences; and
- A proclivity to take action to address the perceived shortfall in their children's educational provision.

Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) observed that when predispositions match fields then people feel like "fish in water". In other words their actions seem unquestionably natural to them. Therefore, parents whose predispositions incline them to engage in private tuition consider their decision to be inevitable. Bourdieu and Passeron also observed that the predisposition to accept instruction is just as important as the quality of the instruction offered. He states:

the successful prophet is the one who formulates for the groups or classes he addresses a message which the objective conditions determining the material and symbolic interests of those groups have predisposed them to attend to and take in. In other words, the apparent relationship between prophecy and its audience must be reversed: the religious or political prophet always preaches to the converted and follows his disciples at least as much as they follow him, since his lessons are listened to and heard only by agents who, by everything they are, have objectively mandated him to give them lessons (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, pp.25-26).

Bourdieu's and Passeron's comments imply that in order for a tuition provider to thrive he/she needs to find a legitimate consumer for his/her tuition service. This chapter does not propose that all families who provide or seek private tuition are the same. Chapter Five described the participants in this study and highlighted the variations between them. Nonetheless, common themes emerged across the cases. In the instance of the parents' data, these common themes indicated a proclivity to pursue tuition.

This chapter identifies three key elements that predispose parents to seek tuition for their primary school aged children. These elements include aspiration, anxiety and action. The three elements are closely related and the relationship between them will be explored in the following pages. These elements create a disposition to engage in private tuition and to respond favourably to the legitimating claims of tuition providers. The chapter will conclude with a brief section that describes the children's perspectives on tuition, considering to what degree the children's perspectives reflect the views of their parents. The children included in this study are quite young, hence it will be of interest to investigate whether the children's perspectives simply mirror their parents' views or whether they differ in significant ways. Furthermore, it is important to canvass the children's views as private tuition is a practice that impacts directly on their lives. The children are the ones who spend the time and effort in the extra lessons and the relationships that constitute private tuition.

Aspiration and Optimism

It is not surprising that parents who enroll their children in after school tuition hold aspirations for their children's futures. Certainly there is evidence throughout the parents' interviews that some parents have their children's future professional careers and high school attainments in mind when they engage in private tuition at the primary school level. The interesting element is the degree of optimism parents held in terms of their children's potential futures. The majority of the children in this study were struggling academically yet their parents held high expectations for their futures. Parents expected private tuition to ensure that their children could make choices about their futures. They expected their children reach their full potential and they sought tuition to meet this aspiration.

Aspirations for professional and high school careers

Parents linked private tuition to the career aspirations expressed by their children and to their own parental aspirations for their children's futures. In some cases parents explained that their children were aiming for specific careers. In other cases parents wished to ensure that their children had choices when it came time to engage in the workforce. These parents expressed a fear that poor school attainment would translate into limited career choices. Some parents explained that despite spending time and money on tuition in the short-term, they would ultimately steer their children away from academic pursuit as a career path. For these parents, the insights gleaned from their children's engagement in private tuition were instrumental in providing a pragmatic and realistic level of aspiration.

Jeff, the parent of a Year 7 student, Jessica, sought tuition for the purpose of improving Jessica's ability to meet a specific career aspiration. Jessica had expressed a desire to become a veterinarian. As Jeff explained:

She's talking about being a vet, or working at the zoo. She loves animals and wants to work with animals but then I believe, perhaps you've got to be top of your class to be able to get into veterinary so she may never get there. But at least if I can help her get as far as she can get.

Other parents referred to their children's career aspirations to enter various professions including architecture, forensic psychology and the electrical trade. Jeff had the most focused correlation between career aspiration and tuition. For other parents it was more important that private tuition enabled their children to be able to make choices about their future careers.

To reiterate an earlier comment, Roy's mother, Karin, expressed this desire for career choice succinctly:

If he can be in class, do the work, get through, and say, "I have the choice to drive the garbage truck or be a teacher" rather than have someone say, "You'll never amount to anything but drive a garbage truck."

Layla's grandmother, Julia, initially stated her own wish that Layla enter university after finishing school. Julia continued to explain that Layla had expressed interest in a number of careers including medicine, archaeology and forensic psychology. Julia

concluded her comments about Layla's future with a sentiment that mirrored Karin's comment about career choice:

I'd like her be whatever, and even if she didn't want to be any of that, if she just said "Nanny I want to sweep roads", as long as she's happy and content. But I think she's going to need a challenge in her life to keep her going.

For some parents engaging in private tuition provided them with insight that caused them to modify their career-based aspirations for their children. For instance, Cindy described her acceptance that Roy would not pursue an academic career:

And look he's not going to be, we would be crazy to direct him into an area of high academic pursuit. That's not going to work for him. But he's always going to know that he can use his power...He's very physical so we've already kind of tried to have him see that a trade or an apprenticeship would be a fantastic opportunity because he can get out – I mean, he's not going to want to be sitting at a desk in high school any longer than he has to. So he does projects with my husband around building stuff. He tells me he wants to be a plumber or an electrician.

Through the feedback given by tuition providers and school teachers, Cindy has gained insight into Roy's academic ability and built career aspirations to match her perception of his ability. The achievement of similar insight was most dramatic in the case of Yvonne, whose emotional response to the realisation that her daughter, Lauren, would not have an academic career was described in Chapter Five. Despite this realisation, tuition continued to have an important role in preparing Lauren for later life, as Yvonne stated:

She's always wanted to be a chef, from being three to about eight, nine, something like that. She's sort of saying that she will want to be a chef again. Part of me is saying, 'Shouldn't we be spending the time on that?' Shouldn't I be paying the tuition for her to be the best chef she can be, rather than (Laughs) you know, continuing down the spelling road? Can't be much fun everyday.

Interviewer: Therefore, what is it about literacy tuition that makes you stick with it?

Yvonne: (Sighs) It's the access to everything, isn't it? I mean, she's got to read recipes. She's got to be able to work out what her field is. She's got to be able to. Unless she is able to have that relationship with language then it's going to be really difficult for her. We really need to at least get her up to Year 10 level, I think, because it's difficult for her to run a business. I

find it difficult and I've been a good reader and I find it incredibly difficult with all the forms and the paperwork and even though, she's got a great mind. She'll go and set up a bead business. She'll go and research on the Internet and you know trademarks, and she'll give her business a name and she'll make business cards and all that sort of stuff but she'll spell the name of the business wrong (laughs) but you know at the end of the day if that's what she wants to do that's fantastic but she's still going to need literacy to do it. How else is she going to read her tax return and she's still going to need it? That's the problem; it's so endemic in our society.

Lauren had been diagnosed as dyslexic and at one stage in her interview Yvonne speculated that her time and money might be better spent on teaching her daughter to julienne carrots, rather than focusing on her spelling issues. Nonetheless, Yvonne's comments stressed the importance of tuition for future school achievement, stating that Lauren would need to achieve at least Year 10 level at school to prepare her for life after school. Following primary school, Lauren was enrolled in an elite private girls' school and Yvonne cited preparation for entry into this high school as a key reason for seeking tuition.

Several other parents referred to preparing their children for high school as an important motivator for engaging in private tuition. In some cases this involved private schools and in others Government schools. One parent had already visited her local Government high school to find out what level of support the school would provide for her son even though his high school enrolment was two or three years away. This parent stated that if she had not been satisfied with the response of the local Government high school she would have pursued a private high school place. The following comment was indicative of the concerns held by parents:

I wanted her to get the foundations because I thought without the foundations she's going to struggle right through and I didn't want her to get to Year 7 or first year high and she's left behind. So much so that you never, you know, you will always struggle.
(Robyn)

The preceding comments illustrate that when parents engage in private tuition they are motivated by concerns about their children's futures both in and beyond high school. There was considerable evidence of these aspirations for the future throughout the interviews with the parents. At the same time, parents expressed aspirations that related to their children's current school situations.

Aspirations for current schooling

In the parent's interview data, the theme of aspiring to improve children's current school life was actually stronger than the themes related to the children's futures. Parents expressed their desires to ensure that their children were keeping pace with their peers and were happy at school. There was also evidence that parents made strong links between school achievement and self-esteem. Furthermore, parents described how they used private tuition as a safety valve, especially when dealing with homework issues.

In the previous chapter, it was noted that while tutors criticised systemic issues in mainstream schooling, they shied away from criticising individual teachers. Some parents had fewer qualms about critiquing individual teachers. In the case of Lynn's son Sean, it was a poor relationship with a classroom teacher that caused Lynn to seek private tuition. As she explained:

Well, what happened was, in Year Three he had an awful teacher and I've never actually seen the effect, it was astounding the effect she had on him. He was literally cowering, trying to please her, but, and it seemed to me she was one of these teachers that if I went in to speak to her, she was fine to me but behind my back she did some awful things to my son. So after that I thought, well my husband and I both thought that... he'll probably always get teachers that he doesn't get on with or who don't like him but that doesn't mean to say his schoolwork has to suffer so my main reason was so he could keep up in class and it didn't matter what his teacher was like, whether she was good, bad or indifferent. Some teachers you get, they yell. Some carry on like pork chops and some are very unreasonable; having said that, his Year Two teacher was fantastic. So he's been coming here since then and it's done him the world of good. And we don't have to worry so much because we know that if he doesn't get the concept at school he can go over it here.

Lynn's son was in his first year of high school and had remained in tuition at the *Lee Colbourne Centre* for five years. Lynn intended to keep him in tuition throughout his school life despite the fact that he was a well above average student. Not only did it provide a supportive alternative to school when he was having difficulties with his teacher, but for Lynn being enrolled in ongoing tuition prepared her son for his later high school years. She anticipated that he would require subject specific tuition for his final exams. Lynn referred to the difficulties she encountered in choosing tutors for her older daughters in their final year of high school but said that it would be so much easier in Sean's case because they would access the tutors through the centre that he already

attended. Lynn had developed a high level of trust in her relations with the tuition centre and her reasons for continuing tuition relate to both current and future schooling issues.

Several parents expressed their view that private tuition reduced the stress of the mainstream classroom learning. These parents noted that tuition gave their children greater confidence in the classroom and that translated into happier children. For Yvonne receiving a diagnosis of dyslexia had two effects. Yvonne reported that it made it easier for her to accept that Lauren has difficulty completing literacy tasks and the diagnosis has made Lauren more open when she experiences difficulties and less inclined to try to hide her problems. Some parents anticipated that tuition would finish when their children completed primary school while others stated that their children would require ongoing tuition. As Karin observed:

There is no light at the end of the tunnel for us. It's not like I can say, 'we'll do this for 20 weeks and that will fix it.' It is going to be an ongoing thing.

Parents such as Karin experienced great frustration completing homework and school assignments with their children at home. Tuition operated as a safety valve in these situations and many parents referred to the ways that tuition took pressure off the family. Tuition acted as a safety valve in a few ways. Parents were busy and tired at the end of the day when they were required to work patiently with their children on homework tasks. Children resisted completing these tasks with their parents but were less likely to resist a professional tutor. Karin explained this dynamic with her son, Roy:

He doesn't like to work with his mother and gets very defensive and very anxious... the conflict you have trying to get your child and not getting frustrated with them when they refuse to do it and they put in their little defense mechanisms. Like or their, "I need a glass of water, I need to go to the toilet, I need to do this." At least with his tutor I don't think he does that. He does none of that. He gets in there, he sits down and does it. Every person I've ever gone to -the tutors, the OT, the speech pathologist have all told me how well he works. How he is such a good child. How he is interactive and does all this. Whereas with me (laughs)

Parents expressed feelings of inadequacy towards the task of providing support for their children. As Vicky stated:

Mamma's not a teacher as far as he's (her son's) concerned.

Vicky's son, Jacob, was only five years old when he commenced tuition. He attended the *Lee Colbourne Centre* for enrichment and extension purposes, not remediation. At the suggestion of the director of the centre, Vicky changed schools to give Jacob more academic stimulation. Vicky originally sought tuition for him to keep him engaged in learning, as she stated:

We're here to just give him what he needs so he's not bored, OK? The law is he has to go to school and part of the reason we had to change schools is because they were not giving him anything at school. So at five and a half he had lost all enthusiasm for going, he wouldn't talk about what he did all day. He was starting to become inside himself and for want of a better group of words, he was dumbing himself down to fit in, because no kid wants to feel different.

Vicky described tuition as a "lifeline" for Jacob in his previous school. She said she continued to bring Jacob to tuition because he loved the stimulation yet she anticipated a time when it would no longer be needed:

He loves it here, he absolutely adores it. He truly adores it and always has...As I've said this may stop if he's getting enough at school. If he's getting enough at school then that will be, never to be pushed. He's not to be pushed. It's to keep him interested, to keep him into it at school, to keep him to enjoy learning. Not necessarily in school, just to learn.

Jacob had a very busy schedule in addition to private tuition he attended swimming lessons, music lessons, karate lessons and cricket. Vicky stated that it was her role to take care of all his needs, physical and academic. Vicky constructed an education portfolio for Jacob that consisted of private schooling, after school tuition and various extra curricular activities in order to meet all his needs. There was a high degree of trust between Vicky and the tuition centre staff, as evidenced through her acceptance of the centre director's recommendation to change schools. Vicky also anticipated that her two year old daughter would need tuition at the *Lee Colbourne Centre* for extension at an early age.

Although Vicky's reason for commencing tuition was quite different from the other parents included in this study, her underlying motivation to improve her child's confidence, happiness and wellbeing in his current school situation was shared by several parents who sought tuition for remediation purposes. Those parents seeking remediation certainly held aspirations for their children's future school and professional careers, yet were also concerned to improve their children's schooling experience in the

short-term. Parents described tuition as a safety valve that dealt with the frustration of dealing with homework issues and alleviated the anxiety that arose when their children developed problems in school.

In addition to these reasons that are linked to definite career and school attainments, whether they be long or short term gains, there was evidence that parents were also motivated by more abstract reasons to pursue tuition. Charlotte's mum, Robyn, stated that ultimately tuition was about giving Charlotte the opportunity to "be the best she can be". The sentiment was clearly expressed by Layla's grandmother, Julia who said:

I really just want her to have a good start and to be confident and reach her potential. She's a very bright little girl. I just want her to reach her potential and be whatever she wants to be.

Julia also commented that enrolling Layla in tuition made her feel more peaceful about Layla's schooling. Parents included in this study expressed considerable anxiety about parenting and schooling issues for their children. For these parents enrolling their children in tuition played a key role in ameliorating these anxieties.

Anxiety

The surprising aspect of the parents' perspectives was the finding that there was a strong theme of parental desire to improve children's current schooling experience. In other words parents were focused on current schooling issues even more than they were focused on the future. This may well be because the children are at the primary school level and have many years of schooling ahead of them, coupled with the fact that children spend a great deal of their time in school every weekday. Nonetheless, parents worried about their children's schooling and sought to ameliorate their worries by employing private tutors.

The interview questions often elicited strong emotional responses. Parents described the anxiety they experienced when faced with a child who was struggling at school, whether that was due to their children performing below or well above the expected norm. Some parents sought underlying causes for their children's issues and consequently interrogated their own histories as parents. Some parents described the fear and desperation they experienced when trying to address their children's learning issues. Finally parents even expressed anxiety related to the decision to engage in private tuition, demonstrating elements of self-doubt.

Guilt

Parental guilt is a common phenomenon (Furedi, 2008) and several of the parents in this study made comments that indicated they felt responsible for their children's learning issues. Some comments were delivered flippantly but others were quite serious. Nonetheless there were clear indications throughout the interviews that parents apportioned self-blame for their children's difficulties.

Robyn was a prime example of a parent searching deeply into her own history to explain her daughter's current situation. She made the following comments:

I was on medication when I was pregnant, for the previous five years. I lost four pregnancies and she was my fifth and I was on, I had very bad stomach problems and I had three lots of operations so I was on medication for that. I was on anti-depressant medication because of the physical side of what I had gone through. Whether that's had an effect – you don't know.

Robyn also speculated that the fact her daughter was in a "split family" situation might have had a bearing on her learning difficulties. Karin, Roy's mother, shared this speculation about a split family situation but took the self-examination further and expressed a concern that she was not proactive enough in Roy's early years of schooling, as she said:

I just don't have enough background in it. If I had known from the beginning and been like my friend is with her children and just research, research, research everything and pushed harder. In fact I would have kept them both (Roy and his twin brother) down in pre-primary.

Schools can inadvertently fuel parental guilt. Yvonne was told that it was her lack of support at home that was causing Lauren's difficulty in school:

The Year One teacher just kept insisting we weren't doing the work at home. Even though we would go and see her and say, 'We're doing the work at home but she doesn't seem to be able to do it.'

Consequently it took several years for Yvonne to identify Lauren's problem. Lauren was eventually diagnosed with dyslexia, but only after many years of struggle for both Yvonne and Lauren. For Cindy, a clear diagnosis was given when Jay was in Year One and he was identified as suffering from dysgraphia, a writing disorder (Miceli, Silveri & Caramazza, 1985). Cindy also explained that she believed that she suffered from

similar writing issues as a child and that the similarity between Jay and her had become a family joke:

But all my other family, as in my brothers, you know, top 1% in the state for English. So they were all perfect and I was exactly like Jay. Which makes it really worse for me. My husband always goes that I let the team down. I should have disclaimed that at the beginning.

Cindy indicated that she identified strongly with her child and this was evident throughout the interviews with other parents. Robyn stated that she and her daughter, Charlotte, shared a creative streak and a preference for visual learning. Vicky saw her own early acquisition of literacy reflected in the exceptional abilities of her young son, Jacob. Julia expressed a desire to protect her granddaughter, Layla, from the racial taunts that she herself had experienced as a child in school. Julia recalled spending many hours standing outside the classroom and being told that she was stupid. When Layla was racially teased by her peers Julia considered home schooling to protect her from similar humiliation. Julia was quite prepared to provide the bulk of the instruction for home schooling, putting aside a career as a psychologist because she believed it would protect her granddaughter from the setbacks that she had suffered as a child. However Julia was not confident providing instruction in Mathematics. Consequently Julia approached the *Lee Colbourne Centre* with the aim of using their tuition to supplement her home schooling. On meeting the director and explaining Layla's situation, Julia instead decided to enroll Julia in a school recommended by the director. Responding to their children's situations with guilt and self-blame was a strong theme throughout the interviews. This theme involved parents looking back in time to examine their personal histories and past actions. A second emotional response involved looking forward into their children's potential futures with feelings of fear and desperation.

Fear and desperation

As was briefly mentioned in relation to parental aspiration and will be explained in the following section on parental action, the parents in this study generally approached their children's futures with optimism. However it cannot be overlooked that at times fear and even desperation were evident in their comments. This was a strong tension in the data as parents expressed both fear and optimism about their children's futures. These emotions existed concurrently. It is important to acknowledge the element of fear in the

parents' interviews because it makes families vulnerable to less scrupulous elements in the tuition industry.

The tutors often mentioned that when parents approached them they were quite desperate to gain help for their children. Some parents described long histories of intervention for their children; the annal of Roy's history of intervention was included in detail in Chapter Five. Yvonne continued to pursue new interventions for her daughter, as she stated:

You can only try can't you, just anything, we'll try anything... we are a bit willing to try anything. She's going through colour filter testing next week.

Yvonne's daughter, Charlotte, had been diagnosed with dyslexia and was attending private tuition three times a week, yet Yvonne continued to search the Internet for new interventions. Another parent, Karin, when asked what she was looking for when pursuing tuition, she simply stated "I was looking for somebody...I was looking for anybody that would help me really".

For a few parents, this desperation was fuelled by a fear that unless suitable assistance was found, their children would disengage from learning and develop behaviour issues. This was most evident in the interviews with the parents of boys. Karin stated her fear that Roy would rebel against school unless he gained more confidence in his ability to learn:

Not that he has done it yet but I have a feeling that he's going to rebel because at the moment he's still a bit nervous to do it, outside of say the home, but I think that day will come when he will just go "nah"... I think that he will either start to drift off a bit or won't go to school. You know when you drop them at school and you hear these stories of kids that just go. I think that could be him if he doesn't feel confident.

Cindy expressed the fear that, without specialist intervention, her son Jay would have been misdiagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder:

He's not one of those kids with ADD who goes off track. I always thought that if we hadn't have done what we did when we did it, then he would have been that kid. He would have got disengaged.

Jay had a diagnosis of a specific learning difficulty, dysgraphia. Jacob, on the other hand, achieved well above average and his parents enrolled him in tuition for the

purposes of extension. Nonetheless his mother, Vicky echoed Cindy's concern that without tuition Jacob could be misdiagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder:

Someone's going to turn around and say he's got ADD or something stupid and then I'm just going to have to hit somebody. Because he's not and I just know he's not.

In addition to concerns about schools misdiagnosing their children, parents' expressed fears that their children became lost in the large classes in schools. This fear correlates to the criticism that tuition providers made of class sizes in schools. Parents stated beliefs that their children were reluctant to ask a teacher for assistance because of the large class size and that their children's compliant behaviour in class made it less likely that their learning issues would be identified and addressed. Karin was particularly concerned by this issue and explained her view in detail:

He was such a quiet child that nobody, and as they said to me when he was in Kindy, they said, "When he gets to school put him at the front of the class because he is so quiet that he just melds into the scenery because he doesn't want anybody to ask him a question". And if they do he would just sort of seize up... he flew under the radar, I reckon for the first three years of school. Like that's not even including pre-primary. For the first three years I reckon he just glided and I would say things and they would say, "Oh no, he's fine, oh well but he's fine". And I would think, "He's not fine. Is he fine?" I don't know... I think he wasn't disruptive, he wasn't aggressive, he wasn't, he just literally whatever they asked him to do he would do and that, but this is his pattern. If you ask him to do something, he will do it. If you sit him down one-on-one he will always do his best but when you put him into a table of six and he has to go off on his own. He just, I think, taps his fingers. I don't know what he does, this is the thing. One-on-one he is very good and he'll try really hard. Put him into a group and he just sort of blends. That's what they always said from Kindy, he will blend, and you've got to be careful because he's not, he doesn't play up and this is the thing. If he'd played up I would be able to say, "See, you know" but they haven't noticed him, they say, "Oh him, yeah he's OK. Who are we talking about?" You know that sort of feeling. And I think that's Roy, he's always quiet.

It is this fear that a child will simply "blend" and "fly under the radar" in the school setting that makes the individualised attention promised by tuition an attractive option.

As the preceding comments illustrate, parents expressed anxiety about the past and the future. Some parents engaged in self-examination and question their personal circumstances to find causes for their children's difficulties. Other parents expressed

fears that their children would be misunderstood or become completely disengaged from learning. The following paragraphs describe the self-doubt that some parents experienced once they had made the decision to engage in private tuition to address their children's learning issues.

Doubts about tuition

Making the decision to engage in private tuition does not necessarily mean that parents became free of anxiety about their children. For some of the parents interviewed there was evidence that self-doubt developed concerning whether ongoing tuition was necessary. Not all of the parents interviewed expressed doubts; some were unequivocally positive about their decisions. Nonetheless others expressed self-doubt, particularly when a significant figure such as a teacher questioned the necessity for tuition.

In the case of Yvonne, self-doubt arose when the *Waterford Literacy Clinic* proposed that Lauren undergo further assessment with a literacy expert at the cost of \$1,000. Yvonne was unsure whether to pursue this option and stated her doubts in the following terms:

I don't know. I don't know whether, how much more you know, you ask the question, "How much more are they going to tell you?" Are they going to tell you, well, she has got dyslexia, she's got memory problems, she's got sequencing issues. She will never learn it and do you really need to pay a thousand to find that out? Or do you just need to get to the point where you just go, OK she's got these problems and she'll never be particularly good at these things and let's just work around it.

As stated earlier, Yvonne continued to actively pursue new interventions through the Internet but at times she expressed doubt about the efficacy of this course of action.

For Cindy self-doubt arose when her perception of her son's needs was challenged by classroom teachers, as she explained:

Last year he had two teachers who sat there and went, "I don't kind of get where you're going with this". Then they'd show me his work and go, "this is the story he just wrote, I don't understand it" and I'm like, "Yeah, that's great but if he hadn't have had this and if we don't keep this (private tuition) up you won't see work like that". So I guess it's a bit frightening for me too because then you think, "Well are you doing the right thing? Are you making a mountain out of a molehill? Is it that

they just don't understand? Is it that they don't have the knowledge? What if I do stop and it's all fine?"

At the beginning of every school year Cindy met with Jay's classroom teachers and provided them with details of his diagnosis and copies of various reports on his abilities. The previous year she met with resistance from Jay's teachers as relayed above. Although Cindy actively defended her decision at the time of the challenge, on reflection it caused her to doubt herself and question whether tuition was necessary for her son.

Karin expressed a series of doubts about tuition. She doubted the short and long term effectiveness of tuition. She questioned whether her son, Roy, absorbed the information at the time it was delivered and whether he maintained gains made during the year over the long summer break. Finally she questioned whether Roy needed tuition at all because she lacked a firm diagnosis of a specific learning difficulty, as she explained:

I worry that when he sits there and he does his tutoring, he walks out the door and I have this horrible feeling it just goes straight out of his head (makes dispersal gesture with hand). But I do see him improve, like last year with the tutor doing this work with him. By the end of that year he always seems to get his stride towards the end of the year. Because he's had 12 months of this is what we do, so he catches up at the end of the year and then we have the break for school holidays and I find he just lets it all go and we start again. But I think it has been good...but because we don't have anything conclusive. I do look like I'm running around trying to, you know, like Munchausen's by proxy saying (laughs) "there's a problem! There's a problem!"

Karin's likening of herself to a parent with Munchausen's by proxy, a psychological condition where a parent fabricates or causes an illness in their child to gain attention (Jones et al. 1986; Meadow, 1982), even in jest, indicates deep-seated self-doubt. Throughout the interviews some parents expressed doubts about their decisions to initiate and continue with private tuition. However, this theme was overshadowed by the theme of parental action, even when doubts were present in the parents' interviews there was an overriding sense that they were compelled to act on their children's behalf. It is this theme of parents as advocates for their children that will be explored in the following section.

Taking Action

In the previous sections of this chapter it has been demonstrated that parents experience anxiety related to issues of their children's schooling. The element that is common to all parents in this study is not only the experience of anxiety; it is also the propensity to act upon that anxiety. Robyn explains it simply:

So I'm very, I was very proactive in that I worried about it, I stressed about it and I did something about it.

The following pages explore this theme of parent action, arguing that parents in this study view their actions as combative and are prepared to do "whatever it takes" to provide their children with the assistance they deem necessary. In doing so parents are displaying a high degree of trust in both their own children and the tuition providers. Often this trust is related to a breach of trust with mainstream schools. Some parents express the view that they must act as an advocate for their children because in their experiences of schooling nobody else will.

Battles and sacrifice

In their interviews parents often described realising that they had to take action on their children's behalf. One parent described how the school advised her that she could wait for an intervention with a government provider or she could "take the bull by the horns" and seek private assistance. Another parent described reaching the point where she said, "Nah, nah, nah. This has got to stop now. We've got to resolve this". A third parent was approached by her daughter's Year 2 teacher and left the meeting thinking, "I need to do something constructively with this". In all these examples the parent took on the responsibility to address the child's learning issues. One parent, Cindy, described her advocacy as an ongoing battle on behalf of her son. Her comments included:

I don't see that there's going to be an end point and I would see us still using Waterford Literacy when he went into high school. I see that it's also a campaign that you have to be a warrior for. I mean even when he goes into high school, he needs extra time for his exams. He needs to not be put in the dummies class but in a class that does actually reach his... you know and I'll have to fight for that, I know that. And, you look at his work and it's messy and it's, I mean it's come such an amazing distance but it still doesn't match up. So you know certainly through his education. I see probably there being a sort of a, almost a peaceful time after that but while he's having to go to school I see it as an ongoing thing he's going to need support with and that we have to champion.

For these parents there is no doubt that they should take direct action to address their children's schooling needs. They described feeling compelled to act on their children's behalf. As Robyn stated:

You just have to address it. You know well, I'm having to address it to do whatever is required. I'll do whatever, for her, for her wellbeing to make sure she's happy.

These parents declared that they were willing to do whatever it took to meet their children's needs. This action was not without sacrifice. The main sacrifice was financial. In the case of the *Waterford Literacy Clinic* and *Premier Education Services* parents needed to set aside \$100 a week for tuition fees. However this did not deter the parents. Cindy stated that she would sell her car or even her house to continue funding tuition. The other sacrifice was logistical. Ferrying children between tuition and school was a considerable organisational feat for some parents, especially those with full-time jobs. In some cases grandparents were enlisted to assist. Tutors relayed stories of parents who traveled long distances to attend their centres. Parents were willing to make considerable financial and time investments in their children's tuition.

For Vicky there was a social cost involved in pursuing tuition for her young son. Vicky described "receiving flak" for choosing to enroll her five year old in tuition for extension purposes. She said that when she began tuition fellow parents had ostracised her and teachers had advised her that she should simply be satisfied that she had a happy child. Despite these criticisms, Vicky viewed tuition as an important aspect of her parenting practice. Vicky stated that:

He may always need it (tuition) and if he always needs it that's part of it. Same as he goes to karate and he does his swimming. We take care of his physical body, he's enrolled in his cricket that he wants to do. So we take care of that part, this (tuition) has to take care of his mind.

There is evidence in the interviews that parents were willing to make sacrifices - financial, time-wise and social - to meet their children's needs. In some cases parents viewed themselves as being engaged in a battle on behalf of their children. This approach to parenting is accompanied by a high degree of trust in both the children and the agencies that provide private tuition. Often this optimism and trust is accompanied by a breach of trust with mainstream schooling and classroom teachers.

Issues of Trust

Despite the anxieties that parents displayed, there was a strong theme of hope and optimism in the parents' interview data in relation to their children's futures. Parents asserted that despite their current schooling issues they foresaw success in their children's lives. Parents trusted that their children would have bright futures. Parents described their children's capabilities and often referred to their children's intelligence. Ultimately, parents continued to have faith and refused to give up their efforts to attain the best education possible for their children.

Some parents made clear distinctions between their children's level of intelligence and their ability to perform well at school. Robyn described her surprise at being confronted with learning issues when her daughter, Charlotte, entered formal schooling:

when she was little, when she was a toddler growing up, I never thought I would have this problem because she was so bright. She's an intelligent, bright child but the learning process. There's a developmental process going on there where she's slow on the uptake.

Robyn also differentiated between Charlotte's spoken and written language abilities in the following terms:

Charlotte's got a fabulous vocabulary she uses words that you just go, "where in the heck did she get that from?" but what she can't do, or what she couldn't do was put it in writing and structure it and spelling was atrocious.

Robyn also described Charlotte's musical and artistic abilities as strengths that exist irrespective of Charlotte's learning difficulties. Cindy also described the surprise she experienced when her son, Jay, was identified with learning issues during his first year of formal schooling:

...it was devastating but we knew he was really, really smart, and that was also another indication for his teacher. She said, "I know he is so bright and his vocabulary is fantastic, and he's the third child" so he had all these concepts, things that a lot of these other kids just didn't have and she said, "It's not an IQ or an intellect thing, it's definitely a literacy thing but I don't know what".

As explained earlier, Jay was eventually diagnosed with dysgraphia, a writing disorder. As a direct consequence of this diagnosis and the subsequent learning difficulties he

experienced, Cindy has modified her aspirations for Jay and stated her hope that he would eventually pursue a trade. Nonetheless she has not completely discounted the prospect of a professional future for Jay:

I think he could be a doctor if he wanted to but I think the pain wouldn't be worth it...but I know he will be successful because he is charming, smart, savvy and, you know, gorgeous. So he has actually got it all.

One of the tutors, Carol of *Premier Education Services*, also commented on the optimism her clients held about their children's futures. In Carol's view many of the parents she encountered had also experienced difficulties in school and had gone on to build successful and fulfilling careers. She stated that they expected the same of their children. Certainly, Yvonne, whose daughter, Lauren was diagnosed with dyslexia, expressed this sentiment in the following comment:

At the end of the day she, actually, she's a clever girl. And she will be a successful girl. And you know she's more than the sum of her parts so-to-speak.

As Cindy had modified her aspirations for Jay, Yvonne had considered encouraging Lauren to pursue an ambition to become a chef. This followed the *Waterford Literacy Clinic* advising Yvonne that Lauren would never have an academic career. At one level Yvonne accepted this advice, even though she initially found it emotionally devastating as described in Chapter Five. However, the following comment made towards the end of her interview, Yvonne revealed that she had not completely closed off any options for Lauren:

It's a funny thing. Dyslexia's a funny thing because you hear about all these great people who go on and do these great things and you think, "How?" They must have been... I can imagine the Tom Cruises and those sort of thing, I can get that. Other people who go on and do more academic stuff, I think, "How do they do that?" Maybe that's what Lauren will be able to do, maybe it will be just a matter of her being slower at it and taking a bit longer.

Yvonne found support for Lauren at the *Waterford Literacy Clinic*; she noted that while the tutors advised her not to expect an academic career for Lauren neither did they give up in their efforts to assist Lauren. Yvonne appreciated their pragmatic advice and decided to trust them to provide the support Lauren needed. Consequently Lauren attended the clinic three times a week. This consisted of two literacy sessions and one numeracy session every week, outside school hours. Yvonne explained how

she balanced her pragmatism over Lauren's abilities with the considerable time and money that she continued to invest in tuition:

It was devastating on the day but you know it was really good. So that's where they've been really good, so that's one of the benefits, they've sort of really contextualised it and said, "It's just where she's at and she may never be able to do this stuff." I think it is important that you have that but also that you don't give up and that you don't think, "Oh she'll never get it," and then you don't try. I think that's the wrong attitude as well. And they (the tutors) don't do that, they don't go, "She'll never get it. We'll give up. We won't bother".

The *Waterford Literacy Clinic* gained Yvonne's trust because they gave an honest opinion concerning Lauren's capabilities and offered strategies to assist Lauren reach her full learning potential. Parents often referred to the trust they placed in their tuition providers. Yvonne explained the relationship succinctly:

It felt really good when we took her to *Waterford Literacy Clinic* and they said, "99% sure she's got dyslexia and if she has we think we can really help her." And so then just going to SPELD and getting it confirmed, we put our trust in *Waterford Literacy Clinic* because they were the first people to say, "Yes and we know what to do to help you" (laughs). Then we were like, OK, just do it then, whatever it takes.

The *Waterford Literacy Clinic* assessed Lauren and the feedback from this initial assessment convinced Yvonne to pursue tuition with the clinic. Jeff also referred to the initial testing conducted by the *Lee Colbourne Centre* as a key element in his decision to pursue tuition for his daughter:

Once she (Jacqui, the centre's director) had done the assessment she (Jacqui) could pinpoint areas that she (Jessica, his daughter) needed to have help and I thought, "Oh well sounds like she obviously knows what she's doing".

Parents placed a high degree of trust in the tutors. Parents from the *Lee Colbourne Centre* accepted advice on schooling issues, even to the extent of accepting a recommendation to change schools. Parents also accepted referrals to alternative therapists such as the behavioural optometrist, naturopath and kinesiologist included in this study. The surprising element is the lack of knowledge that parents professed to have about the actual content and underlying philosophy of their chosen tuition provider. Not one parent included in this study was able give an in-depth description of the philosophy and method of the relevant tuition provider. Instead the following comments were made:

I don't actually know what the teaching method is. I haven't asked that. I just want to know if I am getting the results and basically I'm getting the results. I think that's, I don't get too bogged down in that I think it's just, you know. (Robyn)

They have a very structured approach to the homework that comes home and I really liked that. They were insistent on, "you have to do your bit everyday at home", I do like that because I think that there's no point in me sending her twice a week and then not having it supported out of school, at home sort of thing. I don't really know a lot else about what they do. They just seem to have a pal system. (Yvonne)

I suppose the thing I've got in *Waterford Literacy Clinic* is I suppose I trust them to be professionals in the area of dyslexia. Whether they are or not, I don't know but that's what I trust them to be. They seem to talk in that way. (Yvonne)

Cindy was asked: How much did you know about their philosophy and teaching methods before you went in?
Cindy replied: Nothing.

Karin was asked: With the programmes you were involved with, how much did you know about the philosophy and teaching methods that they chose? Was that part of your decision?
Karin replied: I didn't really know anything about it.

Jeff was asked: What do you know about the philosophy and teaching methods behind what they do here?
Jeff replied: Nothing, Nothing at all.

Julia was asked: What do you know about the teaching methods and philosophy behind the teaching here?
Julia replied: I don't (laughs) I just trust them.

Lynn was asked: What do you know about the philosophy and the teaching methods they use here.
Lynn replied: Ooh, to be honest, not much, I mean I know that they treat them very well. My son never complains about coming, he's always happy to come. If there's a problem I can always ring the director and I think they treat them very well. I mean you don't see any kids being pulled in here.
Lynn later stated: I feel like I don't really know what's going on in here. (laughs)

These comments are significant for several reasons. Parents are investing considerable time and money in the tuition programmes. Tuition providers stress the content of their programmes and their underlying philosophies as key aspects that legitimate their practice. However, parents do not claim to have any knowledge of the philosophies

and teaching methods that their tuition providers use. Instead, parents place great trust in their respective tuition providers.

Vignettes about breaches of trust with schools

The issue of trust is also evident in the parents' discussions of their relations with mainstream schooling providers. Often alongside the trust placed in tuition providers there was a history of a breach of trust with mainstream schooling. In several instances the parent interviewed for this study cited a breach of trust with their child's school as a key contributing factor to the decision to engage in private tuition. These experiences are pertinent to tracing the paths parents took that led them to engage in private tutors for their children. This section of the chapter will describe each parent's experience in detail. These experiences will be presented in the form of vignettes to give coherence and clarity to the parents' accounts.

Vignette 1 – Robyn and Charlotte

Charlotte was enrolled in the *Waterford Literacy Clinic*. She was in Year Four at the time of the interview and attended her local state primary school. Her mother, Robyn, was Charlotte's primary caregiver. Charlotte's parents were divorced and Charlotte regularly stayed with her father but lived primarily with her mother. She had no siblings.

The first time Robyn was notified that Charlotte had literacy issues was when Charlotte began Year Two. Throughout Year One Charlotte received very positive school reports that Robyn described as "glowing". Whenever Robyn asked the Year One teacher about Charlotte's progress she was assured that Charlotte was doing very well and there was nothing to be concerned about. Robyn speculated that the Year One teacher was young and inexperienced. Furthermore, Charlotte was always well behaved, considerate and cheerful in class. Robyn conceded that Charlotte may have "hoodwinked" the Year One teacher, causing her to overlook Charlotte's difficulties.

Early in Year Two the class teacher approached Robyn and expressed concern that Charlotte was unable to perform the basic reading skill of blending sounds. Robyn was shocked and requested an interview with the school principal to explain why the issue had not been identified earlier. Both Charlotte's parents attended the interview and were dissatisfied with the response. The principal asked Charlotte's parents to look at

various statistical displays on the school computer to address their concerns. Robyn described her reaction in the following terms:

And I just thought, “You know that’s not what we’re on about. You’ve got a teacher, you say she’s doing marvelously well. Look at my result. Look at what I’ve got here. Look what I’m having to do. I’m having to go and pay for extra tuition”.

Robyn initially responded to Charlotte’s issues by paying for tuition at a franchised tuition centre. However the business failed and Robyn was generally unhappy with the quality of instruction offered in that setting. Charlotte’s learning difficulties persisted in Year Three and the teacher recommended the *Waterford Literacy Clinic*. Subsequently Robyn paid for assessment and tuition at the clinic. At the time of the interview, Charlotte had been attending the clinic for approximately eight months. Robyn was much happier with the tuition at the *Waterford Literacy Clinic* because she was seeing improvements in Charlotte’s school results.

Robyn intended to keep paying for private tuition at least until Charlotte completed Year Four, at which point she was due to commence Year Five at a private school. Attendance at the clinic was prioritised above school attendance. The Year Four teacher had requested that Robyn alter Charlotte’s attendance at the clinic because she was missing language and maths lessons at school. The clinic was unable to accommodate a timetable change and nonetheless Robyn decided that Charlotte should stay at the clinic. Robyn described a recent meeting with Charlotte’s Year Four teacher, who told her:

State schools don’t have the facilities. They haven’t got the extra to be able to, you know, if your child lags behind only you can probably do something about it.

Robyn elaborated on this comment in the following terms:

I mean she **was** in classes of, say, 22 students. She’s in Year Four and there’s 32 so even in, you know, how can you input so much into each child with 32 students. You can’t! So you’ve got to hope that they’ve all got some understanding of what’s going on. I find it very frustrating, the education system.

Robyn’s disillusionment began when the school failed to detect learning issues in Year One and was fuelled by an inadequate response by the principal when Robyn and her husband sought an explanation for the oversight. Robyn’s ongoing concern is that due to large class sizes her daughter’s needs cannot be met in mainstream schooling;

therefore, she places great trust in her private tuition provider, the *Waterford Literacy Clinic*.

Vignette 2 – Yvonne and Lauren

Lauren also attended the *Waterford Literacy Clinic*. Lauren was in Year Seven at the time of the interview and anticipated attending a private girls' school for high school the following year. Lauren lived with her family, including her Mum, Dad and younger brother. Yvonne, her Mum, was parenting full-time at the time of the interview. The family lived in the United Kingdom for many years and migrated to Australia when Lauren was in Year Five.

In the UK Lauren attended a private school with a class size of 14. Her parents noticed that Lauren was having difficulties learning to read when she was in Reception (the equivalent of pre-primary in WA). They suspected that Lauren was dyslexic but were reassured by her teachers throughout her early school years that this was not the case. In Year One the teacher insisted that the family was not completing assigned homework despite Yvonne's protestations that they were attempting the tasks but that Lauren seemed unable to do them. In Year Two Lauren was awarded a book prize for her hard-working efforts in class. It was in Year Three that the class teacher expressed concerns and sent Lauren to be assessed for dyslexia.

The testing found no evidence of dyslexia; however, Yvonne observed that Lauren didn't "get on" with the examiner. The subsequent report contained the comments that Lauren was "shy and unforthcoming" throughout the testing process. Despite the lack of a formal diagnosis, Lauren commenced extra in-school tuition to address her difficulties. Yvonne was disappointed with this school intervention because it was conducted by an assistant who often misspelt words in notes sent home. At this stage Yvonne began asking the class teacher if she recommended extra tuition outside school and was constantly reassured that everything was going well.

The family relocated to Perth when Lauren was in Year Five. She completed Year Five in the UK and then enrolled in the final term of Year Five in Australia. At the beginning of Year Six a folder of class work was sent home for comment. Lauren's parents were appalled at the standard of her work and requested an interview with Lauren's teacher. At this interview the class teacher speculated that Lauren may have

dyslexia and further testing was conducted within the school system. This testing also failed to diagnose dyslexia; however, her parents were dissatisfied and pursued assessment outside the school. A friend referred them to the *Waterford Literacy Clinic* where the directors conducted tests and stated that they were 99% sure that Lauren was dyslexic. Their findings were confirmed by further testing conducted by SPELD. Lauren subsequently enrolled for literacy and numeracy tuition with the *Waterford Literacy Clinic*.

Yvonne's breach of trust with formal schooling was the result of years spent suspecting that her daughter had a serious learning difficulty and being constantly reassured that everything was fine. She chose to place her trust in the *Waterford Literacy Clinic* staff as they were the first professionals that validated her instincts. Yvonne described her years trying to get help through the school system as "frustrating and annoying". Friends had advised her to sue the private school in the UK but instead Yvonne chose to express her disappointment in an email to the school. Yvonne continued to experience disappointment with the school system after migrating to Australia, citing a lack of coordination between Lauren's school teachers and the *Waterford Literacy Clinic*, as she explained:

it's incredibly difficult to communicate with them. They are not very email literate so since she's got Year Seven teachers. They email me and I email them. Although it's not perfect and we haven't done a lot and they know they haven't done what they committed to doing. But they've done more than any other classroom teacher before so I don't really want to be on their case too much because I know they've got 30-odd kids. But maybe I need to do more pushing

Vignette 3 – Karin and Roy

Roy's case differed from Lauren and Charlotte's cases in one key respect. Roy was born premature and received medical and educational interventions from a very early age. For Roy, private tuition was the most recent in a long history of special care that included speech therapy, occupational therapy and psychological testing. These interventions included government-funded and private providers. Karin was dissatisfied with the government-funded agencies because their services were delivered in a group setting and Karin suspected that Roy "blended in" when placed in a group. Karin expressed a belief that Roy needed a one-on-one situation in order to learn. Karin met with classroom teachers regularly throughout Roy's early school years. Karin was assured by the kindergarten teachers that the school would be fully prepared for Roy

when he entered primary school but according to Karin they were not. Karin was disillusioned with the school-based interventions and eventually pursued private tuition to support Roy, as she stated:

I have to say the meetings were pretty useless, nothing really happened after we had them.

Karin speculated that it was a struggle to gain support from the school because the various assessments did not result in a firm diagnosis of a specific learning difficulty. In Karin's view, the lack of diagnosis combined with Roy's compliant behaviour in class with the effect that Roy did not receive the individual attention that he required in order to thrive. As discussed in detail in a previous chapter, Karin believed that because Roy was not disruptive or aggressive in his behaviour, his needs were often overlooked in the classroom. She expressed her fear that he quickly disengaged from learning in a group situation and only worked well in a one-on-one situation. She believed he simply blended into a group and furthermore, because he was a quiet and cooperative student some teachers were unaware that he had any learning issues and when Karin approached them the teachers seemed unable to even recall exactly which student he was.

Vignette 4 – Cindy, Jay, Lynn, Sean, Julia and Layla

The final vignette combines the experiences of three families enrolled at the *Lee Colbourne Centre*. Their breaches of trust with their children's school communities have been introduced elsewhere and will be revisited and combined in this vignette.

Jay was the youngest child included in this study. His mother became disillusioned with mainstream schooling. She believed Jay was bored because the school environment was unable to cater to his need for intellectual stimulation. Cindy used terms such as "jail sentence" and "detention camp" to describe Jay's experiences in the state school system. Cindy also described the social repercussions that resulted from her decision to enroll Jay in private tuition at the age of five years. His classmates' parents ostracised Cindy and teachers admonished her to be simply satisfied that she had a happy child. She described her frustration in the following comment:

It was very difficult because the school tells you to be part of it, as soon as you do, they are not quite so welcoming.

Consequently, Jay was transferred from the state school to a Catholic school, following his tutor's recommendation. Cindy said that Jay was much happier in his new school but stated her intention to continue with tuition for as long as Jay needed the additional attention.

Sean also enrolled in tuition following negative school experiences. In Sean's case this involved mistreatment by a specific class teacher, as described earlier in this chapter. His mother, Lynn, stated her belief that tuition enabled him to revise concepts taught in school and provided a safe haven of learning when problems developed at school. The breach of trust between Sean's mother and the school occurred on a personal level, as she explained in the following terms:

I just felt so angry at this teacher for treating a child, not even her own child, that way. That's the thing, you put them in their care for the day and they make their life miserable...and he was so young to try to explain that it wasn't him. I guess you feel pretty helpless because you can't help them.

Finally, Julia also sought private tuition in response to negative school experiences. Julia and her granddaughter, Layla were Aboriginal and Layla had been subjected to racial teasing at school. Initially Julia considered home schooling Layla but eventually opted to change schools instead. When considering home schooling, Julia doubted her ability to teach mathematics and investigated private tuition providers to cover the shortfall. Eventually Julia chose not to home school Layla but when she perceived that Layla was having difficulties with Maths she again considered the private tuition option. Julia's aim was for Layla to "keep ahead". Julia also noted that large class sizes made it difficult for Layla to gain individual attention in the school setting, as she said:

She was having troubles at school and the teacher didn't have time to explain those things to her. She was saying, "I don't ask because there's too many kids in the class," or "I forget to ask at recess time". So that was actually a big thing that I just said, "No, we'll do this".

In these three instances, trust with the school system broke down due to social issues. Cindy stated that the school community did not understand or support her decision to enroll her son in private tuition. Lynn cited a poor relationship with a classroom teacher as the trigger for enrolling her son in tuition. Julia initially investigated private tuition following her granddaughter's experiences of racism in the school environment. Two of these families opted to change schools as well as pursue tuition. Nonetheless it was

disillusionment with schools that led these families to seek educational assistance outside the mainstream school system.

Throughout these vignettes parents describe how the events resulted in them shifting their trust from the mainstream schools to the private tuition providers. Their experiences make them open to the critiques of schooling that tuition providers offer to legitimate their service. They are also particularly drawn to the prospect of individualised attention promised by private tuition providers. These elements within the parents' data and the tuition providers' data dovetail with each other, creating conditions within which private tuition can thrive.

Thus far this chapter has dealt exclusively with the parents' data. This examination has found that parents experience conflicting emotions of anxiety and optimism concerning their children's future. When these parents experience anxiety they are mobilised by the emotion and choose to act on their children's behalf. Furthermore, in taking responsibility for their children's education into their own hands, parents often transferred trust from schools to their private tuition providers. The following section introduces the data collected from the children engaged in tuition, with the aim of examining how closely the children's perspectives align with their parents' perspectives.

Children's Perspectives

Six children were interviewed for this study. Two of the children; Charlotte and Jay, attended the *Waterford Literacy Clinic*. Three of the children, Jacob, Jessica, and Sean attended the *Lee Colbourne Centre*. One child, Roy, received tuition from Sandi Venner, the moonlighting tutor. The children were asked about the positive and negative aspects of tuition. They were also asked to explain their understanding of why they required tuition and to describe their ideal tutor. The following paragraphs report their responses in order to ascertain whether children simply mirror their parents' views or whether they have unique insights into the phenomenon of private tuition. The children's perspectives are also significant because the practice of private tuition impacts most directly on their lives.

Not surprisingly, social aspects of tuition featured throughout the interviews with the children. For instance, according to the children, the main upside was that it could be

fun; even Jacob (who was only five at the time of the interview) stated that the best thing about tuition was that it was fun. Conversely, the primary downside to tuition was that it could be boring. Another downside was disruption to social life. Roy stated that he disliked it when he missed out on playing with his friends because he had to attend tuition. This was particularly difficult because his twin brother did not attend tuition and was able to continue playing. As he stated:

I get a bit bored of it... the thing I don't like about it is sometimes when I have friends come over I have to go to tutoring while my brother gets to play with his friend.

Jessica cited the loss of a Saturday morning sleep-in as her main downside to tuition. The children disliked tuition impacting on their usual routines. For the children the advantages and disadvantages related to immediate social experience rather than on future academic or career gains.

Children also described the new social relations created by tuition as major benefits. Jessica described the opportunity to “meet different people” as a major advantage of her involvement in tuition. Charlotte received tuition with a partner, Stella. She described the best aspects of tuition as “having my friend around here, just having fun while I am learning.” Jay said that the best thing about tuition was the lolly reward at the end of each session. The children were more focused on the immediate social aspects of the tuition experience than their parents.

Nonetheless, the children, like their parents, were cognisant of the link between current school performance and tuition. They often referred to tuition helping them improve academically. As Jay stated, tuition was “time-consuming and brain-hurtingness” yet he continued to state; “It’s annoying but I know it helps”. Charlotte observed that following her enrolment in tuition, “there’s a big difference, there’s been a lot of stuff that I have been better at, like English and stuff”. Sean also made a link between school performance and tuition, explaining that “at school it helps me to understand a lot of the questions we get asked and that I have to answer in tests”.

Sean and Jay also credited tuition with affecting their position in class. Sean said the purpose of tuition was, “just to benefit in the schoolwork, so I don’t get below average, just to stay with the class”. Jay stated, “it helps, it just makes things a lot easier. I’m actually above class average now”.

While the majority of the children linked tuition to current school performance, only Jessica speculated on future goals. Jessica stated that she was, “learning stuff that I might need for high school” and also linked tuition to her career aspirations in the following statement:

I want to work at the zoo or be a vet or something like that so I think that maths would be good when I go there.

In the parents’ data issues of self-confidence and the importance of individual attention were key elements. These issues were less evident in the children’s data, but both were briefly mentioned. In relation to self-esteem, Roy stated:

I used to doubt myself a lot that I wasn’t good and say that I’m the worst kid in the school and I’m not very smart, I’m dumb and my brother’s smarter than me but over the year I’ve been with my tutor I’ve started to get more confidence with the work.

Jay displayed awareness of the issue of class size and individual instruction in the following comment:

Because at school my class is 38 and there’s only one teacher. Well, two teachers but one at a time, and having a tutor just gives more one-on-one than just the occasional attention.

These comments indicate considerable self-awareness and maturity. It is also possible to hear the echo of conversations held with their parents or held between parents that have been overheard by the children. Other instances of children referring directly to conversations with their parents are evident in the children’s data. Jessica stated:

My Dad and my Mum said it (tutoring) would be really helpful and you could learn some new things, which would be good so I just came.

Charlotte explained how her parents encouraged her to attend tuition:

My Mum and Dad told me that, “If you want to be the best you can, why don’t you just try out the literacy clinic?” And I went. “Ok” so I agreed to come and I did.

In these instances the children demonstrated compliance with their parents’ wishes. Jay went further in his comments and characterised tuition in the following terms:

Tutoring isn’t something, if you’re getting D’s and stuff, the lower grades, and you’re not happy with your child’s effort or something. It’s not something you just send them to, to get them better and increase their average to make them, well, a lot

smarter. If you really need it, you use it, like a privilege. It's a privilege, not a right.

Jay expressed the opinion that tutoring should not be taken for granted but should be highly valued. He went further than expressing simple compliance with his parents' wishes and advocated that children and their families should be aware that not everybody is able to access private tuition. His comment aligned with the parents' comments about the sacrifices, financial and logistical, that they made to engage private tutors.

Finally children were asked to identify features that they believed good tutors should possess. This focused on a concrete aspect of tuition and reflected the children's interest in the social aspects of tuition. To address this issue the children were asked to draw a picture of their ideal tutor; however, only two of the children (Roy and Charlotte) did this. The other children preferred to answer the question verbally or in writing. One child, Jacob, was too young to engage with the task and preferred to discuss the lush grass in his school playground and the joy of getting a lunch order every Friday.

Roy drew a monstrous figure that had several eyes. He explained it as a feature that enabled multi-tasking. He stated:

I gave it lots of eyes because if she's with one thing she can look at the other thing while then doing another thing. But she's only got two arms but sometimes she can speak while thinking and reading to me and thinking about the other thing and sometimes speaking like keep swapping over so she can look at one thing and read it out in her mind. Then she looks at me and does work with me then she reads something like that.

Roy also said that knowledge was important, so that the tutor could:

Teach me the right thing and tell me exactly what they are so I know them when I go to school.

Charlotte took great care to draw a female tutor and expressed her preference in the following terms, "It's a lady. She's a very nice person. She likes being with kids, of course. She's a very nice woman". Charlotte elaborated on her preference for a female tutor, "I prefer ladies as teachers because they are more cuddly and stuff". Charlotte also stressed kindness and honesty as key features. Charlotte's criteria all focus on social aspects of the tutor. Her interest in honesty may relate to her experience with a Year

One teacher who gave Charlotte a very positive school report and assured Charlotte's mother that Charlotte was doing well in class; however, on entering Year Two Charlotte's learning difficulties were identified.

Jay also highlighted social elements in his description of the ideal tutor. He stressed openness and patience as key factors. He also assumed the tutor would be female, as he stated, "she should be strict when she needs to be and listen to advice she's given". He also stated that a tutor should be, "patient, especially patient and they should be able to help you, no matter what problem you get into". With this last comment Jay indicated that a tutor also needed to be competent. Hence although the relationship was important to him, it was also necessary for the tutor to demonstrate academic expertise.

Finally Sean also stressed the social component of tuition. He described the staff at his tuition centre in the following terms, "they are just all great people. They love teaching. They love to help the children". Sean was similar to Jay and also expressed a concern that tutors demonstrate teaching competence, as he stated, tutors should:

...try not to give you the answer straight away, try to get you to figure it out for yourself, so give you hints to figure it out.

Sean asked if he could write a paragraph about his ideal tutor, rather than draw a figure. He wrote:

I think a tutor should be very encouraging to children to help them through their work and not give away answers trying to help them. A tutor should be trying to help the child have fun while working instead of giving them the idea that this work is really hard and boring and it should be fun.

His comments return to the notion that tuition should be fun and not boring. This was the strongest sentiment in the children's data. All of the children, even Jacob (five years old) commented that tuition should be fun and conversely that it should not be boring. In this sense the children (with the exception of Jessica) were more focused on the immediate experience of tuition and the relationship with the tutor than on potential future gains.

It is important to note that the children in this study were all primary school aged students. Their views concur with those of their parents to a very high degree and all were cooperative participants in tuition despite the few negative comments. It may be

that as children age their compliance with their parents' views may change. There were some indications of rebellion against tuition in the parents' data. Three parents described instances of their children becoming unhappy in tuition and expressing a desire to withdraw from tuition. Roy's wish to be able to play with his friends rather than attend tuition is one example of this. However, the overwhelming evidence indicates that at the primary school level students accepted their parents' direction and willingly participated in the private tuition provided for them.

Conclusion

This chapter developed one central proposition with three key elements: aspiration, anxiety and action concerning the predisposition of families to seek private tuition. The first element describes the optimism that parents feel about their children's futures that predisposes parents to seek tuition. The second element describes the anxiety about their children's current schooling experiences that predisposes parents to seek tuition. The third element describes a proclivity to take action in relation to their children's education that predisposes parents to seek private tuition. This chapter also compared the parents' perspectives with those of their children – finding that, in the main, children's views concurred with parents' views. Nonetheless, children were more concerned with the current experience of tuition, the relationships formed during tuition and the overriding sentiment that tuition should be fun. There were fewer comments about the future within the children's data. However, children accepted the assertion that private tuition improved the quality of their current academic attainment and future schooling prospects.

The following chapter discusses the two propositions presented thus far in this thesis. The first proposition was presented in Chapter Six and pertained to the data collected from the tuition providers. The second proposition was presented in this chapter and pertained to the data collected from the families who engaged the private tuition providers. The two interrelated propositions will be discussed and together they will build a theory of legitimating claims whereby private tuition providers make claims to provide a legitimate educational service that the parents of the primary school-aged children included in this study respond to favourably. Furthermore the following discussion will examine the effects of engagement in private tuition on key stakeholders; namely tutors, parents and children.

Chapter Eight: Discussion

Introduction

This chapter presents the theory generated about how private tutoring impacts on the lives of the tutors and families engaged in tuition. The major theoretical outcome of this study is the theory about the relationship that develops between the legitimating claims made by private tuition providers and the predispositions of parents who respond favourably to the tutors' claims. This chapter draws on the findings presented thus far to develop theoretical propositions in relation to the aims of the study. These propositions provide the structure for this chapter. The development of the two propositions and their interrelated elements is discussed, linking the relevant themes from the data analysis with themes from the literature. However before dealing with the specific propositions it is important to attend to the issue of legitimacy. Legitimacy emerged as the pivotal theme throughout the data analysis. Therefore this discussion chapter will first explicate the concept of legitimacy, drawing on Bourdieu's work on education, and discuss how it is used in this thesis.

Once legitimacy has been explicated the chapter will discuss the theory generated from this study, that is, the theory of legitimating claims. The discussion is in two main parts; Proposition One and Proposition Two. The first proposition and its three elements derive from analysis of the tutors' data and the second proposition and its three elements derive from the analysis of the parents' data. To reiterate, the first proposition is that tuition providers substantiate claims to educational legitimacy in three ways:

- The quality of services offered by the tuition provider;
- The shortfalls of mainstream schooling; and
- The individualised nature of the tuition service.

The second proposition is that the predisposition of parents to seek out and pay for private tuition for their children is driven by one or more of the following factors:

- Optimism about their children's futures and a concomitant desire to maximize their children's future opportunities.
- Anxiety about their children's previous and/or current schooling experiences; and
- A proclivity to take action to address the perceived shortfall in their children's educational provision.

In discussing these propositions this chapter will describe the relationship that develops between tuition providers and the parents who engage private tutors for their children. Furthermore, this chapter will discuss how the concept of bespoke education applies to the theory of legitimating claims and accurately describes the phenomenon whereby parents take a determining role in their children's education.

Bourdieu and Legitimacy

Legitimacy emerged as a key theme during the data analysis phase of this project. It is also a significant aspect of Bourdieu's work on education. As discussed in the introduction Bourdieu described social life as consisting of relations between the constructs of field, capital and habitus. Bourdieu argues that education entailed processes of social reproduction that perpetuated existing structures of social privilege and social disadvantage. Bourdieu's work on education included consideration of the concept of educational legitimacy. Three elements of Bourdieu's notion of the role of legitimacy in education pertain to the present study. Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) observed that for schools educational legitimacy was implicit or hidden. They also observed that educational legitimacy provided the basis upon which educators built their authority to teach, or impose meaning, on their students (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). Finally they observed that for legitimacy to be effective it needed to be responsive to the predisposition of its intended audience (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). This thesis examines the relationship between one group of education providers (the private tutors) and the clients who engage their services (the parents who employ private tutors for their primary school-aged children). This section deals with the three assertions about educational legitimacy and their application to the current research project.

Bourdieu observed a process whereby teaching, through the phenomenon of government-funded mass schooling, became steadily more enmeshed in the civil service. Under these circumstances the legitimating claims became more opaque as the teacher was "no longer remunerated by the client" (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, p.66). The trend towards private education, in Australia and worldwide, is evident in the growth of fee-paying schools; outside of school private tuition and educational therapies. Therefore, private educators are returning to a situation where they need to attract clients. This need has unveiled many of the elements of educational legitimacy. This trend to make legitimating claims explicit is flowing over into the Australian government schooling system as evidenced in the developing culture of accountability

and transparency. The introduction of standardised testing throughout primary and secondary schooling in the form of NAPLAN and the consequent publication of the test results on the “My Schools” website attest to this developing culture.

Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) asserted that educational legitimacy entailed an educator claiming the authority to teach. This entails taking something that is actually contingent, or created, and presenting it as inevitable or natural with the outcome of ultimately perpetuating relations of social domination. Exploring how private tuition perpetuates the Australian social hierarchy is beyond the scope of this project. Nonetheless, the tuition providers included in this study drew on several key strategies to legitimate their practice and establish their authority to teach. They highlighted the quality of their teaching programmes, the quality of their staff and the quality of their reputation. These strategies will be discussed in detail in the following pages. Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) also posit that in the field of education a relationship forms between the legitimate educators and the legitimate addressees. Bourdieu and Passeron also use the term “legitimate consumer” and describe it as, “one equipped with the social definition of the legitimate product and the disposition to consume it in the legitimate manner” (1990, p.38). The shared elements that predispose parents to consume tuition in the legitimate manner will also be discussed later in this chapter.

This thesis asserts that educational legitimacy is only complete when responded to by a legitimate consumer. In this case the tuition clients (primarily the parents) accept and validate the tutors’ authority to teach. Therefore it is relevant to consider the elements that predispose parents to engage private tutors, thereby entering a very specific field of education. The “system of predispositions” that informs an individual’s choices has been defined as “habitus” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, p.67). Bourdieu and Wacquant observed that when the social world, or field, and habitus are compatible an individual is like a “*fish in water* it does not feel the weight of the water and takes the world about itself for granted” (1992, p.127). In other words the choices and actions of the individual feel natural and their justification is self-evident. This relationship between provider and consumer is at the heart of the overarching theory developed in this chapter, which is presented as two discrete but interrelated propositions.

In the context of this study habitus embraces the elements that predispose parents to engage private tutors for their primary school aged children. These elements include

optimistic aspirations for the futures of their children, anxiety about the current schooling experiences of their children and a proclivity to take action in relation to education issues on behalf of their children. These elements predispose parents to respond favourably to the legitimating claims made by the private tuition providers. Hence they engage with the tutors as the legitimate consumers of the educational services offered to them by the tutors. The third element, a proclivity to take action in educational matters, informs the concept of bespoke education as parents craft their children's educational life to meet specific aspirations and perceived needs.

Before considering the specific propositions developed in this thesis it is important to note that the issue of legitimacy has previously been applied to the field of shadow or supplementary education. In her work on private tuition in Canada, Aurini explores the issue of legitimacy and private tuition provision (2004, 2006). In her later work Aurini describes private education businesses as being engaged in "legitimation projects" (2006, p.85). However Aurini does not use the term legitimate in the Bourdieuan sense, rather she draws her conception from institutional theory and compares how private education businesses diverge from mainstream schools in their crafting of educational legitimacy. Aurini's research focuses on tutoring businesses and learning centre franchises. She states that:

Legitimation projects engage three underanalysed processes central to institutional theory: myth making, coupling and the logic of confidence (2006, p.85).

Aurini's work affirms that the issue of legitimacy is a key element in shadow or supplementary education. However, as stated earlier, in this project it is the dynamics of the relationship between the legitimate educator and the legitimate addressee that are of concern rather than the application of educators' legitimating claims to institutional theory.

In this thesis the issue of legitimacy is central to the relations between the tuition providers and the parents who enroll their children in the tuition programs. The legitimating claims of the tuition providers are explicit. The legitimating claims establish the tutors' authority to teach. The legitimating claims emphasise the quality of the educational services that tutors offer, and highlight the individualised nature of private tuition. Finally, the tutors' legitimacy is validated by the response of the parents and therefore represents a relationship between the legitimate educator and the

legitimate consumer. Throughout this chapter this relationship will be explored via the discussion of the propositions generated by this project.

Proposition One

Tuition providers substantiate claims to educational legitimacy in three ways:

- **The quality of services offered by the tuition provider;**
- **The shortfalls of mainstream schooling; and**
- **The individualised nature of the tuition service.**

This study suggests that tuition providers make legitimating claims and use specific strategies to communicate their claims. The claims have two foci. The first is the quality of the individualised services provided by the tutors. The second is the inability of mainstream schooling to meet the needs of all children. The first focus on quality of service provision is the most extensively used strategy while the second focus is more incidental but nonetheless crucial because it establishes the need for intervention by private tutors.

Quality of the programmes

The tutors stressed that the teaching programs they provided were unique and effective. They described the underlying theories informing their programmes, the quality of the staff they employed, the comprehensive testing they undertook and the reputation of their service as the key indicators of the high calibre of the educational interventions they provided. The specific details of these elements differed from one provider to the next however in each case the four key elements of underlying theory, professional staff, detailed testing and high reputation were identified.

All five cases adhered to specific underlying theories of learning. In two cases, *Waterford Literacy Clinic* and *Premier Education Services*, the theories described how children acquired literacy. The theories were developed independently and they informed the teaching and testing conducted in the centres. The *Waterford Literacy Clinic's* theory was neurologically based and the *Premier Education Services'* theory was based on orthography. The two franchises, *Lee Colbourne* and *Moreno Tutoring*, drew on theories of skill development that emphasised the acquisition of basic skills that included spelling strategies and times tables. Sandi Venner, the moonlighting teacher, also stressed the importance of basic skill acquisition and her teaching involved

identifying the “missing chunks” in her students’ literacy or numeracy skills. Although the content of the underlying theory differed between cases, across the five cases the underlying theory of learning that informed the tuition intervention was a significant component of educational legitimation.

In Chapter Five case studies of the five tuition providers in this study were grouped into three categories that were informed by the business structure and underlying theory of each provider. The three categories included, *tuition as therapy*, *franchises* and *the moonlighting teacher*. These three categories are useful for this small-scale study but are by no means exhaustive. *En masse* or large-scale tuition where the instruction is provided in whole class settings such as that provided in Perth by *Kumon* or academic coaching companies such as *Northside Coaching* is one further possible category. Online tuition is another possible category (Bray 2010a). Other researchers have used categories that differ significantly from the model proposed in this study. This variety of tuition providers, employing different underlying theories of learning offers a wide choice to parents, enabling them to tailor their children’s education to suit individual requirements.

The Tanner Report examined private tuition provision in England and developed five categories that grouped providers according to the mode of business operation. The categories included traditional agencies, notice boards, mediated notice boards, individual/small agencies, and educational centres (Tanner et al., 2009, p.18). The first three categories describe agencies that put clients in contact with individual tutors who subsequently provide the tuition. The last two categories describe agencies that directly provide the tuition. The categorisation is derived solely from the business model employed by the agency.

From an American perspective, Gordon et al.’s (2007) *The Tutoring Revolution*, attempted to comprehensively categorise all tutoring options available in the 21st-Century. The categories included professional tutors, community/nonprofit tutors for children, community/nonprofit tutors for adults, school-based volunteer tutors, college peer tutoring, adult work force tutoring, peer tutoring (elementary and secondary schools), college/university clinical tutoring, corporate-owned tutoring centres and franchised tutoring centres (Gordon, et al. 2007). As in the English example, the categories primarily addressed the business mode of the tuition such as whether the

tuition operated on a voluntary basis or for profit and whether it was a franchise or corporate-owned business.

Both the American and English examples are valid and useful categorisations of tuition. However, this study would suggest that a categorisation based on business model alone is less helpful than one that takes into account the underlying theory of learning that informs the tuition. In this study, tutors argued that the quality of their programme was crucial to the legitimisation of their practice; hence, taking the underlying theory of learning that informs the tuition into account becomes a key element in categorising the tuition provider. Tutors in this study stressed the importance of their identity as educators, using underlying theories of learning, as well as the mode of business, to inform categorisation, acknowledges the perspectives of the tutors in this study. Furthermore, this categorisation highlights the notion that education can be individually tailored through the employment of private tutors.

Diskin's unpublished thesis (2010) addressed the question of whether tutors view themselves as being primarily engaged in business or education. The phenomenological study examines the perspectives of 10 tutors engaged in private tuition. The author expected her participants to prioritise their identities as business people; instead she found that their identities as educators were dominant. Diskin drew the following conclusion:

The research findings, in summary, showed that private for-fee tutors, although mindful of the fact that each needs to garner business, place more emphasis on the value-laden characteristics of years ago. Despite the fact that the private tutoring industry has grown to an over \$8 billion dollar a year industry, those tutors who conduct their own business and who are not working for agencies as employees, still see themselves as providers of a concept of education that emphasises joy in learning, understanding for understanding's sake, and learning to seek one's own answers (2010, p.160).

The findings of this study concur with the Diskin's conclusion that tutors prioritise their identities as educators above their identities as business people. Therefore it supports the assertion that it is appropriate to categorise tuition programs by considering the underlying theories of learning, alongside the business structures, rather than relying solely on business structure.

This study found that there was variety in the underlying theories of learning across the relatively small number of cases under consideration. In contrast, Dierkes (2008) found the opposite. Dierkes described *juku* schools, the dominant form of shadow education in Japan. Dierkes investigated whether shadow education, as an example of school choice, resulted in variation in the underlying theories of learning, as claimed by proponents of competition in schooling (Dierkes, 2008). Dierkes found that:

While the shadow education system is rife with choice of different delivery techniques and formats, it appears not to have produced much variety in terms of a fundamentally different educational philosophy. (Dierkes, 2008, p.241)

In later research Dierkes (2010) observed that the operators of *juku* schools often claimed to provide superior pedagogy to schools. However, he states that the only justification for this claim is that market forces will ensure that inferior *juku* schools fail. Dierkes stresses that there is no empirical data to support this claim. Therefore, for Dierkes, categorising tuition providers according to underlying educational philosophy would not be useful because he doubts that variation exists and questions the providers claims to possess superior pedagogy. In contrast, using underlying theory of learning to inform categorisation of tuition providers in the Australian context is useful for two reasons. First it acknowledges the desire of the tutors to be taken seriously as educators. Second it provides a more detailed understanding of variations in the private tutoring industry. Tutors advanced the quality of their programmes as a key legitimating claim and the underlying theories of learning were central to this claim.

Quality of the staff

Complementing the quality of the teaching programmes was the quality of the staff that delivered the programmes. The tutors emphasised their staff's educational credentials and the passion for teaching as the two elements that attested to the quality of the staff that delivered tuition. In the *Waterford Literacy Clinic* and *Premier Education Services* the tutors were all fully qualified and experienced classroom teachers prior to their employment as tutors. The franchises had a combination of qualified teachers and unqualified assistants; however, the teachers were responsible for the programme delivery. Sandi was a qualified teacher with over 30 years of teaching experience. This emphasis on teaching qualifications runs counter to a claim made in the education press that without government regulation tuition can, and therefore will, be provided by anyone who decides to set themselves up in a tuition business. A recent article in the

education press reported that in NSW Mohan Dhall, who was the CEO of the Australian Tutoring Association (ATA), successfully registered a tuition coaching business in the name of a convicted pedophile to illustrate the risks of an unregulated tuition industry (O'Keefe, 2010). This suspicion of private tutors is evident throughout the literature on shadow education worldwide, where there is concern about corruption amongst classroom teachers who tutor after school hours and may withhold key curriculum components during school lessons so that students must pay for private tuition (Bray, 2006, 2009)

In contrast the findings from this research indicate that for the tuition providers included in this study, teaching qualifications and experience are essential to private tutors' claims to educational legitimacy; hence, sectors of the industry demonstrate evidence of self-regulation. Furthermore the tutors in Perth are subject to Working With Children Checks conducted by the state government that operate to ensure that people with convictions against children are not employed to work directly with children. Nonetheless bodies such as the ATA continue to call for formal regulation of the private tuition industry. To do so may lead to increasing levels of regulation over elements such as the content of teaching programmes resulting in a homogenisation of the tuition industry that works against parental desire to access a wide variety of education services. In other words attempts at regulation in Australia may fail as did the attempts to ban private tuition in Korea, where the phenomenon proved to be immutable to change.

As stated earlier, in the present study the tuition providers considered teaching qualifications to be the minimum standard. They stated that their tutors were all registered members of the Western Australian College of Teachers. Furthermore, the directors of the tuition centres sought teachers who were passionate about teaching, qualification alone was not sufficient. They stressed that their tutors engendered positive atmospheres in the tuition centres and genuinely liked children. The tutors stressed the importance of the relationships they built with the children they tutored. At times the tutors eschewed a business sensibility and noted that they considered themselves to be educators and not merely tutors. This sensibility is reflected in a recent book, *The Tutoring Revolution* (Gordon et al., 2007). The authors position tutoring as the original educational method when they argue that:

Tutoring is as old as civilization itself. It has been around longer than the common forms of education that we take for granted today. In the twenty-first century, schooling is synonymous with education. This was not always true. There is a sizable body of evidence that tutoring was a prominent form of education in its own right (Gordon et al, 2007, p.26).

The tutors in this study concur with Gordon et al. in positioning tuition as an educational method that equals or in some instances surpasses that provided by schools. Throughout this study advocates of tuition argue that the passion and commitment of individual tutors are key elements that legitimate private tuition as an educational method.

The emphasis that the tutors placed on the quality of the staff they employ resonates with Australian research that finds that the key element in regard to any student's academic achievement in school is the effectiveness of the classroom teacher (Jensen, 2010). As is clear in this study the modes of private tuition are varied. These variations make it difficult to determine the quality and effectiveness of private tuition using empirical research methods. As Bray (2011) states:

While some tutoring is of doubtful quality and questionable value, other tutoring may be very effective and of great value, not just to the learners but also to their families and to wider societies (p.19).

In the present study all of the tuition providers drew attention to the quality of the staff engaged in tuition to legitimate their practice. Furthermore, the tuition providers often referred to themselves as agencies that support the whole family. Nonetheless there is no formal regulation or accreditation process that Australian tuition providers can utilise to verify their claims. However, as stated earlier, this lack of regulation enables the wide range of tuition services to flourish, providing parents with choice in terms of their children's education.

The Australian Tutoring Association is a professional association for private tutors in Australia. The ATA has no regulatory powers but has established a "Code of Conduct" that its members must follow. As mentioned earlier, the ATA CEO, Mohan Dhall has called for the Australian Government to "introduce standards and regulate the industry, or else promote the ATA parents as the self-regulatory body" (O'Keefe, 2010, p.8).

The findings of this study indicate that tutors would support such regulation as it would

further legitimate their claims to employ quality staff and provide effective tuition; however, initiatives that lead to the homogenisation of the industry would be likely to fail.

The role of testing

Tutors also emphasised the role of comprehensive testing as a legitimating factor of their practice. Testing was conducted when children entered the programmes and repeated periodically in four of the cases. In four cases the directors of the tuition businesses took a pivotal role in testing. They conducted the initial testing and determined the teaching programme accordingly. Testing and test-taking skills have received attention throughout the education system in Western Australia due to the introduction of Australia-wide standardised NAPLAN testing. For the tuition providers in-house testing provided evidence of educational effectiveness and feedback for future interventions. It was a key tool in providing information to parents' that validated the tuition intervention. Tutors stated that regular testing gave parents clear indications that their tuition fees were money wisely invested. Positive test results provided evidence of children's progress and enhanced the tuition centre's reputation.

Throughout the literature on shadow or supplementary education it has been argued that the demand for private tuition increases when high stakes testing is a feature of the schooling system (Bray, 2011; Watson, 2008). High stakes testing occurs when the results of the testing determine the future educational path of the student. For example when testing determines whether a student enters a vocational or academic course of study. Baker et al. (2001) disputed this claim and found no significant correlation between high stakes testing and prevalence of private tuition.

Watson (2008), on the other hand, used differences in testing regimes to explain differences in the level of shadow education in two Australian states in the following terms:

In New South Wales, which has a relatively high level of household expenditure on private tutoring, there is a public examination system for university entrance and 27 selective state high schools. Participation in private tutoring is lower in Victoria, which has a largely school-based assessment system for university entrance and only two selective state high schools (p.12).

Watson surmised that, because the New South Wales system featured higher stakes testing than the Victorian system, there was a corresponding higher level of spending on private tutoring in New South Wales. In Western Australia, university entrance is determined by a public examination system in conjunction with school-based assessment. However, the students in this project were all primary school-aged and the public examinations for university entrance were several years away.

The NAPLAN testing regime had far more impact on this study's participants. Interestingly, the in-house testing conducted by the private tutors provided families with an alternative authority on the children's abilities. Several parents noted that they disregarded the NAPLAN results thereby rejecting the testing regime's assessment of their children capabilities. Furthermore one of the tutors reported saying to a father that the profile provided by the NAPLAN results was not truly representative of his daughter's abilities as evidenced in her performance at the tuition centre. The tutor told the parent, "That is not your child". The testing conducted by the tuition centres thereby plays a role in resisting the mainstream testing system and legitimating the practice of the tutors.

Thompson (2010, 2012) argues that NAPLAN is a high stakes testing regime that modulates and controls the students and staff within the mainstream education system. The control is asserted in part by links between NAPLAN results and school funding. Furthermore, the publishing of NAPLAN results on the *My Schools* website makes the testing regime high stakes for school teachers, principals and administrators. However in terms of determining future schooling options for individual students NAPLAN, in its current guise, lacks regulatory power. In other words children are not sorted into academic and nonacademic schooling streams according to their NAPLAN results. Therefore the implications of adverse NAPLAN results can be resisted by alternative testing regimes such as those offered by private tuition providers. NAPLAN, therefore, is not yet high stakes in terms of determining children's future academic paths. However it is becoming high stakes for school communities as assessment of individual teachers' performances and programme funding are becoming closely linked to NAPLAN results (Thompson, 2012; Thompson & Cook, forthcoming; Thompson & Lasic, 2011).

According to the tutors in the present study, the introduction of NAPLAN has two major implications. Tutors claim NAPLAN increases the need for private tutoring as teachers spend disproportionate amounts of classroom time in specific test preparation classes. The tutors argue that the overemphasis on test preparation causes teachers to overlook crucial components of the schools' teaching programmes. This creates a need for tuition due to the omission of key skills and concepts in mainstream classes. On the other hand, tutors claim that standardised nationwide tests, such as NAPLAN, give unequivocal feedback to parents concerning their children's academic attainment. Accordingly, the demand for private tuition increases amongst families whose children demonstrate results below the national benchmarks on NAPLAN. As stated earlier, at least one Australian researcher is advancing the argument that NAPLAN is high stakes testing (Thompson, 2012). It will be pertinent to observe whether the demand for private tuition in Australia increases as NAPLAN becomes entrenched in the educational landscape. In summary, tutors use NAPLAN to legitimate private tutoring in two ways. First private tuition compensates for the overemphasis in schooling on NAPLAN test preparation and, secondly, private tuition ameliorates parental anxiety when children perform poorly in the national testing regime by providing alternative test results.

Maintaining a good reputation

Showing positive test results was one strategy that enhanced tutors' reputations. Tutors described the maintenance of a good reputation as an essential legitimating component of their practice. Every tutor stated that the main avenue for attracting clients was word-of-mouth. Accordingly, a positive reputation became a key element in any tutor's long-term success. In addition tutors used testimonials and success stories to bolster their reputations. The success stories were relayed verbally during the interviews. Written testimonials were kept in a folder in the foyer of the *Lee Colbourne Centre* for parents and prospective clients to peruse. In some cases the testimonials were written by parents and in some cases by children. The *Lee Colbourne Centre* also made use of the local newspaper to enhance its reputation in the wider community. Sandi Venner stated that she only provided tuition to families on request. For Sandi, tuition was provided as a personal favour rather than a business transaction.

Researchers in Canada, the UK and the US also note the importance of reputation and word-of-mouth referrals to the success of private tuition providers. A report on tutoring

in the UK found that “just over half” of the study respondents chose tutors through recommendations from friends or fellow parents (Ireson & Rushforth, 2005, p.9). In her doctoral thesis, Diskin (2010) notes that her nine study participants were private tutors who gained clients “primarily” through word-of-mouth referrals (p.145). The Canadian researchers Aurini and Davies concur that, “in the tutoring industry, word of mouth is the key to generating business” (2004, p.429). Therefore the proposition that maintaining a good reputation through being seen to provide a quality service with quality staff is a key element in the legitimization of private tuition is congruent with the findings of research into private tuition conducted in the United Kingdom and North America.

Shortfalls of mainstream schooling

Tutors often stated that they aimed to provide support for teachers in schools; however, there were two themes in the tutors’ interviews that indicated problematic relationships with mainstream schools. First was the theme that schools were unable to meet the individual needs of all the children in their care and second was the theme that schools felt threatened by private tutors and consequently rejected the support tutors offered. These two themes of inadequacy and distrust indicate that the private tutors experienced complex and difficult relations with the schools. Tutors sought to concurrently provide support to and gain recognition from mainstream schooling; however, few tutors experienced positive, collegial relationships with classroom teachers. The only tutor who reported positive relations with mainstream schooling was Sandi Venner because she was employed as a relief teacher in a school. Nonetheless, even Sandi criticised the mainstream system and questioned its capacity to meet the needs of all children within the school.

As discussed earlier, Bourdieu and Passeron theorise that legitimacy will always be contested. They used the notion of social fields to explain these competitive processes. In the present study the field of mainstream schooling competes with the field of private tuition for legitimacy in the task of educating children, as Bourdieu and Passeron state:

This competition is sociologically necessary because legitimacy is indivisible: there is no agency to legitimate the legitimacy-giving agencies, because claims to legitimacy derive their relative strength, in the last analysis, from the strength of the groups or classes whose material and symbolic interests they directly or indirectly express (1990, p.18)

In other words the validation of the parents is an essential component of the private tutors' legitimacy, as there is no overarching body to convey legitimacy. Private tuition providers' main rival for educational legitimacy is the schooling system. Hence it is not surprising that highlighting the shortfalls of the mainstream is a key legitimating factor for private tuition providers.

In the US recent legislation has resulted in private tuition providers accessing government funding. The No Child Left Behind legislation provides "Supplemental Education Services (SES)" (Burch et al., 2007, p.15). SES consist of:

Tutoring and after-school services and may take the form of public or private sector providers approved by the state (Burch et al. 2007, p.115).

Here the issue of competition for educational legitimacy is foremost. Accordingly, there is a growing body of research that questions the effectiveness of private tuition in the US to assess whether education funding is being used wisely (Burch et al., 2007; Chappell, Nunnery & Pribesh, 2011; Farkas & Durham, 2006; Good et al., 2011; Heinrich & Burch, 2012; Heinrich et al. 2010; Petersen, 2005; Steinberg, 2011; Steinberg, 2006; Sunderman & Kim, 2004). In this body of literature it is the shortfalls of private tuition that come under scrutiny.

Meeting the needs of all

Tutors referred to several elements within mainstream schooling that inhibited classroom teachers' capacity to meet the needs of all the children in their classes. These elements included class sizes, funding constraints, the introduction of NAPLAN and the crowded curriculum. Accordingly, the tutors generally blamed systemic issues rather than individual classroom teachers for the schools' inability to respond to the needs of children experiencing learning difficulties in class.

Before becoming private tutors all of the interviewees were experienced classroom teachers and they described how children became "lost" in the classroom or how children "flew under the radar" of the teacher. These tutors described their task as filling in the "missing chunks" that children had in their repertoires of basic literacy and numeracy skills. They expressed the frustration they had felt as classroom teachers when they were unable to provide the individualised instruction that some of their

students required. Gordon et al. describe a similar phenomenon in the US when they state:

The best tutors are often frustrated classroom teachers. They are frustrated because they long to reach out to the student who seems lost in the classroom but they don't have the time to do so during group instruction (2007, p.168).

Dierkes (2010) made a similar observation about the operators of juku schools in Japan. He noted that a significant proportion of the operators of the juku schools were school teachers who had become "frustrated by the rigidity of a highly bureaucratic and inflexible school system" (Dierkes, 2010, p.31). Gordon et al. blame the progressive education movement in America for creating unrealistic expectations of classroom teachers and make the following observation:

Unfortunately Dewey and other progressives overlooked the fact that the original context of tutoring was one-to-one instruction, not large-group teaching. The progressives cast the teacher in an almost impossible role, attempting to carry out precise individualised classroom teaching originally formulated for a tutorial curriculum (2007, p.27).

This element of frustration with the mainstream of schooling is evident when private tutors in Perth claim that children with specific needs become lost within the school system. Tutors legitimate their practice by highlighting the inability of mass schooling to cater to individual need. This is a key legitimating claim of private tuition providers. This claim rests on the notion that one-on-one instruction is superior to whole class instruction; hence, a major shortfall of mainstream schooling is its inability to meet the needs of all the children in its care. Interestingly the impact of class size reductions on the effectiveness of classroom learning has been described as "intuitively appealing" (Jensen, 2010, p.4), yet has been challenged in recent research that positions teacher quality as the key element to effective classroom learning (Jensen, 2010).

This legitimating claim of the inadequacy of mainstream schooling creates a need for parents to purchase additional education services such as private tuition. Parents engage tutors to tailor their children's education to address their children's needs that cannot be met in the classroom. Therefore, the concept of bespoke education is useful because it captures the sense that adjustments need to be made to mainstream schooling in order to fit individual children's requirements. In this scenario the parents craft the education of their children according to perceived need.

Schools feeling threatened

Not surprisingly, given the foregoing discussion of the criticisms that private tutors made of mainstream schooling, there was a distinct lack of coordination between the efforts of the private tutors and the children's classroom teachers. This was despite the fact that most of the parents interviewed for this research expressed a desire for their private tutors to liaise closely with their children's teachers. Several tutors stated that they viewed themselves as a support service for schools and would ideally like to be in regular communication with classroom teachers. The exception was Carol of *Premier Education Services* who expressed a concern that closer relationships with schools could result in classroom teachers telling her how to undertake tuition and interfering in her established programme of instruction. It was more common, however, for tutors to decry the lack of communication with schools and the suspicion that they faced from school staff.

There was some evidence throughout the interviews that parents transferred trust from schools to their private tutors when seeking advice on educational matters. Two families took advice from the director of their tuition centre concerning school choice issues. Families accepted referrals to therapists from their tuition providers. As discussed in the previous chapter, one parent said that her son's classroom teacher had assured her that his level of achievement in the classroom was appropriate and that the quality of the work he produced was very good. The parent had responded by telling the teacher that without the input of the private tuition centre, her son would not be producing work of such a high standard.

Undoubtedly these factors result in a fraught relationship between mainstream educators and private tutors. Tutors desire recognition from mainstream educators. Initiatives such as *An Even Start* in Australia and the NCLB tutorial voucher scheme in the US indicate that governments are prepared to incorporate private tutors into government-funded programs (Burch et al., 2007, Gordon et al., 2007; Watson, 2008). Nonetheless it is difficult to imagine that the existing tensions between private tuition providers and mainstream schooling will be resolved. It is more likely that supplementing schooling with private tuition will always entail implicit criticism of the mainstream system. Both private tutors and classroom teachers are key players in the field of education and as the sociologist Thomson (2008) observed:

According to Bourdieu the game that occurs in social spaces or fields is competitive, with various social agents using differing strategies to maintain or improve their position (p.69)

For Bourdieu and Passeron, the power to determine what is taught to students is always contested. They stated that:

The monopoly on the dominant cultural legitimacy is always the object of competition between institutions or agents (1990, p.22).

Therefore it is hardly unexpected that the relationship between private tuition providers and mainstream schooling is competitive rather than cooperative. The case being made here is that tutors make legitimating claims that mainstream schooling is deficient and the notion that schools feel threatened by private tutors strengthens these claims. If schools are threatened then private tutors are legitimate educators, competing with classroom teachers for recognition as the agents who have the most effect on a student's ability to learn. It follows that the specific tensions evident in this thesis are likely to be commonly evident between private tuition providers and school-based educators in other settings.

Surprisingly there is scant literature on the issue of tension between mainstream schools and private tuition providers. Aurini (2004) observed that in Canada private education businesses were more successful when they avoided direct competition with government schools. In the United States researchers have investigated the effectiveness of private tutors that access government funding through the No Child Left Behind legislation (Burch et al., 2007; Heinrich et al., 2010). In Perth the Department of Education has a policy that outlines how school principals should manage students who attend private tuition during school hours. The policy states:

Achievement of students is the province of teachers...Schools must not abrogate this responsibility through the use of private tutors.

It is recognised, however, that schools do not always have the necessary resources to present educational programs to meet the full range of the needs of all students.

In such cases, the principal may consider requests from parents to grant approval for students to attend private tutoring programs during school hours (DETTWA 2013a).

There are three interesting aspects of this policy. First the policy statement accepts the assertion that schools cannot meet all individual needs, in this sense the Education

Department shares the view of the tuition providers that there are shortfalls in mainstream schooling. Second, the policy assumes that initiation of private tuition will come from the parents. Third, the policy cautions teachers that they should not hand responsibility for a students' education over to a private tutor. There is little in either the Education Department policy, or the literature on shadow education, that explores the dynamics of the relationship between the private tutor and the mainstream classroom teacher. Nonetheless, in this thesis, according to the tutors, their relationships with classroom teachers were often problematic, indicating that they were competing for educational legitimacy.

Internationally there is discussion of the tensions that arise when classroom teachers provide private tuition for their own students. In this context researchers express concerns that classroom teachers may withhold important elements of the curriculum so that students have to pay the teacher private tuition fees (Bray, 1999; Bray & Suso, 2008; Paviot et al., 2008; Bray & Kwok, 2003; Bray, 2005). In other words this is an issue of private tuition leading to corruption of classroom teachers. However, according to Bray, "this mainly occurs in countries in which mainstream teachers receive low salaries" (2005, p.519). Furthermore, there was no evidence in the present study, or in the wider literature on private tuition provision, to suggest that such corruption exists in Australia.

Individualised education

Providing education that caters to individual children's needs is the cornerstone of modern schooling, as evidenced in the WA Department of Education's strategic plan for 2012-2015. The plan states that:

Each parent should feel confident that their local public school can meet the needs, aspirations and interests of their children (DETWA, 2013b)

Gordon et al. (2007) argue that the high value placed on individual need sets an almost impossible task to teachers who face classes of between 20 and 35 primary school aged children. This opens the space for private educators or tuition providers to make legitimating claims for an active role in the field of education. Hence the claim that private tuition is individually-tailored becomes a key legitimating factor for many tutors.

In this study all of the tutors and the directors of the tuition businesses claimed to provide individualised instruction. The mode of instruction varied across the cases from individual, paired and even small group teaching situations. Nonetheless all stressed the individualised nature of their services. One tutor stated that she felt that the small group setting was superior to one-to-one tuition. She said the small group setting suited her teaching style and enabled a more dynamic and interactive learning experience. Yet she also stressed that the children in the small groups were all working on separate programs that were individually-tailored to their specific needs.

The *Waterford Literacy Clinic* provided either one-to-one or paired instruction. Only the directors, who were the most experienced in the programme delivery, taught the children in pairs. The tutors they employed all taught in one-to-one situations. The directors also stressed that paired instruction was only provided for children who exhibited very similar learning profiles. These learning profiles were the result of the testing conducted when children enrolled in the centre. The directors also stressed that children were always working on programmes that were planned to suit individual needs.

Accordingly all the cases claimed to provide individually tailored education even when their programs were delivered in a paired or small group settings. Furthermore, they asserted that mainstream schooling was unable to provide individual instruction. Tutors referred to funding constraints and large class sizes as the factors that inhibited mainstream teachers from providing individual attention to all of the children in their classes. Aurini (2004) also finds that tutors advance their ability to provide individualised instruction. This key legitimating claim is found in literature on private tuition based in Canada, the UK and the US (Aurini, 2004; Aurini, 2006; Aurini & Davies, 2004; Gordon et al., 2007; Gordon et al., 2005; Tanner et al., 2009). According to the Tanner Report, that surveyed private tuition providers in England, 96% of the companies surveyed claimed to provide “individualised tuition tailored to the needs of the student” (Tanner et al., 2009, p.78). This body of research supports the claim made in this thesis that tutors advance individualised instruction as a key legitimating claim.

Enhanced relationships and self-esteem

Tutors argued that the individual attention they were able to provide led to enhanced interpersonal relationships between the tutors and their students. Tutors also highlighted

that their interactions with client families went beyond tuition. The tutors aspired to provide support for the whole family, which took the form of advice about schooling and interpersonal issues. Tutors referred to their service as a “safety valve” that took pressure off the whole family by addressing the needs of a child struggling with school work. Tutors reported positive effects on children’s self-esteem. However, Gordon et al. (2007) question whether improved self-esteem leads to academic achievement and argue:

The research findings related to self-esteem indicate that there are only modest correlations between self-esteem and school performance. The evidence does not support the notion that high self-esteem leads to good school performance. Instead high self-esteem is believed to be partly the result of good school performance...In sum, self-esteem was not found to be a major predictor or cause of anything, with the possible exception of happiness (pp. 73-74)

In other words, improving a child’s self-esteem does not have flow-on effects to significantly improve academic performance. The good relationships and fun times that the tutors report therefore do not necessarily result in improved school attainment. However, the converse applies, if a tutor improves a student’s academic performance this could be expected to result in improved self-esteem. Furthermore, Gordon et al. (2007) observe that improved self-esteem leads to happiness which is precisely what some of the parents in this study aspire to have – happy children. Therefore, highlighting the effects of tuition on students’ self-esteem is a valid legitimating claim because it may be indicative of improving academic prowess or because it results in a happier child. For their children to have the experience of feeling supported, happy and competent in a school-like setting may be a goal for parents that is of equal importance to the flow-on effect of academic gain into general schooling.

Beyond instruction

Finally some tutors referred their clients to alternative therapists to address specific needs. These therapists included a naturopath, a kinesiologist and a behavioural optometrist. Because the tutors and therapists operate outside the mainstream of schooling they believed that they could address underlying conditions and causes of learning difficulties that were beyond the reach of classroom teachers. However, by their own admission the results of these interventions were variable. In fact, the naturopath likened his attempts to identify underlying causes of learning difficulties to the “search for the Holy Grail”

There is little evidence in the wider literature that tutors liaise with alternative therapists as was the case in this project. However, this may be an oversight in the research rather than an indication that it doesn't occur. A Canadian researcher described the way that franchised tuition centres in Canada expanded to encompass a broad range of education services including preschool programs, test preparation courses and adult education. They state that such centres "transcend" traditional shadow education by offering a wider range of services (Aurini & Davies, 2004). As they explain:

We attribute this expansion to the logic of franchising that demands continual diversification of services to retain and build market share (Aurini & Davies, 2004, p. 424)

The case of the *Lee Colbourne Centre* displayed a similar propensity to expand its services and even engaged with a naturopath and kinesiologist in reciprocal referrals. The calls for increasing regulation of the tuition industry, discussed earlier in this chapter, threaten tuition providers' ability to provide these alternative education services.

This thesis proposes that the strongest legitimating claim made by tutors was their capacity to provide individualised instruction. Tutors made this claim even when tuition was provided in paired or small group settings. Tutors contrasted their ability to provide individual attention to the children they taught with the constraints of an under-funded schooling system with large class sizes. Finally some tutors referred clients to alternative therapists as part of the individualised services they provided. Through these avenues tutors highlighted the quality of the programs they provided and drew comparisons to the shortfalls of mainstream schooling. In this thesis the phenomenon of private tuition is conceived as a relationship between legitimate educator (the tutor) and the legitimate consumer (the parent). The first proposition deals with the legitimacy of the tutors. The following proposition describes the elements in the parents' interviews that indicate their proclivity to respond to the tutors' legitimating claims.

Proposition Two

The predisposition of parents to seek out and pay for private tuition for their children is driven by one or more of the following factors:

- **Optimism about their children's futures and a concomitant desire to maximize their children's future opportunities.**

- **Anxiety about their children’s previous and/or current schooling experiences; and**
- **A proclivity to take action to address the perceived shortfall in their children’s educational provision.**

The first proposition derives from analysis of the tutors’ data and outlines how the tutors stake a claim to legitimacy within the field of education. The second proposition derives from analysis of the parents’ data and describes the predispositions of the parents included in this study. Bourdieu and Passeron refer to these predispositions as features of habitus. Habitus has been defined as “a system of dispositions” (1990, p.67). As stated earlier, when field and habitus match then actions seem natural or inevitable, and individuals have been described as existing like “fish in water” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p.127). However, it should be noted that habitus is a dynamic and reactive field of dispositions. One of the parents in this study observed that despite the fact she was raised in the same household and had very similar upbringing to her brother, he would never consider private tuition for his children while she embraced it fully.

Optimism and Aspiration

Throughout their interviews parents discussed their hopes and expectations for their children’s long and short term futures. The parents’ discussions of their children’s prospective futures were mostly optimistic. Parents often stated their beliefs that in the long term their children would prosper from tuition. In some cases they expressed views that their children would not follow academic careers but they instead envisioned successful futures as entrepreneurs or tradespersons. One tutor observed that many of the parents she met had struggled at school themselves and their experiences in overcoming their own adversities gave them confidence that their children would be equally successful.

Fuelled by this optimism, the parents in this study were willing to invest considerable time and money in pursuit of private tuition. Several tutors observed that the families they catered for were affluent. Several of the parents in this study planned to send their children to private fee-paying high schools. It has often been observed in the literature that there is a correlation between academic achievement and high socioeconomic status (Considine & Zappala, 2002; Rothman, 2002; Rothman, 2003; Lokan, Greenwood &

Cresswell, 2001). This correlation suggests that the parents' optimism was warranted. Nonetheless in some cases the degree of investment in children's private tuition, at a primary-school level, could be described as excessive or even irrational, as Frank Furedi notes in his book "Paranoid Parenting":

In a world that is more and more dominated by instrumental calculation, the parent-child relationship stands out as a unique example of an interaction that is primarily guided by sentiment or even altruism (2008, p.106)

This optimistic sentiment was particularly poignant in the case of Yvonne and her situation warrants reiteration. Following an initial assessment at the *Waterford Literacy Clinic*, Yvonne was told her daughter would never have an academic career. Yvonne speculated that perhaps it was inappropriate for Lauren to spend so much time in tuition given this diagnosis. Yet even in the face of experts saying that Lauren wouldn't have an academic career, Yvonne did not give up. Yvonne reported continually searching the Internet for new theories to assist her daughter. Towards the end of her interview Yvonne referred to famous individuals who had experienced learning difficulties early in life but had overcome their issues to lead exceptional lives. She observed:

Other people [with dyslexia] who go on and do more academic stuff, I think, 'How do they do that?' Maybe that's what Lauren will be able to do, maybe it will be just a matter of her being slower at it and taking a bit longer.

In Yvonne's case, her optimism about her daughter's future became a driving force that spurred her to pursue educational interventions, outside of schooling, at considerable financial and logistical cost.

Parents in this study expressed optimism about their children's long term futures. Parents stated their hope that providing private tuition in the primary school years would enable children to have options when choosing a career. For these parents it was important that their children have choices later in life, rather than have their futures determined by others and constrained by poor academic results at school. In some cases there was a direct link between the tuition sought and later life goals, such as the link that Jeff drew between his daughter's desire to follow zoology or veterinary science and her need to maintain good mathematics grades. In other cases the link was less direct and one parent expressed the belief that literacy was the key to every career, an essential tool that her child needed to ensure future success. The parents in this study expected their children to experience self-determination in their future lives. To this end the

parents were willing to make financial sacrifices and invest considerable amounts of time and energy providing their primary school-aged children with private tuition outside the school setting.

Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) identified the accrual of skills, knowledge and abilities for future personal success as the accrual of cultural capital. Bourdieu adapted the economic notion of human capital and described cultural capital in the following terms:

From the very beginning, a definition of human capital, despite its humanistic connotations, does not move beyond economism and ignores, *inter alia*, the fact that the scholastic yield from educational action depends on the cultural capital previously invested by the family (Bourdieu, 1986, p.244)

In the present study it is clear that parents invest in private tuition with the explicit aim of improving their children's academic performance in mainstream schooling. The annal of interventions that Roy's parents invested in over his primary school years is a prime example of this approach to schooling. Parents create an education portfolio, confident that their investments will yield positive returns in the area of school achievement.

Davies (2004) has called this style of parenting "intensive parenting". Lareau describes a similar phenomenon and refers to it as "concerted cultivation" (2002, p.748). Lareau (2002) elaborates on parents who engage in "concerted cultivation" as follows:

They enroll their children in numerous age-specific organized activities that dominate family life and create enormous labour, particularly for the mother. The parents view these activities as transmitting important life skills...This "cultivation" approach results in a wider range of experiences for children but also creates a frenetic pace for parents, a cult of individualism within the family, and an emphasis on children's performance (p.748)

Certainly there is evidence that the families included in this study enrolled their children in numerous extra curricular activities. Furthermore, the mothers were the main facilitators of these activities. Private tuition was one of these activities which although it did generate a lot of frenetic activity, also acted a safety valve that enabled parents to support their children's academic performance using tutors, rather than attempting to supervise extra academic activities themselves. The concepts of "concerted cultivation" and "intensive parenting" are central to the notion of bespoke education because parents tailor or craft their children's educational experiences to meet specific aspirations.

With private tuition the question arises of whether the investment is proportional to the educational outcomes it achieves. Research in Korea posed this question and suggested that the investment in private tuition was related to prestige orientation rather than actual academic achievement (Lee & Shouse, 2011). In the US the question of whether private tuition had secondary as well as primary effects arose. For example, by investing in private tuition parents demonstrate to their children that they value education and through tuition children meet mentors who value education (Gordon et al., 2007). The question of whether investment in private tuition is proportionate to its effects on academic achievement has mainly been raised overseas but it certainly applies in this thesis to Cindy's case which raises the issue of whether private tuition is necessary for a five year old child.

Researchers have suggested that in Asia the level of investment in private tuition is influenced by Confucian philosophy that credits hard work as the determining factor in academic and personal success (Rohlen & LeTendre, 1996; Salili, 2005). Therefore parents are confident that increased study through private tuition will yield significant results. Some parents in this study expressed doubts about the efficacy of private tutoring for their children; however, these doubts were overshadowed by the degree of optimism parents exhibited in terms of their children's long term futures. This optimism is a major predisposing factor that leads parents to respond to the legitimating claims of private tuition providers; however, this does not mean that parents of tutored children are free of anxiety.

Anxiety

The parents' long term aspirations for their children were optimistic. Yet, as described in some detail in Chapter Seven, many of the parents' aspirations focused on the present and the short term future. These current and short term aspirations related to their children's schooling experiences. When discussing these aspirations the parents' comments reflected a high degree of anxiety. Primarily, this anxiety centred on the emotional lives of their children in school. Secondly the anxiety focused on how the parents contributed to the difficulties their children faced at school. In many cases parental anxiety was related to a breach of trust with mainstream schooling. In some cases parents identified strongly with their children and this heightened their anxiety.

One parent observed that children spend a large proportion of their waking lives in schools. Several parents commented that their key aspiration for their children was that they achieve happiness. Keeping up with peers in the classroom was a major component of that happiness. Parents drew direct links between academic competence and personal confidence or self-esteem. The majority of the parents were addressing issues of remediation and feared their children may disengage from learning if they did not receive private tuition. One case differed; Cindy engaged a private tutor for her five year old son as she believed he was under-stimulated at school and risked becoming disengaged due to boredom. However, across all the cases parents used private tuition to ameliorate their anxiety about the quality of children's school lives.

It is understandable that parents develop feelings of anxiety when faced with a child who is falling behind at school. However, there is also evidence that some parents seek tuition for academic extension and to coach their children in test-taking skills (Kenny & Faunce, 2004; Aurini & Davies, 2004). This indicates that parental anxiety exists even when children are relatively successful academically. This may be related to the observation that there are "few, if any, traditional routes to adult status left in most modern societies" (Baker et al., 2001). Therefore success in schooling equates with success in life. As Baker et al. (2001) explained:

Over the past century, the widespread use of mass, compulsory schooling with large public investment and enhanced study as a social sector has made schooling the central, formal institution connecting children and youth to adult status. (p. 3)

The central role of schooling in children's personal development adds potency to parental anxiety when children struggle academically. For some parents engaging a private tutor is a powerful strategy to assuage these anxieties.

At times parental anxiety about children's schooling contained elements of self doubt and blame. One parent recounted her pregnancy complications and postnatal emotional state and speculated whether they had impacted on her daughter's schooling experiences. In two cases parent's speculated that their split family situation may have impacted on their children's learning issues. Julia, a grandmother, stated that she engaged in tuition for Layla (the granddaughter Julia was raising) in part because she felt responsible for her own daughter (Layla's mother) going "off the rails". One mother wondered whether her son would be in a better situation if she had held him back a year

from commencing school at kindergarten. In all these cases the parents or grandparent engage in self-examination to explain why their children require private tuition. For these parents even the decision to engage in and continue with tuition can be the source of self-doubt. These elements of self-blame and doubt make parents emotionally open to the legitimating claims of tuition providers offering professional advice and support on schooling matters.

It is hardly surprising that parents experience self-doubt and anxiety. In the wider literature there are many self-help books on parenting, at times they present conflicting views on how parents should approach the task of parenting. Two recent books, that made the bestseller lists, gave diametrically opposed parenting advice. On the one hand, Amy Chua (2011), in “Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother”, compares Chinese and Western styles of parenting and suggests that Western parenting is lax. Chua’s book is a memoir that purports to be humorous but it makes strong critiques of easygoing Western parents. On the other hand, “Free Range Kids” (Skenazy, 2009) claimed Western children were over protected and overscheduled. In a climate where such opposing views of parenting compete it is little wonder that parents experience self-doubt. Even the WA Education Department provides advice on parenting, most commonly in Western Australia through the Positive Parenting Programme (Sanders, 1999) offered through many mainstream schools.

There was also some evidence that at times the identity between parent and child can become blurred. Parents drew comparisons between their own characteristics and those of their children. Several commented that they had experienced similar difficulties in school to those experienced by their children. One parent, Robyn, was discussing her daughter, Charlotte’s, learning issues when she made the following assertion:

she’s a visual child. I’m a visual child. Charlotte’s extremely creative and I’m extremely creative. So we need to, we need the help of that. We need visually to be able to see how it works.

Robyn’s strong identification with Charlotte gives her anxiety a powerful emotional charge. Robyn can recall how it felt when she struggled with academic tasks and wants to provide professional assistance in an effort to spare her daughter from similar experiences. Private tutors offered to tailor learning to suit Charlotte’s specific learning needs, appealing to Robyn’s anxiety.

The literature dealing with parents of children with disabilities describes a phenomenon whereby parental identity becomes infused with the issues of the child with a disability. This is referred to as “intersubjectivity” (Kelly, 2005). In terms of general parenting, Furedi (2008) notes:

So parenting is not simply child rearing. It is also how adults construct their lives through and in interaction with their children. Adults do not simply live their lives through children but, in part, develop their identity through them (p.103).

The findings of this thesis support the notion that children’s struggles at school impact on their parents’ identity. Parents identify similarities between their own past experiences and their children’s contemporary struggles. This gives their desire to redress their children’s learning issues a powerful emotional charge and predisposes them to respond favourably to the legitimating claims made by the private tuition providers. Consequently parents take determining roles in shaping their children’s education which is the distinguishing feature of bespoke education.

For many parents, schools and classroom teachers provide sufficient reassurance and advice on learning and parenting issues. However several of the parents in this study had broken trust with their schools. In some cases they placed great trust in their tutors and accepted advice on their children’s schooling, learning needs and even alternative therapies. This trust was built on the individual attention offered by the tutors. Furthermore, in many families tuition operated a safety valve between parent and child in the struggle over homework. Accordingly private tuition became entrenched as a feature of their children’s educational lives. For some parents this was characterised as a negative aspect of tuition. As one parent stated there was “no light at the end of the tunnel” because she believed her son would always require private tuition in order to keep pace at school. For other parents ongoing tuition was viewed more positively. One grandparent stated that tuition made her feel peaceful about her granddaughter’s schooling. One mother stated that having regular tuition in place with a provider she trusted allayed her anxiety about finding assistance when the need arose throughout her son’s school career.

Throughout this study anxiety about children’s schooling experiences has been a common theme in the parents’ interviews. Australian researchers examining issues of

school choice have described aspiration and anxiety as the “two sides of choice” (Campbell et al., 2009, p.3). Furthermore they propose that:

While anxiety about choosing the right school occurs across all social groups in Australia, it is especially pronounced in middle-class Australia (Campbell et al., 2009, p.3).

Choosing the right school was a concern for most of the families in this study, all of whom could be described as middle-class Australians. Forsey (2008) observed that among middle-class Australians there is a growing perception that parents have “no choice but to choose” in relation to their children’s schooling (p.73). In Canada, Davies (2004) has noted that the desire for private tutoring is an instance of “school choice by default” (p.252). Accordingly he argues that the costs of private schooling are prohibitive and that private tuition offers “a relatively affordable strategy for a variety of parents who aim to improve their children’s performance” (Davies, 2004, p.236). As has been noted elsewhere in this thesis, there are clear similarities between the elements that drive school choice and those that drive parents to seek private tuition. Most of the families included in this study were active in choosing schools for their children, most chose to send their children to private fee-paying schools for high school or to address inadequacies in their children’s primary school. One family chose to move from a Catholic primary school to their local public school when they became dissatisfied with their son’s schooling. In these instances parents are engaging in bespoke education, not only by employing tutor, but also by adjusting their children’s mainstream schooling. Some families sought advice on the most appropriate school for their children from their private tuition providers. Themes of aspiration and anxiety featured strongly throughout the parents’ interviews for this study indicating that they are strong predisposing features shared by parents who respond favourably to the legitimating claims of private tuition providers. Furthermore, I propose that a third element combines with aspiration and anxiety to predispose parents to seek private tuition. The third element is a parental propensity to act to address their children’s educational issues.

A Propensity to Act

Throughout the interviews it became apparent that the parents were very involved in their children’s lives, including their schooling. The parents demonstrated a proactive approach to school issues and held few expectations that anyone else in the school community would address their children’s needs. There was some evidence of a transferal of trust on educational matters from their children’s classroom teachers to

their private tutors. Parents used tuition to address the increasing expectations of home support for classroom learning. Parents expressed a willingness to make financial and personal sacrifices in order to address their children's educational needs. In some cases parents took a combative view of their role and developed a warrior mentality about the need to advocate for their children's needs. This element is the fundamental feature of bespoke education.

The parents in this study were proactive. They took active roles in both their children's school lives and leisure time. Parents described meetings with classroom teachers and even school principals. One parent approached the classroom teacher at the beginning of every school year to explain her son's learning difficulty. She expressed her doubts that the assessment reports and diagnoses were passed on from one year to the next. Another parent described the spelling and maths activities she supervised for her children before and after school everyday. Finally some children had busy extra curricular schedules that included sports, dance and music lessons, in addition to the time they spent in private tuition.

Parents had little faith that anyone else in the school community would address their children's specific needs. Cindy made the unequivocal statement that just as she addressed her son's physical needs through sports activities, she used tuition to address his intellectual needs. Cindy viewed it as her responsibility to keep him engaged in education and was prepared to pay for private tuition for her five year old child in order to meet that responsibility.

As parents turn to private tuition to address needs that they no longer trust schools to meet, they transfer trust from school teachers to their private tutors. Several parents described their tutors as experts in their field. Few had deeply investigated the content of the programmes their tutors provided and stated that they simply trusted them to deliver on their claims. The clearest example of this was the case of Lynn's attitude towards tuition for her son, Sean. Lynn had enrolled Sean in private tuition as a response to his poor relationship with his Year Three teacher. Lynn was distressed not only that his academic achievement was affected but that he was so unhappy in the classroom. The pertinent issue is that he remained enrolled in private tuition after he had improved his grades and moved on to the next year of primary school. He had been continually enrolled in the private tuition centre for four years, despite becoming an

above average student. Lynn stated that it was important that he have a positive educational experience in his life that would be constant, regardless of the quality of his classroom teachers. Lynn also expressed her relief that when the future need for tuition arose, she would already have a trustworthy tuition provider in place for Sean. Both of the franchise directors noted that they had families who stayed enrolled after the apparent need had been addressed because they valued the support provided by the centre and the positive learning environment that private tuition provided for their children.

It has been noted in the literature that tutoring can take on a role beyond immediate academic need. In other words it takes on a symbolic role. In Korea investment in private tuition has been linked to “prestige orientation” which the authors argue:

May influence parental spending on shadow educational services – for some parents, perhaps inflating such spending beyond the demands of the educational task at hand (Lee & Shouse, 2011, p.213).

Furthermore, the authors describe a phenomenon where parents engage private tutors to assuage a “general *feeling of uneasiness* at the idea of not doing so” (Lee & Shouse, 2011, p.214). A similar anxiety was reported among parents in the United Kingdom who express shock at the extent of private tutoring for primary school aged children in an article that referred to private tutoring as “Secret Lessons” (Russell, 2002, p.10).

In the present study Lynn explained that turning to a tuition centre enabled her to take action that ensured her son had positive learning experiences regardless of his experiences in the classroom. Parents often described the frustration they experienced when trying to assist their children with schooling. In some cases this entailed the difficulty parents experienced providing homework assistance. One parent stated that although she was intellectually capable of assisting her child, as far as her son was concerned “Mama is not a teacher”. Karin contrasted the resistance she faced when trying to instruct her son with the compliance he exhibited when working with tutors. In these instances tuition operated as a safety valve to the pressure that parents felt on their relationships with their children when they tried to support schoolwork at home. For these parents tuition provided a strategy to support academic achievement while avoiding conflict with their children and the school staff. For these parents the tuition provided a consistently positive and supportive learning alternative.

Furedi (2008) took note of the increasing expectation for parents to be involved in children's schooling as he states:

Politicians, educators and child-rearing experts constantly pile on the pressure, continually informing mothers and fathers that students perform better academically when their parents are part of the learning process...Nor is this role simply restricted to a monitoring function. The term in vogue is *supporting a child's learning*. This means that parents play an active pedagogic role in the educational life of their children (p.86).

Given this high level of expectation, it is not surprising that parents seek private tuition to assist them in supporting their children's learning outside of school hours. The parents in this study respond to the school's and society's expectations and are predisposed to take action to address schooling issues; however, they may not believe they have the personal resources to take appropriate action so by employing a private tutor they outsource the responsibility for their children's out of school education.

The fact that the parents outsource the responsibility for out-of-school education does not mean there is no parental cost or effort. For many of the parents in this study taking action on schooling issues entailed sacrifice. The obvious sacrifice was financial, as families spent between 40 and 100 dollars a week on tuition. When the household was split, the financial strain was greater. Nonetheless parents were willing to pay the tuition fees and one parent asserted that she would willingly sell her car or house to fund ongoing tuition. The second sacrifice concerned the time and logistics of getting students to and from tuition. In one case the student was attending tuition three times a week, after school and far from home. Another parent stated that adjusting her work hours to accommodate her son's tuition meant that she spent some long evenings at the office to make up the time. One parent cited a social cost of tuition. She stated that other parents ostracized her and teachers had criticised her as they believed her son too young for private tuition. Finally, parents spent time and effort trying multiple interventions. Roy's annal of interventions is presented in Chapter Five. Other parents described trying different tuition arrangements and educational therapies in their efforts to support their children's schooling. Parents were willing to invest time, money and effort in their pursuit of private tuition for their children.

In its most extreme manifestation the proactive predispositions of parents became confrontational. One parent referred herself as engaged in a campaign for which she

had to be a warrior. She described how she had to champion her son's needs. Another parent expressed her willingness to do "whatever" was required to make her daughter happy in school. As mentioned earlier, Karin, was prepared to weather social isolation from her peers and criticism from her son's teacher in order to pursue tuition. The attitude of several parents is encapsulated in the following comment made by Robyn, "If your child lags behind only you can probably do something about it". Given this scenario private tuition providers become important allies to proactive parents, as they offer individualised, professional education services to children and their families.

Davies (2004) hypothesised that in Canada private tuition may be accessed by busy parents who had little time to spend attending to their children's education. However his findings refuted this hypothesis and instead he found that parents who accessed private tuition were more likely to be very involved in their children's education. Ireson and Rushforth (forthcoming) concurred by finding partial support for Davies' claim that parents who engage private tutors for their children are more involved in their children's education. Building on Lareau's (2002) concept of "cultural cultivation", Davies used the term "intensive parenting" to describe the style of parenting he encountered and elaborated:

This style of parenting emphasises a careful plan of structured activities for children, in which tutoring is part of a series of private lessons that also include music, dance and sports (Davies, 2004, pp. 238-239).

As stated earlier, the children in this study also engaged in many extra curricular activities in addition to private tuition. One parent described her responsibility to meet all her son's needs including his intellectual needs. The parents in this study do engage in intensive parenting and demonstrate a predisposition to take action when faced with issues in their children's schooling, a process that this thesis defines as bespoke education. The parents perceive that the weight of responsibility to address schooling issues lies with them, not with the schools their children attend, making them receptive to the legitimating claims of private tutors to provide professional, individualised education services.

Conclusion

The involvement of the families in this study in private tuition provides them with access to an alternative educational authority. The monopoly that schools hold over defining their children's academic potential can be challenged. Tuition acts as a safety valve that releases the pressure of increasing demands for parental involvement in children's schooling. Private tuition provides an expert and professional education service for parents to access when their trust in the school system is damaged. The benefits of tuition also carry a sacrifice, which while largely financial also entails time, effort and in some cases, social isolation. The parents display optimism about their children's long term futures and experience anxiety about their children's schooling experiences. They are proactive in relation to their children's schooling. These features make them receptive to the legitimating claims made by the private tuition providers.

This thesis posits a theory of legitimating claims. Tuition providers make claims that legitimate their authority to teach. They highlight the quality of their programs, staff and reputation to establish their authority. Many tutors, in this study, were classroom teachers who either experienced disruptions in their careers or became disillusioned with mainstream schooling. Private tuition enabled them to continue to pursue a teaching career outside the classroom. Regardless of the mode of delivery, the tutors claim to provide an individualised education service that schools are unable to match due to funding constraints and large class sizes. This chapter has discussed the two interrelated propositions that make up the theory of legitimating claims. The legitimating claims of the private tutors match the predispositions of the parents described above. A relationship forms between the legitimate consumer and the legitimate educator. In this relationship the choice to engage in tuition seems natural and inevitable. Parents engage in bespoke education by employing private tutors, adjusting schooling provision and engaging in extra-curricular activities to tailor their children's educational experiences to meet specific needs and aspirations.

Chapter Nine: Conclusion

Shadow or supplementary education, characterised in this thesis as “bespoke education” is an entrenched feature of contemporary educational practice worldwide. However it is largely unregulated and generally under-researched. This study has provided insight into how private tuition impacts on the lives of the tutors, parents and children engaged in tuition at the primary school level, through an interpretivist study of participants’ perspectives on the phenomenon of bespoke education to generate theory about the relationship between private tutors and their clients. This chapter provides a summary of the research by revisiting the theory and the two interrelated propositions that build the theory. It then discusses the significance of the methodology. Specifically, it addresses the original contribution to knowledge, provides an overview of the main argument, and considers the generalisability of the theory. This chapter also makes recommendations for future research directions and associated changes to policy and practice.

Original Contribution to Knowledge

This thesis has generated a theory of legitimating claims. The theory draws on Bourdieu and Passeron’s (1990) work on education yet makes an original contribution by addressing the specific relations between private tutors and the parents who strategically employ tutors for their children. The theory also provides insight into relations between private tutors and the mainstream schooling system as a relationship where two educational authorities compete for educational legitimacy. The theory of legitimating claims is robust for the participants in the specific context of this project but can be applied to various education providers and their relations with those they educate.

The proposed theoretical framework for this study drew on Bourdieu’s notions of cultural capital, habitus and field; however, the initial findings of the study indicated that the key issue was educational legitimacy. Returning to the work of Bourdieu and adding this component to the analysis resulted in the theory of legitimating claims. This iterative process of theory generation has resulted in unique insights into the relationship between a group of educators and their clients. The propositions that build the theory of legitimating claims explore two themes: educational legitimacy and parental aspiration. The propositions further explore the interplay between these two themes with application not only to shadow or supplementary education but also to issues of school choice and mainstream schooling.

The notion of bespoke education is used throughout this thesis as an alternative to shadow or supplementary education. The aim of the reconceptualising the field is to shift the phenomenon of private tuition from the periphery of education by situating it within wider processes of school choice, thereby acknowledging tutors' desire for recognition of their educational legitimacy. Bespoke education describes the process whereby parents, who can afford to do so, tailor their children's education to meet individual need, often by employing private tutors. Bespoke education bridges the public and private spheres of education; acknowledges the wide variety of education options available to families; and foregrounds the role of parents in determining their children's educational trajectories. As detailed in Chapter Three, the concepts of "intensive parenting" and "concerted cultivation" are central to bespoke education (Davies, 2004; Lareau, 2002). Parents tailor and individualise their children's education. In other words, their children's education is made-to-order rather than the standard government schooling experience. The notion of bespoke education is a product of this thesis and aptly describes how the parents in the present study adjust and customise their children's educational lives.

The study was conducted in the unique context of Perth, Western Australia and used qualitative research methods to facilitate a detailed and in-depth depiction of the tuition industry. One unexpected outcome of the study was the finding that some tuition providers develop relationships with alternative therapists such as naturopaths, kinesiologists or behavioural optometrists. Referrals were made between the tutors and the therapists, adding a further dimension to the private tuition field. This study also found that some children were removed from their mainstream classroom, during school hours to attend private tuition centres. The third finding of this study was that some parents transfer trust on educational issues to their private tuition providers and consequently continue to enroll their children in tuition long after the apparent need for tuition has been addressed.

Finally this study employed modified grounded theory techniques. The grounded theory techniques used for data analysis included open coding, the use of *in-vivo* codes and clustering. The process of data analysis was modified to facilitate a second level of analysis that featured codes drawn from Bourdieu and Passeron's concepts of habitus, cultural capital and field. This second level of analysis established a dialogue between

the issues that were intrinsic to the data and those that were applied to the data from the work of Bourdieu and Passeron (1990). The result was a richer understanding of the relationship between the private tutors, the parents and the mainstream schooling system.

Overview of the Argument

The aim of this thesis was to develop theory about how private tuition impacts on the lives of the tutors, students and families involved in the tuition industry. The theory of legitimating claims arose from the data collected from the participants and provides an answer to the research question. The theory posits that a relationship develops between private tuition providers and parents of children who access private tuition services. This relationship feels natural and inevitable because the legitimating claims made by the tuition providers speak directly to the predispositions of the parents who pay for the tuition. In this sense the private tuition providers are the legitimate educators and the parents are the legitimate consumers of the services on offer (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). This symbiotic relationship generated two closely connected propositions leading to the theory of legitimating claims. Central to this theory and the two propositions is the notion of educational legitimacy.

Three features of educational legitimacy have been taken from Bourdieu and Passeron's (1990) work on education to inform the analysis in this thesis. The first feature derives from the assertion that educational legitimacy has become implicit or hidden as mass schooling has become entrenched in the civil service. This thesis reverses this assertion and argues that as the private education sector grows claims to educational legitimacy are explicitly articulated as education providers vie for business. This enables the legitimating claims of education providers to be examined in detail.

Second, educational legitimacy has been described by Bourdieu as a cultural arbitrary. In other words although the right of teachers to educate and the appropriateness of the curriculum they teach are often considered natural or inevitable, they are instead contingent, created or arbitrary (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). For Bourdieu and Passeron this arbitrariness entrenches relations of social domination. For this thesis, the notion that educational legitimacy is arbitrary enables the features of educational legitimacy to be unpacked and examined in detail. Accordingly it was found that private tutors strategically highlighted the quality of their teaching programmes, the

quality of their staff and the quality of their reputations to establish their legitimacy to teach.

Finally, Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) claim that educational legitimacy is complete when it is responded to favourably by legitimate consumers. They describe the legitimate consumer as:

one equipped with the social definition of the legitimate product and the disposition to consume it in the legitimate manner (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, p.38).

Consequently, the parents of the children receiving tuition are the legitimate consumers who possess the dispositions to appropriately consume the legitimate educational service offered by private tutors. As stated earlier, two interrelated propositions construct the theory of legitimating claims. Each proposition has three components as follows:

Proposition One

Tuition providers substantiate their claims to educational legitimacy in three ways;

- The quality of the services offered by the tuition provider;
- The shortfalls of mainstream schooling; and
- The individualised nature of their tuition services.

Proposition Two

The predisposition of parents to seek out and pay for private tuition for their children is driven by one or more of the following factors:

- Optimism about their children's long term futures;
- Anxiety about their children's previous and/or current schooling experiences; and
- A proclivity to take action to address perceived shortfalls in their children's educational provision.

These two propositions are closely related. They outline the dynamics of the relationships that develop between the tuition providers as legitimate educators and the parents of the tutored children as the legitimate consumers of the services offered by the tuition providers. In the first proposition the legitimating claims of the tuition providers are dealt with. These claims demonstrate that legitimating their roles as education providers is a central concern to private tutors. They include claims to provide quality

educational programs and testing regimes delivered by quality staff members. The key legitimating claim is the ability of tuition providers to offer individualised attention that cannot be provided in a mainstream classroom setting. These legitimating claims connect with the predispositions of the parents who engage in private tuition. The second proposition describes factors that predispose parents to seek tuition. The parental predispositions indicate desires to maximize children's options later in life. They include: optimistic aspirations for their children's long term futures; anxiety about their children's recent past, current and short term future schooling experiences; and a propensity to take action in the realm of their children's educational needs.

Generalisability of the Theory

From the outset it has been asserted that the theory developed in this thesis is embedded in the specific context of the study. The themes that inform the propositions have been found to be robust across the participants of this study. Certainly the strategies for legitimation were common across the tuition providers; however, the list is by no means exhaustive. Similarly common themes emerged in the interviews with parents indicating shared features that predisposed them to engage private tutors for their children. In this sense the propositions hold true for the stakeholders included in this project.

Furthermore the findings of this study were triangulated by including a variety of different styles of private tuition and by employing a variety of data sources including in-depth interviews, document collection and field observation. Hence the findings are trustworthy for the phenomenon under examination.

The theory generated by this study may well prove to apply more widely to similar contexts and phenomena. In particular other private tuition providers, both in Australia and worldwide, could be expected to make legitimating claims to which their clients respond favourably. The findings of this study are particularly relevant to the field of school choice. In that field schools need to attract parents and could be expected to make legitimating claims and for parents to share predispositions that incline them to be active in processes of school choice. The theory could be applied to the relationships between any therapeutic, recreational or educational service providers and the clients they attract. Within the wider educational context in Australia, mainstream schools are becoming subject to processes that require accountability and transparency. In this context it could be expected that even schools fully entrenched in the public service will make legitimating claims in order to meet the demands for greater accountability, and to

maintain levels of school enrolment in the face of competition from alternative education providers.

The application of Bourdieuan themes indicates that the theory of legitimating claims could apply to other fields of social science. The theory of legitimating claims draws on the notion of educational legitimacy and provides insight into the enmeshed relationship between the concepts of cultural capital, habitus and field. It is parental habitus that fuels the acquisition of cultural capital for the children, inclining parents to respond favourably to private tutors' legitimating claims. Furthermore, when parents engage private tutors improving their children's later life options is often a key motivation, hence parents are seeking to accrue cultural capital for their children. In terms of the concept of fields, private tutors legitimate their practice by highlighting the shortfalls of classroom teaching, clearly manifesting the competition that exists between the fields of mainstream schooling and private tuition. At this juncture it is important to provide a caveat acknowledging the limitations of this study. The number of cases and participants is relatively small. Larger scale studies, in a variety of settings, would be necessary to verify the theory of legitimating claims. However, the in-depth nature of the qualitative research undertaken in this project resulted in the detailed and nuanced findings of this project.

Implications

Implications for future research

As is common with qualitative research this thesis raises pertinent questions for further investigation that may be explored on a larger scale. In other words the theory developed in this project could be tested and verified through broader studies. The themes and propositions of this project could be used to inform survey instruments designed to collect data from a larger number of participants. Testing the propositions through larger scale research would determine whether the theory of legitimating claims is robust across wider settings and populations. In addition to simply increasing the scale of the research, there are several possible future themes for research that this study has identified.

A recent article in the Australian news magazine "Monthly" (Pung, 2013) examined the phenomenon of private tutoring in the guise of coaching colleges that aim to assist students gain admission to academically selective schools. Pung discussed three themes

that resonate with this study and suggest future research directions: ethnicity; student quality of life; and the question of legitimacy. The article dealt primarily with Asian students and specifically referred to Chinese, Vietnamese and Indian families. The article proposed that migrant families view education as the primary path to class mobility. In the literature on shadow or supplementary education there is not only discussion of a migrant culture, but also an Asian culture influenced by Confucianism that potentially predisposes families to seek private tuition. This suggests that further research into the effects of ethnicity on involvement in private tuition may be a fruitful research topic; however, it should be approached with caution to avoid racial stereotyping.

Pung (2013) also discussed student quality of life, specifically noting the lack or recreational and social lives for the students who engage in heavy timetables of coaching and at the extreme referring to issues of depression anxiety and stress in students. In this thesis there were glimpses of student discontent with tuition; however, the primary focus was on the parents. Nonetheless the cost to the students in terms of quality of life could be a future topic for research on private tutoring in Australia. Finally the article discussed whether students who were heavily coached in test-taking skills through private tutoring gain access to academically selective schools and programmes legitimately. This resonates with Kenny and Faunce's (2004) discussion of parents who believed that engaging in private coaching was a form of cheating. This issue also resonates with the expressed desire of the tutors in the current project for acknowledgement as legitimate educators and warrants further investigation. The article also raises the issue of whether innate ability or individual effort is the true indicator of academic excellence, which again questions the legitimacy of students who employ private tutors to bolster their academic performance and could prove a valuable issue for future research projects.

Research has addressed the question of whether private tuition is a vehicle for privilege or a potential strategy for equality in education (Ball, 2010; Dang & Rogers, 2008; Dawson, 2010). The issue of educational equality is a theme that also arose in this project. All of the families engaged in this project were able to afford the private tuition fees. Hence it is worth exploring whether private tuition is purely a service for the wealthy or whether disadvantaged groups can benefit from the provision of state-funded tuition services or from sharing the knowledge about learning that is gained by private

tutors. Gordon et al. (2007) advocate for tuition as a research tool that can benefit everyone engaged in the field of education. Accordingly Gordon and his colleagues argue that one-on-one tuition provides the ideal situation to learn about student learning styles and effective teaching strategies. The findings of investigations conducted in tuition settings can potentially be applied more generally to improve school teaching. However the question of whether, and how, this can occur warrants further investigation.

In this project the overwhelming majority of parents and tutors interviewed were women. An American study, “Could it be otherwise?” (Andre-Bechely, 2005), claimed that the “work” of school choice was often the province of mothers and identified gender as a significant theme for consideration. Furthermore the female tutors and directors in this study often began their careers in the mainstream but due to family responsibilities experienced disruptions that pushed them out of schools. Entering private tuition provided an alternative career path that enabled them to continue as educators. These two aspects of the gender of the parents who engage in tuition and of the tutors who provide tuition could prove to be pertinent issues for future studies.

This study focuses on the relationship between parents and tutors. Accordingly children become the passive individuals who are acted upon in the realm of private tuition. This is partly due to the data collected from the children which indicated that the children accepted the will of their parents and generally concurred with their parents’ aspirations. This may be due to their young age. As children become young teenagers there could be more resistance to parental desire. This is beyond the scope of the current project yet may prove a fertile avenue for future research. Furthermore, the issue of whether there is a gender bias amongst the children enrolled in tuition could prove to be a fruitful avenue for future research. In other words, are boys or girls more likely to require and employ private tutors?

As noted elsewhere in this thesis, there is distinct lack of statistical data on the prevalence of private tuition in Australia. In this sense the field is wide open for quantitative researchers to investigate the rates of private tuition and the modes of delivery of private tuition. Furthermore, the theory of legitimating claims suggests that quantitative internet-based research on the legitimating claims made by tuition providers could prove a valid research strategy.

Finally this project deals with the problematic relationship that exists between private tuition providers and mainstream schools. The project has found evidence of shifts in parental trust from their schools onto their tuition providers. However this relationship is viewed only from the standpoints of tutors and parents. Further research is needed from the perspective of classroom teachers and school administrators on their attitudes towards, and experiences with, private tuition providers.

Implications for policy

Regulation of private tutoring, worldwide, has proven to be notoriously difficult; however there are precedents for the Australian Government to introduce educational standards for previously under-regulated child services. The most prominent, recent example is the legislative and regulative government policy for the childcare sector, entitled “The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care” (Department of Education, Employment & Workplace Relations, 2012). This policy legislates and sets national standards for kindergartens, childcare centres, family day care providers and after school care centres. It provides legislation and national quality standards that are administered by state and territory agencies. All of the tutors in this study were fully qualified teachers who may welcome regulation as it confers educational legitimacy. Administering formal regulation would be most difficult in the case of Sandi, the moonlighting teacher, due to the informal nature of her tutoring arrangements.

On the other hand, the findings of this study suggest that any initiative to increase government regulation of private tuition providers may face considerable resistance. In South Korea, as described in the literature review, a government attempt to ban private tuition failed and private tuition has proved itself immutable to policy reforms. This may well be similar in Australia. Firstly, parents who engage private tutors are seeking alternative educational authorities and accordingly parents value the wide choice and the variety of tuition services. Increasing government regulation has the potential to homogenize the private tuition industry. Furthermore, several of the tutors who took part in this study chose to develop tutoring careers because of disillusionment with mainstream education. They wanted to work outside the schooling system and relish the professional freedom this provides. A case in point is the *An Even Start* tuition voucher scheme. Three of the tuition providers were involved in the scheme and

accepted clients who used the government vouchers. As the scheme progressed the government regulations increased and began to dictate the content of the tuition programmes. Subsequently the private tuition providers opted out of the Commonwealth Government scheme because they were unwilling to conform to a mandatory tuition curriculum.

As stated in the Background and Context chapter, there are few school policies at the State Government level that directly address the relationship between private tuition and mainstream schooling. The consensus is that these relationships are managed at the discretion of individual school principals. Western Australia is the only state with a schools' policy dedicated to addressing the relationship between private tutors and mainstream schools. By acknowledging that schools cannot meet all the educational needs of every child the Western Australian policy supports the legitimating claims of private tuition providers. One of the greatest tensions in the study arose as tutors desired acknowledgement by mainstream schools while simultaneously critiquing the schools to legitimate their tuition services. If school systems widely acknowledged their inability to meet the educational needs of all students (as stated in the WA policy) the way may be opened for more partnerships between private tuition providers and schools.

Implications for practice

As the private tuition industry in Australia grows it is important that parents have access to reliable information about the services that tutors provide. As has been demonstrated in this thesis, parental desire to improve their children's education has a powerful emotional charge which can make parents vulnerable to less scrupulous tuition providers. It is important that the private tuition industry is monitored to protect such parents and their children. Therefore, one strategy to assist parents would be to establish a comprehensive information network for those seeking to engage in private tuition. The Internet could be a valuable tool for the dissemination of information. Already parents are trawling the Internet to gain information about private tuition and alternative educational support therapies. The need exists for the development of a website that provides unbiased evaluations of the tuition options available in Australia. Furthermore, the use of online forums dedicated to the issue of private tuition could provide an important tool for parents to communicate with each other about their tuition experiences.

As stated elsewhere private tuition provides an alternative career path to many experienced educators. The tutors working in franchises have access to support services provided by their parent company. However many tutors work in isolation. The ongoing professional development of these educators should be addressed to both to keep them up-to-date as educators and to provide collegial support networks. These educators have chosen to work outside of the mainstream schooling system and in doing so lose access to the support services that are associated with the mainstream. Some tutors in this study maintained membership of ATA; however, in terms of supporting individual tutors at the local level there is wide scope for expansion. The ATA could expand their web presence to include an online forum for tutors. Social networking sites could be used to provide support. A nation-wide system of accreditation for private tuition providers would also address this issue and provide tutors with the educational legitimacy that they seek. For this issue the prohibitive factors would be twofold. First, the cost of providing support services, professional development courses and an accreditation system could be prohibitive. Second, overcoming the competition between providers could be difficult. One of the legitimating claims made by tuition providers was that their programmes were unique; therefore, they may prove reluctant to engage in support networks and professional development courses with their competitors. However, as the industry grows so does the need for these professional support services.

This thesis has found that relations between private tutors and mainstream schools are often problematic. However, the employment of private tutors to bolster school education is becoming commonplace in Australia. Most of the parents in this study expressed a desire for tutors to work in coordination with their children's classroom teachers but they also noted that this rarely occurred. According to this thesis the tension between private tutors and classroom teachers is inevitable as they grapple to establish educational legitimacy. Furthermore, critiquing schools is an important legitimating claim for tutors. While this suggests that the conflict between private tutors and classroom teachers will be intractable, this should not preclude the possibility of tutors and teachers coordinating their efforts for the benefit of the children they teach together. Parents could provide a conduit for the communication between tutors and teachers or email communication could be used when time and logistical constraints preclude face-to-face meetings. To respond to this implication schools would need to acknowledge that private tutors have a legitimate role to play in the education of children in Australia.

Significance of the Methodology

The key elements of methodology in this research were its qualitative approach, the use of case study method and the openness and flexibility applied to sample construction and data analysis. In discussing the emergent field of research into shadow education, Mark Bray notes that qualitative research has “achieved insights which could never have been secured through quantitative approaches” (2010b, p.9). The use of the qualitative tools of semi-structured interviews, close observation and document gathering in this study has yielded rich and diverse results.

Taking a multiple case study approach has uncovered various forms of shadow education. This diversity ranges from the single tutor working from home to the large franchise catering for well over one hundred families every week therefore making a significant contribution to addressing Bray’s concern that:

The field is in need of stronger conceptualisation to take account of the different types of shadow education which have emerged and developed in different settings (Bray, 2010b, p.11).

The notion of bespoke education provides a conceptualisation that accounts for the Australian context and positions private tutoring within the wider field of school choice while acknowledging the central role of parents in determining their children’s educational lives. Bray also noted that there are gaps in the research on private tutoring, “both in the geographic coverage and the specific themes addressed by researchers” (Bray, 2010b, p.11). This study provides research in the Australian setting and addresses wide ranging themes presented from the perspectives of the tutors and of the families engaged in private tuition.

Finally, the study yields rich results because of the principles of flexibility and openness that undergird every aspect of the research. This is most evident in the construction of the research sample, the data collection and the analysis of the data. The sample became more diverse than the limited model originally envisaged. The sample eventually included a new category of participants, the associated professionals, who were not even considered in the original research plan. Observations conducted in the tuition centres were included in the data collection methods, yielding a deeper understanding of the practice of private tuition. Finally the data analysis combined themes drawn from the work of Pierre Bourdieu with themes that arose in the data

promoting a theoretically deep analysis that accurately reflects the insights of the study participants.

Few studies of shadow education take an in-depth multi-case study approach at the level of individual tutoring programmes; even fewer deal with programs in an Australian context. The unique contribution of applying interpretive case study methods has been to move the field of research into private tuition beyond issues of scope or prevalence into the realm of the lived experiences of the participants in the phenomenon.

Furthermore the two-layered approach to analysis whereby grounded theory techniques were modified to accommodate analysis informed by the work of Bourdieu yielded rich results.

Conclusion

This thesis has examined bespoke education through five case studies of private tuition providers in the Perth metropolitan area. The study canvassed the views of administrators, tutors, parents and children involved in the private tuition industry. The study found rich diversity in the private tuition accessed by parents seeking to optimise their children's future opportunities through education at an early age. Applying Bourdieuan concepts to the participants' views focused the study on the relationships that develop between private tutors as legitimate educators and proactive parents as the legitimate consumers of private tuition. The parents individually tailor their children's education to meet perceived needs and private tuition provides an alternative educational authority for parents to turn to when they believe there are shortfalls in the education provided by their children's schools.

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