RESISTING EDUCATION: A CAPITAL IDEA

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Abstract

This qualitative instrumental case study examines school resistant students' relationships with formal education, as experienced within an Alternative Education Program (AEP) in Queensland, Australia. The AEP examined, given the pseudonym the Indigo Centre, is a systemic response by the Department of Education to students displaying challenging behaviours in mainstream schools. The study found that despite the rhetoric of being 'alternative', the practices and expectations within the AEP perpetuate dominant discourses of mainstream education and as such continue to devalue these students' configurations of capital. It is this ongoing devaluation of the students' capital, and their subsequent disempowerment, that perpetuates the occurrence of challenging behaviours, conceptualised in this study as acts of resistance.

Data was collected from observations, analysis of the documents guiding the operation of the Indigo Centre, student and teacher focus groups, and individual interviews with students, teachers and parents. The thematic analysis identified themes related to recognition and resistance: resistance towards the mechanisms that recognise and value some capitals within the field, while failing to recognise the value in other capitals. This study combines the Bourdieuian concepts of social capital, habitus and field (1984, 1986, 1990) with Willis' (1977) theory of resistance, to reveal how the devaluing of students' capitals perpetuates resistance towards formal education.

Three key findings inform the understanding of the role of social capital in acts of resistance towards formal education. Firstly, that the students referred to the Indigo Centre encounter the same disempowering and exclusionary structures experienced in the mainstream field. Secondly, the students' attempts to create their own social capital are unrecognised within the field. Thirdly, the ongoing struggle for recognition of capital underpins the students' relationship with formal education and blocks the flow of capital within the field. Significantly, this study identified *justice capital* as the youth's social capital unrecognised in the field, yet potentially important in increasing the flow of capital and transforming the students' educational experience.

Finally, this research contributes to the field of alternative education by suggesting a learning model that promotes emancipatory learning that could be used

to inform the development and implementation of alternative education programs in which students are empowered to take control of their learning.

Preface

A career in education spanning two states and 24 years has delivered personal joys, professional satisfaction and yet at some level, a relentless uncertainty over the genuine meaningfulness of my efforts.

Working across many contexts, primary and secondary physical education, Indigenous education, special education, school leadership, student services and currently in a Central Office support role, I have often felt privileged in the company I have found myself in: such educators and educational leaders whose dedication and insight inspire their colleagues, teachers who through human spirit and passion for learning inspire their students to reach for the stars. Yet I myself have often found my own inspiration and dedication tempered by moments of self-reflection that revealed large question marks about my chosen vocation.

My years working in Indigenous communities were personally enriching; I was "adopted", receiving the skin name *Gammarang*, signifying my place in the relationship-based society of the Jawoyn people, and received my own (albeit minimal) education into Indigenous life. Yet professionally, I struggled. The frustration I encountered in teaching English to the Jawoyn children of the Northern Territory, or the Yidinji children of far North Queensland, was multiplied by the fact that most of them were already bilingual, a task I have still to master despite some effort.

School holidays spent fishing on the banks of the Roper River in the middle of the "Never-Never" and listening to the children of my adopted families switching effortlessly between languages highlighted the apparent unnatural struggle to 'learn' that they faced in my classroom and began an endless, though often private critique, of my role as an educator in facilitating the learning process.

Shortly after leaving Indigenous communities and returning to the city, I also returned to study, completing a Master's degree in Special Education. I took up a position in that field only to find that within that setting, my newly acquired knowledge took a back seat to tradition. Programs were structured on what had always been done and new ideas received the respect due to "fads". While I am sure this is not the case in the majority of special education programs, sadly it was my experience across the

next two special education programs I worked in. Despite my confidence that I had something of worth to contribute, I felt disempowered, “locked out” and powerless to contribute. The desire to make a meaningful contribution to the lives of students, and the stifling I felt as a teacher, were the catalyst for my move into school leadership, where I believed I could influence what I saw as much-needed changes to the system.

A brief stint in school leadership endowed me with a greater understanding of the bureaucracy of large educational systems, and a large dose of cynicism. As a teacher I had occasion to question the decisions of the administration. While some decisions made reflected positively the student-centred focus of many a good educational leader, some decisions were what I called policy decisions, with no credence given to the teaching and learning process.

As principal, while I initially revelled in my apparent autonomy, I soon felt like a cog in the mechanism of bureaucracy. Policy became the driving principle of my work. Decisions made from a policy perspective sometimes sat uneasily with my self-view as an educator. One of the most difficult aspects I found was the use of school disciplinary absences (exclusion, suspension) as a consequence for inappropriate behaviours. I felt like a tyrant on occasion; dealing out “my way or the highway” consequences to young people still developing an understanding of their place in the world. While this strategy has a place in the management of a school, I couldn’t help but feel like I was commodifying learning as something you can only ‘do’ when I said, where I said and how I said.

After much soul searching and reflection regarding who I am and who I wish to be, I relinquished my position as principal and after six years, returned to teaching. Following a further few years in the classroom, I eventually found my way to working with those students most familiar with the school disciplinary absences’ trail: students for whom formal schooling (and sometimes life itself) is a daily struggle, students who for some reason became less than themselves in the proximity of a school.

Armed with many years’ experience and renewed passion (that had been somewhat diminished during my time as Principal), I engaged wholeheartedly with my new role only to find the students almost completely unwilling to accept my assistance. While on the surface it appeared that these students, upon being delivered the ultimatum from school, “my way or the highway”, had chosen the highway, when drilling down through conversations and observations, the truth of this became

questionable. Further investigation into the students' school history revealed complex relationships from the very beginning. In a similar fashion to the children of my adoptive Jawoyn and Yidinji families, while learning was not an issue, school learning was.

This research project therefore is the culmination of many years of questioning my role as an educator, a role that has changed many times over the course of this research yet one that has always been about improving the educational and life outcomes for students, specifically those students who exist on the fringe of education.

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List of Abbreviations

AEP	Alternative Education Program
AoR	Acts of Resistance
AVT	Advisory Visiting Teacher
CoAG	Council of Australian Governments
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
DETE	Department of Education, Training and Employment (Queensland)
DETYA	Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (Australia)
ETRF	Education Training Reform Framework
FE	Further Education
HE	Higher Education
MACER	Ministerial Advisory Committee for Educational Renewal
MCEECDYA	Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs
MCEETYA	Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs
QUT	Queensland University of Technology

Statement of Original Authorship

The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted to meet requirements for an award at this or any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

Signature: QUT Verified Signature

Date: 23/01/2019

Acknowledgements

This research began as a small desire to do a better job. I am very grateful to a number of people who supported me in this desire, even as it grew into a mammoth undertaking and a challenging journey that I suspect won't end. I wish to acknowledge their support for this part of the journey, the completion of my thesis.

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Secondly, I would like to thank my wife, whose interest, patience, advice and quiet tolerance has meant the world to me. I doubt I would have been able to undertake this without her support.

I would like to thank my sons, for their support, perspective and for continually inspiring me to try and create a better world. I would also like to acknowledge the interest, support and encouragement of all my family, friends and colleagues, in particular, my colleague and friend Dr Marg Lloyd. A special thank you to my father, that smartest person I know, for inspiring my thirst for knowledge.

I would also like to thank the staff and students who participated in the research. These individuals were, and remain, part of my community and their willingness to be interviewed, observed and examined for the betterment of others speaks volumes about their character and values.

Chapter 1: Introduction

We shall not cease from exploration

And the end of all our exploring

Will be to arrive where we started

And know the place for the first time.

'Little Gidding', T.S.Eliot (1942)

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Those students who succeed in mainstream schooling may do so because the social and cultural capital they and their families possess synchronises with "the values and practices of the educational system which shapes educational participation" (Cardona, Watkins, & Noble, 2009, p. 3). For other students, entry into mainstream schooling reveals a disconnect between the social and cultural capital of their family and the capital valued in school (Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993; Crozier & Davies, 2006; Reay, Hollingworth, Williams, Crozier, Jamieson, James, & Beedell, 2007; Wallace, 2017). Such students may struggle to adapt to the values, practices and expectations of school, may experience the devaluing of their family capital and may find themselves positioned in the margins of the education system. Some students take a resistant stance towards this devaluing and positioning on the margins of formal education by engaging in behaviours that challenge the school's values and expectations (Willis, 1977). In Queensland, where this research was conducted, such challenging behaviours can result in the school enforcing school disciplinary absences, also known as suspensions and/or exclusions.

This thesis examined the interactions between seven *resistant* students, their parents/carers, and three teachers within a state-run Alternative Education Program (AEP) in Queensland. It analysed the students' relationship with formal education, as played out through their relationships with each other, their teachers, and the educational activities offered within the AEP. Influenced by, and drawing on the

Bourdieuian concepts of capital, habitus and field, this study aimed to conceptualise this relationship as a network of social interactions that form a complex social field operating within the AEP. This study also drew on the work of Paul Willis (1977) in understanding how, through such interactions, resistant identities are formed and maintained. The way in which the students are empowered and/or disempowered within this relationship was considered through the lens of capital, habitus and field (Bourdieu, 1977, 1998; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

This study involved collecting and analysing the perceptions of students, staff and parents attending the AEP and observing their interactions during the everyday operation of the program. It is envisaged that this knowledge will contribute to developing alternative education programs that support those students and ultimately lead to improvements in the practice, quality and effectiveness of the educational and social support offered to these students.

This chapter provides a background to the study (Section 1.2). The aims of the research are outlined (Section 1.3) and the research question is presented (Section 1.3.1). The following sections discuss the significance of the project (Section 1.4), the role of the researcher (Section 1.5), and the theoretical framework (Section 1.6). The chapter concludes with an overview of the study (Section 1.7) and an overview of the thesis (Sections 1.8).

1.2 BACKGROUND

This thesis examines the social factors that influence the manifestation of acts of resistance by students within an Alternative Education Program located in south-east Queensland. Acts of resistance here encompass verbal and physical aggression, non-compliance and truancy.

Hemphill, Kotevski, Herrenkohl, Smith, Toumbourou, and Catalano, (2013) state that a management tool available to Australian schools to address persistent, challenging and disruptive misbehaviour is exclusionary practice, namely suspension and expulsion. They continue, however, to explain that exclusion can have “serious, unintended negative consequences for the suspended student across a range of domains including educational outcomes and problem behaviours” (p. 237).

In Queensland, where this study in situated, a further systematic response to challenging behaviours lies in the provision of AEPs. AEPs have been established by

Queensland Department of Education, Training and Employment[1] (DETE) to respond to the issue of students engaging in challenging behaviours (acts of resistance) in mainstream schools. Systemically, DETE considers acts of resistance as counter-productive to effective engagement in learning and achieving educational success, labelling students exhibiting these behaviours as disengaged, or at-risk of disengaging from education. The AEP is designed as a supportive strategy to assist such students to re-engage in learning and achieve educational success.

The AEP which provides the research setting for this study has been developed (with others) in response to both federal and state government policy initiatives encompassing the dual goals of student retention and the need to cater for challenging student behaviour. Legislatively, the national move to increase student retention was preceded by the Queensland Government's implementation of a comprehensive education reform package. In the state of Queensland, the Education Training Reform Framework (*ETRF)* (Queensland Government, 2002) was released by the state government in 2002, whilst nationally the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions was agreed to by the Council of Australian Governments (CoAG)on July 2 in 2009 (CoAG, 2009). Both these legislations, along with *the Queensland Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* respond to the national target of raising the Year 12 completion rate by 6.5% to 90% by 2015 (CoAG, 2009, p. 7), and focus on supporting disengaged youth to re-engage in formal education (Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), 2010).

However, with a focus on students with challenging behaviours, the 2005 *Report* of the Behaviour Management in Queensland Schools Sub-Committee of the Ministerial Advisory Committee for Educational Renewal (MACER, November 2005) recommended to the then state Education Minister, "that there be provision for the care, support and learning in a safe environment for students who exhibit chronic infringements of expected behaviour and/or serious misdemeanours including alternate placements" (p. 31). In response to the MACER *Report*, the (now defunct) Centre for Behaviour Support was established, which in turn developed a number of policy and practice initiatives that supported the state-wide management of student

[1] In 2015 the Queensland Department of Education, Training and Employment was renamed the Queensland Department of Education and Training, further renamed in 2018 as the Queensland Department of Education.

behaviour, such as *Essential Skills in Classroom Management, Better Behaviour Better Learning* (Education Queensland, 2014) and the provision of alternative program placements. Later, the *Education Queensland 2010 Strategy* (*QSE 2010)* identified the provision of alternative education programs as an important strategy to address the growing issue of students with challenging behaviours (Education Queensland, 2000). The alternative education program at the centre of this research has an established political history of catering for students with behavioural issues rather than working to increase student retention rates.

As noted, the setting for this study is a state-run Alternate Education Program (AEP) in Queensland called the Indigo Centre. The Indigo Centre caters for students between the ages of 10 – 15 years of age with a history of behaviours inconsistent with school success, namely, truancy, non-compliance, vandalism, and physical and verbal abuse. These students are considered at-risk of disengaging from formal education and not completing their education to Year 12. The Indigo Centre operates the same hours as mainstream school with students being offered an individualised and flexible curriculum, a mix of high interest and hands-on subjects, and functional literacy and numeracy objectives.

Students arrive at the Centre through a referral process involving the parents/carers. This typically begins with the mainstream school's response to repeated inappropriate school behaviours such as truancy, non-compliance, vandalism, and physical and verbal abuse. The school makes a decision that it cannot meet the student's needs at that time. Once referred and accepted into the Centre, students remain in the Centre for a period of time, usually no greater than 18 months. The maximum number of students enrolled at any one time is 12. Indigo Centre staff work with the students to support their transition back to and re-engagement with mainstream educational pathways. The referral to the Indigo Centre is promoted by DETE as a supportive and inclusive pathway; however, my research findings suggest this Centre reinforces the exclusionary and marginalising structures of the mainstream education field.

The majority of students attending the Indigo Centre are male, living in low socio-economic areas, and characterised by DETE as at-risk or disengaged. The media reporting of anti-social behaviours, including violence, portrays boys and young men in these environments as the chief protagonists, often in gangs (Mills & Keddie, 2010).

Similarly, the media have promoted a "moral panic" relating to the underachievement of boys in school and their negative attitudes to education were dubbed in the UK as a "laddish" anti-learning culture (Foster, Kimmel, & Skelton, 2001). These belong to a hypothesis of boys being the "new disadvantaged" in education (see, for example, Epstein, 1998; Rowan, Knobel, Bigum, & Lankshear, 2002). This has been challenged as representing a "unitary masculinity" which collapses and "flattens" the diverse social and educational experiences of boys (Watson & Kehler, 2012) and, by focusing solely on gender, silences other critical factors of influence (Luke, Green, & Kelly, 2010).

Some older studies placed the instance of problematic behaviour of boys in school as being biological/hormonal (see, for example, Gurian, 2002) or physiological (Sax, 2005), where others thought that it was due to a lack of self-regulation and self-control (Krueger, Caspi, Moffitt, White, & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1996). It has been further suggested that the cause is the lack of positive models of masculinity for boys, frequently defined in terms of ethnicity, and the increased masculinisation of violence (Watson, 2007). Gilbert and Gilbert (2017), in an Australian review, discount these contentions and point to socio-economic circumstances as a key source of gender disadvantage. Whilst the student demographic in the Indigo Centre has a predominance of males, it is not indicative of all programs operating under the label of Alternative Education. This study, therefore, acknowledges issues of boys and masculinity in adolescence but has not made this a focus of this study.

A comprehensive examination of alternative education is undertaken along with the concept of educational engagement and an argument made that the effectiveness of alternative education programs in re-engaging disengaged students is hindered by the ability of educators to fully understand the complex concept of educational engagement. The contrasting complexity of the concept of educational engagement and the quite widespread and catch-all use of the term 'disengaged' hinders the accurate understanding and the ability to support the needs of these students. In Chapter 2, the literature regarding resistance is also critically examined, and Resistance Theory, as attributed to Willis (1977), is drawn upon to reject the deficit-laden terminology of *disengaged* in favour of the agentic term, *school resistant*.

This thesis does not imply that educational engagement is not essential, and in fact supports the view of Zyngier (2008) that engagement is crucial to all students,

particularly those marginalised students carrying labels implying a deficit in behaviour or motivation. However, if the problem of disengagement is viewed as residing *within* the student, as in the perspective of a deficit model, then it becomes easy to blame the individual and simply apply remedial support or strict sanctions or a mixture of the two strategies. However, if the reasons for the disengagement are more complex than "the student's fault", then the application of strict sanctions may, at best, do little to address the issue and, at worst, exacerbate the issue, sending the teacher and student dynamic into a cycle of growing disconnect.

The research informing this thesis holds to the premise that the provision of educational support based on inaccurate knowledge and understandings of the reason behind the lack of educational success for these students is both illogical and unproductive. Without accurate knowledge and clear understandings of why some students fail to effectively engage and therefore achieve educational success, it is a haphazard venture to design and implement programs aimed at increasing educational success.

When students fail, finding fault with the teacher is the oft and easily taken approach. It is not the stance taken in this thesis to blame teachers, yet we must also be mindful that if we do not hold teachers accountable, we may find ourselves at the equally simplistic and equally erroneous conclusion that students must be responsible for their educational failings. While no one could question the worthiness of such support programs, questions do remain regarding what factors influence students' decisions to initially engage in such behaviours. If these behaviours are influenced by factors within the mainstream settings, and alternative sites are established as more supportive pathways, why do some of these behaviours continue from one setting to another?

1.3 AIMS OF THE STUDY

The general and overarching issue this study addresses is that of the demonstration of challenging behaviour by students in school, and how this might be addressed by the formal education system. The premise of this research is that, without deeply understanding the factors influencing student behaviour, effectively addressing it becomes a very difficult prospect. This study draws together resistance theory and the Bourdieuian concepts of capital, habitus and field to examine the complex

educational and social fields in which students and teachers operate so that we may attempt to understand the complex issues they face.

It is the intent of this study is to provide insights that will assist policy makers and teachers to develop and deliver supportive and inclusive alternative educational programs for resistant students. It is also hoped that this study will extend theoretical understandings of the social factors within mainstream educational settings that could contribute to the creation of resistant identities.

1.3.1 Research questions

The central research question posed by this study is:

What role does social capital play in resistance towards formal education by students attending alternative education programs?

The corollary questions that guide this research are:

What social capitals are available within the field and does availability influence acts of resistance;

To what extent are the different habitus (embodied capitals) validated by the field and does validation influence acts of resistance?

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of this study lies in its addressing the seemingly intransigent issue of student resistance. The overall aim of this research is to generate a greater understanding of the factors influencing why some students engage in the behaviours that result in their removal from mainstream education and why some students continue to engage in these behaviours when presented with an alternative to the mainstream educational contex.

While there is a large body of literature pertaining to AEPs in all their different guises (see, for example, Aron, 2003, 2006; Aron & Zweig, 2003; Lehr, Tan, & Ysseldyke, 2009; Mills & McGregor, 2014, Te Riele, 2007, 2012; Thomson & Pennacchia, 2016), much of the attention in the literature has been paid to the definition of alternative education, the typology of programs and the collation of "best practice" with less attention directed to generating a greater understanding of the students attending AEPs (see, for example, Aron, 2003; Lange & Sletten, 2002; Mills & McGregor, 2010; Mills, Te Riele & Hayes, 2015; Te Riele, 2007; Thomson &

Pennacchia, 2015). This study, rather, critically examines the structures, practices and perceptions within the AEP, from a relational perspective through the lens of capital, habitus and field.

According to Zweig (2003), AEPs can be both the problem and the solution, potentially exclusionary and inclusionary, both educationally and socially. This research draws on Zweig (2003) and follows in the steps of Smyth and McInerney (2012) who used youth narratives to call for the need to rethink the curriculum and pedagogy in AEPs. This research heeds the call of Smyth and McInerney (2012) and will reframe the issue, moving away from a deficit model where the problem is located with the student (or family), and thereby examining the relationships experienced by students within the AEP.

This research also follows on from Connor's (2006) investigation of how relationships with formal education may influence educational success. Connor (2006) suggested that the structures within formal education may both empower and constrain the practices of teachers. This research extends the work of Connor (2006) in specifically examining how these same structures may impact on the students' relationship with formal education.

The study reported in this thesis found that while the students move from the mainstream educational context into an alternative education context, they continue to experience the same disempowered relationship with formal education. The resistant habitus, formed through the devaluing they experienced in mainstream education, encounters similar devaluing experiences in the alternative education program, and as such, the students' resistant habitus is maintained and they continue to engage in acts of resistance. The institutional habitus of the AEP is strongly aligned with the institutional habitus found in mainstream schools, and as such AEP staff are predisposed to value similar practices and expectations as are valued in mainstream schools, which includes viewing the students' resistance as both an expectation of "these students" and as a problem to be "fixed".

The habitus of both teachers and students is predisposed to accumulate capital (Mills & Gale, 2002), and social capital is conceptualised as the platform for this to occur (see Section 3.2.2). The AEP staff privilege engagement in literacy/numeracy tasks delivered through their pedagogy, as the social capital platform for students to accumulate further educational (valued) capital. The students, resisting both the

platform and the valued capital of the field, attempt to create their own social capital, which I call *justice capital*. Justice capital is conceptualised as a fluid collection of strategies that emphasise the social value students place in personal connections. Having justice capital is being accepted, valued and recognised within their relationship with formal education. In the students' attempts to accumulate more capital, that is by having justice capital recognised, the students aim to re-position themselves in their relationship, empowering themselves to leverage this position to gain further capitals. As such, justice capital is a counter cultural capital.

A significant finding is that the struggle by the students for recognition of justice capital stands in contrast to the recognition or value placed on pedagogy by the staff, effectively blocking the flow of capital within the field. The lack of flow of capital limits the students' ability to accumulate further capitals. However, the study also found that such a small AEP as the one at the centre of this study lacked a strong unified institutional habitus, and this allowed individual habitus to infrequently influence institutional practices (Thomas, 2002; Walker, 2015). This finding indicates the potential does exist within the staff and students to collaboratively increase the flow of capital and engage in transformative practices.

1.5 ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER

The impetus for this study arose from my prior connection with the AEP and my abiding interest in the motivations of resistant students and how staff might better connect with them. I had been employed as a staff member of the AEP for three years. During that time, I often found myself wondering if the support I was offering matched the students' needs.

My perception at that time was that students were referred to the program because they were having problems at school and that my role as a staff member was to provide intervention and support to enable the students to overcome their problems and return to school or another educational pathway. I often found myself wondering why the students themselves behaved in ways that seemed to reject or resist my teaching. Furthermore, while they were able to reflect upon some past behaviours and decisions as having negatively impacted their schooling and overall lives, when faced with similar situations they often made similar decisions and repeated aggressive or inappropriate behaviours. Whilst neither the students nor their parents were happy with

the students' level of educational success, they seemed unable to "see" the decisions and actions that led to the creation of that situation. I often found myself wondering if I too were unable to "see" the decisions and actions that had led to this situation.

A significant catalyst to this study was my observation that the students and their parents appeared to "reject" me and the educational activities I offered. Whilst students and their parents said they valued education, they seemed to position it as more important for "other" students and families. This study has therefore evolved from my experiences, observations and reflections upon the role I play/played in these students' relationship with formal education. I have included myself as a participant in the study along with students, parent/carers and teachers (see Section 4.4.2.4).

Because of this prior connection to the AEP, I am not an "outsider" and have used my own voice in this thesis, particularly through observations and field notes. I have, through past experiences with the participants, been able to fill in details that would otherwise be missing. Sections of the thesis are written in first person to clearly indicate my involvement and "insider" status.

1.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research project makes use of Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical concepts of capital, field and habitus, in an attempt to critically examine and understand the social influences affecting decisions of some marginalised students to engage in a Willis-style counter school culture, or school resistant behaviours. Some of the common terms, or labels, used to describe these students, such as "at-risk" and "disengaged", are also examined in the context of this study.

For Bourdieu, formal educational institutions figure centrally in the reproduction of educational inequality, explained through the concepts of capital (cultural, social and economic), habitus and field. A significant range of educational research projects are underpinned by the application of Bourdieuian thinking (Field, 2016; Mills & Gale, 2007; Portes, 1998).

Paul Willis is a British sociologist, often described as a cultural theorist, and is credited with the development of the concept of the 'counter school culture' which offers to explain the lack of school success achieved by marginalised students in terms other than lack of natural ability or individual effort. Willis (1977) argues against viewing the school as central to the reproduction of inequalities, suggesting that

schools' influence be seen as more indirect and unintentional (Willis, 1977), and that students themselves, through their resistance, contribute to their continued marginalisation. Linking the approaches of Bourdieu and Willis suggests the need for a greater understanding of the students' social and educational experiences in order to address educational inequalities.

Drawing on Bourdieu and Willis, this study will explore the concepts of capital (specifically social capital), habitus, field and educational resistance. The concept of social capital is "one of sociology's most popular theoretical exports" (Dika & Singh, 2002, p.31). However, it is a difficult concept to operationalise because it can manifest as other forms of capital (human, economic capital, cultural). Social capital, rather than being the end resource, forms the function of assisting the transfer and generation of other forms of capital.

While the exact origin of the term "social capital" is widely debated, Bourdieu, Putnam and Coleman are considered the seminal theorists on the topic (Dika & Singh, 2002). All three key social capital theorists interpret the concept slightly differently and while all three conceptualisations are examined in Chapter 3, it is Bourdieu's more sophisticated interpretation (Portes, 1998), with the additional concepts of habitus and field, that underpins this study.

The notions of field and habitus, best described as intellectual tools, or ways of thinking, were developed in response to what Bourdieu saw as the limits imposed by the domination of sociological debate by the opposing schools of thought, subjectivity vs objectivity (Bourdieu, 1990; Webb, Schirato, & Danaher, 2002). Habitus, described by Bourdieu as a ''strategy-generating principle enabling agents to cope with unforeseen and ever-changing situations" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 72), can be seen as how individuals develop "how they think" as well as the expression of an individual's internalised historical and cultural references. As a way of thinking, habitus can be simplistically understood as common sense, or the behaviours an individual is orientated towards in a given situation. Therefore, habitus alludes to the principles that guide practice. However it is also a conceptual tool that helps us to examine and understand "complex, situated actions with a range of precursors and a range of consequences, anticipated, unanticipated, highly visible or less visible" (Reay, 2011, p. 249).

Bourdieu's "field" can be seen as the context of that practice. Field can be located, as everything exists somewhere, but it is much more than the location: it is a "structured space of relations" (Lane, 2000, p. 73) p.73) specific to the physical and relational contexts of such things as a family, organisation, team or a classroom. If habitus can be "understood as a system of dispositions" (Bourdieu, 1980, p. 59) or a way of thinking, and field as a "structured space of relations" (Lane, 2000, p. 73), then these notions, central to Bourdieu's work, weave together to explain the development of an individual's perception of resistance and conformity (Brown & Rodriguez, 2009), and therefore both concepts will be utilised in this research project's examination of some marginalised students' decisions to resist formal education.

Also underpinned by the notion of resistance theory, this study explores the evolution of resistance theory, drawing from the landmark work of Willis (1977) and his notion of a self-defeating resistance, and the later works of Solórzano and Delgado-Bernal (2001), Giroux (1983, 2001, 1988) and Tuck and Yang (2011), who suggest a possible evolution in our understanding of resistance, from self-defeating to transformative. These later interpretations of resistance suggest that individual acts of student resistance may differ in form and function and potentially in destination. However, at the heart of all educational resistance lies the critique of a formal education system that lacks the ability to make visible the individual within the collective.

Through this thesis, I advocate for consideration of the lived experiences of the students; this study takes up the challenge of focusing research on the restructuring of learning environments based on accurate understanding of students' attitudes and perceptions. In the words of Ivan Illich, "most learning is not the result of instruction. It is rather the result of the unhampered participation in a meaningful setting" (Illich, 1974, p. 39).

1.7 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

This study is situated within a critical interpretivist paradigm (see Section 4.2), drawing on the works of social theorists Bourdieu and Willis to build social knowledge that may address educational inequalities for students labelled at-risk or disengaged or marginalised, through the examination of their social and educational fields.

A qualitative instrumental case study design has been chosen as the most suitable research design for this project as it allows for a holistic research approach (Crowe et al., 2011) whereby the experiences and relationships of the research participants can be explored within their natural social and educational contexts.

A key benefit of case study is the employment of multiple data sources within a real-life context that allows the researcher to generate thick descriptions, the major strength of qualitative research (Creswell, 2012). Therefore, the multiple data collection processes employed in this research project, namely, focus groups, interview methodology, observations and document analysis, are methods recommended as the most applicable for a qualitative case study (Crowe et al., 2011; Stake, 1995).

The research design is guided by Yin (2003, 2009) and Stake (1995, 2006, 2013), who both align case study design with research conducted in real life contexts where the boundaries between the context of the research and the subject of the research are not clear. However, it is Stake's (1995) emphasis on the contextual (social and historical) interpretation of meaning that is most useful in guiding data analysis. Beginning both data collection and data analysis simultaneously is suggested (Cohen et al., 2011) and necessary, given the use of focus group methodology and the often-resistant behaviours exhibited by some of the students.

All students currently enrolled at the AEP, along with their parents and teachers, were offered the opportunity to participate in the focus group and individual interviews. Interviews were conducted either at the site or at a mutually agreed venue at the convenience of participants. The interview methodology followed three semi-structured interviews (Seidman, 2013) exploring the educational perceptions and attitudes of the participants. Interviews were followed by observations of students and teachers within the normal context of the program. Including observation as a data collection method serves as both a method of triangulation and as a method to generate understanding of the social norms of the social field as it operates within an educational field (Simons, 2009).

Qualitative data collection methods can produce a large amount of data and to ensure efficient, effective and ethical use of the data, I employed a process of systematic data analysis (see Chapter Four). Written consent for all participants in the study was gained, as was ethical approval from both the Queensland University of

Technology (QUT) and the Ethics division of DETE. All participation was voluntary and anonymous.

1.8 OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS

This thesis comprises seven chapters. Chapter 1 has introduced the background and significance of the research project while Chapter 2 contains a review of the current literature pertaining to the context of the research, educational engagement, and alternative education programs. Chapter 2 discusses the continued relevancy and evolution of the theory of educational resistance as originally attributed to Willis (1977).

Chapter 3 outlines the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that underpin the research, the application of Bourdieu's relational thinking, and how the interplay between field, habitus and capital provides a platform for exploring the factors influencing resistance to formal education by marginalised students placed in alternative education programs.

Chapter 4 describes the qualitative and critical interpretivist research methodologies for data collection and analysis that inform the pragmatics of the project. Chapter 4 sets out the qualitative data collection methods used - focus groups, individual interviews, direct observation and document analysis - and outlines how both the relevant literature and the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of this project guided the data analysis process.

Chapter 5 introduces the students and teachers and illustrates their cultural trajectories into the Alternative Education Program. In Chapter 6, the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 3 is used to guide the data analysis and interpretation. The Bourdieuian concepts of habitus, capital, field, as well as Resistance Theory, underpins the analysis.

Chapter 7 concludes the thesis by drawing together the preceding chapters, responding to the research question, presenting the findings of this research and their implications for practice, and making recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2: Context of the Research

> All young people have the capacity to learn and to enjoy learning; they do not 'fail school', rather, schools fail them.
>
> (Mills & McGregor, 2014, p.2)

2.1 INTRODUCTION

As the context for my research project is an alternative education program, this chapter begins with a review of the literature pertaining to the field of alternative education (see Section 2.2), in order to contextualise the research. The chapter will define the relevant terms, offer a brief outline of the history of alternative education, and describe the general student population and identify the gaps in literature. This will include a review of the pejorative labels used within the literature and education policy to describe and identify alternative education students and how these terms are implicated in the educational marginalisation (exclusion) of these students. Relevant empirical evidence on the effectiveness of alternative education will also be reviewed. A critical review of literature is undertaken to illustrate that that despite the social and educational ethos of inclusivity underpinning alternative education programs, some programs, in particular those with a remedial approach, treat their student clientele as a homogenous cohort, misunderstanding or misrecognising their unique stories and educational and social needs, and are in themselves "barriers that prevent an education system from guaranteeing an inclusive education for all" (Arduin, 2015 , p. 106).

The purpose of the alternative education program at the centre of my study is the re-engagement of disengaged students, and therefore the relevant literature pertaining to educational engagement (Section 2.3) is also briefly reviewed and the term *disengaged* is problematised. This chapter presents a review of the literature on resistance theory in education (Section 2.4) and drawing on this literature, argues that resistance theory offers a useful way to view and position these students and their educational and social needs. Finally, this chapter summarises the argument that *school resistant* is a more accurate and more useful term in understanding these students (Section 2.5).

2.2 ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

Contextualising research within the field of alternative education is not a simple task, as Alternative Education is a very broad term that encompasses various and different educational programs, services and sites catering for students experiencing a range of difficulties in mainstream education (Aron, 2003; Aron & Zweig, 2003; Lehr, Lanners, & Lange, 2003; Mills & McGregor, 2014). Globally, services falling under this term are wide, ranging from *remedial* education for *problem* children, to individualised approaches for gifted children (Mills & McGregor, 2014; Nagata, 2007).

Aron and Zweig's 2003 review of the literature (particularly pertaining to the US context) highlighted the lack of a single clear definition of alternative education that covers all models, stating that "there is no commonly accepted or commonly understood definition of what constitutes alternative education" (pp. 20-21), and this limited agreement on the definition (Prior, 2013; Thompson, 2016) continues to the present day.

Further, Lange and Sletten's (2002) claim that the term alternative education "can mean different things to different audiences" (p. 5) is supported by recent literature from the USA, where most state education authorities offer a range of alternative programs and services, often defining alternative education in their own context (Lehr, Tan, & Ysseldyke, 2009; Porowski, O'Conner, Luo, 2014; Schwab, Johnson, Ansley, Houchins, & Varjas, 2016).

The US Department of Education defines *alternative education* as:

> …[any] elementary/secondary school that (1) addresses needs of students that typically cannot be met in a regular school, (2) provides non-traditional education, (3) serves as an adjunct to a regular school, or (4) falls outside the categories of regular, special education, or vocational education.
>
> (Sable, Plotts & Mitchell, 2010, p.61, C-1)

The US definition is very broad and encompasses all models of alternative education. If applied to an Australian context, this definition would also cover the School of Distance Education, a service that ensures the provision of formal education for students in the remote parts of the country, but that is not considered in Australia

to be alternative education. Therefore, this definition fails to accurately define alternative education as it pertains to the context of my research.

In the UK, the Department for Education uses the term *alternative provision*, defined more narrowly as:

> …education arranged by local authorities for pupils who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, would not otherwise receive suitable education; education arranged by schools for pupils on a fixed period exclusion; and pupils being directed by schools to off-site provision to improve their behaviour.(DfE, 2013, p.3)

This definition focuses on who is served rather than how (Thomson & Pennacchia, 2016a) and yet, could exclude alternative provisions within the school or on the same site, which can occur in the Australian context. Therefore, similar to the US definition, the UK definition fails to provide an accurate definition of alternative education that suits the purposes of this research. Furthermore, both the US and UK definitions mention, but fail to explicitly articulate, the difference between different types of alternative education models.

Different models of alternative education are "shaped by particular religions, ideologies or deficit constructions of youth" (Mills & McGregor, 2014, p.15). Ideologies that are alternative to mainstream theories of child development drove the development of alternative educational models such as Montessori Schools and Steiner Schools (Miller, 1989; Sliwka, 2008). These models focus on a student centred, holistic education, and offer alternatives to what is seen as the rigidity of public education (Quinn, Poirier, Osher, & Skiba, 2006). Such models are commonly referred to as *Alternate Schools*.

Other alternative education models are more policy driven: for instance, aimed at increasing retention rates through re-engaging those students who have become disengaged from the more traditional educational pathways (Aron, 2006; Te Riele, 2012) or catering for students with challenging behaviours (de Jong & Griffiths, 2012). However systemic policies aimed at improving student retention and/or reducing student behaviour, are often shaped by deficit constructions of youth (Mills & McGregor, 2014; Te Riele, 2012). These models are what are more commonly understood as *Alternative Education Programs.* In Queensland, Australia, the term

Alternative Education Program is most often used as a colloquial umbrella term capturing a number of alternative education services. Additional to the lack of consensus over official definitions, the terminology used is often contested (Te Riele, 2006, 2012), with many terms often (and erroneously) used interchangeably – *Alternative Schools, Second-Chance Schools, Behaviour Schools, Flexible Learning Centres, Flexible Learning Programs, Positive Learning Centres, Community Based Programs* and *Blended Learning Programs* (Aron, 2006; de Jong & Griffiths, 2012; Plows, Bottrell, & Te Riele, 2017; Riele, 2007; Te Riele, 2012; Thomson & Pennacchia, 2016a). Within the Australian context, the debate over the negative impact of labelling of both students and programs, gave rise to a new term of *Learning Choices*, favoured by the Dusseldorp Skills Forum (an independent, not-for-profit organisation that aims to enhance the opportunities for education and employment for all young people) as a more positive term for alternative educational programs (Te Riele, 2012).

Adding to the confusion are the different types of learning that may take place in alternative programs, such as formal, non-formal, and informal learning. A framework developed by Coombs and Ahmed (1974) on behalf of the International Council for Educational Development offered a definition of these types of learning still widely accepted and in use today (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999; Nelson, Cushion, & Potrac, 2006; Tuijnman & Boström, 2002). Therefore, in the context of this study, the term formal learning is used in regard to an "institutionalised, chronologically graded and hierarchically structured educational system" (Coombs, 1974, p.8). Non-formal learning pertains to "any organised, systematic, educational activity carried on outside the framework of the formal system to provide select types of learning to particular subgroups in the population" (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974) p.8). Informal education will be defined as "the lifelong process by which every person acquires and accumulates knowledge" (Coombs, 1974, p. 8).

The research that informs this thesis was undertaken in an Alternative Education Program, an established program operating as a part of the Queensland formal education system, operating off-site from a mainstream school and driven by government policy of catering for students with challenging behaviours. This program can best be described as part of the formal education system offering students a type of formal learning. According to the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment,

Training and Youth Affairs[2] (MCEETYA), the most common purpose for Alternative Education programs in Australia is to cater for students forced out of mainstream schooling due to challenging and disruptive behaviours (de Jong & Griffiths, 2006). For the purposes of contextualising my research, such Alternative Education Programs will be defined as "programs designed to support students who are unlikely or unable to access mainstream education programs for a number of reasons" (de Jong & Griffiths, 2006, p. 30), and referred to using the acronym of AEPs.

2.2.1 Typology of alternative education programs

Given the diffuse definitions of alternative education, many educational researchers, in an effort to inject clarity into the debate over defining the academic field of alternative education, have favoured a typology based on common characteristics or client base over a definition (Aron, 2006; de Jong & Griffiths, 2006; Te Riele, 2007). These scholars argue for a classification system of common characteristics as a way of generating greater understanding of the different types of alternative education programs (Aron, 2006; Aron & Zweig, 2003; Raywid, 1994; Te Riele, 2007). While there is currently no single universally accepted typology, the typology developed by Raywid in 1994, identifying three types of alternative education based on their intended program goals known as Type I, II and III, continues to be used in the US today (Morrissette, 2011; Thompson, 2016).

Raywid (1994) identified Type I programs as innovative, that is, those showing a distinct departure from traditional educational organisational, programming and administration methods. Attendance at these programs is generally voluntary, with a focus on providing genuine alternative educational choices for students and parents. Type I programs are usually popular with parents and students and some charter schools in the US follow this model. The programs are generally full-time and offer genuine alternative pathways to a recognised credential, through an individualised approach to a student's education. A prominent example is Summerhill in Suffolk, UK, founded in 1921. Whilst offering mainstream credentials, Summerhill students navigate optional, personalised learning pathways (Woods & Woods, 2009).

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[2] MCEETYA is an Australian Federal Council, overseen by the Council of Australian Governments which was renamed the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) in 2009 and again renamed the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood in 2012.

Type II programs are identified as behavioural programs, and in some localities, have been likened to correctional facilities (Te Riele, 2009), for example, *Last chance* programs where attendance is mandatory and seen by students more as a consequence of previous behaviours than an alternative pathway to the future. The typical approach to behaviour management/modification is through segregating disruptive students from other students until their behaviour improves.

Type III programs take a remedial or rehabilitative approach. Rules on attendance vary, from mandatory attendance to voluntary, and the focus is on 'fixing' problem students. While similar to Type II, Type III programs have a more therapeutic focus than Type II, offering counselling services and access to other external agencies (Raywid, 1994). Research from both the US and Australia indicates that while all three of the Raywid (1994) program types are capable of achieving positive student outcomes, the benefits for students engaging in Type II programs are often short term and temporary (Aron & Zweig, 2003; Holdsworth, 2004).

Although leading the field in mapping the typology of alternative education programs, some critics (see, for example, (Hendrick, 2005; Kellmayer, 1995) have voiced concerns over Raywid's perceived failure to consider the overlapping of program features and her inclusion of deficit or flawed models such as those reliant on segregation. In its defence, Raywid's typology was developed to distinguish more effective models of alternative education, in an attempt to move the field towards models of alternative education that could offer genuine and transformative alternative pathways (Raywid, 1990, 1994). Therefore, as Lehr and Lange (2003) note, the only valid criticism should be that recent conceptualisations of AEPs offer more complexity than can be captured in Raywid's initial work (Lehr & Lange, 2003), as in programs for children deemed to possess behaviour problems that are voluntary and include a remediation or therapeutic approach.

While Aron and Zweig (2003) suggest building on Raywid's (1994) typology by including dimensions such as student population, ecology, educational focus, administration and credentials offered, more recently Te Riele (2007) proposed an "alternative education landscape" map (see Figure 2.1), placing emphasis on only two dimensions: locus of change and stability of program.

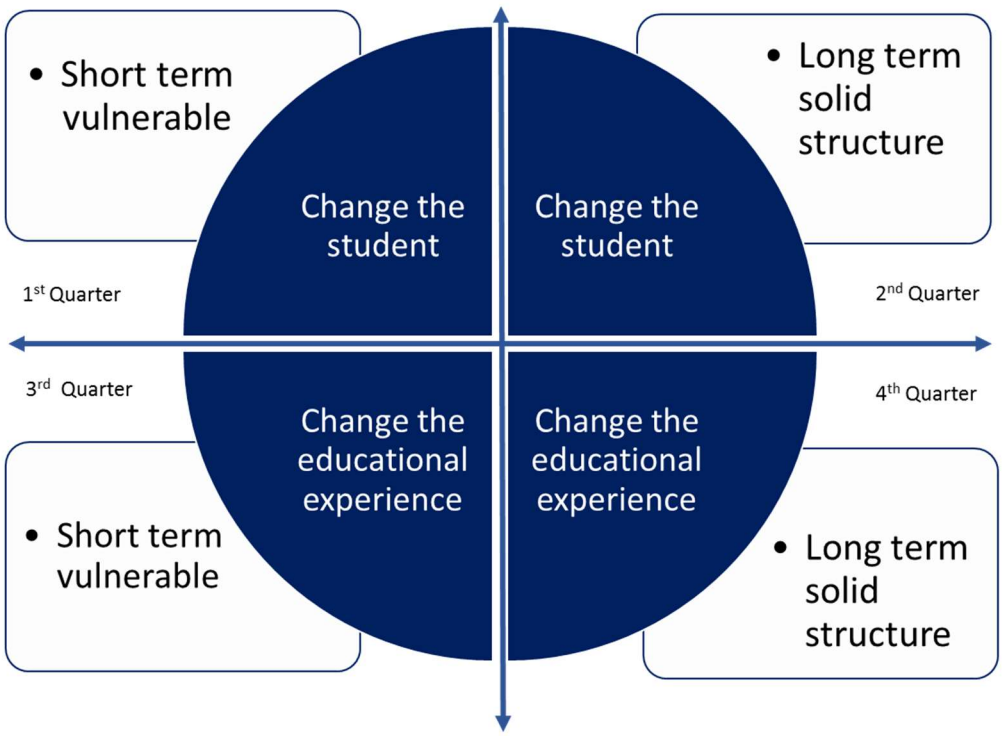

Figure 2.1 Map of educational alternatives for marginalised youth (Te Riele, 2007)

Through the map (see Figure 2.1), Te Riele (2007) provides a "framework for understanding the variety of educational alternatives" (Te Riele, 2007, p. 54) that contributes much value to the discussion on the effectiveness of alternative education programs by defining programs by whether they are aimed at changing the students, or whether they focus on changing the educational experience of the student. While the focus of Te Riele's (2007) map is on post-compulsory education, it holds relevance for alternative programs catering for "young people who – for whatever reason – are unlikely to complete Year 12 schooling in mainstream settings" (Te Riele, 2007, p. 54)

Alternative programs aimed at changing the students are underpinned by a deficit conceptualisation of these students (Te Riele, 2007), and focus on counselling and/or behaviour management and improving students' basic literacy and numeracy skills. Such programs are located in the 1st and 2nd quarters and share purposes similar to the flawed "remove, rehabilitate, return" model of alternative education (Granite & Graham, 2012). An opposing perspective focuses on offering genuine *learning choices,* improving overall educational success by reshaping the students' experiences

through the provision of student centred, interconnected learning pathways. Such programs are located in the 3rd and 4th quarters (see Figure 2.1), and are designed to change the educational experience for the students, and provide increased opportunity for students to fully engage in education through the provision of an alternative educational experience (Te Riele, 2007).

The use of a typological approach may be seen as adding value and clarity of purpose to the academic debate on the provision of alternative education programs, in particular when considering the most effective practices or principles of alternative education programs. Aligning student needs to specific alternative programs is a process that, while guided by policy, requires clarity of a program's purpose, the needs of the students, and the alignment between the perspectives and practice of staff and students, in order to be successful. The literature shows that across educational jurisdictions, much time and consideration has been given to developing alternative education programs along the dimensions of who is served, where the program is located, what is the curriculum, and the pragmatics of how it is delivered. Nevertheless, there appears that a limited focus has been placed on understanding who these students really are and why they are where they are.

Subsequently, an aim of my research (see Section 1.3) is to generate a more informed understanding of why these students continue to be marginalised and how they can be best supported in their education. The intention of this research is to question how alternative education programs are conducted in Australia, and the resultant knowledge used to develop a more effective model of alternative education programs.

2.2.2 History and development of alternative education

The field of alternative education began in the early 20th century, shortly after the wide introduction of public education (Semel & Sadovnik, 2008; Turton, Umbreit, & Mathur, 2011). Its development was influenced by visionaries such as John Dewey, Rudolph Steiner, and Maria Montessori (Nagata, 2007). Recent decades have seen an increase in the number of alternative educational choices available across most countries affiliated with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), such as Australia, USA and the UK (Foley & Pang, 2006; McFadden, 2010; Sliwka, 2008; Young, 1990).

In the USA, ideology and the desire for more just and equitable educational models solidified in the 1960s into a strong social movement with a focus on developing alternative schools to meet the needs of the disadvantaged and minorities. (Lange et al., 2002; Meyers, 1988; Raywid, 1994). Alternative schooling became available for students and parents searching for a more equitable education, and alternative education programs were offered to students who were perceived as needing a different form of education, outside of mainstream environments (Siegrist et al., 2010). This 'perception', a deficit construction of student identity by educational authorities, was usually characterised by student behaviour and/or life circumstance and reserved for racial minorities, drop-outs, truants, and disruptive students (Carswell, Hanlon, O'Grady, Watts, & Pothong, 2009; Neumann, 1994; Siegrist et al., 2010).

In the United Kingdom, by the 1970s, alternative education was being provided for disruptive and truanting students with a goal of remediation (Grunsell, 1980). By 2008, the UK Government released *Back on Track - A Strategy for Modernising Alternative Provision for Young People*, the White Paper articulating the UK Government's comprehensive plan to address what was then a growing issue of excluded students (Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), 2008). An indication of both the ongoing need and the limited success in resolving the issue, a White Paper entitled *The Educational Excellence Everywhere,* was released in 2016, outlining the Government's ongoing commitment to alternative education reform.

In Australia, specifically Queensland, the alternative education movement is considered to have begun in the 1920s with special provisions made for students who "were not making normal progress" (Logan & Clarke, 1984, p. 18). The initial intent of these classes, colloquially known as "backward classes", was educational support for blind and deaf students. The lack of specific criteria for placement however, resulted in the few centres that were established becoming overrun with students exhibiting behavioural and disciplinary problems (Logan & Clarke, 1984). In 1926, these centres were renamed "opportunity schools", and placement was restricted to children with government-recognised disabilities. Later, with the 1973 release of the *Karmel Report* on the needs of all schools (and how the government might address them) (Karmel, 1973), a range of federal government funding sources targeting

inclusive schooling practices were initiated that saw the widespread development of AEPs across Queensland (Slee, 1986).

In Queensland, the *Education Queensland 2010 Strategy* (*QSE 2010)* through its associated *Building Success Together – A Framework for Students at Educational Risk* (Education Queensland, 2000), saw the establishment of AEPs across the state in response to the growing issue of students whose behaviour impacted on their learning and the learning of others (Education Queensland, 2000).

Whilst the overarching policy "promoted a reasonably strong social justice agenda" (Taylor & Henry, 2003, p. 12) and focused on improving outcomes for "at-risk groups", the associated framework, "rather than avoiding a deficit approach …actually reinforced it" according to some critics (Taylor & Singh, 2005, p. 11).

Brader and McGinty (2005) undertook a review of Australian (and international) policy, approaches to re-engaging disengaged students and found policy supported the model's focus on "increasing surveillance and control measures" (p. 1). Locally, such a policy approach ostensibly failed to understand or solve the issue of student behaviour, as demonstrated by the 2013 announcement by the Queensland Education Minister of "an *enhanced* (emphasis added) commitment to alternative learning centres that provide highly specialised support to students with the most complex needs" (Queensland Government Media Statement, October 2013). Driven by policy, the need to provide support for students deemed 'unsuccessful' in mainstream education through the establishment of alternative and often segregated programs, demonstrates a less than inclusive approach to these students.

2.2.3 Students in alternative education programs

AEPs cater for some of the most vulnerable youth in schools, students who face a myriad of challenges to achieving success in school and it is imperative that AEPs support these students (Gable, Bullock, & Evans, 2006). However, this is not a singular grouping but a wide and diverse cohort (Simonsen & Sugai, 2013). For example, whilst some students accessing AEPs exhibit disruptive behaviours and are formally excluded from mainstream schooling, others (or their parents/carers) access AEPs voluntarily, searching for an individualised and supportive format of education they desire but have failed to find in mainstream schooling.

In Australia, most AEPs are policy driven, developed in response to federal and state government policy initiatives aimed at either re-engaging disengaged students and increasing numbers of students completing Year 12 (Te Riele, 2007, 2012), or addressing the need to cater for challenging and disruptive student behaviours (Arnold, Yeomans, & Simpson, 2009; De Jong & Griffiths, 2006; Slee, 2011; Thomson & Pennacchia, 2015). Much of the contemporary educational policy is underpinned by the notion of individual accountability, which does little more than hold students accountable, or to blame, for their lack of educational success (McGregor, Mills, Te Riele & Hayes, 2015).

At a national, or systemic level, this type of educational policy effectively reduces all students accessing AEPs to an all-encompassing singular deficit label (Te Riele, 2012). This is not unique to Australia as, in the US, AEPs are most often used to cater for a diverse student demographic usually broadly labelled as "at-risk youth" (Aron, 2003; Smith & Thomson, 2014). This term is generally understood to mean youths who are at risk of not completing Year 12 and gaining employment but may also include youth who might engage in criminal activity or self-harm. Students labelled *at-risk* may include teen parents, suspended/expelled students, drop-outs and truants, delinquent teens, youth with mental health issues, low-achievers, Indigenous students, and ethnic minorities (Lange & Sletten, 2002; Rennie Center, 2014).

Finnan and Chasin (2007) state that in the US, "approximately one third of all high school students drop out" (p. 627). The provision of AEPs to support these 'drop-outs' to re-engage with education and complete their schooling is a socially just and honourable vocation. However, if the program's staffing, location, curriculum and resourcing are all developed to assist the 'drop-out' through a one size fits all service provided to all students with said label, targeting the specific needs of each student is difficult. McWhirter, Shepard, and Hung-Morse (2004) demonstrated four distinct types of 'drop-outs' - disengaged, low-achievers, quiet, or maladjusted. A student who is a low-achiever may require support which is distinct in its approach from a student who is 'maladjusted'.

It is clear that the lines between these student populations are blurred (Te Riele, 2012) and this may render a policy as misrepresenting the actual cohort and thus ineffective. Accurate knowledge of the program and the cohort it services is critical to providing AEPs that target the needs of the students (D'Angelo & Zemanick, 2009).

Without a clear ideological base from which to draw curriculum and pedagogy, it is possible that all 'drop-outs' will receive a similar intervention, negating the individuality of the intervention and reducing the targeted flexibility of alternative education to a rigidity more synonymous with mainstream schooling.

The AEP in this study serves a cohort that is often categorised as *educationally at-risk* which, in Queensland, is used as a general term to broadly indicate students unlikely to finish Year 12 (DETYA, 2001). However, "policy interpretations of youth 'at-risk' tend to construct 'risk' either as an individual attribute or as a condition of particular groups" (Te Riele, 2006, p. 136). The ongoing use of the term at-risk receives criticism in the literature as a continuation of deficit logic which does little more than blame the student and/or family for "the differences between the culture of the school and that of the pupils' homes" (Araujo, 2005, p. 258).

The AEP which provides the setting for this study is largely policy driven. For the students referred to this setting, the AEP is seen as a last resort response by their school to their behaviours. Other, earlier responses can range from providing in-class support to enforcing school disciplinary absences from school. The use of the term, "school disciplinary absence" rather than suspension and/or exclusion, "serves to emphasize that it is the child who is entirely at fault and in need of such 'disciplinary' measures" (Mills & McGregor, 2014, p.18). This pathway into the AEP suggests that the cohort referred to this program is shaped by a deficit construction of the students.

The term *at-risk* is a deficit construction, that is not only applied to a wide demographic based on very broad characteristics and life circumstance, but one that ignores the "structural and institutionalized patterns of oppression" (Ginwright et al., 2005, p. 28) impacting on these individuals. Therefore, the term will not be used in my research but rather, in Section 2.4, I will draw on the literature to argue for the use of the term *school resistant* as a more accurate and useful term in the context of my research.

2.2.4 The effectiveness of alternative education programs

It is not a straightforward task to determine the effectiveness of alternative education programs (AEPs). As part of the formal education system, effectiveness against the same "standardised assessment regimes privileged in the Australian (and international) educational policy sphere" (Thomas, McGinty, Te Riele, & Wilson,

2017, pp. 455-456) is desired by policy makers (Te Riele, Wilson, Wallace, McGinty, & Lewthwaite, 2017). While there is support for AEPs to include a focus on improving academic outcomes (Te Riele, 2009), Wyn et al. (2014) caution against this, suggesting the effectiveness of alternative education goes "beyond traditional measures of attendance, retention and pathways' (p. 8). Some researchers argue that within alternative education, the social, emotional and academic needs of students are interdependent (Gutherson, Davies, & Daszkiewicz, 2011; Johns & Parker, 2017). Unsurprisingly, Te Riele et al. (2017) suggest that the wide range of services provided under the banner of alternative education currently have "difficulties in defining and measuring their product (outcomes)" (p. 126).

Thomson and Pennacchia (2014) conducted a large-scale project exploring the effectiveness of AEPs. A key finding of their research, encompassing 17 AEPs across four countries was that, despite differences in structure, rhetoric, staffing, curriculum or pedagogy, there was a shared underlying goal of these AEPs to change the student's behaviour. Therefore, the measure of success, or effectiveness of these AEPs, could be distilled to changes in behaviour, as measured through such instruments as: standardised tests, checklists, behaviour charts, and attendance. However, even against these measures, there was little empirical evidence of improved behaviour (a subjective measure in itself) as a measure of effective outcomes for these students. These findings echoed research in Australia suggesting that inconsistency is endemic in AEPs, subsequently reducing the likelihood of providing the kind of meaningful education that could result in improved outcomes (McGregor et al., 2015).

If the re-integration of students back into mainstream school is the goal of AEPs, then the number of students successfully transitioning back to mainstream school could be an indicator of the effectiveness of programs. However, the 'return to school' phase of alternative programs is often problematic for these students, with mainstream schools either being unwelcoming of their return or simply providing the same rigid and alienating structures previously experienced by the students (Lane, Gresham, & O'Shaughnessy, 2002). In some cases, the stigma of attending an AEP stays with the students after transition, forging a reputation as 'troublemakers' and drawing the suspicion and further attention of authority figures (Granite & Graham, 2012), and often results in difficulty in establishing positive networks and supportive relationships.

In Australia, and Queensland specifically, a fragmented history of alternative education and a disconnected array of often competing, ideological and political agendas (Te Riele, 2007) within the field has resulted in a lack of common understandings and shared terminology, limiting the ability to critique and compare the effectiveness of alternative programs for students who have been evicted from mainstream schooling.

Furthermore, as noted, in Australia and internationally, AEPs encompass a wide array of programs and services, approaches and ideologies catering for a wide and heterogeneous student demographic. While the literature discusses best practice, and offers a few specific ideal models, there is only limited empirical evidence supporting the effectiveness of AEPs (Thomson & Pennacchia, 2014), and as such determining effectiveness within such a broad and disconnected field is a difficult task (Aron, 2006; Aron and Zweig, 2003; Lange & Sletten, 2002; Mills & McGregor, 2010; Te Riele, 2007; Thomson & Pennacchia, 2015).

Adding to the complexity surrounding any measure of effectiveness, the very aspects lauded as 'best practice' by some researchers give rise to questions from other researchers regarding the role of AEPs in the continued marginalisation of these students. For example, reduced numbers of students and teachers may increase the ability of teachers to cater for individual student's needs, with some researchers (Connor, 2006; Mills & McGregor, 2010; Mitchell & Carbone, 2011; Zyngier, 2008) arguing that smaller number of students may lead to an increase in the provision of relevant, challenging and negotiated curriculum and pedagogy tailored to the individual. Granite and Graham (2012) however contend that smaller educational settings face greater difficulties in providing a balanced and challenging curriculum. There are further concerns within the literature (Rose, 2005; Thomson & Pennacchia, 2014) that the lack of shared ideology and understanding of the students' needs amongst AEPs' staff, corrupt the implementation of best practice, with many programs falling into a remedial and teacher-directed approach to engaging the students in 'hands-on' practical work (Jeff Thomas, Dyment, Moltow, & Hay, 2016). One such pedagogy that can inform the approach educators take when working with marginalised students is critical pedagogy. Critical pedagogy will be considered here as relevant to the context of alternative education, more as a theoretical framework to

be applied to considerations of effectiveness, rather than a review of critical pedagogy literature.

2.2.5 Critical pedagogy

As a teaching and learning approach informed by critical social theory, critical pedagogy is underpinned by the desire to "empower the powerless and transform existing social inequalities and injustices" (McLaren, 2014, p.122). It is an approach to education that "challenges the social, environmental, and economic structures and social relations that shape the conditions in which people live, and in which schools operate" (Kirylo, Thirumurthy, Smith, & McLaren, 2010.p, 332). Critical pedagogy as defined by Shor (1992) constitutes "habits of thought, reading and writing and speaking which go beneath surface meaning" (p. 129). While many authors have contributed to the literature on critical pedagogy (see, for example Duckworth, 2014; Freire, 1970; Giroux, 1983, 1988, 2005; Kincheloe, 2008, 2012, 2014; McLaren, 2014), Paulo Freire (1970) is considered the seminal author, and his insistence on humanisation in pedagogy as a central tenet of critical pedagogy is of particular relevance to this study. Freire argued against the traditional model of education, which he called the "banking education model" (Freire, 1970), which frames teachers as the holders of knowledge and students as passive recipients of this knowledge. In such a model, education is not a democratic, active process of constructing knowledge, but a passive process, "transferring the knowledge statically, as a fixed possession of the teacher" (Freire & Shor, 1987, p. 14), in which students are expected to compliantly adopt the dominant constructions of knowledge. Such a model dehumanises students and perpetuates deficit views of marginalised students, further alienating them from mainstream education (Giroux, 2006; Kincheloe, 2014).

Humanising pedagogy calls for understanding and treating students as thinking and feeling, agentic beings. According to Freire (1970), this humanisation happens when *'who'* is being taught is examined along with the *'what'* is being taught and *'how'* it is taught. Hence critical pedagogy is a humanising approach, as it is "profoundly concerned with understanding subjugated forms of knowledge coming from various oppressed groups and examining them in relation to other forms of academic knowledge" (Kincheloe, 2008, pp.25-26). When this examination takes the form of a dialogue between teacher and students, students are recognised and take an active part in the learning process. This dialogic approach to teaching promotes

"conscientisation", where students can engage in critical reflection and exchange ideas, debate, discuss and challenge their disempowerment (Freire, 1970; Smidt, 2014).

Following on from the work of Freire (1970), critical educators suggest that when working with marginalised students, a humanising critical pedagogy approach should be adopted to allow these students to take their own stance against disempowerment and oppression. Ade-Ojo and Duckworth (2015) describe the purpose of critical pedagogy as "social transformation through emancipation of individuals and their communities from limited or oppressive beliefs and structures towards a more just, equitable and empowering world" (2015, p. 107).

In relation to the effectiveness of an alternative education program for marginalised students, critical pedagogy suggests that an effective, or meaningful educational service for these students would require a more overt awareness (and incorporation into the alternative program) of the way the curriculum and pedagogical approach contributes to their continued marginalisation (Giroux, 1983, 2005; Kincheloe, 2008; McLaren, 2015).

The positioning of these students on the margins of education is accomplished through the "structure and evaluation of the curriculum" (Giroux, 2005, p. 14), and a pedagogical approach that "specifies a particular version of what knowledge is of most worth, what it means to know something and how we might construct representations of ourselves, others, and our physical and social environments" (Simon, 1987, p.370). In other words, "curriculum favors certain forms of knowledge over others and affirms the…values of select groups of students…and social relations embodied in classroom practices benefit dominant groups and exclude subordinate ones" (McLaren, 2014, p.147).

Therefore, from a critical perspective, an individualised curriculum could only be considered 'best practice' if underpinned by a pedagogical approach that goes beyond providing activities that continue to privilege the dominant constructions of knowledge and learning. For instance, the design and provision of a 'best practice' individualised curriculum for students in an AEP would need to be based on a consideration of how the student's experiences of mainstream curriculum/pedagogy influenced their trajectory into alternative education (McLaren, 2014).

This does not mean critical pedagogy sits in opposition to the features of best practice for AEPs described in the literature. For example, while relationships figure significantly in 'best practice' literature (Aron, 2003, 2006; Thomson & Pennacchia, 2014; Zyngier, 2008), there are theoretical perspectives that suggest that the very discourse of AEPs (and formal education as a whole) promotes conflict and resistance rather than productive relationships for marginalised students (Maag, 2004; Reay, 2012). Underpinned by a critical perspective, a focus on building relationships may also involve dissecting assumptions regarding current and historical student/teacher relationships with and within mainstream school (Kincheloe, 2008).

Critical pedagogy is a "moral project and not a technique" (Giroux & Barroso, 2013). As such, a critical approach to alternative education may offer "a potential and rich space for transformation where learners can explore their narratives and society around them" (Ade-Ojo & Duckworth, 2015, p.113). Alternative education underpinned by such an approach may provide an ideological unity to the implementation of 'best practice' elements of AEPs. As Haberman (2010) suggests, "whenever students are involved with applying ideals such as fairness, equity, or justice to their world, it is likely that good teaching is going on" (Haberman, 2010, p. 86).

2.2.6 Contribution of this research to alternative education

The overall aim of this research is to develop better ways to support students attending AEPs by generating a greater understanding of the student's relationship with formal education and how this is played out in an alternative education context. A critical review of the literature suggests the policy-driven provision of alternative education fails to accurately understand the needs of their students or the mechanics behind their movement to the fringes of the formal education system. This has resulted in a range of alternative education models that position students as 'deficit', all similarly orientated towards "fixing" these student deficits and returning students to mainstream schools. These models operate from a policy perspective that fails to challenge, and often perpetuates, the structural exclusionary practices operating within mainstream schools (Granite & Graham, 2012; Mills & McGregor, 2016; Pennacchia & Thomson, 2014), prompting Graham, Van Bergen and Sweller (2016) to conclude that attendance in an AEP is "unlikely to lead to improved outcomes" (p. 51).

To reiterate, while there is a large body of literature pertaining to AEPs in all their different guises, much of the attention is paid to the issue of defining alternative education, describing the typology of programs and collating lists of "best practice". The term "best practice" refers to "features or characteristics thought to be esseintial to the success of alternative education" (Aron, 2003, p. 17) from the perspective of researchers and teachers alike (Lange & Sletten, 2002). Less attention however has been paid to understanding the students attending AEPs, their lives, perceptions and educational and social experiences and needs. Why do students engage in the behaviours that result in their removal from mainstream education? Why do some students continue to engage in these behaviours when presented with an alternative to the mainstream educational context? What is the relationship with formal education that led to these students taking up positions on the margins of education, and ultimately their relocation in alternative education? How do the student's experiences and the structure of schooling, work together to power this relationship? How would the students, if asked, explain this relationship and their acceptance or rejection of it?

This research follows in the steps of, and draws from, research such as the examination by Smyth and McInerney (2012) of youths' own stories of disengagement and re-engagement from formal education. Using semi-structured interviews, conducted with 100 youths aged from 13 – 22 living in regional Australia in 2010 and 2011, Smyth and McInerney provide data in the form of youth narratives, which indicate the need for the rethinking and restructuring of curriculum and pedagogy in AEPs.

The students in Smyth and McInerney's study through their own narratives illustrate how student agency can interact with the institutional structure, characterised by "large classes, impersonal and disconnected learning, constant pressure to engage in work that is tedious and unchallenging, competitive assessment regimes, and the strict and unbending disciplinary code" (Smyth & McInerney, 2012, p. 195) to construct "overt forms of resistance, disciplinary infractions and truancy" (Smyth & McInerney, 2012, p. 190). Backed by students' own voices, the authors call for a new 'social space' through which the educational 'issues' of marginalised young people could be reframed, moving away from "individualising the issue – it's them or their families that are the problem" (Smyth & McInerney, 2012, p. 199).

This research heeds the call of Smyth and McInerney (2012) and will use the students' own voices to examine the relationships experienced by students within the AEP and reframe the issue, moving away from a deficit model where the problem is located with the student, to a relational model, where the problem is located within the relationships and interactions between agents.

My research builds on the work of Connor (2006) in understanding how relationships might present barriers to, or opportunities for, educational success. Connor's (2006) research into AEPs in Logan, Queensland, encompassed five mainstream schools and five AEPs nominated by the regional Executive Director of the Queensland Education Department as "exemplifying innovative programs and strategies designed to meet the needs of 'at- risk' students" (Connor, 2006, p. 13). A qualitative study employing a student forum, interviews and questionnaires, found evidence of a considerable individual effort on the part of staff to cater for the needs of the students, while at a systemic level, policy and procedure hindered the practice and expected success for both teacher and student. Connor (2006) suggested that the practices of individual teachers are both empowered and constrained by the structures of the formal system, but did not consider whether the practices of the individual students are similarly influenced by the structure of the formal education system. This research therefore will then extend the work of Connor (2006) by including both teachers *and* students in an examination of whether both the problem and the solution might lie within the relationships experienced within the AEP.

Section 2.2 reviewed literature on AEPs demonstrating that, across the field of alternative education, there are issues pertaining to clarity of purpose, understanding of student needs, and the impact of social relations and classroom practice resulting in alternative education. It is therefore argued that in all its guises, alternative education in Australia fails to achieve significant effect in terms of educational and social change for our most marginalised students. My research aims to go beyond examining the visible materiality of alternative education programs, and aims to shed light on, examine and understand the social relations and practices that legitimise existing inequalities.

In the following section, I briefly review the literature regarding the concept of educational engagement and, in so doing, present an argument for conceptualising the students at the centre of my research as school resistant rather than disengaged. Not

only is education engagement difficult to singularly define (Harris, 2010; McMahon & Zyngier, 2009; Solomonides, Reid, & Petocz, 2012), "not all conceptions of engagement equally promote academic success for marginalised students" (McMahon & Zyngier, 2009, p. 176). This is significant, as how educational engagement is understood and operationalised (and contested) influences how the process of disengagement is perceived, and subsequently, how programs to support the re-engagement of students are designed and implemented.

2.3 EDUCATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Across the literature, educational engagement is conceptualised and defined in myriad ways; however, this lack of clarity impacts on how it is operationalised (Christenson & Reschly, 2012). For instance, engagement can be viewed from a constructivist or objectivist standpoint (McMahon & Zyngier, 2009), understood as both an outcome and a process (Christenson & Reschly, 2012), and be defined as behavioural, emotional and/or cognitive (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). While educational engagement is strongly associated with achievement (Bishop & Pflaum, 2005), Vallee (2017) suggests its use in education is "problematic and, ultimately exclusionary" (p. 920). Appleton, Christenson and Furlong (2008) suggest that "sufficient engagement with school … does not occur for far too many students" (p. 372) and that "the construct of engagement is useful" (p. 373). However, they also argue that "theoretical and research literature on engagement generally reflects little consensus about definitions and contain substantial variations in how engagement is operationalized and measured" (p. 370).

Significantly, Harris (2008, 2011), mapping the range of understandings and perceptions of engagement within a cohort of Queensland teachers, found that within the teaching profession, as in the research field, there are contrasting and contradictory interpretations on what engagement is, and what strategies develop it. Logically, this lack of consensus must impact on those programs designed to re-engage students, as it is within these programs that the concept of student engagement is operationalised. This calls into question the use of the terms 'engaged', 'disengaged' and 're-engaged' if the perceptions of these terms are not consistent amongst those who design and implement support programs for the disengaged.

In an attempt to achieve clarity on the concept of educational engagement, Appleton et al. (2008) critically examined the literature on the varied definitions of engagement and methodology used in its study. These authors extracted a multidimensional notion of engagement (two or three components with up to four sub-types) and then noted, quite conversely, the almost two-dimensional characteristic of the majority of the research. Of the 19 definitions tabled by Appleton et al. (2008), five define engagement through relationships or connectedness and yet "in examining engagement, the majority of research has focussed on more observable indicators that are related to academic and behavioural engagement" (p. 381). Within their literature review, behavioural/psychological aspects of engagement are comprehensively discussed, while the social aspects are, comparatively, overlooked. Conway (2006) supports this, with the finding that a teacher's perception of the student's behavioural needs is strongly associated with the teacher's perceptions of educational engagement, with students displaying inappropriate behaviours considered to be not engaged.

Zyngier (2008) proposed that disengagement can "be seen in terms of the school failing to enable the student to achieve" (p. 1767). This effectively questions the 'ownership' of engagement. Is it the responsibility of students to engage in school or the responsibility of schools to engage students? Conceptualising engagement as a "thing" students do can facilitate the provision of an AEP aimed at increasing a student's ability to "do it". The AEP at the centre of my research locates the responsibility with the student, segregating the disengaged student and working to "fix" their behaviours and their ability to "do school" before returning them to the mainstream setting. Conceptualising engagement as a "thing" schools allow or disallow, knowingly or unknowingly, encourages a critical re-examination of practice. The purpose of this study is to undertake that critical examination of practice and re-focus the research on the perceptions of teachers and students, the co-producers of educational engagement at a micro-level, that are currently all but absent from the literature (Brown & Rodriguez, 2009; Fredricks et al., 2004; Smyth & McInerney, 2012).

For educators, educational researchers and policy makers, educational engagement is positively associated with educational benefits: higher levels of academic achievement, greater school completion rates, and social benefits such as social inclusion (Harris, 2011), and negatively associated with attendance,

participation, and achievement (McMahon & Zyngier, 2009). However, exactly how to engage students is a complex pursuit and, therefore, so too must be the design and implementation of programs for students designated as "disengaged".

I used the literature reviewed in Section 2.3 to position the term 'disengaged' as problematic. The critique and suggested removal of the term when referring to marginalised students accessing AEPs should not be seen as a devaluation of educational engagement, which remains an important overall goal (Bishop & Pflaum, 2005; Zyngier, 2008). However, this chapter will now offer a review of the literature pertaining to resistance theory, and argue for the term "educationally resistant" as a replacement to "disengaged", so to better capture the complexities inherent in these students' lives and actions.

2.4 RESISTANCE IN EDUCATION

Caldwell (1991) argued that "resistance can take the form of momentous acts of organized, planned, and disciplined protests, or it may consist of small, everyday actions of seeming insignificance that can nevertheless validate the actor's sense of dignity and worth" (p. 276).

Resistance Theory sits within the field of sociology of education and has its roots in theories of social and cultural reproduction. Rather than a counter to reproduction theory, resistance theory is a departure from the structuralist view of reproduction. Theories of social and cultural reproduction locate the institution of school as the central mechanism in reproducing and legitimising social inequities. Theories of resistance differ from cultural and social reproduction theories in two main ways: an overt focus on agency and a more micro-social perspective. While reproduction theories consider the macro-social phenomenon of inequality in education, resistance theories allow us to more closely examine the micro-socio-political contexts of individuals and groups experiencing these inequalities (Tuck & Yang, 2011).

Resistance Theory has neo-Marxist origins, emerging in the 1970s from the body of work undertaken by critical education scholars regarding what were seen as overly deterministic Marxist notions of social and cultural reproduction (Abowitz, 2000; Anyon, 2011; McGrew, 2011). Social and cultural reproduction theories offer a framework to explain stratification in capitalist society and how educational systems work to maintain the status quo, inculcating students into the dominant ideology to

ensure the material conditions of each stratum are produced and reproduced over lifetimes and generations. However, these theories fail to fully consider the role of individual agency, that is, an individual's "ability to act to further their own interests" (Narayan, 2005, p. 10), while resistance theory offers a "prism through which to understand complex social and political events" (Tuck & Yang, 2014, p. 30). Studies of resistance (see, for example, Giroux, 2001; Pitt, 1998; Sassatelli, Santoro, & Willis, 2009; Willis, 1977) have indicated that cultural and social reproduction theories offer an incomplete description of the mechanisms of socialisation, mitigating the influence of individual agency by advancing the notion that schools reproduce society through the reproduction of existing positions and relationships of power. Resistance theory argues that rather than lack of agency, production/reproduction requires agency, either collaborating with or contesting dominant structures.

Resistance Theory developed from the desire to better understand how and why some individuals resist dominant ideology, with the focus for most research divided between questions of race (Fordham, 1996; Kelley, 1996; Ogbu & Simons, 1998) and a class-based model (Willis, 1977). Resistance theories in the literature have traditionally been romanticised (and masculinised) as noble efforts by the disempowered to overcome disadvantage. More recent research, however, has highlighted resistance of the empowered, suggesting that resistance is pervasive and not a characteristic solely of the underclasses (Tuck & Yang, 2011).

2.4.1 Resistance Theory (Willis, 1977)

Paul Willis is a British sociologist, often described as a cultural theorist, and credited with the development of the concept of the 'counter school culture' which offers to explain the lack of school success achieved by marginalised students in terms other than lack of natural ability or individual effort. Willis (1977) argues against viewing the school as central to the reproduction of inequalities, suggesting that schools' influence be seen as more indirect and unintentional (Willis, 1977), and that students themselves, through their resistance, contribute to their continued marginalisation.

While Resistance Theory underpins research across a range of contexts, Willis's (1977) book, *Learning to Labor: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs*, was instrumental in placing the school context in the forefront of research underpinned by theories of resistance. In fact, both Willis (1977) and Fordham (1996)

regard resistance as a "counter school culture" and an "anti-achievement ethos" respectively, while Giroux (1983) defines resistance as "a critique of schools as an institution, where social activities are tied to political and cultural significance" (p. 286). According to McGrew (2011), *Learning to Labor* (Willis, 1977) is widely assumed to be the origin of resistance theory in education" (p. 239). It is an ethnographic study of youth subcultures in education and "was one of the very first books to take seriously notions of youth agency and resistance" (Tuck & Yang, 2014, p. 32), making it "arguably one of the most significant educational research studies of the 20th Century" (Dolby & Dimitriades, 2004, p. 2). Situated in an industrial centre in the midlands of England, dubbed Hammertown, this study, conducted over a three-year period, consisted of one main case study and five comparative case studies of male students with similarities regarding academic ability, school conformity and class.

The main case study comprised 12 working class boys attending a single-sex working class secondary school. Through qualitative methodologies such as participant observation and interviews, the boys or "lads" were followed as they engaged in a counter school culture, resisting school authority and institutional values through "their style", that is, their dress, language, and behaviour. The study followed the lads out of the institution of education and into the institution of employment and, in so doing, was able to contextualise their counter school culture, or educational resistance, within the wider working-class culture. Juxtaposing the lads' counter school culture against the working-class attitudes of the shop floor, Willis (1977) demonstrated that the "counter school culture and its processes arise from definite circumstances in a specific historical relation and in no sense are accidentally produced" (p. 120). In other words, the students' resistance was inherited through the cultural context of their upbringing, highlighting the critical need to understand a student's cultural trajectory.

Willis's conceptualisation of acts of resistance as socio-political acts is an acknowledgement that not all oppositional or defiant behaviours displayed by students in a classroom can necessarily be classified as resistant behaviours (Bottrell, 2007; Giroux, 1983; Solorzano & Bernal, 2001). Willis articulated the context of the wider working-class culture, mediated through the power of the informal group, the lads, as influential to the practices evident within the counter school culture, pointing to a

specificity of form (of acts of resistance) in their cultural practices as the differential evidence for resistance. Willis (1977) explained that "it is no accident that different groups in different schools, for instance, come up with similar insights, even though they are products of separate efforts, and thus combine to make distinctive class bonds" (p. 121). Resistance theorist Henry Giroux (1983) supports the argument that not all oppositional behaviour is resistant behaviour, stating that true resistance "emerges out of a latent or overt ideological condemnation of the underlying repressive ideologies" (p. 288).

For Willis, student agency is a critical element of resistance as his students were "not passive receptacles of dominant ideology but play an active role in reproduction as they engage in shaping their own cultural responses to their conditions" (Nolan, 2011, p. 139). Willis's Resistance Theory extends our understanding of reproduction theory, theorising the unpredictability of reproduction; dominant groups lack absolute domination, allowing non-dominant groups to challenge and resist the status quo in forms relational to the social field.

Based on Willis's theory, the behaviours of the students in the study reported in this thesis mirror the lads' counter school culture (Willis, 1977), resulting in further marginalisation from mainstream cultural keystones as in their dislocation from mainstream educational institutions into an alternative education program. In enacting their counter school culture, Willis's lads engaged in a series of "pyrrhic victories" (Tuck & Yang, 2014), as they took a stand, resisting the dominant modes of education, yet ultimately failing to break the reproduction cycle and thereby engaging in a form of self-defeating resistance that reproduced their objective conditions and reinforced the dominant ideology.

2.4.2 Resistance Theory since Willis

The economic era in which theories of resistance were formulated has passed. Other researchers have since used Resistance Theory in the examination of race-based (Nolan, 2011) and class-based (Bottrell, 2007; Willis 1977; McLaren 1983) oppositional behaviour of youths in school.

Resistance theory is still described as an evolving construct and it is suggested that, despite a range of theoretical offshoots and varying applications of the theory, it "continues to be a widely used lens through which to see and understand the social

contexts of communities and schools, and youth experiences in schooling, and in education beyond schooling" (Tuck & Yang, 2011, p. 523). It is not, however, without critics. For example, Solórzano and Bernal (2001) viewed the concept of resistance as too deterministic, and proposed instead that resistance manifests in a variety of ways. They made a distinction between three forms of resistance, and oppositional behaviours that are not acts of resistance (Table 2.1). It is worth noting that the idea of resistance manifesting in a variety of forms is supported by Willis in a later refinement of his theory (Willis, 2003).

Solórzano and Bernal (2001) argued that research underpinned only by a concept of self-defeating resistance offers a research scope limited to the individual's role in social reproduction. Transformational resistance differs from the self-defeating resistance described by Willis (1977) in that it "illustrates both a critique of oppression and a desire for social justice … [and] … does not serve to strengthen the oppression and domination of the person" (Solórzano & Bernal, 2001, p. 319). According to Cammarota (2017), different forms of resistance can be learnt formally and/or informally. The concept of a "pedagogy of transformational resistance" (Cammarota, 2017, p. 208) may hold significance for this research with the question of how to encourage or support students to engage in acts of transformational resistance.

Table 2.1 *Different forms of resistance* (Adapted from Solórzano & Bernal, 2001)

Form of resistance	Explanation
Reactionary	Not really a form of resistance
	Manifested as neither a political critique nor with an interest in social justice
	Identified as moment in time reaction to events
Self-defeating resistance	The common, traditional view of resistance
	Motivated by a political critique but lacking interest in social justice
	Re-creates the objective conditions of their oppression
Conformist resistance	When agents are motivated by the desire for social justice but do not critique the structures of their oppression

Transformational Resistance	Orientated towards social justice and is able to critique the structures of domination Offers potential for social change

Nolan (2011) extrapolated Willis's theoretical model into discussions on race and argued that Willis, through his continual focus on "the everyday lives and the cultural practices of youth (that) can help illuminate the repressive function of schooling" (p. 143), continues to make essential contributions to contemporary analyses of schooling and "offers a framework for understanding young people's own roles in reproduction of their class positions" (p. 144). Drawing on ethnographic studies into youth of colour in the US, Nolan (2011) provided a strong argument that despite differences in the social and economic landscapes of Willis's traditional working class Hammertown, and contemporary ethnographies concerning youth and education, his model still holds some relevance today. However, acknowledgement of the "new macro structural and institutional context calls for an updated analysis of the ways in which young people attach meaning to their oppositional behaviour" (Nolan, 2011, p. 563).

In UPHS, a large urban public school in the USA, Nolan (2011) conducted an ethnographic study of the school's behaviour management policies and practices. The school had an enrolment of approximately 3000 students and over the space of a month, the researcher observed interactions, specifically around student behaviour in the context of the disciplinary process used by such a large school. Interviews were both formal and informal and included students, staff and law enforcement officers. In undertaking this research, Nolan acknowledged that this was a different time with different social and economic landscapes, and therefore the students of the UPHS faced differences in both the objective conditions leading to resistance and the consequences for that resistance, than those faced by Willis's lads. The central theme emerging from this study was the students' use of oppositional behaviour to counter the dehumanisation of a neoliberal schooling agenda and to "generate a sense of autonomy in a highly controlled context, create valued identities" (p. 570).

Nolan's (2011) suggestion that a change to their educational experience would not negate their resistance but may allow a "move toward more constructive and overtly political forms of contestation" (p. 570) resonates with my research by posing

the question to be asked, if acts of resistance are truly "motivated by a desire to create more just and equitable learning environments" (Solórzano & Bernal, 2001, p. 310) then why do the self-defeating acts of resistance continue after the students leave the mainstream setting? My research theorises that the structures of the AEP do not offer an agentic space for transformative resistance, but rather, in conjunction with student and teacher agency, co-produce a self-defeating form of resistance.

Bottrell (2007) suggests that neoliberalism has resulted in "individualised conceptualisations of oppositional behaviour and personal deficit that are decontextualized from social conditions" (p. 599). This echoes the work of others (Araujo, 2005; Te Riele, 2006) and aligns with the more recent view from McGregor, Mills and Te Riele (2015) that current political ideology holds these students personally and solely accountable for their situation. Beliefs such as "if they only worked harder, or behaved better, they would do better at school" fail to adequately and accurately represent the student as an amalgam of their lived experiences. In contrast, the lens of resistance theory allows us to come to understand these students and their behaviour by examining that very lived experience. To counter the issue, Bottrell (2007) suggests it is timely for researchers to revisit Willis's original work and consider the impact of individuals' cultural capital on the acts of resistance. Resistance theory offers a viable alternative to the static, deficit construction of these students offered by the current ideological standpoint.

Bottrell's Glebe study, situated in Australia and exploring the relationship between youth experiences and schooling, draws on resistance theory to examine why marginalised students achieve limited educational success (Bottrell, 2007, 2009). The Glebe study involved participant observation and semi-structured interviews of 12 girls aged between 13 and 24 living in a housing estate in Sydney. From her interpretation of the data, Bottrell (2007) concludes that when "marginalised youth do reject mainstream options as limited and constraining and opt for the more rewarding and supportive terrain of the margins, their resistances may at times reinscribe barriers to conventional success" (p. 613). She suggests reconceptualising resistance theory, not as 'class consciousness but as 'identity work' (p. 599) in order to understand why the margins of education may offer more attractive options for resistant students. Bottrell later (2009) extends the analysis of the Glebe study, stating that "peer and extended networks provide young people the support and resources for dealing with

disadvantage" (p. 476), and suggesting that social capital "enhances capacity and opportunity for expression of personal and social identity" (p. 498).

Acknowledging the work of Willis by suggesting a return to resistance theory as an alternative to current deficit notions of student behaviour, Bottrell (2007) calls for acts of resistance to be examined within the social and relational contexts in which young people engage in both resistance and conformity in order to establish identity. Bottrell makes a strong case for understanding the logic behind acts of resistance from the perspective of a resistor; however, she provides no indication of how this may occur. My research acknowledges Bottrell's recommendations and aims to build on her work, employing student voice in examining the influence of social capital on the logic of resistance.

On the surface, educational resistance may be seen as an educational issue. However, a critical examination of the literature indicates a social and perhaps temporal aspect to educational resistance. Extending Willis's cultural resistance and drawing on the work of Scott (1986), McFarland (2001) suggests that student resistance may be understood as a form of everyday resistance, a form of resistance differing from wider and more organised cultural resistance, mainly due to the less permanent temporal aspect of high school classes. An ethnographic study in the vein of Willis, but moving from his class-based model, McFarland's (2001) findings were generated by data gathered from 36 classes across two secondary schools in the US. The findings suggest that resistance emerged in response to the social situation within the classroom and the desire for change, and, importantly for my research, McFarland concluded that the continued manifestation of acts of resistance was supported by the social situation existent in the classroom.

Hand (2010), in conducting an ethnographic study in a Canadian secondary school maths class, found classroom resistance was co-constructed, "across multiple social and cultural spaces" (p. 124) through social networks of the student, and the pedagogical organisation by the teacher and/or school. While the findings of Hand's (2010) work are potentially limited by the fact only one class was researched, a limitation freely admitted by Hand, her study does reinforce the argument pursued earlier by McFarland (2001), that student resistance "is not just an outcome of societal inequities" (p. 666) but rather, can be influenced by the social setting within the educational context. Hand's (2010) work supports McFarland's (2001) general

assertion that, “local characteristics of schools and classrooms have important independent effects on student resistance that are at least comparable to total effects of student background characteristics” (McFarland, 2001, p. 664).

McFarland’s summation (and surprise) that “disadvantaged students can really only sustain their resistant efforts when they are given the social opportunity to do so and when they have enough social resources to take advantage of such an opportunity” (McFarland, 2001, p. 665) gives direction to my research, and my focus on the social elements influencing the continuation of student resistance. Drawing together the works of Bottrell (2007), McFarland (2001), Hand (2010) and Willis (1977), my research will examine the social influence on resistance in an alternative educational context.

In affording us a closer examination of the educational inequalities confronted and contested by disadvantaged students, the lens of resistance theory makes visible both the possibilities and limitations for change (Pitt, 1998). The presence of both possibilities and limitations suggests cultural resistance can be “used consciously or unconsciously, effectively or not, to resist and/or change the dominant political, economic, and/or social structure” (Duncombe, 2002, p. 5), and this is evidenced in ethnographic studies from Willis’s (1977) ground-breaking work studying working class lads in UK to Bottrell’s (2007) analysis of disadvantaged youth in Australia. Underpinned by a body of work originating with Willis (1977), this research uses resistance theory as the lens through which to view and understand the nuances of the interactions that pervade a student’s social trajectory, from which the resistant identity ultimately emerges, while acts of resistance are the manifestations of these identities.

2.5 SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter has reviewed the current literature on alternative education, educational engagement and the work of resistance theorists, and positioned my research within this body of work. This chapter drew on the literature to demonstrate the complexity of the concept of educational engagement, and to argue against the label ‘disengaged’ as too simplistic and individually deficit-laden to guide research into the complexities of student behaviour. Across the literature there is evidence that engagement is an important element in educational success (Appleton et al., 2008; Bishop & Pflaum, 2005; Brown & Rodriguez, 2009; Fredricks et al., 2004; Smyth,

2006); however, lack of definitional clarity has Appleton et al. warning that "failure to achieve clarification and consistency may obscure a construct of considerable potential" (2008, p. 383). Much of the research into educational engagement is heavily focused on observable indicators such as the expected behaviours associated with effective engagement, which may lead to students who do not display the expected behaviours being labelled as disengaged. The findings from this literature review demonstrate the need to redefine the student participants as 'school resistant students'.

Resistance theory attempts to explain why some individuals resist dominant ideology. Willis's (1977) *Learning to Labor* is considered the seminal work on resistance theory in education, and for Willis (1977) agents engage in self-defeating resistance as part of a class-based struggle, playing an active role in the reproduction of their class-based origins. The research literature demonstrates that not all oppositional acts are acts of resistance, and that not all acts of resistance result in change to social and educational opportunity. Solórzano and Bernal (2001) suggest that resistant students may embark on different pathways (and therefore end up in different places), yet those who resist due to a "critique of oppression and a desire for social justice" (Solórzano & Bernal, 2001, p. 319) may potentially transform the objective conditions of their oppression. Therefore, some resistance may be ineffective and self-defeating, resulting in further social marginalisation, but the potential remains that resistance may offer transformational pathways.

Underpinned by Willis's theory of resistance, but in an attempt to go beyond simply describing acts of class-based resistance, this study reframes the seminal work of Willis's (1977) investigation of "how working class kids get working class jobs" (p. 1) by shifting the focus from working class kids in a working class school in 1970's England, to marginalised students accessing alternative education programs in Australia in the early 21st century, and from working class jobs to increased educational and social marginalisation.

Critical to this research is the use of resistance theory to counter deficit constructions of students by articulating the position of educational institutions as sites of power and domination. Structures of power and domination presuppose structures of resistance (Kanpol, 1999), and it has been argued in this chapter that for some students, their relationship with education is based on a struggle over arbitrary and socially unjust domination. In this respect, student behaviour and resistance to formal

education can be seen as a political act, a challenge to existing knowledge and the social organisations that wish to impose their future upon them.

The literature reviewed here suggests that Alternative Education Programs are "inherently contradictory" (Plows et al., 2017) and can be both inclusionary and exclusionary (Slee, 2011; Zweig, 2003). This study heeds that suggestion and will attempt to build on the notion that the solution can be found in the relationship between the human agency and programmatic structures of alternative education programs. Therefore, this research focuses on the relationship between institutions and individuals. The review of the literature clearly demonstrates that the work of Wills (1977) is still relevant in contemporary examinations of social and educational inequality. Giroux (1983) suggest the value of resistance is in "understanding the complex ways in which subordinate groups experience educational failure" (1983, p. 107), and therefore this study conceptualises resistance as a lens through which to examine a student's social and educational trajectory, their interactions, struggles and victories and the nuances of these social interactions that give rise to what is traditionally seen as educational failure.

The following chapter offers an in-depth exploration of the relationship between the work of Willis and Bourdieu's theoretical concepts, and will present an argument that the complexities of student resistance and the nuances of their social relationships influencing their struggles are best understood and explained using Bourdieu's social capital and his associated concepts.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 offered a critique of the Australian and international literature on alternative education, educational engagement and resistance theory in education relevant to the context of my research. This chapter proposes a significant and useful relationship between the works of the cultural theorists Paul Willis and Pierre Bourdieu. Through this relationship, a theoretical framework will be established that will guide the examination of the central research question: what role does social capital play in resistance towards formal education by students attending alternative education programs? and the corollary questions: what capitals are available within the field and does availability influence acts of resistance; and, to what extent are the different forms of capital validated by the field and does validation influence acts of resistance?

Relating Bourdieu's conceptualisation of cultural capital, a source of social inequality, with Willis's (1977) insights into how student acts of resistance expose the role cultural capital plays in social reproduction (in schools), the argument presented in this thesis is that the students' acts of resistance manifest in response to the lack of value ascribed to the students' cultural capital (by the school). Drawing on the literature, I argue that the use of Bourdieu's concepts of field, habitus and capital help in understanding how the different acts of resistance emerge from the students' lived experiences. Viewing the students at the centre of my research through the lens of Resistance Theory offers a counter-argument to the static, deficit-laden constructions of at-risk students inherent in current neoliberal ideology. While it is evident that acts of resistance can manifest in a variety of different forms, it can be argued that at-risk students are likely to engage in acts of self-defeating resistance and thereby contribute to their own ongoing disempowerment (see Section 2.4). The concept of transformational resistance (Cammarota, 2017; Cammarota & Fine, 2008; Raygoza, 2016; Solorzano & Bernal, 2001) is regarded as a potential pathway towards student empowerment.

Drawing on elements of Bourdieu's theory the theoretical framework of this study will critically examine the factors influencing students' enactment of acts of

resistance. Later chapters will use this theoretical framework to explore the relationship of students in this study with formal education, and examine the influence that this relationship has on the manifestation of acts of educational resistance, whether self-defeating or potentially transformational.

This chapter outlines Bourdieu's concepts of capital (Section 3.2), field (Section 3.3) and habitus (Section 3.4) as they are interpreted within the ontological and epistemological perspective of this research project and contribute to the methodological approach taken. Bourdieu's capital, field and habitus assist researchers to examine the macro and the micro levels of social and educational inequality simultaneously (Martin, Gregg, Hilgers, & Mangez, 2015; Mills & Gale, 2007). Whilst receiving some criticism for being overly deterministic, Bourdieu's concepts are flexible in application, equally able to explain social reproduction as they are able assist in our understanding of how pathways towards social transformation may be generated (Bourdieu, 1990, 1993; Yosso & Solórzano, 2006). It is the relational aspect of these concepts that are their strength, bridging the structure/agency divide (Jenkins, 2002; Reay, 2004) and therefore allowing the macro/micro analysis of some central aspects of resistance.

Bourdieu's relational concepts of capital, field and habitus link with Willis's insights to create understandings regarding the emergence and maintenance of resistant student identities. Applying Bourdieu's concepts relationally (Section 3.3) offers us a way of understanding and explaining the development of such acts of resistance, through his formula, "[(capital*habitus) +field] = practice" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 101). In the context of this research, acts of resistance are the "practice".

This chapter will conclude (Section 3.4) with the position that acts of resistance are generated by an individual's habitus, while the exact forms of the acts of resistance are shaped by the intersection of field and capital. Bourdieu's concepts are interrelated, requiring a theoretical approach that considers capital, habitus and field as individual lenses of a single theoretical perspective. However, it is first necessary to consider each concept individually, in order to understand them and their influence on the manifestation of acts of resistance.

3.2 CAPITAL

The term "capital" in everyday language is most commonly understood as referring to financial capital. Bourdieu (1986), however, defined capital as "accumulated labour (in its materialized form or its 'incorporated' embodied form)" (p. 241) which can be realised in economic and symbolic form, as cultural capital and social capital. In other words, capital is a resource that can translate to social power. Bourdieu (1990) further explained that:

> [F]undamental social powers are, … firstly economic capital, in its various kinds; secondly cultural capital or better, informational capital, again in its different kinds; and thirdly two forms of capital that are very strongly correlated, social capital, which consists of resources based on connections and group membership, and symbolic capital, which is the form the different types of capital take once they are perceived and recognized as legitimate. (pp. 3–4)

Here, Bourdieu indicated that while there are different forms of capital, namely cultural, social and symbolic, social value or power is associated with possessing those capitals recognised as legitimate. Associating social power with possession of a specific type of legitimate capital implies there are certain capitals that hold limited or no social power (Bourdieu, 1986).

Bourdieu's conceptualisation of capital as a resource which confers power and profit in a social world is underpinned by his notion of the convertibility of different forms of capital. Yet capital is not just convertible but also transferrable and is therefore "primarily a relational construct" (Rampersad, 2016, p. 71). This implies that capital accumulated in one field can be transferred and used in another field (Bourdieu, 1998). This is apparent when educational capital (qualification gained from school) is transferred from an educational field to an employment field and converted to economic capital (gaining paid employment). The convertibility and transferability of capital are tied to historical and contextual perceptions of legitimacy, leading to the unequal distribution of valued capital (all forms) and therefore power and dominance across society. Not all capitals are equal.

Bourdieu conceptualised social life as a complexity of relationships between forms of capital and between individuals embroiled in an ongoing attempt to not only accumulate and transfer capital (all forms), but to exert control over the recognition or

valuing of different forms of capital. It is through the lens of capital that Bourdieu provides one of the theoretical tools my research will use to examine the historical and contextual influences acting upon the relationship with formal education of the students attending the AEP. These forms will be further explained in the following sections.

3.2.1 Cultural capital

Cultural capital, defined as "instruments for the appropriation of symbolic wealth socially designated as worthy of being sought and possessed" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 488) can be thought of as cultural knowledge that enables an individual to accumulate symbolic rather than economic wealth within their cultural group. These knowledges are acquired by being part of that group, with possession influencing practice, for example, how a student dresses. Engaging in appropriate cultural practices signifies not only membership of that group but the person's status within the group.

Cultural capital exists in three forms: (i) the embodied state; (ii) the objectified state; and, (iii) the institutionalised state (Bourdieu, 1986). Cultural capital in its embodied state, that is, "in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 47) can be understood as the internalisation of cultural knowledges and practices of an individual's cultural group (see Section 3.4). In its objectified state, cultural capital refers to material possessions whose worth is "defined only in … [its] relationship with cultural capital in its embodied form" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 47). For example, books that represent knowledge confer symbolic value for individuals who own and recognise it as legitimate. Cultural capital in its institutionalised form symbolises cultural competency in valued practices, and in relation to this study, valued educational practices. In other words, cultural capital in its institutionalised state is educational capital, seen in the form of academic credentials, bestowed on individuals who display competence within the specific cultural (educational) arena. Institutionalised capital is therefore the valued educational practices arbitrarily "quantified" or "codified" by the institution into a form of capital that allows for ease of comparability and transfer, that is, into the workforce.

Some students are perceived as lacking the recognised cultural capital in its different forms; for example, students who prefer to wear 'hoodies' and baseball caps, or chose to sit on desks rather than a chair (embodied); who do not own shoes or a school bag, who do not have a favourite storybook (objectified); who fail to respond

when the teachers ask them a question or who do not follow teacher directions (institutionalised). Such students enter the school and think, dress, speak and act in ways that are in contrast to the valued practices. Positioned by these capitals, rather than by ability, the transference and subsequent conversion of their cultural capital into educational capital is difficult, potentially leading to a lack of educational success (Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993).

While cultural capital is primarily acquired in the home, it features significantly in educational research examining the differences in educational outcomes for different groups within society (Crozier & Davies, 2006; Reay & Mirza, 2005). Where there is significant alignment between the cultural capital in the home and that valued at school, students arrive at school already possessing the educationally valued cultural capital of school. This alignment affords easy transference of the home capital to the school setting. These students then readily demonstrate competence in the cultural practices of school and, as such, are positioned to convert family cultural capital to institutionalised (educational) capital. For example, students with adequate knowledges of the valued literacy practices of the school are able for example, to discuss their favourite story and/or author, taking books home to read and returning them to the proper place upon completion. Such practices position these students as better readers than those who value different literacy practices and are unable to name a favourite story or who forget to return home-readers.

While cultural capital underpins much research regarding educational achievement, there is a common thread in the literature of cultural capital being singularly defined in terms of the dominant class culture, whether "white" or "highbrow", or "elite" culture (Covay & Carbonaro, 2010; Dumais, 2002; Flere, Krajnc, Klanjšek, Musil, & Kirbiš, 2010). According to Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) and Di Maggio (1982) cultural capital in its conventional mode position the capital of the dominant (upper and middle classes) as legitimate cultural capital with such interpretations contributing, perhaps unintentionally, to the deficit constructions of students from non-dominant groups (Carter, 2005; Wallace, 2017).

Flere et al. (2010) examined the existence of a relationship between cultural capital and educational achievement. The study was conducted with secondary school students (n=1308) in Slovenia and gathered data on their academic achievement and levels of cultural capital. In that study, cultural capital was measured in terms of

parents' education and participation in cultural activities. Flere et al. (2010) found that, while accumulating dominant cultural capital assists with social mobility, field agents (for example, students) who possess less dominant cultural capital occupy a lower position of power than those with greater amounts of dominant capital. Positioned with less social power means limited opportunities to accumulate (more) dominant capital. The circular nature of this argument, if you have little capital you have less power to get more capital, illustrates how differential access to certain types of cultural capital is strongly implicated in social reproduction.

Theoretically and methodologically, Flere et al.'s (2010) study aligns with Bourdieu's writing including the operationalisation of cultural capital. The view, however, offered by Flere et al. (2010) essentially reinforced the position of dominant cultural capital as the cultural capital rendering those without it as "have-nots." Viewing dominant cultural capital as legitimate cultural capital is a teleological and perhaps even a tautological view of the link between cultural capital and educational achievement: lower class students do not achieve well in school because they are lower class and the only way to do better at school is to not be lower class. This dominant interpretation of cultural capital as "an elite culture" permeates the literature despite Dumais (Dumais, 2002, 2006) and Lareau and Weininger (2003) demonstrating that interpretations of cultural capital as only "knowledge of or competence with 'highbrow' aesthetic culture" (Lareau & Weininger, 2003, p. 568) offer a narrow and perhaps limiting scope for analysis of the role of cultural capital. Other researchers attempt to reframe the deficit perspective by acknowledging and recognising the cultural capitals within non-dominant classes (Ball, 2003; Carter, 2005; Reay et al., 2007), yet the continued differential value attached to dominant and non-dominant cultural capitals perpetuates educational and social inequity and the marginalisation of students from non-dominant groups.

Investigating the link between cultural capital and educational success, Wallace (2017) undertook an ethnographic study of British African Caribbean students in Years 10 and 11 in London. The study highlighted the ways in which students (and parents) make effective use of cultural capital to achieve school success. Guided by their parents, the students were well aware, and able to articulate, how certain practices are required to get ahead in school, such as shaking a teacher's hand and looking them in

the eye. Wallace (2017) extended Bourdieu's early work as well as challenging the "implicit assumption that cultural capital is synonymous with whiteness" (p. 14).

The theoretical framework outlined in this chapter acknowledges the contribution of Bourdieu's cultural capital in the examination of educational outcomes for students, but rejects the deficit-laden ideology that espouses cultural capital as the possession of the elite classes, choosing instead to incorporate an inclusive interpretation of cultural capital which suggests that students in an alternative educational program do possess cultural capital. Acknowledging possession, albeit of non-dominant forms of cultural capital, shifts the locus of the issue of possessing cultural capital, to possessing *valued* cultural capital.

This section outlined the Bourdieuian concept of cultural capital and how the valuing of different forms of cultural capital over others, impacts significantly on educational success. The literature demonstrates a consistent theme, the link between the compatibility of home and school capital and a students' educational success (Crozier & Davies, 2006; Reay & Mirza, 2005; Van de Werfhorst, 2010). The following section will explore and examine the concept of social capital.

3.2.2 Social capital

The beginnings of the modern conceptualisation of social capital can be seen in the classic sociology and politics of Durkheim, Marx and Weber (Adam & Rončević, 2003; Baum & Ziersch, 2003; Portes, 1998), and while numerous authors have defined social capital since, it is Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam who are considered the seminal theorists on the topic (Dika & Singh, 2002; Schaefer-McDaniel, 2004). Across the various disciplines that use social capital theory, Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam are each considered pivotal thinkers and yet conjecture and criticism exist in relation to each of their individual definitions and application of the concept (Adkins, 2005; Baron, Field, & Schuller, 2000). I provide a review the central interpretations of social capital, in order to explain why it is Bourdieu, rather than Putnam or Coleman, who provides the theoretical framework necessary to capture the nuances of youth relationships and connections as relevant to this research.

Bourdieu's work brought the concept of social capital to the attention of sociologists, particularly those researching within the field of education as the contestation and distribution of capital offers an explanatory reflection of inequities in

society (Papapolydorou, 2015). The concept of social capital is "the product of investment strategies, individual or collective, consciously or unconsciously aimed at establishing or reproducing social relationships that are directly useable in the short or long term" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 251). At its heart is the mutual "essence of co-operation" that is inherent in effective relationships, including the student's relationship with formal education.

Linked to the fundamental premise of sociology that social connections have inherent personal value (Field, 2016; Portes, 1998) that may counter the negative effects of economic disadvantage (Stanton-Salazar & Spina, 2005; Terrion, 2006), social capital theory has provided the conceptual framework to research undertaken across a number of social science disciplines (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Pawar, 2006).

Putnam (1995) researched social capital from a macro-social perspective as it related to wide scale political and economic outcomes in the US and Italy, and offered a very broad definition of social capital as "features of social organisation such as networks, norms and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit" (p. 67). Putnam's work highlights networks of trust and reciprocity, legitimising the existence of both positive and negative influences of social capital, as opposed to his earlier romanticised versions of social capital as a virtuous common good. However, Putnam fails to consider the ability of youth to create and use social capital (Weller, 2006).

Putnam (2000) offered a conceptualisation of social capital that allows for both bonding and bridging elements, both of which have some use in the context of the examining youth relationships. Bonding social capital refers to co-operation amongst peers where the major benefit is to the peer group. Bridging social capital pertains to connections and networks between groups, or co-operation that is most beneficial to both the individual and society as a whole (Putnam, 2000). Putnam does not consider the difference in form and use of social capital between adults and youth, relying on social capital indicators such as philanthropy, political participation, and membership in formal organisations which are mostly adult orientated activities, a perspective that limits the contribution of his work to this study.

Coleman's (1988) definition of social capital shares similarities to Bourdieu's; however, Bourdieu sees social capital as far more individualistic, that is, "owned" by individuals through their attitudes and perceptions. Coleman's (1988) view resides in

and between families through the social obligations and norms of behaviour that structure relationships. This is not to suggest that Bourdieu views social capital as something that one can 'possess', but rather understands it as a function that one can instigate, namely, practices or (a series of) strategies to engage in. Whereas Bourdieu viewed social capital as a potential source of social inequality, Coleman positioned it as positive, a collective good enabling group cohesion.

According to Leonard (2005), neither Putnam nor Coleman give due consideration to the networks of youth and their ability to generate social capital distinct from adult networks. While Coleman considered social capital as a way to explain why children value peer over adult approval, his work does not suggest that youth can develop their own social capital and, like Putnam, does not consider the difference in use between adults and youth (Billett, 2012a, 2012b).

Billett (2011) suggested that disadvantaged youth who may not have the backing of a strong family network may make a greater investment in capital building strategies within peer networks rather than reproducing adult capital existent within the family. Such strong adult-orientated perspectives can present limitations in youth studies. Coleman's suggestion that "single-parent and dual earner families are lacking in social capital" (Hendrick, 2005, p. 144) is strongly adult-orientated and suggestive that not only can youth not generate their own social capital, but that only some family structures provide for the transmission of it from parent to child. Coleman operationalises social capital in the form of stable family life and residential security. These aspects are frequently absent in the lives of many disadvantaged youth. This means in the context of this research, Coleman affords us a limited perspective on how social capital might function for disadvantaged youth who socialise within largely informal peer networks.

Although Bourdieu does not directly consider the relationship between social capital and youth, it is through the inclusion of his other theoretical advancements that Bourdieu provides my research the tools to go beyond the thinking of both Coleman and Putnam and examine the contextual factors influencing student resistance to formal education.

Despite the early predominance of Coleman's social capital in educational research literature, Bourdieu's interpretation has a greater capacity to explain differential access to social and educational resources (Stanton-Salazar, 2011). When

considered within the context of this study, both Coleman and Bourdieu share a comparatively micro-social perspective of social capital, with both contributing significantly to understanding the relationship between social capital and educational achievement. Bourdieu's interpretation of social capital sits apart from Coleman's in that his work stems from the examination of conflict and inequality that the uneven distribution of capital creates (Baron et al., 2000).

In the context of this research, therefore, Bourdieu affords an opportunity not offered by Putnam or Coleman, to acquire a greater understanding of the nuances of youth relationships and connections as they navigate and/or resist the inequalities present in their everyday struggles. It is, therefore, drawing from Bourdieu's interpretation of social capital that I conceptualise as a relationship between the social capital of marginalised youth and acts of educational resistance. The various interpretations of social capital, whilst consistently featuring the inclusion of relationships and social networks, can be clearly divided as social capital viewed from an individualistic perspective, a view attributed to Bourdieu (1986) and, at times, Coleman (1988), or the Putnam perspective of social capital as inherent in the social interactions of a community (Billett, 2012b; Schuurman, 2003).

Given that acts of resistance are socially influenced and given the youth student cohort at the centre of this study, understanding both the social mechanisms by which capital is distributed and the concept of youth social capital is critical to this study. There are studies that link the protective aspect of social capital, that is, of positive relationships to the wellbeing of young people (Ferguson, 2006; Morrow, 1999, 2004); however across the literature, the issue of youth social capital is under-represented. When social capital theory is applied to youth within the literature, it is generally conceptualised as an under-developed resource that youth can draw on from their family or parents, with minimal focus on the social capital that may be created and used by youth themselves (Coleman, 1988; Davison et al., 2012; Holland, Reynolds, & Weller, 2007; Leonard, 2005).

There are a few studies, however, that question this conceptualisation of youth social capital, suggesting that youth may use social capital to develop, understand and negotiate their place within their social networks (Bottrell, 2009; Holland et al., 2007). One such study is Weller's (2006) doctoral research project which examined the influence of citizenship education on levels and types of youth community

participation. The study gathered data from over 600 teenagers and their parents and community members in a region of the United Kingdom which, at the time, was subject to the isolation and economic deprivation inherent in some rural communities. The study involved surveying students across Years 9, 10 and 11 with follow up surveys of just the Year 10 students five months later. A sub-sample of Year 9 students (n=20) engaged in diary writing and small group discussions and some less formal communications. A further 50 participants were drawn from the community and the school. Parents and community members were given opportunities to engage in discussions across various forums, in person, via radio, and web-based forums.

Weller's (2006) work challenged the dominant writers on social capital, critiquing them against the data generated by the youths in her study. Weller found that youths may use social capital in efforts to overcome "disadvantage" derived from a lack of other capital, namely economic, which resonates with my research. In a similar fashion to Willis's (1977) "counter school cultures", the students at the centre of Weller's study enter the educational field with limited field valued capital. Hence social capital may be positioned as a significant resource for youth who have few other resources at their disposal.

Also drawing on Bourdieu's work, but extending it to further redefine youth social capital, is the study conducted by Raffo and Reeves (2000) in Manchester (United Kingdom). It was a qualitative study investigating the transition of youth to work or further study, involving young people (15-24 years of age) who fit into the demographic of "disadvantaged" with poor school experiences. Drawn from the data analysis of semi-structured interviews, Raffo and Reeves (2000) contend that young people's choices regarding transitions "are conditioned to a large extent by the evolutionary and adaptive characteristics of their individualized systems of social capital, rather than prescribed social characteristics" (p. 148). This underscores the argument to go beyond describing students based on the objective conditions of their lived experiences, and to examine their access to, use and influence of their social networks.

Raffo and Reeves' (2000) theoretical framework acknowledges both the temporal nature of relationships experienced by these young people and the often overlooked "dark side" or negative side of social capital. While the literature supports the positive impact of social capital, it is in fact a dual-edged sword, capable of

blocking access to groups and information and effectively constraining social mobility (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Bowen, 2009; Portes, 1998).

Raffo and Reeves (2000) positioned youth social capital as a bridge from the past to the future, an individual resource embedded in a constellation of relationships and mediated by structural factors (p. 150). In this way, the agency of youth is both constrained by objective structures and supported by their social networks and relationships. This implicates social capital in both social reproduction and social transformation, dependent on the field and the relationships that the structures of the field enable the students to experience. For instance, within Raffo and Reeves' (2000) framework, four broad typologies are conceptualised (weak, strong, changing and fluid), explaining the "different constraints and opportunities afforded to similar [groups of] young people because of the specific social relations they experience" (p. 153). Weak individualised systems of social capital (Raffo &Reeves, 2000) are defined as:

> A network of social relations that is relatively small, provides little practical informal knowledge through the interactions of that network, is often not practice driven, and has little access to material and symbolic resources, resulting in a relatively passive/static articulation of individual change and development. (p. 156)

This can mean that for students with relatively weak individualised systems of social capital, such as students removed from school with restricted access to other students, there are "few opportunities for learning from others in authentic situations" (p. 153). Possessing a strong individualised system however can provide greater opportunities for informal learning.

Raffo and Reeves's (2000) concept of individualised systems of social capital resonates with the present study as it creates a space in which to link Willis's resistance theory with Bourdieu's concept of social capital, and suggests the need to more deeply examine the influence of social capital on acts of resistance.

Bourdieu (1986) suggested that "social capital is the aggregate of the actual or *potential resources* which are linked to possession of a *durable network* of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (p. 248, emphases added). I interpret "potential resources" and "durability of networks" as

being a reference to (macro) social structures and the (micro) individual's lived experiences. "Potential resources" allude to the power of agency, either individual or collective, to undertake strategies and engage in the intentional creation of social capital through action (Siegrist et al., 2010), whereas the "durability of one's networks" can be directly related to the structure of an individual's social world.

Bourdieu continues, suggesting that group membership "provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively-owned capital, a 'credential' which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word" (1986, p. 248). The "backing of the collectively-owned capital" has important implications to this study, in terms of the structure of both the alternative education program and the teachers and students operating within it. For the students, there may be a reliance on the collective capital available in the relationships within the AEP, as the volume of social capital that can otherwise be mobilised (through other relationships) may be limited. For the teachers, it has implications for the design and implementation of the AEP and the relationships they foster, as to the extent to which it allows students to access and benefit in the collective capital. Bourdieu's 'institutionalised relationships' and the establishment and maintenance of symbolic exchanges, can be aligned with the 'institutional agents' prominent in the work of Stanton-Salazar (2011). Institutional agents, in the words of Stanton-Salazar (2011) are:

> Defined as an individual who occupies one or more hierarchical positions of relatively high-status and authority. Such an individual, situated in an adolescent's social network, manifests his or her potential role as an institutional agent, when, on behalf of the adolescent, he or she acts to directly transmit, or negotiate the transmission of, highly valued resources. (p. 1067)

Social capital, as seen by Stanton-Salazar (2011), is a resource accessible and/or transferrable by the student through their connection with an institutional agent. For students marginalised from mainstream education, the relationships between them and their AEP teachers can be seen as a type of social capital (Stanton-Salazar, 1997) accessible through the teachers in the AEP acting as institutional agents. The effectiveness of these institutional agents would be dependent upon the very nature of the relationship, depth of contact and the structure of the AEP.

Adam and Roncevic (2003) explained that "despite problems with its definition as well as its operationalization, and despite its (almost) metaphorical character, social capital has facilitated a series of very important empirical investigations and theoretical debates" (p. 177). As the usefulness of social capital to this empirical investigation and the subsequent analysis hinges on the interpretation and operationalisation of Bourdieu's social capital, I will now frame social capital in the context of this research.

The concept of social capital can afford us explanatory thinking regarding the mechanisms of exchange involved in social relationships; however, it is a concept defined in a myriad of ways (Weller, 2006) and this makes social capital a complex and potentially ambiguous concept, open to interpretation and re-interpretation based on the ontological and epistemological beliefs of the researcher (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Dolfsma & Dannreuther, 2003; Sanders & Robson, 2009).

This research is aimed at examining and understanding the manner in which social capital influences student resistance, and I have attempted to avoid the value-laden terminology of benefits and risks, positives and negatives, and to discuss social capital in regard to its effects. One effect of social capital is the capacity to provide individuals with access to information (Adler & Kwon, 2002), and where the information flow is reciprocal, this can have a flow-on effect allowing the individual, or group, to become a "source" of information. A further effect of social capital is group solidarity, with strong group norms of behaviour and beliefs encouraging conformity to group expectations and thinking. Portes (1998) indicated that the solidarity produced by social capital may also produce further effects with different implications for both the individual and the group, such as strengthening the group bond to the exclusion and distrust of outsiders, including the weakened influence and respect of authority figures from outside the group. This can lead to individual members becoming blocked from membership in other groups and restricted in their access to non-redundant information (Bowen, 2009; Morrow, 1999). The social capital benefits embodied in "meaningful communicative exchanges" (Ellison, Vitak, Gray, & Lampe, 2014, p.870) emphasise the importance of ongoing membership in diverse groups.

While possession of a durable network is a structural pre-condition, the specific practices or strategies employed within the network are critical (Papapolydorou, 2015).

Certain practices hold recognised value within particular fields, and therefore networks may hold potential value only if recognised practices are employed within the network.

Table 3.1 outlines, from a theoretical perspective, the macro and micro level influences on social capital and the stated effects of social capital in relation to this research project. A mapping of the structural influences on the network as well as an examination of the practices within the network will be required to understand the effect of social capital as it relates to this research. Such an understanding is critical as a key value of social capital in the potential for the generation of positive outcomes. However, social capital can be enabling or disabling, contributing to change or reinforcing the status quo, dependent on relationship between the field, where the capital is valued, and the nature and depth of the social connections through which it is acquired (Bassani, 2007).

Table 3.1 *Influences and effects of social capital*

Influences on social capital	Effects of social capital
Structure of the networks (macro)	Access to information
durable or highly fluid	redundant vs non-redundant
closed vs open	reciprocal vs one way
	useful vs useless
Practices within the networks (micro)	Solidarity of expectations and thinking
recognised as valued	set of group norms – accepted practices
not recognised as valued	increases conformity
	can lead to distrust or lack of respect for outsiders

Drawn, therefore, from the sociology of Bourdieu, and in the context of this study, capital is interpreted as a resource one can acquire, with social capital operationalised as a platform for this acquisition to occur. Social capital "plays an integral role in the mobilization and formation of other types of capital" (Bassani, 2007, p. 21), and from a methodological perspective, this operationalisation of social capital within the theoretical framework affords the examination of "the condition and effect of successful management of the capital collectively possessed" (Bourdieu,

1998, pp. 70-71) or, in other words, an examination of both the micro- and macro-level influences on and of social capital.

The notion of *justice capital* emerges from my research as a previously unconsidered capital. While it is not considered by Bourdieu or other scholars who draw on Bourdieu, justice capital builds on a Bourdieuian understanding of capital as multiform, and as such should be considered important to the overall study of capital and its relationship to educational achievement.

Through the formula, "[(capital*habitus) +field] =practice" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 101), Bourdieu highlighted the importance of the relationship between the concepts of habitus, field and capital and how the relationship is structured to create practice. The relationship is reciprocal rather than causal and can be described as a system which should not be treated in isolation (Bourdieu, 1990).

The following section will explore and examine the concept of field.

3.3 FIELD

Field is a powerful conceptual lens which operates interdependently with the concept of capital (Gorski, 2013). Bourdieu defined field as "a structured space of positions in which the positions and their interrelations are determined by the distribution of different kinds of resources or capital" (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 14). For Bourdieu, a field is structured by capitals or more specifically the distribution or positioning of the capitals, while at the same time structuring or positioning these capitals, and the agents or institutions that possess them, into a hierarchy (Naidoo, 2010). The differential position of capitals within a field correlates with their differential social value in that field. The value of capital in a field is specific to that field, as capitals do not have value or "function except in relation to a field" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 100). In other words, a field is structured around the differential value of capitals, with the value of these capitals determined by the field. The interdependence of these concepts highlights the fundamental relational aspect of Bourdieuian methodology.

It is this relationship between the two concepts that provides a way of examining how students are positioned as empowered or disempowered. For example, in the context of this research, a student enters the field of alternative education in possession of capital/s and is positioned according to the value those capital/s have in relation to other capitals within the field. The position a student occupies within the field of

alternative education is determined, therefore, not by their capital as much as the position or value of their capital, in contrast to the capital of others, such as the teacher. The student's access to further capitals is also influenced by this position. In this way, the field of alternative education functions to enable or restrict the student's access to further capitals, empowering or disempowering the student within the field.

The boundaries of a field are not only defined by what is valued (capital), but also the struggle and competition for the accumulation and distribution of those capitals (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Within a Bourdieuian field, "constant, permanent relationships of inequality operate … in which various actors struggle for the transformation or preservation of the field" (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 40).

Bourdieu suggested that individuals, upon entering a field, synchronously take up their *assigned* positions within that field (Bourdieu, 1984, 1993). According to Bourdieu, this *position-taking*, equating to strategies individually or collectively employed, is born of conflict and struggle rather than collaboration (Bourdieu, 1993). However, Willis's (1977) examination of the lads' struggles, expressed through their counter-culture, ultimately saw them "collaborate" with the field to take up their "assigned" position within the cycle of social reproduction.

For this to occur, individuals must have an awareness of the way fields are structured and which capitals hold or lack value (Williams & Choudry, 2016), and also, importantly, they possess an awareness or "sense" of the value of their personal capital/s in relation to that field. Such an awareness would indicate previous field experience. This may not be previous experience in the exact same field but in a field that shares "structural and functional homologies" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 105), where a "resemblance within a difference" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 106) can be observed. For example, Bathmaker (2015) in her field analysis of higher education (HE) in the United Kingdom (UK) suggested that as the admission procedures of HE control position-taking across a portion of Further Education colleges (FE), that FE and HE can be conceptualised as overlapping fields, while HE (practices) in FE is a sub-field within the main field of HE. Drawing on Bathmaker (2015), this research study conceptualises the alternative education field and the mainstream education field as overlapping sub-fields of the formal education field, with both sharing structure and function. Homology of fields means that lived

experiences in previous fields allow students, upon entering new fields, to anticipate their position.

In the context of this research, students' lived experiences in the mainstream educational field condition their expectations of and position-taking within the alternative education field. This highlights the importance of examining students' historical trajectory and the particular configuration of capitals (or field structure) specific to the students' previous field experiences.

This perspective is explored by O'Donaghue (2013) in her study into how working-class mothers encounter the field of education. A small group (n=5) of mothers in Ireland were selected, all working class and all committed to the education of their children. O'Donaghue (2013) drew on Bourdieu's (1997) work to show how both the family and the school are fields, and through time spent in the primary field of the family, students become attuned to the practical knowledge appropriate to their position. Disconnect between the family field and the school field became apparent to these mothers, through their unfamiliarity with the specific language and practices of the school. With limited accumulated capitals valued in the field, the mothers perceived themselves to be on the outside of the school field. Through the use of phrases such as "people like us," the mothers articulated not only their discomfort within the field, but also their complicity in the perpetuation of feeling out of place. They sense the positioning within the field as discomfort, and by moving to spend as little time in the field as possible, to avoid the discomfort, rather than learn the "rules of the game" (Bourdieu, 1997). As O'Donaghue (2013) illustrated, "to achieve in the field, one must not only be able to play the game, but also know the game" (p. 205).

O'Donaghue (2013) not only shed valuable light onto the barrier the field of education itself presents to parents (and students) who try to enter from incongruous family fields, but demonstrates that individuals enter the field of education with no choice but to bring their "embodied history, their habituated practice, and their access to capitals" (p. 190). Applied to the students of this study, lived experiences in previous field allows students, upon entering the AEP, to not only anticipate their position, but also anticipate their disconnect with the educational program.

Williams and Choudry (2016) argued that "to take up a powerful position in the social space of a mathematics classroom, a student must come with the mathematics capital appropriate to the educational field" (p. 7). This demonstrates the link with

previous fields (where students would acquire the appropriate capital), such as the general education field, but also including the family field. This raises the questions, in Bourdieu's words, of what configuration of capitals operates within the alternative education field, and are acts of resistance manifestations of the struggle to transform, or the struggle to preserve this configuration? Drawing from a Bourdieuian perspective, both types of struggle will be considered "practices", or strategies undertaken by agents to access the power (field-valued capital) to achieve their goals (specific goals being either to transform or preserve) within the field (Hanks, 2005, p. 73).

Ferrare and Apple (2015) argued for the application of field in the analysis of educational practices and advocated a micro-level analysis in order to better understand the lived experiences of actors and the nuances of specific and local fields. They also argued that a more micro-level perspective counters the traditional deficit model and locates the deficit in the position taking structures of the educational field. This is highly relevant to this research project, and the inclusion of the concept of field in this research provides the analytical power to bridge the work of resistant theorists and Bourdieuian concepts in allowing an examination of the nuances of the students' lived experiences across fields, and how these influence decisions within an educational context.

Allard (2005) also used Bourdieu's concept of field to undertake a micro-level examination of marginalised young women as they negotiated access to specific resources across the range of different educational, social and work contexts they encountered. This has implications for my study, as interrogating the women's stories from a Bourdieuian perspective illuminates the nuances and complexities of the social contexts in which they lived, allowing a "better understanding of the complex intersections of power relations and individual agency" (Allard, 2005, p. 73).

Bourdieu's field offers a framework through which we can use other conceptual tools, capital and habitus, to view and explain the structures of the relationships through which all actors, not just students, struggle for power (Martin et al. 2015). While Bourdieu's concepts are "tools for conducting empirical research" (Gorski, 2013, p. 20) aimed at examinations of power and struggle, they are not isolated theoretical constructs but intended to be applied as a framework (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). The theoretical framework that underpins this study draws on the

concept of field as a theoretical tool to construct the space in which to examine the particular configuration of capitals, specific to the AEP, that influence the continued manifestation of acts of resistance.

In this research, that examination space, or field, refers to the relationship students experience with formal education. This relationship is a Bourdieuian field, in which the students, positioned by a specific configuration of capital, struggle to accumulate valued capital within the overlapping fields of alternative education, mainstream education and family. The struggles are observable in the daily interactions within the AEP, and the discussions regarding formal education by significant members of the student's family and social network. This chapter posits that through the use of Bourdieu's concepts of capital, habitus and field a micro-level critical analysis of the factors influencing the manifestation of resistance can be undertaken.

By locating the students' relationship with formal education as an overlapping field within the broader field of formal education, this chapter has satisfied the first step of a field analysis (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). The second step, "map the objective structure of the relationships between positions occupied by the agents" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 105), and the third step, "analyse the habitus of the agents" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 105), will be undertaken as part of the analysis phase of this research and reported on through a "descriptive account and analysis of the relational social positions" (Krarup & Munk, 2016), p. 13) in Chapters 5 and 6 respectively.

In this section the concept of field was identified, which, along with the concept of capital, are relational concepts to assist researchers view and analyse the complexities of society that create and allow inequality (Murphy & Costa, 2015). The next section will focus on habitus.

3.4 HABITUS

Within an extensive body of work, Bourdieu had opportunity to define and elaborate on the concept of habitus many times. Habitus, as described by Bourdieu in different stages of his oeuvre, is:

- "systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 72);

- "a subjective but not individual system of internalised structures, schemes of perception, conception, and action common to all members of the same group or class" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 86);
- "a system of durable, transposable dispositions which function as the generative basis of structured, objectively unified practices" (Bourdieu, 1979, p. vii); and,
- "a kind of transforming machine that leads us to `reproduce' the social conditions of our own production" (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 87).

Despite slight variation in wording, Bourdieu's intent is consistently clear: the concept of habitus captures the interrelatedness of the agent's operations and the structures in which they have been operating, and are operating, within. Habitus is the embodiment of one's biography, or historical social trajectory, operating in the present to orientate an individual's thoughts and actions through future trajectories. It "is thus a past which survives in the present and tends to perpetuate itself into the future by making itself present in practices" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 82).

Fields are organised around the struggle for capital (Gorski, 2013) and it is the availability of and access to (valued) capitals within the field that generate the habitus. It is in this way that the field structures the habitus. The habitus generates practices, through our perceptions and in response to dynamic everyday circumstances. Habitus is also the lens through which we perceive and reflect on our practices and how the field responds to them (Hilgers, 2009). The ability to cope with change (Bourdieu, 1977) suggests a reflective element to this lens, allowing us to perceive the (re)actions of others operating in the field against our anticipated (re)actions of others. It is this reflective capacity that is described by Reay (2004) as "the genesis of new creative responses that are capable of transcending the social conditions in which it was produced" (p. 435).

Habitus is used in research across a range of fields (Nobel & Watkins, 2003). To develop this theoretical framework, I draw however on educational research that has used habitus to understand "how the structure of schooling shapes individual students' social trajectories" (Horvat & Davis, 2011, p. 143). Reay (1994, 2004) argued that habitus both empowers, and demands, us to ask such questions. In a highly influential text, Reay (2004) challenged the entire research field to "put habitus into practice,"

and operationalise the concept rather than simply reference it. Critiquing the superficial use of habitus by much of the research field, including her own work, Reay's call to action led to increased focus on using habitus in educational research as a conceptual tool to aid data analysis (Abrahams & Ingram, 2013; Bodovski, 2010; Lingard, Sellar, & Baroutsis, 2015).

Dumais (2002), in an embryonic attempt to "operationalise the concept of habitus" (p. 62), examined the influence of habitus on the educational success of students. This examination incorporated the concept of habitus in an attempt to advance the research field through examination of individual aspects of cultural capital. Significantly, however, the findings showed that habitus, operationalised as occupational expectations, has a far greater effect than that of cultural capital. Dumais (2002) contended that "other variables-- including habitus - are more important to grades than is cultural capital, which even at its strongest will not raise a student's grade noticeably" (p. 59). This research indicated a necessity for the current study to consider student, parent and teacher expectations as important aspects of the habitus.

Bodovski (2014) also heeded the call of Reay (2004) and built on the work of Dumais (2002) in a study undertaken in the US using data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study – Kindergarten Cohort (ECLS-K). Bodovski (2014) examined the relationship between parental practices and student disposition. This research employed habitus as the conceptual lens to analyse students' educational expectations and thereby extended the work of Bourdieu (1986), Lareau & Weininger (2003) and Dumais (2002, 2006), and provided empirical evidence that the individual habitus is influenced by a collective "set of dispositions," through either peers, family or institution (Bourdieu, 1977).

Taking up Bourdieu's (1977) notion of a set of dispositions or a collective habitus, Reay (1998) theorised that in education, an 'institutional habitus' would bring together a "complex mix of curriculum offer, teaching practices and what children bring with them to the classroom" (p. 67). The influence of both an individual and an institutional habitus is significant to my research as it "confines possibilities to those possible for the social group the individual belongs to" (Reay, 2015, p. 357) and the institution the individual attends. In relation to this study, this means the students' day-to-day behaviours are influenced by their family and peer context and reinforced or refined through the accepted values and practices of the institution, or AEP.

The conceptual duality of a habitus that is individual yet collective in nature, holds potential and problematics for empirical research in terms of operationalising the habitus. While the concept of an "institutional habitus" (Reay, 1998) has its critics (Atkinson, 2011), my research proposes that distinguishing the institutional habitus of the AEP from the individual habitus of the students and teachers, whilst difficult, would assist in examining the co-construction of acts of resistance. Drawing on resistance theory, the habitus the students bring is interpreted as a resistant habitus. Yet if resistance is co-constructed (see Chapter 2) then it becomes necessary to examine the collective or institutional habitus as a co-constructor of the acts of resistance.

This poses difficulties analytically, as we can only come to understand habitus through observing and interpreting the practices of individuals (Maton, 2018), and individual practices that align with the collective habitus risk being camouflaged by the "taken for granted" nature of such practices. Conversely yet no simpler, individual practices at odds with the collective perceptions or expectations may provide greater visibility of one's individual habitus. Should the student's habitus be one of resistance and the collective habitus not, this may be simpler. However, if resistance is co-constructed then the student's acts of resistance cannot be positioned as at odds with the expectations of the collective.

Habitus, however, is not solely the actions or practices of an individual, nor the accumulation of experiences, but rather the "schemes of thought, perception, appreciation and action" (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, p. 40) influenced by the interrelations between agent and structure, and as such, a complex and situated, social process (Murphy & Coast, 2015; Reay, Crozier & James, 2011). It can be thought of, in layman's terms, as our common-sense view of how to act and behave in certain situations. Bourdieu's understanding of habitus is as a "subjective but not individual system of internalised structures, schemes of perception, conception, and action common to all members of the same group" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 86), so that it "functions at every moment as a matrix of *perceptions, appreciations, and actions*" (Bourdieu, 1977, pp. 82 – 83, emphasis in the original) underpins the argument that the students have incorporated resistance as the embodied expectations of field.

Resistance is embodied in the student's ways of thinking, speaking, dressing and walking (Bourdieu, 1990). In short, the various ways they "do school." Willis (2003)

explained how resistance "becomes a kind of second nature that continues to orientate bodily style, attitudes and values" (p. 394), suggesting the theoretical link between habitus (its embodiment and physical deployment) and resistance. How the students perceive or identify themselves in relation to the institutional habitus influences the development of their resistant identities.

Stahl (2015) made use of habitus in his research into the construction of learner identities in South London. Conceptualising an egalitarian habitus, a "counter-habitus to the neoliberal rhetoric of schooling" (Stahl, 2015, p. 27), habitus in his study is operationalised as the aspirations of working class male students to "fit-in." While emphasising the adaptability of the habitus to "contest, resist and possibly transcend social and economic conditions" (Stahl, 2015, p. 33), Stahl clearly demonstrated how the habitus acts to mediate between the agentic aspirations of the working-class boys and the structural limitations imposed by the neoliberal schooling field through a continual negotiation with itself. For these boys, the struggle between being loyal to one's self (identity) and loyal to their aspirations, required, and was possible, through the constant modification of their habitus.

For the students in my research, their engagement in acts of resistance is not only influenced by what Bourdieu called a "feel for the game" (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 66) but their identity as a "player" within this game. As habitus guides the navigation and "game play" within new contexts, explained as a "strategy-generating principle enabling agents to cope with unforeseen and ever-changing situations" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 72), a resistant habitus guides the acts of resistance the students engage in from one educational context to the next.

For example, the students at the centre of my research enter the education field, carrying perceptions and dispositions generated by the family, or primary field (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977), confirmed by early encounters with the educational field. Once in the educational field, for these students the game of "doing school" has involved feeling unjustly treated, devalued, disempowered and marginalised. This "feel for the game" that these students bring to the AEP is the result of a complex social process, not simply the result of the habitus the students bring.

Habitus is also a conceptual tool (Costa & Murphy, 2015; Reay, 2004; Stahl, 2015) or a lens: a way of conceptualising and viewing this complex social process, this "subconscious understanding through time of the rules of social interaction in a

particular field" (Horvat & Davis, 2001, p. 144). While there is some criticism that Bourdieu's habitus is overly deterministic (Jenkins, 2002), there is in fact the potential for both reproduction and/or transformation through the habitus (Reay, 1995), underlining the need for this research to go beyond simply knowing what habitus the students bring into the field but also understanding the collective habitus operating within the institution.

Habitus guides practice, indirectly, and legitimate (field-valued) practices can be designated as capital (Fowler, 2000). Social capital, "the successful management of the capital collectively possessed" (Bourdieu, 1998, pp. 70-71), indicates that aligning the appropriate habitus for appropriate field constitutes a type of symbolic capital (Duckworth, 2013). Bourdieu establishes a dialectic relationship between agency and structure through the notions of habitus and field (Bourdieu, 1990) and, in doing so, provides a framework that can explain the value and function of social capital in both the creation of and the resistance towards social inequality. This framework has been applied to a range of educational research from pre-service literacy teaching to examining pedagogic decisions to education reform (Marsh, 2009; Rawolle & Lingard, 2008; Wright, 2008).

The habitus students bring becomes active upon entering the field and when there is an alignment between their habitus and the educational field, the potential for field success is high: for example, students who understand the symbolic capital associated with following the school's expectations. However, when the habitus does not align with the field there is a disruption to the habitus (Edgerton & Roberts, 2014; Reay, 2004), as students' regular practices do not meet their anticipated outcomes. This disruption to their habitus can be met with resistance and cause acts of aggression and/or non-compliance which can present as problematic within the education field. However, disruption of the habitus can offer a potential liminal space through which divergent habitus can emerge. For students with a resistant habitus this disruption, dependent on the flow of capitals (Adkins, 2002), can generate a habitus orientated towards Solórzano and Bernal's (2001) transformative resistance, or reproduce a habitus orientated towards more Willis-style acts of self-defeating resistance.

While the influx of additional and new capitals would influence the re-working of the habitus, a lack of additional capital limits the re-working of the habitus. It is the natural orientation of the habitus, whether reproductive or transformative, to seek to

accrue capital (Mills & Gale, 2002). For these resistant students, it is social capital, the platform for this acquisition of addition capitals, that may play a significant role in the continuation of acts of self-defeating resistance or the enactment of transformative resistance.

To fully understand the perpetuation of acts of resistance within this field, it was critical for this research to undertake a deeper analysis into the interaction between the students' resistant habitus and the field. Therefore, this research attempted to go beyond asking what habitus the students bring to the field but rather, how the concept of habitus can be used to understand the (resistant) practices as they are situated within this specific field.

The theoretical framework underpinning the present research operationalises the student's habitus through the key disposition of "recognition" or "validation." This refers to the aspiration of the students to have their position within the group validated, to be seen as having value or worth. This means that student behaviours, specifically acts of resistance, should be understood in terms of the habitus they bring to the field as well as their position and interactions within the field. Reay (2004) suggested that "habitus cannot be directly observed in empirical research and has to be apprehended interpretively" (p. 439). Therefore, the methodology required for this research must be sufficient to observe field practices (behaviours and interactions) as well as reveal the students' lived experiences across the overlapping fields in which they operate so as to interpret the behaviours from the standpoint of the students' lived experiences (see Chapter 4).

3.5 APPLYING BOURDIEU

While Bourdieu's concepts have been criticised, Mills (2008) argued much of this is due to misinterpretation of his work. Mills and Gale (2007) provided a theoretical argument that a Bourdieuian methodology "has the potential to see possibilities for socially just action in education realized" (Mills & Gale, 2007, p. 445). Furthermore, they argue that research underpinned by Bourdieu's "theoretical concepts have made significant contributions in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries to understanding the role that schools and school systems play in reproducing social and cultural inequalities" (Mills & Gale, 2007, p. 434). Specifically,

Mills (2008) suggested that Bourdieu's conceptual tools provide great potential in improving the "educational outcomes for marginalised students" (p. 79).

A demonstration of the analytical power of Bourdieu's theoretical framework as it can be applied to education can be found in Marsh (2006). Adhering to what Mills and Gale (2007) term a Bourdieuian methodology, Marsh (2006), in researching pre-service teachers in England on their perceptions of popular culture in the literacy curriculum, draws on Bourdieu's concepts as an integrated theoretical framework as intended by Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 1984; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Reay, 2004), as opposed to selecting specific Bourdieuian conceptual elements in isolation. The four-year project, in which data were generated regarding the attitudes, beliefs, and experiences of pre-service teachers through group and individual interviews, was underpinned by Bourdieu's concepts, field, capital and habitus, to "explore how student-teachers accepted or resisted dominant literacy traditions within schools" (Marsh, 2006, p. 163).

The findings of Marsh (2006) demonstrate how the relationship between the participants' habitus and capital interact with the field to produce conformity or resistance in terms of literacy teaching. Participants who possessed capital that aligned with the field (established literacy teaching methods of the school) were less aware of dominant discourses, mis-recognising them as "normal", and thus were less likely to challenge them.

Bourdieu's theoretical framework is central to the research of Holt (2012) into choices of young female school leavers living in rural Australia to move to elite city universities. The article draws from data gathered during a four-year study into young women considered disadvantaged and, although failing to explain the reasons for the disadvantaged label, Holt (2012) provides a deep examination of the interplay between capital, field, habitus, and how habitus is constructed over time. Drawing on Bourdieu, Holt (2012) demonstrates how these young women's self-narratives of "being smart" influenced their choices to move to the city for further education, and further demonstrates how such identities are the result of the "capital" invested by their teachers and parents and "embodied" by the young women into habituses that make such choices seem almost inevitable.

Christ and Wang (2008) used Bourdieu's concepts of capital, field and habitus in an ethnographic study of how first grade students develop procedural practices in

order to engage in literacy groups. Conducted over 12 months, investigating both the home and school culture of minority students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, their study employed multiple forms of data collection, focussing on the student-led literacy groups but also capturing data on the wider literacy session so that the school's cultural context could be established. Identifying the small literacy group as the field and using an analytical framework that drew on capital, habitus, field, and also the Bourdieuian concept of practice (practice being the outcome of the interaction between habitus, capital, and field), Christ and Wang (2008) demonstrated how the interaction between students' capital and habitus, within the field, led to the development of practices that either conformed to or resisted the wider class practices, or resulted in the co-construction of field specific practices. Christ and Wang (2008) stated that "our findings suggest that Bourdieu's thinking tools provide a useful means of exploring the co-construction of practices" (p. 205), and that "procedural practices … can be used as an entry point to understand students' different cultural practices and habitus" (Christ & Wang, 2008, p. 206).

Thompson (2011) engages in a Bourdieuian analysis of a work-based learning program, Entry 2 Employment (E2E) in England that aimed to "re-engage young people with 'barriers to learning'" (Thompson, 2011, p. 15). Thompson draws on international research to support the argument that credential inflation has meant that "the forms of capital these young people possess have been progressively devalued" (Thompson, 2011, p. 19). Furthermore, Thompson (2011) states that the field of E2E is "formed from the intersection of a number of fields … [of which almost all] … occupy dominated positions with respect to the field of power" (p. 18). This in effect positions this type of learning program as work focussed or practical based, denying the students attending, seen as workers rather than thinkers, "access to the forms of knowledge required for full participation in society" (Thompson, 2011, p. 16).

Thompson (2011) stated that "different orientations to education or employment can arise, with the same broad set of dispositions and broadly similar objective conditions, from specific differences in experience, not only of schooling but of all the fields constituting a social world" (p. 22), simultaneously demonstrating both the complex and dynamic relationship between habitus and field, and the flaw in generalising family background of students as deficits, or "barriers to learning."

3.6 SUMMARY

This chapter outlined the theoretical framework and relevant concepts guiding this research. The central question, what role does social capital play in resistance to formal education by students attending alternative education programs, links the work of Bourdieu and Willis in an examination of the phenomenon of social and educational inequality manifested within an (alternative) educational setting.

The different interpretations of social capital by the key theorists, Putnam, Coleman and Bourdieu, were examined in the context of this study and it was argued that Bourdieu offered a greater opportunity to understand the nuances of the interactions between the individuals and the institution through his central interest in conflict and inequality, and the power of his conceptual tools.

An exegesis of Bourdieu's work informed the argument that Bourdieu's theoretical constructs, capital, habitus, field, provide powerful tools for exploring the factors influencing resistance to formal education by marginalised students. The significance of Bourdieu's conceptualisation of capital as multiform (economic, cultural, social, and convertible) was discussed and linked to educational success and/or the lack thereof, for these students. The relationship, or contrast in value between the students' capital and the valued capital of the field, positions these students in such a way as to disempower them from accessing the further capital.

Bourdieu's work was shown to have provided a research framework that has underpinned much educational research ranging from micro-level examinations of pedagogic decisions and pre-service literacy teaching, to more macro-level general education reform and policy initiatives (Lingard, 2010; MacLennan & Lingard, 1983; J. Marsh, 2006; Rawolle & Lingard, 2008; Wright, 2008).

This chapter has demonstrated the relationship between Willis and Bourdieu, with both acknowledging the role of the school system in the reproduction of power distinction between classes (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Sassatelli, Santoro, & Willis, 2009), and both acknowledging resistance by the dominated (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Bourdieu 1984). Yet whether acts of resistance by students are part of the mechanism of institutional power and domination, or simply challenges to the hegemonic structures of formal education, or indeed move beyond both these

conceptualisations and can lay claim to potential transformative power, the question remains, in what way do the social relations influence the educational trajectory of students?

Taking a Bourdieuian perspective, the disposition to resist is generated by an individual's habitus, while the exact form the acts of resistance take are shaped by the intersection of field and capital. Therefore, by employing Bourdieu's concepts, this study undertakes an in-depth analysis of the logic behind acts of resistance, an examination of not only the form such acts take, but also some of the central aspects that influence the manifestation and perpetuation of acts of resistance. This research seeks to answer these questions through critically examining the social landscape of an Alternative Education Program (AEP).

In this section, it was argued that habitus is produced by our experiences within the various social fields in which we exist. Our experience within the social world guides the development of the habitus and our habitus governs how we perceive the world and, in this respect, it "is thus a past which survives in the present and tends to perpetuate itself into the future by making itself present in practices" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 82). In relation to a student's practices, or acts of resistance, the student's resistant stance towards formal education is manifested in the habitus and related to the dis-connect between the student's embodied cultural capital (habitus) and capital valued in the educational field. When acted upon, the enacted form of these acts of resistance is related to the position of the students and the capitals available to them within the field (Duckworth, 2013; Reay at al., 2005).

I propose that using Bourdieuian thinking to examine the duality of resistance, implicated in social reproduction and required for social transformation, can provide new understandings that could assist in the restructuring of learning environments as more equitable educational spaces for all students, reducing educational 'failure'.

This chapter outlined the theoretical framework underpinning this research. The relationship between Bourdieu's concepts of capital, field and habitus and students' acts of resistance was identified and positioned as complementary to the purpose of researching educational inequality. Chapter 4 provides details about the research methodology employed as informed by the theoretical framework presented here.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the research methodology used to critically examine the connection between school resistant students' social capital and their acts of resistance as played out through their relationship with formal education.

This research follows a qualitative research methodology, outlined in Section 4.2 to "develop an in-depth exploration of a central phenomenon" (Creswell, 2003, p. 206). The research question, introduced in Section 1.3.1, is re-introduced and discussed in Section 4.3. The research design (Section 4.4) is aligned with the theoretical framework previously outlined in Chapter 3. The methods of data collection are discussed in Section 4.5, and data analysis, including ensuring the trustworthiness of the data, is presented in Section 4.6. The remaining sections of the chapter deal, in turn, with limitations (Section 4.7), and ethics (Section 4.8). The chapter concludes with a brief summary of the research methodology, presented as Section 4.9.

4.2 QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY

Stake (1995, 2006) suggests the defining characteristics of a qualitative study are that it is holistic in nature, empirical, interpretative and empathetic. For this study, I employed a qualitative interpretive methodology in order to "explore in detail social and organizational characteristics and individual behaviors and their meanings" (Lapan, 2011, p. 69).

Qualitative methodologies are "interested in uncovering the meaning of a phenomenon for those involved . . . [by] understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (Merriam, 2009, p. 5). This aligns with interpretive research approaches that aim to create meaning through "studies that endeavour to understand a community in terms of the actions and interactions of the participants, from their own perspectives" (Tobin, 2000, p. 487).

The theoretical framework (Chapter 3) presupposes a belief in the social construction of reality, which ties an individual's construction of reality to their

specific socio-political and cultural contexts. From an interpretivist perspective, what an individual sees as reality, or what exists, is constructed through that individual's context and/or culture. However while this perspective lends itself to criticism for assuming a value-free position, following the belief that "all constructs are equally important and valid" (Schram, 2006, p. 45) is not the same as suggesting that all constructs hold equal legitimacy. Therefore, the issue of legitimacy requires a critical examination as "what counts as worthwhile knowledge is determined by the social and positional power of the advocates of that knowledge" (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 32).

In other words, one's reality is constructed by the way one interacts and experiences the world and while it is important to recognise that while each reality is valid, it is equally important to be critically aware of the contradictions between the different social realities that can lead to the creation and perpetuation of inequality. In this study therefore, it is important to consider the social realities, or histories of the students, their lived experiences, and how this influences their interpretations of the social and educational world around them. This view aligns with resistance theorist Henry Giroux's (1983) suggestion for researchers to "link the behaviour under analyses with an interpretation provided by the subjects who display it" (p. 109).

Resistance theory holds that there are dominant structures in society operating to ensure a social reality based on power rather than 'truth', and social capital theory suggests that social relationships hold value and can be both a source of power and the result of being in power. Therefore, this examination of the social and educational fields of marginalised students is situated in a critical interpretivist paradigm as it seeks to uncover truth as it exists in "local and specific constructed and co-constructed realities" (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 193), whilst recognising that "all thought is fundamentally mediated by power relations that are socially and historically constituted" (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005, p. 305). The focus on histories and lived experiences led to the decision to use a narrative voice to present the participants' stories (Chapter 5) in a way which "foregrounds the 'voices' of participants and respects them as agentic and performative narrators" (West, 2013, p. 1). McMahon and McGannon (2016) argued that:

> … narrative provides researchers and the researched with the potential space to represent the complexity and range of embodied experience … [which should] be 'captured' and represented as complex, multi-dimensional,

multifaceted and layered embodied encounters … rather than just providing a one-dimensional story. (p. 98)

Whilst a critical interpretivist approach aligns the theoretical framework with methodological design, it is not easy to differentiate between the educational and social causes and effects of student resistance to formal education. Therefore, as this research holds both social and educational implications, the use of case study methodology is most appropriate (Merriam, 2009; Simons, 2009; Stake, 1995, 2006; Yin, 2009).

Defined as "a holistic inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its natural setting" (Harling, 2002, p.1), case study "explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information… and reports a case description and case themes" (Creswell, 2003, p. 97). According to VanWynsberghe and Khan (2007), whilst case study methodology can be situated within an interpretivist paradigm, where "reality is a social construct that emerges from the way in which individuals and groups interact and experience the world" (p. 8), it simultaneously affords us an opportunity to work within a critical paradigm to "detail a history of contradictions that has led to injustices" (p. 8). Therefore, case study is a research method well suited to exploring the relationships between equality and inequality, power and resistance, in order to gain a more in-depth awareness and understanding of social and educational inequality.

Robert Stake (1995, 2006) and Robert Yin (2009) are considered the key authors on case study methodology (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Cohen et al., 2011; VanWynsberghe & Khan, 2007) although they offer different methods of data analysis (Baxter & Jack, 2008), with Yin assuming a more analytical focus and Stake taking a more holistic perspective. Stake's emphasis on understanding the meaning behind participants' experiences situates him within an interpretivist paradigm, whilst Yin's approach to data analysis is more positivist, for example emphasising criteria for generalisability (Crowe et al., 2011), and therefore, while both Yin and Stake have much to offer to case study methodology, I found Stake's work much more suitable for the purposes of this qualitative research project. Case study is not in itself a strict method, as different researchers can use a case study design while employing different methods, including quantitative research methods (Bassey, 1999; Merriam, 2002; Simons, 2009; Stake, 1995, 2006; Yin, 2009). A review of the literature on case study design indicates the

salient features of case study as a real-life or holistic research approach (Crowe et al. 2011; Huberman & Miles, 2002; Merriam, 2009; Stake, 1995, 2006; Yin, 2009) and the use of multiple data sources (Stake, 1995, 2006, 2010; Yin, 2009).

Stake (1995, 2006) suggests there are three types of case studies, intrinsic, collective and instrumental. An intrinsic case study has as "the main and enduring interest… the case itself" (Stake, 2006, p. 8), whilst a collective case study draws together data from several sources (Stake, 1995). In an instrumental case study, the researcher attempts to gain insight into an issue beyond the actual case, for instance, when the researcher "selects a small group of subjects in order to examine a certain pattern of behaviour" (Zainal, 2007, p. 4).

Bourdieu describes the site in which different groups compete for power as a field, and in the context of this study the field is the relationship between the students and formal education. This study proposes that within this field, the demarcation between the social and the educational is blurred, and the ways in which the two competing groups come together, bringing with them different capitals, creates a social struggle. For some students, this struggle may manifest as acts of resistance, displayed across multiple physical sites but is most apparent where the two groups connect, within the boundaries of the Alternative Education Program.

Therefore, I have chosen to further refine the research design as a qualitative instrumental case study, as the research is interested in gaining insight into the social mechanisms involved in the manifestation of acts of resistance by these students in an AEP, rather than the AEP itself. Baxter and Jack (2008) describe an instrumental case study as being "used to accomplish something other than understanding a particular situation. It provides insight into an issue or helps to refine a theory. The case … plays a supportive role, facilitating our understanding of something else" (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 549). The life histories and experiences of the participants in this study and observations of the research setting play the "supportive role" in this study.

The natural boundaries (temporal, physical, enrolment) of the AEP impose limits on the students' relationship with formal education (the case), enabling the case to be defined as a 'bounded system' (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009; Stake, 2006). The bounded real-life context of the AEP allows for a holistic, in-depth examination of the social relationships and educational experiences of all of the participants in the program, specifically the students, with the aim of understanding the role social capital,

habitus and field play in the decisions of students to resist the education offered by the alternative program. The students' actions are generated from the interplay between field, habitus and capital. This aligns with Bourdieu's (1986) epistemology; the way we can know social capital is through the examination of the interplay between an individual's field, habitus and capital.

Therefore, in responding to what exists to be researched, how we can know about what exists, and why this research is important, a qualitative, instrumental case study was adopted, through it being suited to the theoretical framework of social capital within the field of education and being appropriate to my ontological position as a researcher.

4.3 RESEARCH QUESTION

The central research question, introduced in Section 1.3.1, is:

What role does social capital play in resistance to formal education by students attending alternative education programs?

The corollary questions that guide this research are:

What capitals are available within the field and does availability influence acts of resistance; and,

To what extent are the different forms of capital validated by the field and does validation influence acts of resistance?

As outlined in Chapter 3, this research is underpinned by a theoretical framework that posits a relationship between two central elements of the research question, social capital and educational resistance, that can be understood through the examination of capital, field and habitus. Student resistance towards formal education is generated by the students' habitus and can manifest as acts of resistance generated by the interplay between capital and habitus, which is, in turn, linked to the students' field history.

Therefore, this research is an examination of a complex and contextualised phenomenon, situated within a critical interpretivist paradigm, and best suited to a case study research design, allowing researchers to build social knowledge through the contextual interpretation of the subjective meanings those participants give to their life experiences. This knowledge can then be used to "understand, explain and demystify social reality through the eyes of different participants" (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 19)

which can then be used to inform the development of pedagogy and curriculum aimed at establishing critical resistance as both a social ontology and an epistemological approach.

4.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

This section presents details of the research setting and the participants of this study.

4.4.1 Research setting – The Indigo Centre

The context of this study is the Indigo Centre, an Alternative Education Program run by the Queensland Department of Education, Training and Employment (DETE) that offers intervention for 10 – 15 year old students with chronic histories of engaging in behaviours considered to be inconsistent with school success: truancy, non-compliance, vandalism, and physical and verbal abuse. Currently operating within the grounds of a mainstream primary school, it has operated in three other locations since the program began in 2000 and has only been in its present location since the middle of 2013. I was employed at the Indigo Centre as a teacher during this last relocation. Initially, the Indigo Centre began life in a house in a metropolitan suburb. The program was established in 2000 by the state government as part of the *Queensland State Education 2010* (QSE 2010) (Education Queensland, 2000) to cater for disengaged students. In 2004, the Indigo Centre was relocated for the first time when its original location was sold. This move saw the Indigo Centre operating out of a premise that also housed other education department services. It was relocated twice within these same premises. Various systemic and structural changes to the provision of education in Queensland saw a nearby department-owned building become vacant. The decision was made by DETE to relocate the Indigo Centre for a fourth time, to this facility, after a refurbishment.

This current iteration of the Indigo Centre operates as a "medium term, intensive support program for students aged 10-15 years who have or are at significant risk of disengaging from schooling and has a focus on improving the referred student's ability to be successful in school" (Behaviour Co-ordinator interview 1: 05/06/14). In order to improve students' ability to be successful, the Indigo Centre focuses on improving the students' skills in positive behaviour, engagement and participation, wellbeing, literacy, numeracy; and skills for learning. Table 4.1 illustrates how the day schedule

of the Centre compares to that of a typical day schedule in a mainstream school in the state of Queensland.

Table 4.1 *Comparison of a school day in the Indigo centre and a typical Queensland mainstream school*

A typical Queensland mainstream school	The Indigo centre
Students arriving at school are supervised but are under their own direction until school begins. There are usually a number of acceptable activities available and students can choose with what and whom they engage.	Students are under direction of staff as soon as they arrive. They are expected to engage in a staff chosen whole group activity.
Lessons times are defined. The start and end of lessons and breaks is signalled by bell/music.	Lessons times are flexible. Lessons start when staff believe students are ready. Start and finish of lessons is announced by the teacher.
Learning is timetabled – lessons start and finish at a pre-determined time. Changing the timetable usually requires negotiation across many staff.	The timetable is flexible and start and finish times can be changed easily and quickly.
Learning is structured by subject and/or learning areas and learning is sequential (builds on previous lessons).	Learning is structured around students' engagement in their preferred (games) or non-preferred activities (school work).
There are set times for eating/playing when staff supervise students but when students are expected to be under their own direction.	Students constantly under close supervision and direction from staff.

Non-contact time for staff (scheduled time when there is no contact with students – preparation time).	Staff have no non-contact time away from students.
Student learning progression is systemically assessed and graded.	No assessment is undertaken and no grades assigned.

The Indigo Centre is run by two permanent teachers and one-part time teacher aide and is supported by a visiting Art teacher and one part-time Guidance Officer. The academic program is also supported by a music program, run by the teacher aide. The staff are line-managed by a co-ordinator who works off-site and a management committee, consisting of Principals from a number of the region's state schools, which meets once a month to discuss operational procedures (see Figure 4.1, Governance Structure of the Indigo Centre). The program is funded centrally but connected to the regional behaviour support service.

The Centre is part of a broader government-provided service that also offers early intervention for students between the ages of seven and ten who exhibit challenging behaviours, and an Advisory Visiting Teacher (AVT) service that offers in-school support for low level behavioural issues. All services operate from the same physical location with some overlap; for instance, students attending the Indigo Centre may have received AVT and early intervention support at one stage.

One of the espoused (and documented) goals of the Centre is to provide an alternative, flexible educational pathway for students up until the end of their compulsory school period; however, the fact that it is run under the broader 'behaviour services' label, and operates within the same physical location as intensive behaviour programs, and the student cohorts of the different behavioural programs overlap, are all contextual elements that may produce some confusion as to the exact purposes of the program. The perceptions of staff working in the program are therefore crucial in furthering our understandings and it is important they are included in the research.

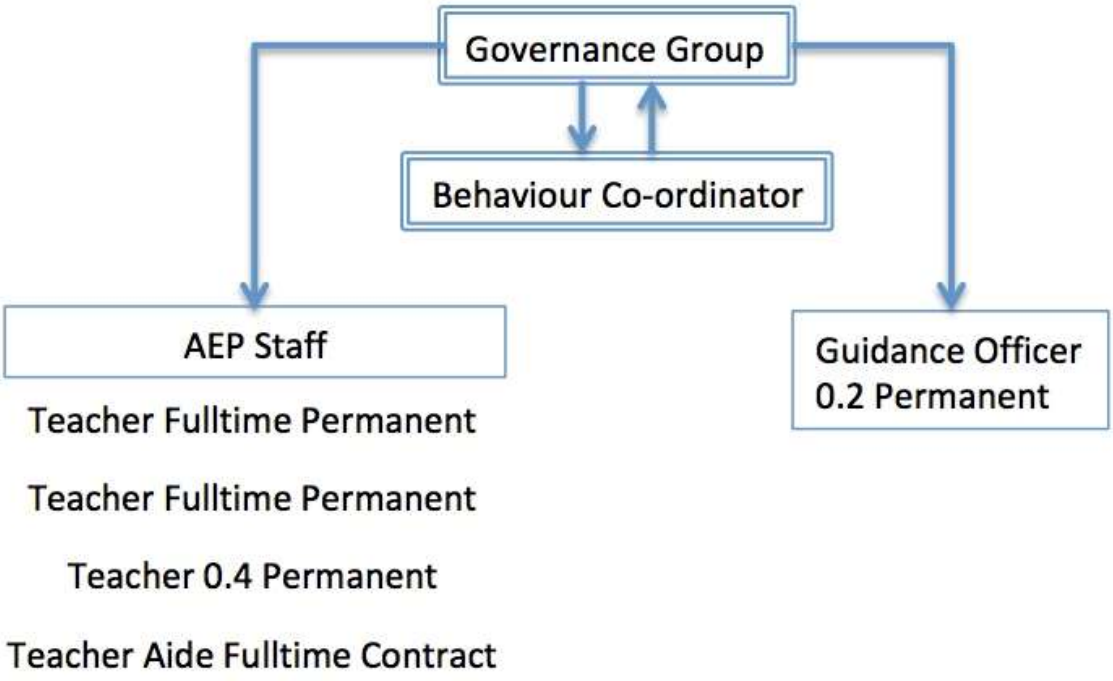

Figure 4.1 Governance structure of the Indigo centre

Schools wishing to refer students to the Indigo Centre initially send referral paperwork to the Behaviour Co-ordinator. Background information is collected usually through a telephone conversation with the contact person at the school. The referral is then tabled at a meeting of the Governance Group and either accepted, rejected or put on a wait list. While it is not documented as a policy, the Behaviour Co-ordinator explained that the only reasons a student referral would be rejected are if they posed a threat to the safety of others or there was a lack of available places.

When a referral is accepted, the Indigo Centre staff are notified by the Co-ordinator and meetings are scheduled with school, parent and student. At this meeting parents and students are taken through an orientation to the program, and attendance, transport and behaviour expectations are outlined. Generally, the students start within the following fortnight.

4.4.2 Participants

As Stake (1995, 2006) mentions, an instrumental case is determined through a careful selection to ensure productive outcomes, and although there was no formal sampling prior to the case being selected, it could be argued the sampling occurred through the researcher's involvement in the alternative education field. In a qualitative

case study, triangulation occurs through multiple perspectives and sources of data. Drawing on multiple sources of data enables trustworthiness, and drawing on data from different sources, permits identification of patterns and themes (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). Therefore, this study collected data from the various perspectives of members associated with the Indigo Centre.

The participants in this study comprised selected students in the Indigo Centre (Section 4.4.2.1), their parents/carers (Section 4.4.2.2) and teachers (Section 4.4.2.3). The researcher is also a participant with "insider" knowledge of the participants and the research setting (Section 4.4.2.4). As Stake (1995) observed, the researcher is a sort of biographer who observes and studies a particular aspect of the life of an individual/s.

4.4.2.1 Students

The student participants in this study had been referred to the Indigo Centre because of a range of behavioural concerns. They represent a non-randomised opportunistic sample. Because of this, I needed to consider the issue of student participation in the research from both the professional and the ethical perspective. Professionally, it is usually only parental permission that is required to complete tasks with students. It is generally accepted in schools that by attending on any given day, students have given their tacit approval to engage in all regular activities. Only for changes to regular routines is parental permission sought and rarely if ever, is student permission required.

However, ethically, to involve an individual in a research project requires the individual's understanding and approval. I was conscious that this in itself may prove to be challenging, as my previous experience had shown me that Indigo Centre students are fully aware that generally when a teacher "asks" a student to do something, it is less about giving the student a choice and more about wording an "order" nicely. Furthermore, the students invited to participate in the research project are not often willing participants in school tasks. Therefore, in the participant selection phase, I endeavoured to meet with each student to personally explain the research, their potential involvement, and to clarify any questions they may have, in order to make an informed decision as to whether they would be involved.

As the student enrolment at the Indigo Centre was spread across both morning and afternoon sessions, students from both programs were invited to participate in the research project. Interestingly, all the students attending the afternoon session declined to participate and the students who chose to participate were all attending the morning session. Table 4.1 introduces the seven students who agreed to participate. It also details their age, an abbreviated reason for referral, and period of enrolment and attendance pattern within the Centre. All participants were male.

Table 4.2 *Details of student participants*

Participants[1] (*N*=7)	Age[2]	Reason for referral[3]	Period enrolled at Indigo Centre[4]	Attendance (days per week)[5]
Victor	14 years 4 months	Absenteeism, verbal abuse	9 months	1
Neil	12 years 9 months	Violent behaviour	23 months	2
Michael	11 years 6 months	Non-compliance	11 months	4
Neville	13 years 7 months	Absenteeism, task refusal, leaving classroom without permission, verbal aggression	7 months	2
Eric	12 years 1 month	Physical aggression, verbal abuse	14 months	3
William	11 years 6 months	School refusal	14 months	3
Ewan	11 years 9 months	Anger, physical and verbal abuse	14 months	3

Notes to Table 4.2

1. Pseudonyms given to students who participated in the study.
2. Participants' age at time of data collection (May 2014)
3. Reasons for referral summarised from document analysis (see Section 4.5.1)

4. Period of enrolment at the Indigo Centre at the Indigo Centre (in months). Some participants have been enrolled in other Centres prior to their current enrolment or had flexible attendance arrangements within mainstream schools
5. This is the days of attendance required as part of the enrolment. The different days in attendance required for each student, combined with their absenteeism, created difficulties in completing all interviews and observations

4.4.2.2 Parents / Carers

Student involvement in the research relied on both their own informed consent and that of their parents or carers. Example consent forms for students and parents are provided in Appendix A and Appendix B respectively. Before approaching the Indigo Centre students, I had to make contact with and seek approval from the parents/carers as all were minors, that is, under 18 years of age. I also wanted to advise them of the research aims and objectives and invite parents to take participate. They were also given the opportunity to engage in dialogue to resolve any concerns they had with the research.

Almost all parents/carers I contacted — using details obtained from the staff at the Indigo Centre — responded positively to the idea of educational research involving themselves and their students. Establishing and maintaining effective communication with all the parents/carers, however, proved difficult due to mobility and changing phone and other contact details. The following anecdotes, describing three failed attempts at recruiting participants, illustrate the instability in the lives of many of these students and their families.

In the first instance, a student's mother declined to participate, citing the fact that she did not believe her son would be attending the Centre for much longer and that he was transitioning back to a mainstream school. At the start of the data collection period, the student was no longer in attendance at the Centre but neither had he transitioned back to mainstream school. I was unable to gain reliable information about this student's further connection in formal education or contact details for the family.

In the second instance, there was initial difficulty in contacting a student's parents. Several calls went to voice mail while others rang out. When contact was established, both parents agreed to be involved, expressing their favourable attitude towards the research project. However, the student's mother failed to attend either of the two meetings scheduled with her. Further phone communications led to her asking

for the consent forms to be mailed to a post office box and these were promptly returned signed. However, later phone calls were not answered and no further contact could be established with either parent. When data collection began, the student was no longer attending the Indigo Centre as, according to staff, his parents had discontinued his enrolment. I was unable to source reliable data on the student's further connection with formal education or contact details for his family.

The third instance concerned a student who was in foster care. In order to contact students living in care, I was advised by the Indigo Centre Co-ordinator to contact the Department of Communities. The process of establishing initial contact proved most arduous as despite many attempts to telephone, the caseworkers were unavailable. Once contact was finally established, my request to contact the students and invite them to participate was noted and I awaited approval from the Case Supervisor. This took several days and several more phone calls. I was finally granted permission to approach these students through their carers. While contacting the students' carers was straightforward, arranging times to meet was quite difficult and took quite some time to arrange. A meeting was arranged at a given time at the student's residence. I drove 21 kilometres arriving at the scheduled time to find no-one at home. I rang the carer's phone and received no answer. I waited in the car outside the residence for 30 minutes. Just as I was about to leave, the student and carer arrived home. The carer informed me that, despite the scheduled meeting, the student had decided he wished to go to the library and so they went to the library until he was ready to leave.

Table 4.2 introduces the parents/carers who agreed to participate in the study. It provides details of their connection to the student participants introduced in Table 4.1.

I had an existing positive relationship with Victor's mother (Rita) and Neil's parents (Lauren and Paul) as I had previously taught both students (see Section 5.2). Both sets of parents immediately expressed an eagerness to be involved. Meetings were arranged at the respective families' homes and informed consent was received from both parents and students.

Table 4.3 *Details of parent/carer participants*

Parent/Carer[1] (*N*=8)	Student (*N*=7)	Relationship to student
Rita	Victor	Mother
Lauren and Paul	Neil	Mother and Father
Tracey	Michael	Mother
Nigel	Neville	Father
Terase	Eric	Grandmother
Samantha	William	Mother
Von	Ewan	Mother

Notes to Table 4.3

1. Pseudonyms given to parents/carer who participated in the study

I made phone contact with Michael's mother (Tracey), and although we did not know each other, she told me that she knew who I was through her other child who had been at a school where I had worked. She expressed a favourable attitude towards the research but failed to attend any of the three meetings we arranged. While I had resigned myself to the possibility that Michael and Tracey may not participate in the research, I later received an email from one of the staff at the Centre stating that she had been asking about the research. Using the staff member as a point of contact, another meeting was arranged. I met with Michael and Tracey at the Indigo Centre and discussed the research; they both provided their written consent.

I was able to make contact with Neville's father, Nigel. Neville was in care but spent considerable time each week with his father and was transitioning back to reside with him. We arranged a meeting and discussed the research. Neville's father was very keen to be involved and so I left the consent forms with him to read and consider. A few days later, he called me to inform me that both Nigel and Neville had given their consent and I picked up the consent forms from their home.

I met Eric, also in care, and his carer at a local fast food outlet where we had a meal together. Eric recognised me from a previous school where I had taught and that he had attended several years ago. Eventually, happily, he gave his consent to

participate. His carer provided me with contact details for Eric's grandmother, Terase, and suggested she would be the most appropriate adult to participate. I contacted her and, after a brief meeting, she gave her consent although she expressed concern she may not know the answers to all questions I asked, as she only saw Eric occasionally since putting him in care.

William's mother, Samantha, was ill when I first made phone contact and, while introductions were made, no meeting was arranged. During our second telephone conversation a few days later, a meeting was arranged where I went to their house to meet with both Samantha and William. Whilst Samantha assured me that she was well, she appeared to me to be still quite ill. They both signed the consent forms. However, shortly after the initial interviews were conducted with both William and his mother, staff at the Indigo Centre informed me that Samantha had been hospitalised and William had been sent away to be cared for elsewhere. No further contact could be established.

I contacted Ewan's mother, Von, by phone and we arranged to meet during her lunchbreak from work. She was positive and seemed very interested in the aims of the research. She expressed a desire to be involved and asked to take the forms with her to read thoroughly to make sure she understood them before signing. A few days later, I received the signed consent forms for Von and Ewan via email.

4.4.2.3 Indigo centre staff

Throughout 2012 and 2013, when I worked at the Indigo Centre, I held regular meetings with all staff including the Behaviour Co-ordinator, in which I outlined the broad scope of the proposed research and the proposed level of involvement for staff if they wished to be involved. In 2014, once all the required approvals were obtained, I arranged a formal meeting with the staff through the Co-ordinator to formally explain the research project and formally request his written consent to conduct the research in the Centre. The approach letter to the Behaviour Co-ordinator and the example consent form are provided in Appendix C and Appendix D respectively. I had not worked at the Indigo Centre since the end of 2013; however, I had retained positive professional relationships with all staff and the meeting was quickly and easily arranged. However, at the time of the meeting only two of the staff could attend due to changing work commitments. Informed consent was received from these two staff (who were later given the pseudonyms, Tina and Oliver). Both expressed a keenness

to be involved and were hopeful that local research would assist them in providing the best support possible for their students. I attempted to make contact and gain informed consent from the other staff members, with informed consent gained from a further three staff, Richard (teacher aide), Edward (Behaviour Co-ordinator), and the Guidance Officer.

However, before data collection began, the Guidance Officer suffered an accident preventing her return to work and therefore she was not interviewed. The final staff member (Vivian - pseudonym) initially declined to participate in the research project, however after the classroom observations began, Vivian became interested in the research and then provided written consent to classroom observations and interview by conversation.

Once informed consent had been established, but prior to starting classroom observations, I met with the staff to discuss the pragmatics of the observations. As only those participants who had given consent could be observed, and not all students had done so, I had concerns as to how this would impact on the scheduling of the observations. Ultimately this did not present an obstacle. Fortuitously, the students who declined to participate did not attend at the same times as the students who were participating. This grouping of the students into two similar yet separate programs and the fact that this grouping coincided with students willing and unwilling to be involved in a research project in itself may have offered some valuable data. Unfortunately, without informed consent, this avenue of examination was not within the scope of this research project.

4.4.2.4 The Researcher

The researcher in this study is not a detached or objective observer (see Section 1.5). I was familiar with the setting, staff and the operations of the program due to prior work in the program and in local schools. I had previous direct experience with two participants (Victor and Neil) and indirect experience with Michael and Eric through the teaching of siblings or at the same school. By association, I also had a prior professional association with some of the parents/carers. This prior knowledge led me to the decision that attempting to remain completely "outside" of the classroom activities would be difficult and unnatural. I continued to liaise closely with staff to maintain balanced participation, which meant observing lessons without participating but at times participating in some games such as Uno.

At times, my knowledge of these participants, particularly of students and their respective parents/carers, and of the research setting has been used to fill in gaps in the data. This positions me as an "insider" and additional informant to the study.

My recounts, particularly as annotations to others' life histories or from my field notes, adopt a first-person narrative voice. This approach also allows my voice to be heard in a similar way to Yip's (2013) research. She argued that this made her work more transparent and allowed her to "include more possibilities in revealing ... [her] experiences" (p. 126). The analysis therefore takes on the character of witnessing, described by Ropers-Huilman (1999) as being "when we participate in knowing and learning about others, engage with constructions of truth, and communicate what we have experienced to others" (p. 23).

At all times, I maintained a professional research approach by choosing a location at the back of the class where I could observe without interrupting or distracting anyone. I recorded any questions I had during classes and used break times to ask questions of staff. I negotiated my arrival and departure times with staff and kept them informed of my movements.

4.5 DATA COLLECTION

Yin (2009) explained that the main sources of data used in qualitative case studies are interviews, direct observation, documents and archival records. The data collection methods adopted by this study, namely, document analysis (Section 4.5.1), focus groups (Section 4.5.2), individual interviews (Section 4.5.3) and direct observation (Section 4.5.4), align with general qualitative methodology approaches.

4.5.1 Document analysis

"Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents" (Bowen, 2009, p.27). Using documents as a data source can be useful to determine the culture of an organisation (Simons, 2009), although some issues can arise over the validity and reliability of some documents as well as the confidentiality of some of the contained information (Denscombe, 2014). Over the course of the data collection period, relevant school level documents were gathered to support the data collected through observation and interviews. The content of the documents also enhanced understandings of the culture of the program, specifically the structures of

the educational field, the relationships between the staff, students, rules or expectations, and the set learning tasks.

Table 4.3 details the documents reviewed which provided background data for each of the student participants. These included referral, enrolment and medical forms, and in the Indigo Centre are collectively referred to as a *student file*. In this thesis, I shall also use this term when referring to these collective documents.

Table 4.4 *Documents relating to student behaviour and achievement*

Document	Description
Referral forms	Completed by previous schools, includes school history, academic and behavioural history and the reason for referral to Indigo Centre
Enrolment forms	Outlines expected behaviours, roles and responsibilities and operational procedures. Requires students and parent signature – legal requirement
Medical forms	Indicates any medical issues – Requires parent signature – legal requirement
Communication	Emails, record of phone contact, meetings
Behaviour Contract	Signed statement of behaviour expectations – explained to and signed by students agreeing to meet the expectations
Parent interviews	Record of any interviews with parents
External organisations' reports	Reports of assessments/interventions carried out by agencies other the Department of Education and Training
Standardised Testing Reports	Results of any standardised testing undertaken by students
School-based assessment reports	Results of any non- standardised testing undertaken by students
Student work	Samples of the work undertaken by students at the Indigo Centre
Incident Forms	Documentation of any crisis situations that occur
Case Notes	Daily anecdotal evidence of students' progress

The case notes and incident reports provided contemporaneous data relating to the types of behaviour, including acts of resistance, that the participants engaged in. These case notes also provided evidence of the types of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours (and the ensuing consequences) in the Indigo Centre. Table 4.4 provides details of the documents that inform and guide the daily operations of the Centre.

Table 4.5 *Documents relating to organisation and operations*

Document	Description
Department of Education, Training and Employment Strategic Plan 2014 – 2018	Articulates strategic vision of the department for all schools in terms of deliverable outcomes, targeted strategies and performance indicators
Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students	Describes high standards of behaviour required so that the learning and teaching can be effective
2014 Program Manual	Sets out the operational procedures of the Indigo Centre
Daily timetable	Sets out the schedule for the day
Curriculum documents	Pertaining to the academic work, the teaching and learning, undertaken in the Indigo Centre
Lockdown procedures	Procedures to be followed in a crisis when Indigo Centre students' and staff safety may be at risk

4.5.2 Focus groups

The use of focus groups has a long-standing association with research in the social sciences. From its early use by Bogardis in the 1920s (Kitzinger, 1994) to the popular works of Merton, Fiske, & Kendall in the 1990s (Krueger, 1994), the use of focus groups as a methodology has developed as a way to use the interactions of a group to generate data (Merton et al., 1990; Morgan, 1996). It is also a way to "provide access to participants' meanings and conceptualisations as they interrogate and debate the issues raised" (Barbour, 2007, p. 111). The use of focus groups offers the potential for more data to be generated between participants than can be generated by individual interviews.

In this study, two focus groups were conducted, one with the students and one with the teachers. Having two focus groups allowed light to be shed on the interactions *within* these groups in order to support data collected on the interactions *between* these two groups during the daily operations of the program. Unlike the teachers and students, the parent body was not a connected group, they did not spend a considerable amount of time together or with other groups, and therefore I made the decision not to conduct a focus group with the parents.

The unit of analysis for this case study is the perceptions of the students, and Kitzinger (1995) stated that focus groups are "particularly useful for exploring people's knowledge and experiences and can be used to examine not only what people think but how they think and why they think that way" (p. 299). Barbour and Kitzinger (1999) suggested that focus groups offer a positive and supportive method when researching hard-to-reach groups, while Bloor, Frankland, and Thomas (2001) indicated the value of focus groups in examining the process of decision making. Furthermore, the use of focus groups offers value in understanding a targeted group's thinking and experiences of contested topics (Clark, 2009; Hughes & Dumont, 1993).

In reference to the theoretical framework guiding this research, the use of focus groups played an important role in the examination of a field within a field, that is, the interactions, including attitudes and decision-making processes, of and between marginalised students as they navigate a social field that has been constructed within an educational field. While the group of students, and similarly the teachers, attending the Indigo Centre constitutes a social field, this is not a social group that would have necessarily developed naturally, despite some similar characteristics, without the outside influence of an educational system that refers disparate students to occupy the same time and space and employs adults to collectively staff the program.

Given the dynamics of the student group within the study, the use of a focus group for this research raised specific issues for the participant selection process, as it was important to understand the individual needs of the students and consider how the involvement of individual students might affect the dynamic of the entire group. This was an area that required significant consideration, as the use of a focus group "capitalises on communication between research participants in order to generate data" (Kitzinger, 1995, p. 299), and careful participant selection was paramount in ensuring that the group had the ability to discuss topics without the situation becoming

unmanageable due to arguments and inappropriate behaviour. The participant selection process for the focus group was therefore informed by the current attendance figures, guided by the document analysis, and determined in collaboration with the program staff.

Within the literature, the recommended size of a focus group varies from four to 20 participants (Howard, Hubelbank, & Moore, 1989; Kitzinger, 1995; Merton et al., 1990; Stewart & Shamdasani, 2014) and while this falls within the range of students attending the Alternative Education Program of 8 – 12 students, group size was limited by a number of factors. Only those students who provided written consent to participate could be invited to participate in the focus group, with that number reduced further for any students for whom the document record on the student and information from the program staff indicated a possibility of serious obstacle to discussion or group safety. Whilst neither the document analysis nor the program staff revealed a need to limit focus group participation, on the actual day of the focus group, although the focus group consisted of only six students, program staff did decide it would be prudent to stay in close proximity to the group due to some behavioural issues displayed by two of the students in recent days. Although the focus group was conducted without any major issues occurring, the possibility led to careful consideration of the final number of students invited to the focus group.

Student Focus Group

The student focus group was conducted at the Indigo Centre and although I envisaged the session would last approximately 45 minutes, its duration was considerably shorter (20 minutes 47 seconds), ending when the students became restless. Throughout the focus group, I had continually monitored the participants' mood, responses and body language. When the students began to appear restless, swinging on chairs, and making negative comments about each other, I decided that continuation of the focus group would not have been beneficial for the students' wellbeing, nor for the further generation of meaningful data.

Six students participated, namely, Victor, Neil, Michael, Eric, William and Ewan. Neville did not take part. His carers telephoned the staff to advise he was refusing to attend. The student focus group was audio-recorded and I took field notes in my journal.

I had prearranged the time with the staff to cause the least amount of disruption to their program and this meant that two students (Neil and Victor) were not scheduled to be in attendance at the time of the focus group. Several days prior to the focus group, I contacted these two students and their family and arranged to pick them up and bring them to the Centre for the focus group and then take them home. As we arrived at the Centre, William was leaving, walking up the road. Neil yelled out to him and he returned, visibly angry. He informed us that he was off, leaving the Centre as they (staff) were annoying him. Neil tried to encourage him to return and participate in the focus group, however I felt it pertinent to check with the staff as to what had happened and if he was able to return. Victor and I went inside where I conferred with the staff regarding William staying for the focus group.

The staff said he had chosen to leave on his own accord and suggested that this was just the normal volatility experienced within the group; a student storming out of the building was expected behaviour. The staff said they had no objection to his returning and participating in the focus group. I went outside and spoke with him and while he seemed eager to leave, with considerable encouragement from Neil, he agreed to stay and participate in the focus group.

The student focus group began with my introducing myself and outlining the structure of the proceedings to generate participants' familiarity with the topic matter (Parker & Tritter, 2006). Each participant was then given an opportunity to introduce himself. The boys began to laugh at this and it occurred to me that perhaps this laughter was generated from slight embarrassment at what they saw as an "odd" request to introduce themselves when they all knew each other. I explained the introductions were for the audio-recording but the introductions had stalled.

I then started reading the vignette I had selected as a stimulus to the discussion (Figure 4.2) and the students were invited to respond (see Appendix F for full vignette). They were asked for their thoughts regarding the actions, and motives behind the actions, of characters in the vignette and the impact these actions have on others. I had decided to use a vignette, a fictional scenario, as the catalyst for discussion with the students (Jenkins, Bloor, Fischer, Berney & Neale, 2010; Steiner & Atzmüller, 2016). It is a validated technique founded in the simple notion of putting yourself in the place of another. Responses to a vignette ask participants to:

> …. search … [their] memory for similar actions of … [their] own and, finding such, can draw from them a general principle concerning the relation of their in-order-to and because-motives. … [They] can then assume that this principle holds true for the other person's actions as well as for … [their] own and can proceed to interpret the other person's actions by "putting himself in …[his/her] place.
>
> (Schutz, 1967, p. 174)

Using vignettes can assist in alleviating defensiveness attributed to participants' personalising the topics (Clark, 2009; Jenkins, et al., 2010). To elicit accurate responses and to generate rich data, the vignette must be plausible and relate to the participants' lived experience rather than those "than those which invite astonishment, incredulity or disbelief" (Jenkins et al., 2010, p. 19). Benedetti, Jackson, & Luo (2018) contended that "implausible vignettes can result in negative reactions from participants, including feelings of confusion, distress, embarrassment, anger, or disinterest" (p. 224). The spontaneous laughter from the students when asked to introduce themselves is an instance of perceived implausibility.

Figure 4.2 presents an excerpt of the vignette (see Appendix F for full vignette) developed to reflect the research context and the lived experience of the students. It was based on Clark's (2009) use of vignettes in interviews.

If Albert rides his skateboard to school, he has to lock it in office until 3pm. When he goes to school he likes Science and Sport. He likes sport but not all the games that they have to play for sport. Sometimes the games the teacher picks aren't as good as others. Sometimes they involve lots of running, even when it's hot. Sometimes Albert just sits out and doesn't play even though he knows he can get in trouble for that. Sometimes they have to do writing and reading and maths and Albert isn't that good at that. Some maths is fun though but Albert isn't always sure what to do and he doesn't like it when the other kids know that. The school has a dress code and Albert is always told he can't wear his clothes. Sometimes it's just easier to stay at the skate park where he doesn't get in trouble.

Figure 4.2 Excerpt from vignette used in the student focus group

Participants were asked to create future or alternative scenarios for the characters. I played a facilitator role in the discussion with an emphasis on staying on topic. At the conclusion of the focus group, the students left the room and joined into the regular tasks for the day. William said he was still leaving and requested a lift home from me, however when the staff said this was not in line with procedure, he swore and he walked off visibly annoyed. I took Neil and Victor home (I had parent permission for these two but not for William) and returned to the Centre.

Teacher Focus Group

The Teacher Focus Group was conducted at the Indigo Centre at the end of the day after the students had left. Three teachers (Tina, Oliver, Richard) took part. The teachers and I sat in the office and I asked an open-ended question about students in general and the reasons why they might be referred to the Centre. The question, what are some of the reasons the students are referred here? prompted considerable discussion which I guided through more specific prompts about the progress students make in the program. The focus group lasted only 28 minutes with Tina contributing more to the discussion than Oliver and Richard.

A potentially powerful outcome of focus groups is the generation of serendipitous data (Stewart & Shamdasani, 2014) whereby the group discussion yields unexpected insights into a topic. In this instance, Tina's dominating the conversations and her reasons for that revealed a power dynamic between the staff. Tina justified her dominance in a later interview stating that the other two don't talk much so she feels she has to do all the talking.

4.5.3 Interviews

Interviews offer an opportunity to "understand the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make from that experience" (Seidman, 2013, p. 9). Cohen et al. (2011) suggested that open-ended interviews offer a more culturally sensitive approach when researching socially marginalised and/or minority participants. The open-ended structure emphasises the participants' "voice", an oft-ignored element, thus aligning data collection with the emancipatory ethos of the study. Further, semi-structured interviews "afford the researcher the opportunity to "elicit additional data if initial answers are vague, incomplete, off topic, or not specific enough" (Mackey & Gass, 2016, p. 225).

I conducted semi-structured interviews with students, teachers and students' family members in the four weeks between April 2014 and May 2014. As the interview times and locations were arranged at the convenience of the participants, most were conducted at the Indigo Centre. Most parents/carers found this easier as they had to drop off and pick students up there regularly. Some parents chose to be interviewed at home (as did two of the older students) and one parent asked for me to conduct the interview at her workplace during her lunch hour. Teachers were interviewed at the Indigo Centre either before or after the workday began. Teachers and parents were all happy to be interviewed and keen to voice their thoughts.

The interviews followed a design described by Seidman (2013), consisting of a three-interview structure (see Table 4.5). Sample interview questions are provided in Appendix G. Seidman (2013) credited the original design to Dolbeare and Schuman (Schuman, 1982, as cited in Seidman, 2013) and suggested the structure situates or contextualises the participant's experiences. Following on from Seidman's (2013) work, I planned to conduct the three interview sequence over a four-week period for each participant. This can reduce the influence of the immediate environment on interview outcomes.

Table 4.6 *Three step interview structure (adapted from Seidman, 2013)*

Interview #	Aim/ Focus
Interview 1	to explore the life history of participant, that is, past experiences in school
Interview 2	to gather details of present lived experiences, thoughts and perceptions of formal education
Interview 3	to encourage the participants to reflect on their understanding of the experience of schooling and education

My previous experience working in the Indigo Centre had given me an insight into the often-tumultuous environment in which the students lived and, if the interviews were scheduled too close together, there was a possibility that life events, ill health, family issues could affect the validity of data. However, despite this interview structure, environmental factors such as ill health and mobility did, indeed,

exert some influence on the interviews, with some participants not being interviewed three times (see Tables 4.6, 4.7, and 4.8). Furthermore, over the course of the data collection period, the interview structure for the students changed from a formal semi-structured interview to conversational interviews that were conducted as we completed tasks such as Scrabble or card games.

Interviews were recorded and transcribed within 48-72 hours to ensure the capturing of the contextual aspects of the raw data. Field notes were recorded to describe key environmental/contextual aspects that impacted on the interview (Creswell, 2012; Maxwell, 1996).

A total of 16 student interviews were conducted with seven students. Four participants (Victor, Neil, Michael and Neville) took part in all three interviews. The volatility of student circumstances and their behaviours prevented the others completing the planned set of interviews. Table 4.6 summarises participation and completion of student interviews.

Table 4.7 *Student interviews*

Participants (*N*=7)	# Interviews *(N=16)*	Interview 1 *(n=7)*	Interview 2 *(n=5)*	Interview 3 *(n=4)*
Victor	3	✓	✓	✓
Neil	3	✓	✓	✓
Michael	3	✓	✓[1]	✓[1]
Neville	3	✓	✓	✓[1]
Eric	1	✓[2]	X[3]	X[3]
William	1	✓	X[4]	X[4]
Ewan	2	✓	✓	X[4]

Notes to Table 4.7

1. Interview by conversation
2. Conducted with Ewan
3. Student refused to participate in the interview
4. Unable to be contacted

Table 4.8 summarises the details of the semi-structured and additional interviews held with Indigo Centre staff. Two of the three completed all three interviews and additional information was gathered from informal interviews by conversation.

Table 4.8 *Teacher interviews*

Participants (*N*=X)	Interview 1 *(n=4)*	Interview 2 *(n=3)*	Interview 3 *(n=2)*	Additional interviews
Tina	✓	✓	✓	Interview by conversation
Oliver	✓	✓	✓	Interview by conversation
Richard	✓	✓	✓[1]	
Edward	✓	X	X	
Vivian	X	X	X	Interview by conversation

Notes to Table 4.8

1. Cancelled through teacher illness

Table 4.9 summarises the interviews held with the parents/carers of the students participating in the study. A total of 18 interviews were conducted with 8 parents/carers.

Table 4.9 *Parent/Carer interviews*

Parent/Carer[1] (*N*=8)	Student (*N*=7)	Relationship	Interview 1 (*n=7)*	Interview 2 (*n*=6)	Interview 3 (*n*=5)
Rita	Victor	Mother	✓	✓	✓
Lauren and Paul	Neil	Mother/Father	✓	✓	✓
Tracey	Michael	Mother	✓	✓	X[1]
Nigel	Neville	Father	✓	✓	✓
Terase	Eric	Grandmother	✓	✓	✓
Samantha	William	Mother	✓	X[2]	X[2]
Von	Ewan	Mother	✓	✓	✓

Notes to Table 4.9

1. Unable to be conducted
2. Unable to be contacted (illness)

4.5.4 Observations and field notes

Observation as research requires the researcher to engage in a systematic method of looking and noting the behaviours of others (Cohen et al., 2011). Observations differ from interviews as they are naturally occurring and are witnessed firsthand (Merriam, 2009). Observation techniques can range from participant researcher to non-participant researcher (Creswell, 2003; Simons, 2009). The data provided by observations in this study are primarily descriptive; observations are important as a method to support the findings from other data sources as well as for merging data sources to create the thick descriptions that constitute a major strength of qualitative research. Observations can uncover the unwritten rules or social norms of a group or field (Simons, 2009) and can be used to give voice to marginalised individuals. Furthermore, observations can also "provide specific incidents, behaviours, and so on that can be used as reference points for subsequent interviews" (Merriam, 2009, p. 119). In this way, the use of observation as a data collection tool was particular useful

for my research in allowing later interviews to benefit from insight into the different meanings that participants gave to specific incidents I had observed.

Direct observations were conducted across 18 days over a 4-week period. A primary record of field notes was kept during the observation period. Field notes consisted of written observations, including diagrams of seating arrangements, and audio recordings of my thoughts regularly throughout the day. Data collected described interactions between staff, between staff and students, and between students and students. Data were also collected on adherence by both teachers and students to the espoused behaviour expectations (as identified through document analysis). As noted, due to the consent of only some students being provided, direct observations could only be conducted in the morning program, between 9 am and 1pm.

Observations, recorded as field notes, were written as first-person narratives and informed the discussion and analysis in this study. A description of a typical session at the Indigo Centre, based on observation, is presented in Chapter 5, in Section 5.5.1.

4.6 DATA ANALYSIS

As explained in Chapter 3, via a thorough investigation of field, social capital, habitus and symbolic violence, this research aimed to examine and understand the influence of social capital on resistance to education by marginalised students attending the Alternative Education Program and, therefore it is these concepts, along with considerations of ethics and data management, that guided data analysis. Thematic analysis is one of the main data analysis methods used in qualitative research (Grbich, 2013, Vaismoradi et al., 2016) and can be described as an inductive process of recovering embodied meaning from participants' descriptions of their lived experiences (van Manen, 2016).

Data analysis involved the organisation of data, guided by the conceptual framework, to facilitate the uncovering of meaning (Maxwell, 1996; Simons, 2009). Data was organised initially according to data collection methods and then arranged and coded against the unit of analysis using the concepts as described in Chapter 3. Appendix H indicates the alignment of the research question with data sources and analysis foci.

When considering the primary focus of the different data collection methods employed, it was prudent to initially separate and apply two distinct approaches to data

analysis, one for focus group data and another for the analysis of data collected from other sources. Kitzinger (1994, 1995) and Freeman (2006) suggested that for focus group data, analysis not only of the interactions between participants but the types of interactions, is essential to gain maximum benefit. These interactions are an inherent feature of focus groups, and therefore focus group data analysis primarily considered interactions between participants whilst other data, interview and observations, focussed more on attitudes and perceptions.

Data analysis can be problematic due to potentially large amounts of data and procedures that are implemented to ensure efficient, effective and ethical use of the data. To assist my interpretation and reporting of data, and to ensure the existence of an audit trail, I employed a process of systematic data analysis, following the model (Figure 4.3) outlined by Creswell (2003). To structure my own thinking, I likened this model to a spiral, progressively focusing my thinking as I spiralled down into the data, conducting several data passes to draw to the surface the salient features of the data (Cohen et al., 2011).

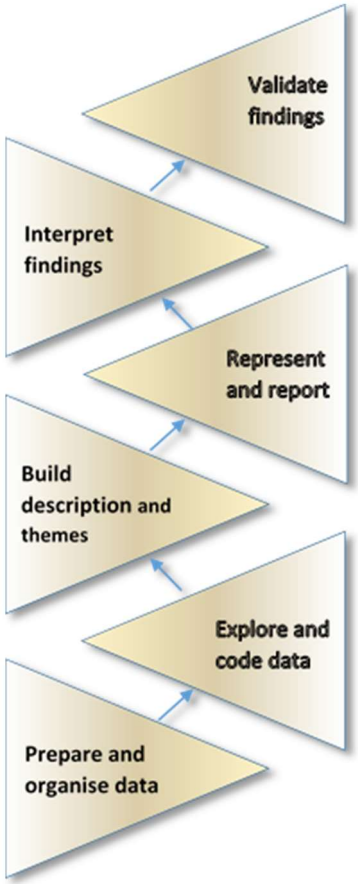

Figure 4.3 Data analysis model used for data analysis (Creswell, 2012)

Prepare and organise data

Throughout the data collection period, audio-recordings were made of individual interviews, focus groups and observations as well as my own thoughts and comments on specific events. I kept detailed records in a journal of the interviews conducted and observations undertaken and, at the end of each day, the audio files were downloaded to computer and backed up. Using a software program, *Sound Organizer*, the original audio files were arranged into relevant categories of students, teachers, parents, interviews and focus groups.

The interview and focus group audio files were then transcribed using a professional transcription service. These were then formatted as per the example (Figure 4.4) with two columns, one for transcribed text and one for my comments, with each turn numbered and with speakers differentiated for easy identification. These were then printed, single-sided and stapled.

Speaker 2:	I fix some of my mates' helicopters now.	
Speaker 1:	How did you learn to do that?	
Speaker 2:	Pretty much just smashing mine apart and putting it back together when I crash it.	
Speaker 1:	Did anyone show you? Is there any stuff you don't understand you've got to get some help?	
Speaker 2:	No, usually I just sit there and have a think, watch TV, then it just pops in my head and then I'll do it.	
Speaker 1:	Okay. Have you ever asked anyone for help?	
Speaker 2:	No.	
Speaker 1:	Do you go out to the shop where you bought it from and ask them what to do?	
Speaker 2:	No, I don't buy it.	

Figure 4.4 Example of an interview transcript

The audio files of my own comments were not transcribed, nor were the audio files of classroom observation. I chose not to transcribe the recordings of the classroom

observation as they included considerable cross-talk of different people and classroom background noises. As I had taken field notes during the observations, including noting the time of specific events, I analysed the audio-recordings in conjunction with my field notes as it was more effective than attempting to use transcriptions containing considerable cross-talk. After conducting some interviews and observations I had recorded my own thoughts as a quicker method than writing; however, these were short recordings, sometimes just suggestions for myself to follow and therefore I chose not to have these transcribed. They were however uploaded and copies were backed up on computer.

Explore and code the data

The literature suggests best practice is to begin data analysis as soon as data collection begins (Cohen et al., 2011; Grbich, 2013; Huberman & Miles, 2002) and this meant that the first reading, or data pass, was in the order in which interviews and focus groups were conducted. I read all the transcriptions, making notes in the column as I read (see Figure 4.5).

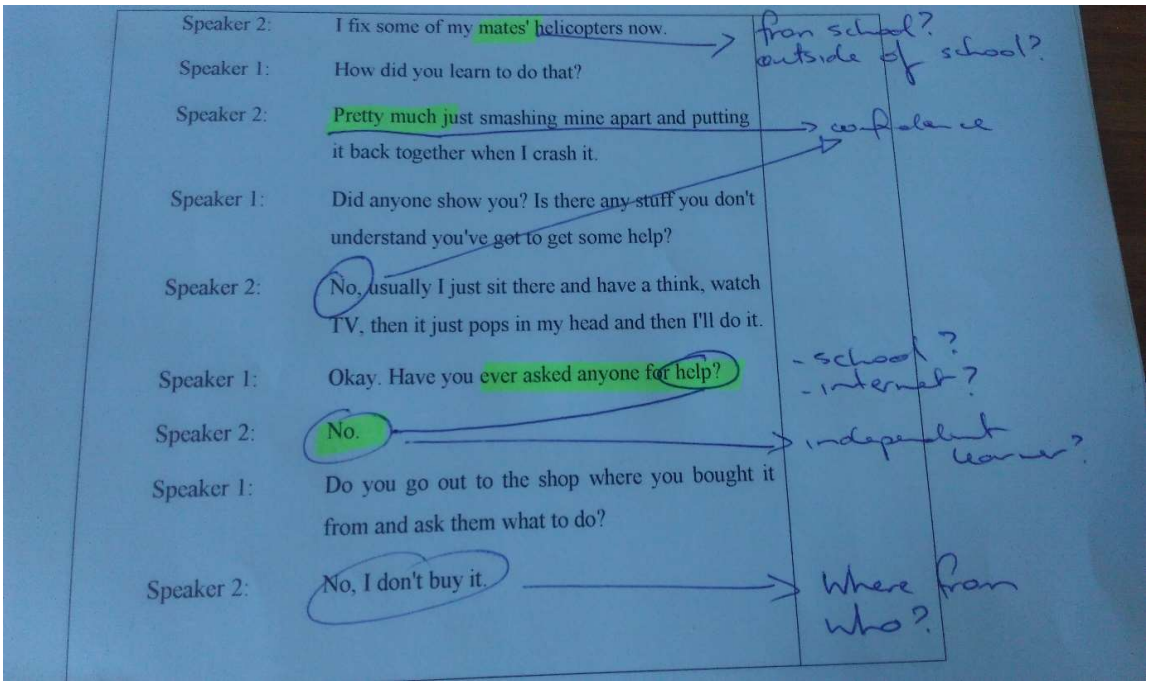

Figure 4.5 Example of initial data analysis

Some of the data gathered in this initial data pass were used to inform and further refine observations and interviews. For example, in the interview transcript shown in Figure 4.5, I made a note regarding this student as an independent learner. During

subsequent classroom observations I looked for further evidence or behaviours regarding the type of learning the student engaged in or tried to engage in.

I then began coding the data. Coding, "as the process of data reduction is an element of data organization in most qualitative approaches" (Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen & Snelgrove, 2016, p. 103), can be understood as deconstructing the data and rearranging it in a way that can be grouped, or themed, and compared for frequency, similarities and differences (Maxwell, 1996; Polit & Beck, 2010). Coding is "segmenting and labelling text to form descriptions and broad themes" (Creswell, 2012, p. 243). In undertaking coding, I "segregated, grouped, regrouped and relinked in order to consolidate meaning" (Grbich, 2007, p. 21).

It was at this stage that I had originally intended to move from reading and re-reading the data for analysis to employing the aid of qualitative data analysis software such as NVivo 10, and had undertaken a two-day training workshop on NVivo before starting data collection and analysis. However, despite the intent to use this software, after beginning the initial data analysis through close text reading, I felt a sense of close comprehension of the data that I did not experience when I started utilising NVivo software. The "hands on" feel of manual analysis made the data feel alive, with multiple categories emerging as I read and re- read, and I chose to continue with manual analysis as I felt a need to be close to the data in order to make sense of it (Vaismoradi et al., 2016).

During this phase I continued to read documents such as the student files and case notes. After data collection was complete, I began again and re-read all the data that had been collected. For this second data pass, or data reading, I arranged the work flow by student, reading first the student's interview and then that student's parent interviews. I read line by line, refining my comments as I read. Then, using *Sound Organizer*, a computer software program enabling me to easily pause, move forwards and backwards through the audio recordings, I listened to the recordings of the classroom observations as I consulted my field notes, making further comments in my journal, in a different coloured pen and timestamping the audio-recording as it corresponded with the field journal comments.

A code can be "a word or short phrase [or sentence] which symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence … for a portion of language based data" (Saldana, 2013. p.3). While I began with a list of pre-set codes guided by the research question and the

theoretical framework, I also purposely prolonged the data analysis phase, arranging and rearranging the order in which I viewed the transcripts, documents and audio files so as to allow further codes to emerge inductively from within the data (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014), in an attempt to reduce researcher bias (Simons, 2009) as well as looking for data that appeared to be contradictory, or any data that were interesting or anomalous.

Table 4.10 *Example of codes used in analysis*

Pre- set codes	Emerging codes
Friendships	Choice/control
Networks	Allegiance/loyalty
Self-perception as a learner	Aspirations
Rules	Resentment
Decision-making	Trivialisation
Resistance towards school	
Sources of capital	
Validation	
Co-construction of power	

I undertook a line-by-line or detailed approach as described by van Manen (2016), examining sentences, sentence clusters, statements and phrases for salient features that align with the analysis foci (Appendix H). The first step of descriptive coding requires limited interpretation of the data (Saldana, 2009), simply reading through and highlighting sections of text and writing the codes in the adjacent column. Codes used ranged from the very general, such as *rules* to the more specific codes, such as *co-construction of power*. After descriptive coding, I re-read the transcripts, attempting to understand what was going on for the participants and to move towards analytical coding (see Figure 4.6).

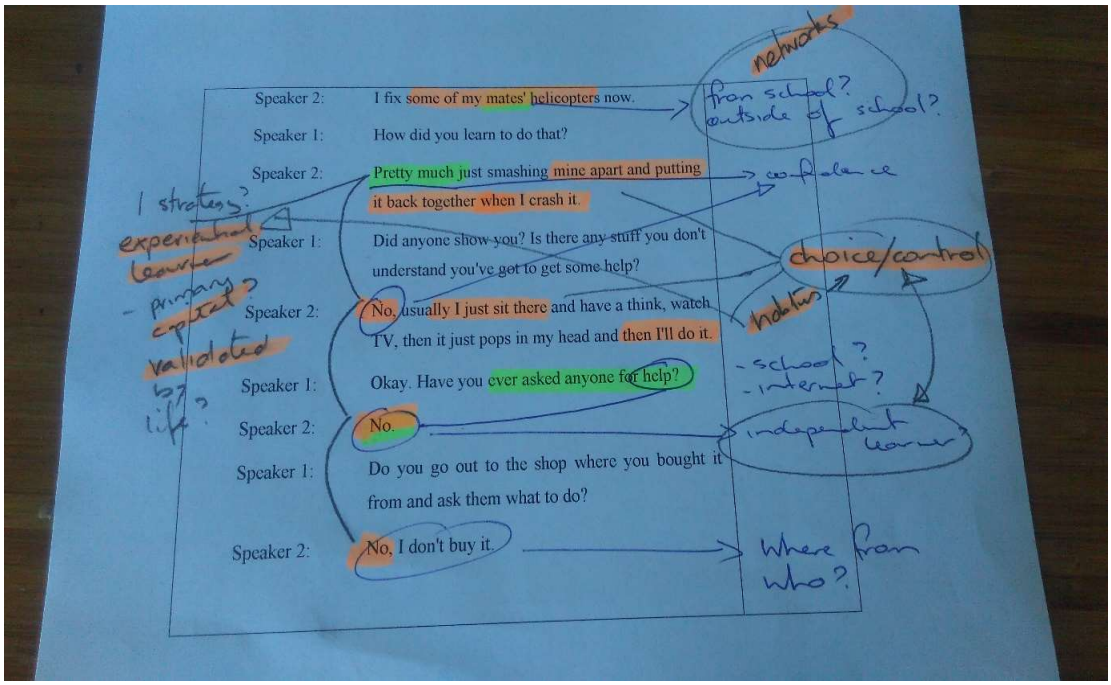

Figure 4.6 Example of data analysis – coding

For example, as in Figure 4.6 I began to code (highlighted in orange) the student's interview transcript using pre-set codes. During this process other codes began to emerge from the data itself.

Build description and themes

In this step, I was looking to build categories and as Stake (1995) argues, to consider the differential data that can be generated through categorical aggregation and/or direct interpretation of individual occurrences, that is, seeking to interpret and understand the importance of both types of data; that which occurs often enough to create a category; and that which occurs once, as both types offer potentially important new meanings (Stake, 1995).

Categorising the codes, while informed by the theoretical framework and research focus, is "largely an intuitive process" (Merriam, 2009, p. 183). In this step, I re-focussed from my line-by-line analysis and began to look for relationships and patterns between the codes, for instance, the frequency with which some codes occurred, or whether different codes all represented a similar underlying concept. As I grouped codes into clusters, I initially did so without concerning myself with the names of the groups of codes. As the groups of codes grew, names emerged from the

cluster of codes, such as *aspirations* and *alliances,* and I began to form categories looking for patterns, overlap of meaning or connections (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Table 4.11 *Examples of categories*

Categories
Alliances with people (forced/needed)
Relationships with people (desired)
Recognising others' intent
Relationships to school work
External expectation/ways of behaving
Internal expectations/ways of behaving
Acceptance of status quo

Categories are ideas "directly expressed in the text" (Vaismoradi et al, 2016, p. 102), and I continued to further refine the categories, combining them where necessary and disaggregating if required. For example, an initial category was *group membership*, which I later disaggregated into two categories - a*lliances with people* and r*elationships with people* (see Table 4.11). I made this distinction based on the observable output of the group membership, such as two students talking about their weekend (relationship); two students encouraging each other to tease a third student (alliance).

My aim in this step was to use "coding, categorization, and analytic reflection" (Saldana, 2009, p. 24) to build themes that addressed the research question, as well as remaining open to identifying themes that may prove contrary. Analysing the categories against the theoretical framework, four interrelated themes emerged.

Represent and report

This step involved analysing the themes against the theoretical framework in Chapter 3 and establishing the relationship between the themes to the theory and the literature. To assist in the deeper analysis and interpretation of the data, I collated the themes into several visual organisers to create and represent categories of thought and

initial understandings (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014). Through this process, layers of abstraction began to emerge and the sophistication of the connections, or relationships became apparent. The major themes are recognition and resistance. The minor themes related to *recognition* are:

- (what are) legitimate capitals (within the field)
- (what are) illegitimate capitals (within the field).

The minor themes relating to *resistance* are:

- towards the recognition of some capitals over others
- as a co-construction.

Interpreting findings

Interpretation is "making sense of the findings" (Creswell, 2012, p. 257), and the analytical and interpretative work undertaken in this phase is articulated in Chapters 5 and 6 of this thesis. The narrative discussion of these chapters weaves the major and minor themes together with the literature and the theoretical framework presented in Chapters 2 and 3. The use of narrative to present the teachers' and students' stories is based on Connelly and Clandinin's (1990) assertion that "narrative is a way of characterizing the phenomena of human experience" (p. 2). Further, using narratives allows "for a rich description of these experiences and an exploration of the meanings that the participants derive from their experiences" (Wang & Geale, 2015, p. 195).

Validate findings

If research is not deemed valid, either in process or findings, then it is, in effect, worthless. However, validity, as a term, is more suited to quantitative research than qualitative research (Cohen et al., 2011; Maxwell, 1996). That is not to say that issues of validity have no place in qualitative research, and for the purposes of ensuring maximum validity of this qualitative case study, I focused on ensuring trustworthiness of the research through the establishment of a clear document trail, member checking or respondent validation (Guba & Lincoln, 2005), and the triangulation of data sources (Cohen, et al., 2011; Simons, 2009).

A clear audit trail of data is essential to maximise trustworthiness of the research and I attended to this during data collection, through the use of audio and/or video recording of interviews, field notes and during data analysis by following Creswell's

(2012) model of data analysis (see Figure 4.3), and by using tables and diagrams to document codes, categories, themes and interpretative decisions.

Respondent validation or member checking was done throughout the data collection period. Methodological triangulation is an aspect of trustworthiness, embedded within the case study design, utilising different data sources, document analysis, interviews and observations, to generate data on the same object of study (Cohen et al., 2011). After the interviews were transcribed I endeavoured to ensure each participant received a copy and had time to check and verify the accuracy of the transcript. Unfortunately, with two students, Ewan and William, I was unable to gain a response from them for all interviews due to their moving away. I was unable to engage William's mother in member checking also.

4.7 LIMITATIONS

It is important to not only consider the strengths of the methodological design, but also the potential limitations of the study. "All proposed research projects have limitations" (Marshall & Rossman, 2010, p. 76) and this research is potentially limited in the following ways:

- The research cohort is bounded by the alternative education program's maximum enrolment.
- The gender of the researcher and the research cohort
- The skill of the researcher in conducting interviews and focus groups.

Whilst the bounded context of the Alternative Education Program allows for a holistic, in-depth examination of the phenomenon (see Section 4.4), there are potential limitations given the restricted student enrolment and the frequent high rates of absenteeism. The student cohort has historically comprised 100% adolescent males, and in the context of a focus group and interviews, facilitated by a single male researcher, issues associated with gender need to be considered, as "the issue of how interviewees respond to us based on who we are...such as age, gender…is a practical concern" (Miller & Glassner, 2010, p. 134). The influence of personal bias on data collection and analysis is a limitation associated with the individual skill of the researcher.

4.8 ETHICS

Upon gaining ethical approval (QUT Ethics Approval Number: 1300000842) from the Queensland University of Technology University Human Research Ethics Committee (UHREC), and reviewed as meeting the mandates of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (National Health and Medical Research Council (Australia), 2007), approval for research was sought and obtained from the Director of Research Services, Strategic Policy and Portfolio Relations, Department of Education, Training and Employment (DETE). After approval was gained (See Appendix K), the approach letter, consent forms and research proposal (see Appendices C, D & E) were taken to a meeting arranged with the Behaviour Services Co-ordinator, the manager of the Indigo Centre.

Having previously worked at the Indigo Centre, I had a positive pre-existing relationship with the Co-ordinator which facilitated an in-depth dialogue through which the full nature of the research was outlined and explained with relevant literature provided, including excerpts from the researcher's own unfinished thesis, to assist in gaining informed consent. Written approval was received from the Co-ordinator who was eager to have research conducted within the program. Both the Co-ordinator and I then disseminated the research information and consent forms to staff, initially through a whole staff meeting and then individual follow up meetings.

Conducting research requires ethical considerations during all stages of the research as well as from the perspective of an insider researcher. Ethical considerations, such as anonymity, informed consent, participants rights, including the rights of young people to have a voice, are paramount during data collection, data analysis and reporting (Darbyshire, Macdougall, & Schiller, 2005; Wiles et al.,2006).

4.8.1 The right of a child

The involvement of the students was similar to the standard conversational meetings that are an aspect of the educational environment and no individual was identifiable from the data. Names of students were coded and changed in the transcription of the data. There were no inducements offered to participate. The research undertook a participatory approach where each participant had control over their participation.

The right of a child to be heard and taken seriously is outlined in Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Acknowledging the age and maturity of the child, assurances need to be given that a child capable of forming their own views is given the right to express those views freely in matters affecting the child (Naties, 1989).

The ethical considerations for this research therefore involved respecting student's participation and non-participation, and providing genuine opportunity for their voices to be heard and for them "to be able to express views without pressure" (Naties, 1989, p.22). Based on the above, as well as the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (NHMRC, 2007) and QUT ethics requirement of respecting the participant, student participants were made aware that the research would not impact on them negatively. Participants were free to share or withhold information and were free not to disclose information if they chose to. Records were maintained in a locked cabinet that only the researcher had access to and electronic files were password protected and stored in a hard drive off site. Where possible, member checking was undertaken to ensure accuracy of their voice.

The students were made aware that participation, or non-participation, would neither benefit or disadvantage them in any way. Non-participation was respected. Students who chose to participate had their views included in the research without any smoothing of the data.

Risks to participants included the risk that they may not wish to disclose all information about activities that led to suspension from school or in some cases involvement with the police. The risks of discomfort and disclosure were minimal as the students were free not to disclose information. The school grievance procedure within the school was available to all student participants to use if required.

Students who did not give permission or whose parents did not give permission to participate were not interviewed Students were informed their contributions would be anonymous and they were free to withdraw from participation within a stipulated period of time.

Being an Insider Researcher

As I had previously been employed as a teacher for three years at the AEP central to this study, I was not an "outsider" to the research context. I had previous experiences

and relationships with some participants and as such, there was a sense of my "belonging" within the context of the research. Such research, conducted by members of the institution being researched, can be considered insider research (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005; Mercer, 2006). I have used my own voice throughout the thesis to indicate my "insider" status and have included myself as a participant in the study (see Section 4.4.2.4)

While insider research is a well-established research method in educational establishments (Noffke, 2009) with insider researchers well positioned to explore the phenomenon under examination due to close proximity to the data, they may also have empathetic understandings beneficial to the research (Mercer, 2006). Further, insider research has the added benefit of insider knowledge about the social, cultural aspect and history of the participants. However, Kincheloe's (2012) warning about neutrality, that there is "no value free, privileged knowers" (Kincheloe, 2012, p. 216) needs to be addressed and, therefore, it is important to consider the ethical implications (Costley, Elliott, & Gibbs, 2010) of insider research.

It was important for me to consider my personal history as a previous teacher of some of these students and a colleague of the teachers within the program and how this might influence the research. For instance, Ryan (1996) suggests that students may misinterpret invitations (such as research participation) as a requirement. Careful consideration of my position as an insider researcher allowed steps to be taken to ensure the pre-existing relationships did not negatively affect the research study.

The ethics of being an insider researcher is accounted for through the recognition of my connections with the teachers and students, and the use of a theoretical framework that recognises the social construction of reality and the "local and … co-constructed nature of data" (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 193). Firstly, while I had stopped teaching the students before I started the data collection, the pre-existing relationship did assist in ensuring a sense of trust with the participants. It was this sense of trust that assisted in gaining informed consent and enabled the participants to reveal much of their personal narratives. It was this same sense of trust that empowered some students to choose not to participate in the research. With teachers, I ensured that they were informed about my insider status prior to data collection and that they were welcome to leave the study within the stipulated period of withdrawal. Further, they

were also provided contact details for the university's counselling centre in case they experienced any discomfort or distress as a result of their participation in the research.

4.9 SUMMARY OF METHODOLOGY

This chapter situated the case study within a critical interpretive paradigm articulating that the goal of research should be to not only understand but to illustrate social and educational inequalities. The choice of research design, a qualitative instrumental case study, was linked to the literature, the theoretical framework and the research question.

The qualitative methods of data collection and analysis, as drawn from the literature and aligned with the qualitative research design, were outlined. The validity of research is paramount and the term was discussed and while the concept of validity is adhered to, the term was replaced by 'trustworthiness', and the processes to maximise trustworthiness were outlined. Finally, ethical considerations relevant to this research project were discussed.

Chapter 5 introduces and contextualises the participants, through the device of narrative, situating the analysis and interpretation undertaken in Chapter 6, within the social reality of the participants.

Chapter 5: Narratives

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 4 outlined the interpretive and critical research methodology used to "link the behaviour under analyses with an interpretation provided by the subjects who display it" (Giroux, 1983, p.109). This chapter provides a contextualisation of the students and teachers, through the device of narrative, so that the lived experiences of the young people may become evident. The stories presented here have been synthesised from document analyses, observations, focus groups and interviews and, as such, form part of the data analysis. By introducing and contextualising the participants, it is my intention to anchor the analysis and interpretation undertaken in Chapter 6, in the social reality of the participants.

Understanding the participants' lived experiences and the complexities inherent in their cultural trajectories contributes to the contextualisation of the data. Seven student narratives are presented in Section 5.2 while three teacher narratives are presented in Section 5.3. These narratives are framed using the concepts of capital and habitus. Section 5.4 offers a summary of the document analysis, to further contextualise the values, expectations and practices of the teachers and students. Observations undertaken in the Indigo Centre (Section 5.5) support the analysis of data collected from other sources and provide another avenue to understand the lived experiences of these students.

5.2 STUDENT NARRATIVES

At first glance, the group of students attending the morning session appeared to form a homogenous group and, indeed, on initial examination, their school histories revealed some commonalities. However, as noted in Chapter 2, Section 2.2.3, while the formal education system groups all these students as requiring alternative educational programs, rarely are the student groups attending alternative programs internally homogenous (Te Riele, 2012; Zweig, 2003). The students in the study were first introduced in Section 4.3.2. They are Victor (Section 5.2.1); Neil (Section 5.2.2); Michael (Section 5.2.3); Neville (Section 5.2.4); Eric (Section 5.2.5); William (Section 5.2.6); and, Ewan (Section 5.2.7). Each narrative introduces the student before

detailing their family structures and school history. The students and their parents/carers are informants to their stories.

5.2.1 Victor

Victor is a male student aged 14 years and 4 months at the time of the data collection (May 2014). I had worked with Victor at a previous AEP where, despite being confronted with his frequent acts of resistance, manifesting mainly as extreme verbal abuse directed towards myself and other staff and students, we had over the course of a year developed a positive relationship. Towards the end of my time as his teacher, Victor and I would engage in friendly conversations about family, interests and aspirations outside of schools. Whilst I have no accurate data from that period, my memory is that while the severity of the verbal abuse directed towards me remained high, its frequency decreased significantly.

Family Structure

Victor lived in a rented house with his mother, Rita, in the local area of the Indigo Centre. Victor was born overseas and he and his mother moved to Australia shortly after he entered the education field. Rita was in full-time employment and had paid work the entire time I had known them. Besides his mother, the only other family in Australia was Victor's maternal grandmother who lived in the same town. Victor would visit his grandmother regularly.

School History

Victor's referral form was dated June 2013 and he commenced at the Indigo Centre in August 2013. At the time of data collection, he had been attending the Centre for nine months. Victor entered the formal mainstream education field overseas at age seven. The information in his student file does not reveal much about his initial school life; however, Rita remembers that struggles with school began almost immediately upon entry into the formal education field, stating that:

> *It was just about when the schooling was starting to get to a stage where they had to sit down and behave and focus and do the written work — and he didn't always feel like sitting there and participating with what they wanted.*
>
> (Rita, Victor's mother, Interview 2)

Victor, according to his mother, was quickly positioned by the school as not wanting to learn. She said "*he's got a label. The label is that he's got an attitude, with bad language and he upsets people so…"* (Rita, Victor's mother, Interview 2). Victor was positioned as a student who did not "feel" like doing the "right thing" and as such was disempowered and marginalised within the field.

According to his student file, Victor had spent a considerable amount of time attending alternative programs and consequently, a limited amount of time in mainstream schooling. In fact, prior to attending the Indigo Centre, Victor had been attending another AEP in a part-placement capacity. He was supposed to spend four days at that AEP and one day at a mainstream secondary school. However, he rarely attended the mainstream school and was subsequently referred to the Indigo Centre.

Victor's trajectory into the Indigo Centre was fairly unique amongst the student participants as he had transitioned from one AEP to another, whereas most students (except for Neil, see Section 5.2.2) were referred to the Indigo Centre by their mainstream school. Victor was also attending the Centre in a part placement capacity (one day a week) with the staff charged with exploring other activities for Victor to engage in on the remaining four days of the school week. There was no documentation available to explain why, with the referral to the Indigo Centre, came the reduction in times, from 4:1 AEP/mainstream attendance to 1:0 AEP/mainstream attendance.

As the following field notes demonstrate, the cultural capital valued within Victor's family field may not be the same as that valued in other fields. The following excerpt from my field notes illustrates, for instance, the expected method of greeting people and engaging in conversation in Victor's family field.

Researcher (Field notes April 2014) 1st meeting – Victor's residence:

> *I arrived at the house and knocked at the door. Victor's mum [Rita] came to greet me and I followed her into the kitchen. We sat at table and I saw Victor playing video games in lounge room. I yelled out 'Hey Victor' and he yelled back 'Oi.' I started to explain the consent forms to Mum and realised Victor wasn't moving to join us. So I said, "I need you in here for a bit, mate" and Victor joined us. He had a big grin on his face and I thought maybe he had deliberately waited to be called in, like a personal invitation. I explained the consent forms and the research while I fended*

off questions from Victor about where I currently worked. Once I had said all I needed to about the project, we chatted about where we were, work, school, addresses. Mum brought up a recent incident of inappropriate behaviour where he had smashed a window at home and Victor swore at her and walked off in a huff. Rita and I chatted for a bit and Victor came back to sign the forms. When I left, he walked me out and seemed proud as he showed me the repair job he had done on the front gate. On reflection, his mother had hardly spoken to Victor and made no attempts to redirect him, even when he swore.

The manner in which Victor spoke to his mother and the way Rita accepted his behaviour provides evidence of the cultural capital within his family field. Victor's school history included multiple suspensions for physical and verbal abuse. This information came from Victor, the staff at the centre, his mother, and my own knowledge, as there was very little information available in his file in the Centre. During my analysis of his student records, it became apparent that the Indigo Centre held a limited amount of information on Victor's educational history. His file was made up mostly of communication records between schools and other agencies. The lack of information in his files regarding the support strategies implemented by the school meant there was no evidence of the school's attempt to support Victor's accumulation of field valued capital. The referral forms were incomplete, possibly due to the nature of his entry into the program in that he was not referred from a mainstream school into an alternative program, but rather relocated from one alternative program to another.

This educational history, whilst limited in its documentation, appears, at least on the surface, to depict a very troubled student who needed to be moved from support program to support program. Victor's mother however offered an alternate perspective in interview by suggesting that, while Victor had many issues with authority and demonstrated many different inappropriate behaviours, the schools only had one strategy in dealing with him which was to move him elsewhere.

Victor said that he liked school but did not like teachers. During his second formal interview, I attempted to elicit Victor's understanding of the difference between school and teachers. He appeared, however, to be unable to articulate the difference. However, from his conversations with others during the observations, it emerged that

Victor liked the subjects at school and the chance to be with his friends. He expressed a desire to be a chef one day. He expressed a frustration in his interactions with teachers. Victor offered that teachers rarely believed what he had to say and had even occasionally bullied him into saying what they wanted said, leading to him getting into trouble for things that he had not done.

Victor's program required him to attend one day a week and during the data collection period his attendance was 80% of the data collection period. When Victor was present, he completed all set tasks. He was, however, frequently and extremely verbally abusive towards staff and other students. Bourdieu's concept of capital allows us the lens to see how Victor was positioning on the margins of the field and how his experiences and relationships within the field kept him marginalised. Victor's experiences at the Indigo Centre provide a strong illustration of the difference between the capital in his family (primary) field and the capital valued by the educational (secondary) field and the devaluation of the capital he brought with him from his family field.

5.2.2 Neil

Neil, a male student, was aged 12 years and 9 months at the time of the data collection (May 2014). He had been diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Neil and I knew each other, as Neil had been a student at a previous AEP where I had worked. Based on our previous interactions, I would describe my relationship with Neil and his parents, Lauren and Paul, as positive. At no time throughout the data collection period was there any indication to the contrary. In my previous capacity as his teacher, I had witnessed and been the object of his acts of resistance, mainly verbal abuse and the destruction of property.

My memory of his acts of resistance from that time was that his outbursts were more sarcastic and mocking than crudely abusive. He would call me a "faggot genius" and would stand and give slow hand claps while making faces when I gave him instructions. I also have clear memories of more violent physical outbursts in which furniture and computers were smashed and thrown at me and others in the room.

Family Structure

Neil lived with his mother and father and two younger sisters in a house in the local area. His father was employed full-time in sales and his mother was a housewife

and actively involved in the local junior sport that Neil and his sisters played. Neil's sisters both attended a local primary school. Neil appeared to get on well with his sisters, neither of whom appeared to have any issues with school.

Researcher:	*Can you tell me about your sisters?*
Neil:	*They can be annoying but they're sisters I guess.*
Researcher:	*Do you spend much time with them?*
Neil:	*Not really, they don't really have the same interests as me so it's a bit hard.*
Researcher:	*Do you have family activities? Do stuff as a family?*
Neil:	*Yeah, we do stuff.*
Researcher:	*What sort of stuff do you do?*
Neil:	*We went out to the museum for the day one time.*

(Neil, Interview 2)

Being the only one in the family with a diagnosis of ASD, there was possibly a mismatch between Neil's communicative habitus and that of his parents (Ochs, Solomon, & Sterponi, 2005) which negatively impacted on his ability to accumulate the cultural capital of his parents in the same ways as his sisters. This resulted in Neil entering the educational field positioned quite differently than his sisters, that is, on the margins of the educational field, contributing to the emergence of his resistant stance.

In my previous role as his teacher and during the data collection, I witnessed both parents visibly upset, to the point of tears, over the way they believed that Neil had been unjustly treated by the two schools he had attended. Neil's father, Paul, had, on a number of occasions, written to the Education Department and his local Member for Parliament to voice his concerns. He expressed unhappiness at having to go to those lengths but felt his concerns were generally ignored by the school except when he took such drastic action. Neil's parents felt disempowered within the educational field which conceivably contributed to Neil's feelings of disempowerment.

School History

Neil's referral form was dated June 2012 and he commenced at the program in June 2012. At the time of data collection, he had been attending the program almost two years. Previous to this Neil had already spent over a year out of mainstream school in a separate AEP, during which time he had also been enrolled on a part-time basis in a specific educational program catering for children diagnosed with ASD. Neil had been diagnosed with ASD at age eight. At the time of data collection, Neil was still enrolled in this program but according to his parents, enrolment was highly sought after and places were limited, so despite their desire to enrol him full-time, he was only able to access the program two days a week, with two days a week at the Indigo Centre. On the remaining weekday, he stayed at home with his mother.

Immediately upon entry into the mainstream education field (the school), Neil was positioned on the fringes and marginalised within the field to a greater extent than the other students in this study. It was decided by the school he should not spend as much time within the field as other students.

Researcher: *What are your memories like of when you first went to school?*

Neil: *I don't really have any because that was mainly just one hour a day for 6 months of the year.*

(Neil, Interview 1)

The school's decision to offer Neil restricted enrolment was, according to his student file, due to his violent behaviour. Although Neil had completed all his schooling at only two different schools, both in the local area, there was very little information held in his student file. Furthermore, his file carried little evidence of any other strategies put in place apart from limiting his attendance, an action which effectively continued his marginalisation.

According to his parents, the schools that Neil had attended had usually dealt with his behavioural challenges by sending him home and restricting his attendance. His father became visibly agitated when this topic was discussed: "*When Neil was at school, at primary school, there seemed to be no forgiveness. If he did something wrong, there was no explaining it to him; what was wrong, why he shouldn't do that, what we should do"* (Paul, Neil's father, Interview 1).

Neil's school history included multiple suspensions for physical and verbal aggression, destruction of property and work refusal. As there was very little information available in his file in the Indigo Centre, this information came from his parents, the staff at the Centre, my own knowledge, and from Neil. Neil stated he did not like school or the Indigo Centre activities much. The misalignment of individual and institutional habitus (the school's expectations of cultural practices) contrasted with Neil's embodied cultural practices. Years of attendance in AEPs failed to provide Neil with the symbolic capital required to occupy an empowered position in his relationship with formal education.

Most of the time Neil exhibited a relaxed, happy, yet at times indifferent demeanour. Infrequently, he would smile and joke with other students or staff. He also appeared to enjoy solitude and frequently sat and worked by himself in a separate room and did not interact much with others. This practice of isolating himself from others was what Neil preferred. He explained that he found it difficult and tiring at times to understand and connect with people and social interactions were often frustrating for him. He said that "*I've always had trouble telling if people are my friends"* (Neil, Interview 3).

For Neil, a frequent form of visible interaction was correcting the mistakes in other people's language. He would often call out to correct grammatical errors in others' spoken language, sometimes doing so from a different room. This practice, and Neil's literal interpretation of language, was not recognised as a valued practice in this field and Neil was usually sanctioned for this practice. It was interesting to observe that a sanction sometimes applied in order to change Neil's practice actually provided Neil with his preferred isolation from other students. This stands as evidence of the teacher's mis-recognition of the differences in symbolic capital within the field.

Neil's program required him to attend two days a week and his attendance was 90% of the data collection period. During the data collection period, Neil was observed arriving on time, completing all set work but having frequent verbal disagreements with others. During these verbal disagreements, he could at times become sarcastic, abusive and aggressive. These disagreements were always related to the actions of those around him but less frequently with staff than with other students. The less frequent disagreements with staff can be interpreted as changes in the teachers' communicative habitus, due to engaging in professional learning with the staff of the

specific educational program for children with ASD. Neil's student file revealed that the staff at the Indigo Centre had attended professional learning at the ASD program. The transfer of knowledge between staff at the different centres could result in changes in cultural practices (communicative patterns) of the Indigo Centre staff (Ochs et al, 2005).

5.2.3 Michael

Michael was aged 11 years and 6 months at the time of the data collection period (May 2014). As with Neil, Michael had been diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). He presented as a smiling happy child and was described by his mother as an avid reader and a computer "whiz". I did not know Michael prior to the data collection period but I knew his mother, Tracey, as I had previously taught at the school attended by Michael's sister.

Family Structure

Michael lived locally in a house with his mother and younger sister. Tracey was employed casually at a local takeaway shop. His stepfather (of seven years) had separated from his mother two months prior to the data collection period. Both his teachers and his mother indicated that his behaviour had declined since the separation. Michael's mother indicated the existence of a pattern of difficult to manage behaviour linked to his stepfather's previous periods of absence. She explained that:

> *He [stepfather] had been to jail when we had been together and Michael does these same behaviours every time he [stepfather] leaves, Michael acts up and goes off the rails.*
>
> (Tracey, Michael's mother, Interview 2)

Tracey also indicated that Michael's relationship with his immediate family (her and his sister) was distant and difficult and that he only really was close to his (maternal) grandmother: "*They have a strong bond. You'd think they were mother and son"* (Tracey, Michael's mother, Interview 2).

School History

Information on Michael's student file was extremely limited and only recorded that he was referred to the Indigo Centre in June of 2013 for non-compliance and lack of social skills. At the time of data collection, he had been attending the program for

11 months. The referral forms also recorded a recent diagnosis of ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder). His mother said he had always struggled to socialise with others. Prior to attending this Centre, Michael had received multiple suspensions and had been referred to a different AEP. The analysis of his student file, however, revealed a distinct lack of information available regarding his educational history.

While Michael appeared happy to talk to me, he was initially reluctant to discuss school, often just saying it was boring or responding to most questions with, "*I don't know*." However, when he did begin to open up, he became quite animated, passionate, and articulate, critiquing the school work offered and the rules associated with schooling. Michael's critique extended to both his previous school and the Indigo Centre where he described schoolwork as "*dull and boring work. Like every day, you get given the same sheet of handwriting, just in a different look"* (Michael, Interview 1).

Michael was often the loudest member of the student group: singing, yelling out strange words and sounds. For example, I observed him repeatedly call out the word "penguin" in the middle of some literacy lessons. Sometimes, this behaviour would incongruently accompany what would be considered on-task behaviours where Michael would be making these noises while completing the work set by the teachers. At other times, the noises preceded and/or accompanied non-compliance, manifested by walking away, swearing at teachers, and refusing to work. In the short time I observed Michael, I was unable to identify a pattern within this behaviour.

> *Researcher (Field notes May 2014) 1st meeting - Indigo Centre:*
>
> *I was in one of the back rooms talking to a staff member when Michael arrived. I noticed his arrival by the sudden new voices. I assumed it was them as I was meeting his mum for her first interview that morning. I was expecting them as I was meeting mum but they were early. They were talking and laughing about something though I couldn't tell what, although it seemed to me that they were laughing about something funny Michael had done or said.*
>
> *I walked into the room to meet Michael and his mother. His teacher introduced me and while he did not acknowledge me in a manner I expected; he did not look at me or say anything, he did pause from what*

he was doing and stared off into the distance. I felt a sense of acknowledgement in this. Mum also made no attempt to greet me in a manner I expected. He put his lunch away and started talking loudly about the day's events but not directed at anyone specific. Despite this, he was answered by the staff. Mum stood still, quiet. She seemed nervous. She then reminded Michael to behave — which, to me, seemed somewhere between a plea and a joke.

This excerpt from my field notes demonstrate how there are differences between groups in accepted ways of thinking, behaving and speaking. The difference in how Michael and his mother acknowledged me, however, is not a deficit in Michael's cultural capital, but rather a difference in the family's accepted practices (cultural capital) and the practices I was expecting.

During May 2014, I observed Michael lying on the floor under tables, repeatedly taking his shoes and socks on and off. At times he displayed difficulty settling, such as when he arrived, started work, or changed tasks. He read regularly, books, magazines and the dictionary; however, he often refused to follow directions, including refusing to read the books the teachers gave him. He repeatedly complained about "dull" work and "stupid" rules. These complaints elicited responses from the staff around the expectations of the program. The staff described these behaviours as "odd", whereas I, having taught many students diagnosed with ASD, might describe them as typical. While Michael knew the rules, at times repeating them over and over very loudly, he did not comply with them. This failure to recognise the symbolic capital inherent in compliance resulted in sanctions that, in turn, became the catalyst for further manifestations of acts of resistance.

On three separate occasions during the data collection period, Michael demonstrated violent outbursts that resulted in property damage and extreme verbal abuse (mostly directed a teacher, Tina, or one other student in particular). This resulted in Michael being sent home early. Michael's program required him to attend four days a week and his attendance was 80% of the data collection period with many of his absences due to official sanctions. His acts can be described as self-defeating resistance in that Michael's complaints were centred on what he called dull or boring work and "stupid" rules, yet his behaviour resulted in an increased enforcement of those rules, and the provision of more of the same type of work. It can be suggested

that this kind of work, that involved him sitting and completing worksheets, made him easier to manage.

5.2.4 Neville

At the time of data collection, Neville was 13 years 7 months, living in foster care but in the process of transitioning back to living full-time with his father, Nigel. He presented as a quietly spoken young man, who was polite in all the interactions I observed taking place with staff. This politeness carried over into his interactions with me. I noted in my field notes that there appeared to be a humility to him when he was discussing school experiences, as if he was aware of past mistakes and wished to do better at school and in life.

Researcher: *You told me that some of the trouble you got into was the people you hung around, are you still hanging around those people?*

Neville: *No, I've learned from my mistakes and I'm avoiding those people.*

(Neville, Interview 1)

Family Structure

Neville's parents separated when he was three years old and he lived with his mother until two weeks before he started school. When his father was awarded custody, Neville went to live with him. His father, a full-time worker at the local markets, employed a nanny to help at home and with school work.

> *He (Neville) was living with me. I was never great at school, so it was a lot harder for me to help him with his school work. So, I had nannies and things like that that helped him with school and things like that. In the early days, up until he was, not quite sure how old but for quite a few years, a live-in nanny looked after him and a couple of them were very good at helping him with his school work and stuff.*
>
> (Nigel, Neville's Father, Interview 1)

In his final year of primary school, according to his father, there was period of time when Neville was "*just very unsure of where he was and where he was going*" (Nigel, Neville's Father, Interview 1). Neville ended up running away from home. According to Nigel, he and Neville had argued constantly during this period over his behaviour which included stealing. These arguments resulted in Neville asking to go

live with his mother. While living his mother, the Department of Family Services removed Neville (and his half-siblings who were living in the house) and placed him in care of the government.

> *They asked me if I could have him back. I had to make a decision. I kind of made the decision on what was best for Neville and what my capabilities were. So, I said "No I wasn't capable to have him back". I am so glad that I did. You know because he just got all the attention that he needed and everything and he's got where he is today. So, I feel as though I made the right decision.*
>
> (Nigel, Neville's Father, Interview 1)

School History

According to his student file, Neville had a significant history of suspensions and was referred to the Indigo Centre in October 2013 for absenteeism (unauthorised absence), task refusal, leaving the classroom without permission, and verbal aggression. At the time of data collection, he had been attending the program for six months. Neville admitted to frequently walking out of classes and "wagging" (a colloquial term for skipping classes). He agreed that he sometimes got angry but initially did not want to discuss this topic further with me during his second formal interview. During some of our informal discussions, held while engaging in the everyday tasks of the program, Neville began to open up about his perceptions of mainstream school and his belief that some previous teachers did not really care about him or like him. He recalled times when he did not understand some of the work and, when he would ask for help, his teachers would say they would help him but they never did. He also admitted to a short period of some substance abuse that made him withdrawn and angry. He did not, however, want to discuss this topic at any length.

Neville spoke of enjoying some subjects at school, particularly Maths and hands-on subjects such as Industrial Arts. He said that he would rather be back at a mainstream school than at the Indigo Centre.

Researcher: *Are you sad to think about leaving here [the Indigo Centre]?*

Neville: *No, I'd rather be at school. I get to go back next term. I will be able to do Industrial Arts.*

In fact, Neville was in the process of transitioning from the Indigo Centre back to a new mainstream secondary school later in the year. The transition process meant that, every Thursday, Neville attended his new secondary school. He expressed his enjoyment in this and even seemed proud when discussing his new school.

Neville's attendance at the Indigo Centre during the data collection period was 60%. During this time, the teachers and I observed engagement in the set tasks and positive social interactions with others, students and staff. On the occasions he was absent, it was simply reported by his carers that he refused to attend. When Neville himself was asked by staff to explain his absences, he would say that he had been tired.

Researcher (Field notes April 2014) 1st meeting – at Indigo Centre:

> *I had been talking with Tina in the office area in the morning when we heard the other students and teachers welcome Neville. We finished our conversation and I went into the main room and met Neville. A tall boy, as tall as me, which was the first thing I noticed about him. The second thing I noticed was his body language. He appeared open, friendly, even happy. He looked me in the eyes when greeting me. He seemed to offer some type of wave (or at least there was a gesture with one hand that I thought could be a slight wave). There was certainly a friendly welcome, verbally and physically. He then sat and joined in the game of Uno with the other students. I noticed that the other students seemed to all want his attention. They were all looking at him, at his face and taking turns to tell silly crude jokes, which gradually became cruder and cruder. Neville laughed along with the jokes but did not join in telling any crude jokes himself.*

5.2.5 Eric

Eric was a male student who turned 12 during the data collection period. Eric provided very little verbal information about himself.

Researcher (Field notes April 2014) 1st meeting – local fast food outlet:

> *I had arranged with his carer to meet at the local fast food outlet. I was the only other person there when they arrived. Eric looked over and noticed me sitting there as soon as they walked in. I introduced myself to them both and he just stared at me, silently. It wasn't a menacing stare, more a blank stare really. His carer greeted me yet still he just stared. The*

carer went to order some food and Eric just stared and said nothing and, for a few moments, it was a little unsettling. I wasn't sure what to do or say, I was thinking fast when he said, "You used to teach at ... (a previous school)."

I replied Yes, smiling. I thought this is the breaking of the ice and this recognition would produce a more comfortable situation. But he continued to stare and I continued to feel uneasy. I tried to cast my mind back to previous encounters. Had they been negative? Had we had run ins? Why is he staring, what does this mean for talking about the research and trying to get informed consent?

Then he said, "You did the football." I said "Yes, I coached the football team." I then asked him if he had ever played? "Yeah" he replied and looked over at his carer buying food. With the stare gone, I started to talk about what I was going to do, the research I wanted to conduct and why. He sat still but offered few signs he was listening. He didn't respond verbally or nonverbally and, while he made eye contact, it felt as though he was looking "through" rather than "at" me. I didn't feel confident that he wanted to participate and was wondering if now was a good time to ask or whether he needed more time to consider it. I was happy to give them the forms and call back in a few days, but then his carer started to talk to him about the research and it felt to me as though she was trying to influence his decision. I interrupted her as I didn't feel it was right to try and coerce him. In reflecting on this as I document the event, I thought that this may have been my perception and not really her intention. I do remember thinking, thought, if I send the forms home now, he may be coerced into participating.

I was unsure what to do when suddenly Eric said, "So you are going to come to (the Indigo Centre)." I said "Yes" and he asked, "And you will talk to me about why I hate school?" I laughed and said I wanted to talk to him about lots of things about school, what he liked, and didn't like. After outlining my research and the voluntary nature of participating, Eric promptly signed the forms. As I review the event, I am reminded how some of Eric's questions did not sound like questions. The inflection at the end

of sentence I am used to hearing when someone asks a question was not there for most of the questions he asked. I have tried to evidence that by leaving out the question marks in my reporting of his comments. The absence of this was more noticeable to me towards the end because the question about whether I would ask him about hating school did have that inflection.

Taken together, these field notes further highlight the notion of a lack of homogeneity within this group of students. The reserves of cultural capital that Neville and Eric drew on when greeting and communicating with me must be stark in contrast to elicit such different responses from them. This difference in cultural capital reserves between these two students must have a differential impact on how they are positioned within their relationship with formal education and within the student group.

During the data collection period, not only did Eric speak very little in comparison to the other boys, he also spoke very little to the other boys. Throughout the data collection period, Eric remained quiet and, while at times he would join in activities with staff and peers, he would often display what could be described as "parallel play," that is, engaging in the same activities as his peers, in the same location, but not engaging *with* them.

Family Structure

Eric lived in care but had regular access visits to his grandparents who lived close by. Prior to going into care, Eric had lived with his grandparents since he was a baby. His grandmother, Terase, explained, in her initial interview, that once they also became primary care givers for his younger siblings, they had to place him in care as they could not cope. Eric's grandmother stated he had no real reaction to being placed in care. She said:

We had five little ones here including Eric. The reason we got Eric to the Department was because I needed help and I thought my priority was the four littlest ones.

(Terase, Eric's Grandmother, Interview 1)

At the time of the interview, Eric's younger siblings were also in care: his two half-sisters placed together and his two half-brothers placed together. According to his grandmother, Eric rarely saw them or his father or mother. He also rarely ever asked

or spoke about them. Eric's grandparents lived very close to the Indigo Centre and, although he had regular access visits after school and on weekends, he often absconded from the Centre during school time to go to his grandparents' place. If Eric absconded, his carers were notified and they brought him back to the Centre.

School History

Eric was referred to the Indigo Centre in March 2013 as a systemic strategy. This means that the school had requested regional support to provide an alternative educational pathway for him, citing a significant and persistent history of extreme physical aggression towards others. At the time of data collection, he had been attending the Centre for 1 year and two months. The referral documents included a note stating that Eric was "*very resistant to intervention*" (Student file, Eric) but failed to explain what intervention(s) had been implemented in the past. Eric's grandmother, Terase, believed that Eric "didn't fit" into mainstream schools.

Prior to attending the Indigo Centre, Eric had been excluded from two mainstream schools and had been subject to a "*flexible schooling arrangement*" (Student file, Eric) at a third school, meaning he did not attend for the same hours as other students. This flexible arrangement is a support measure available to schools, an agreement entered into by the school and the family or care provider, which reduces the hours of school attendance for a fixed period of time while processes can be implemented to support a student's re-entry into school. It is an educational system's response to the safety concerns raised by the behaviours Eric displayed at school. Eric had a history of aggressive and extremely violent behaviours both in and out of school.

Eric frequently used verbally aggressive language and would occasionally recount past aggressive behaviours to the staff and other students. A review of Eric's school file revealed that these recounts of violent and aggressive behaviours were factual. The other students often responded with recounts of their own "exploits" which could not always be proven to be factual. At times, the other boys would band together, make fun of Eric and ostracise him by moving away or calling him names and laughing at him. While I occasionally observed Eric calling the other boys names, I more frequently observed very little demonstrable reaction from him to the other boys' teasing behaviours. It appeared that Eric's habitus and cultural capital were disconnected from the expectations held by the school and from the habitus the other boys.

Eric's program required him to attend three days a week and his documented attendance was 90%. However, he regularly absconded to his grandparent's home during the day. If this happened, his carer was contacted and he was picked up and brought back to the Centre. This type of absence was recorded anecdotally and did not factor into the attendance figures. During May 2014, Eric was observed absconding from the Indigo Centre, swearing at staff, threatening staff, teasing and taunting other students as well as being teased and taunted by them. Eric also slept, sometimes for up to two hours at a time, at the Centre. This situation was recorded by staff in case notes but, as far as I could determine, had never been investigated.

5.2.6 William

At the time of data collection, William was an 11 year and 6 months old boy who lived at home with his mother, Samantha. He presented as a pleasant boy who was so quiet that I recorded *introvert?* in the column of my field notes when describing my first meeting with him. He appeared calm and relaxed but did not look me in the eye. He did not talk to me unless I spoke to him. He did not appear to be nervous or anxious and responded to my questions calmly. He gave me the impression that while he was content to talk to me, he was not that interested in what I was doing.

Family Structure

William lived with his mother in public housing in a suburb at a considerable distance from the Indigo Centre. They lived alone except for two dogs. William's mother was on a pension.

Researcher (Field notes April 2014) 1st meeting – At William's residence:

> *As I knocked on the door, I could hear the television. It was very loud. William came to the door and opened it. He saw it was me, yelled "Mum" and then simply turned and walked back inside. I did not expect that behaviour from someone of William's age and who knew I was coming to speak to both him and his mother. I stood at the door with two little dogs barking at me from inside. His mother came to the door and welcomed me inside. I entered and saw William sitting on a chair very close to the television. Mum sat down on a chair at the table and told William to put the dogs outside. We started talking, small talk mostly, as William complied with his mother's request. He did not speak. After putting the*

dogs outside, he sat back down in front of the television. His mother then told him to get a chair for me to sit on. This comment caused me to look around and I realised there were only two chairs in the room. William got up and went in to another room and pushed out a 2-seater sofa. As I sat down, he went back and sat in front of the television. He still had not spoken apart from initially calling out to his mother.

I explained why I was there and what participation in the research project would involve. The conversation was difficult for me due to the loudness of the television. Neither William nor his mother attempted to turn down the volume. William was called over by Samantha to listen while I explained everything about the research. He listened and showed all the behaviours I associate with listening. There was still no attempt to turn down the television. After a few minutes, his mother told him to get a pen and they both signed. William went immediately back to sitting in front of the television.

Two weeks into the data collection period, Samantha was hospitalised with poor health and William went to live with a relative in another town. Contact with William and his mother ceased and neither me nor the staff at the Indigo Centre were able to re-establish communication.

School History

At the time of data collection, William had been attending the program for 1 year and 2 months. The analysis of the school documents relating to William's school history and referral to the program revealed minimal information. Many of the official documents had fields that were blank. They did show, however, that William was referred to the Indigo Centre in March 2013 for poor attendance and disengagement and in May 2014 his attendance was still very limited. When William did attend, he appeared unfocussed and off-task for most of the time. He appeared uncomfortable while at the program. William had a long history of school refusal, a label used to describe students who do not attend school very often, stretching back to the start of his formal schooling. His mother confirmed that issues with school began as soon as he entered the field.

Researcher: *Do you remember when that [school refusal] first started?*

Samantha: *Yeah way back in Grade 1, oh prep sorry, kindergarten whatever you want to call it.*

(Samantha, William's Mother, Interview 1)

During his school life, William had been referred to three separate AEPs in an attempt to respond to his school refusal. His attendance at all the AEPs and also when he returned to mainstream schooling had not improved. During the data collection period, William's attendance at the Indigo Centre was less than 10%. During the only interview that William took part in, he cited *"staying home to look after his mother"* as the main reason for his lack of attendance at school. He said that *"I take care of my mum and do stuff for her. That's basically it or I'm sick"* (William, Interview 1).

In the focus group, William agreed with others when they mentioned the value of an education. In his interview, however, William did not articulate any strong feelings, positive or negative, towards school.

5.2.7 Ewan

At the time of data collection, Ewan was an 11 year and 9-month-old boy. Ewan identified as an Indigenous Australian. Ewan was small for his age but had a presence that filled the room with his big laugh, quick sense of humour and his gift for storytelling. I found his nature and personality very likeable. Ewan recounted great tales of his experiences and things he had heard from his family. While I believed that the truth may have been "stretched" and some colourful expletives inserted for the sake of entertainment, there was certainly no doubting Ewan's ability to entertain through storytelling. As an Indigenous Australian, Ewan's storytelling is a feature of his embodied cultural capital although it is possible that this may not be recognised as such within the mainstream educational field.

Researcher (Field notes May 2014) 1st meeting – At the Indigo Centre:

> *When Ewan arrived, the staff, I and one other student were playing a hand of Uno. He had been dropped off at front gate by his aunt and walked in by himself. He came in and quietly but sat at the table. The staff greeted him although the other student did not. Ewan did not respond to the greetings. I was introduced by the staff and Ewan was also asked if he*

wanted to play. He asked how many games had been played. The teachers did not respond to the question. A teacher instructed him to put his bag away and then he would be dealt some cards. He put his bag on the floor and sat up as his cards were dealt. He was again told to put his bag in the right place. He continued to ignore the instructions to put his bag away, keeping it close by and began picking up his cards ready to play. He joined in the game. He did not acknowledge my presence until, at one point in the game, he just looked at me and said, "You that fella (fellow) gonna (going to) talk to me?" I replied Yes if he was happy to talk to me. He smiled, said "Yeah" and continued playing the game.

These field notes give an insight into Ewan's resistant stance, joining in the game but not before questioning the context and resisting the instruction regarding his bag. He managed sufficient compliance to remain part of the game. This small amount of resistance towards adult instruction can be interpreted as a sense of autonomy which in my personal experience is viewed as legitimate symbolical capital in some Indigenous family fields.

Family Structure

Ewan lived at home with his mother, Von, but often moved residences, spending time with other family members both close by and in other towns. Ewan had a large extended family including older female siblings but was the only boy in the family and the only child at home. Ewan's mother was employed full-time in the area, in service management.

School History

The first week was good, and it always is the first week whenever he starts school. It's good.

(Von, Ewan's Mother, Interview 1)

Analysis of his student file revealed a school history typified by behavioural issues. Ewan had received behavioural support from the age of 6, that is, almost as soon as he entered the formal education field. He had a history of either being removed from his regular class or removed from the entire school (suspended) and was first referred to an AEP at the age of eight. After this initial 12 months stint in an AEP, Ewan returned to a mainstream school and school documents report that there was a

decrease in his physical aggression at this time. There is no data or anecdotes to explain why and in fact no further data at all, until a report that his physical aggression towards others increased at age 10 and his current referral was made.

At the time of data collection, he had been attending the program for 1 year and two months. There is no record of any support in place between these two referrals to alternative education. This most recent referral was a part-placement and his school week was shared between the Indigo Centre and his mainstream school. The referral document indicated that the school's major concerns were his anger and verbal and physical aggression. The school reports suggest that Ewan's poor social skills were a contributing factor to this aggression.

Ewan's program required he attended 3 days a week at the Centre and 2 days a week at a mainstream school. His attendance at the Indigo Centre during the data collection period was 70%. During this time, his behaviours at the Centre ranged from acts of compliance and engagement in the work, to refusing to participate in activities, property damage and verbal abuse towards staff and threats of violence towards other students. During the second last week of the data collection period, while in attendance at his mainstream school, Ewan exhibited such physical and verbal aggression towards staff that the school made the decision to suspend Ewan (with a recommendation to exclude). After this decision by the school, Ewan's mother and family made the decision to move Ewan to live with his uncle in another town. The distance meant he was no longer able to attend the Indigo Centre. It also restricted his participation in the study (see Table 4.6).

Verbally, Ewan expressed a belief in the importance and value of an education yet through his language and behaviour he demonstrated a considerable dislike for school and teachers.

Researcher:	*So you hated your teachers?*
Ewan:	*Yeah.*
Researcher:	*Can you tell me why?*
Ewan:	*Because they're just all fags. School is shit. But you need it to get a job and not get ripped off.*

(Ewan, Interview 1)

Ewan spoke about his desire to be treated differently than he was, that is, to be treated more like other kids. During the interview and some informal discussions, Ewan commented that he felt some teachers deliberately tried to "shame" him into complying. This admission, or the memory of particular unstated incidents, evoked an emotional response in Ewan. He had tears in his eyes and started to swear and fidget when recalling this. Due to his cultural (Indigenous) background, it can be contended that Ewan's cultural capital is less "possessed" by Ewan and more "shared" by his people. For Ewan therefore, standing out or being singled out by teachers shames him as it reduces his access to symbolic capital.

5.2.8 The students as a collective

As the above narratives illustrate, these students, Victor, Neil, Michael, Neville, Eric, William and Ewan, share similarities in their positioning within their relationship with formal education. The document analysis of the student files, case notes and anecdotal records kept by the staff also illustrates how these students are positioned as a homogenous collective of students, that is, all educationally "at-risk." The narratives, however, illustrate how these students are individuals, with different expectations and different approaches to learning from those held by each other, the school and staff. Even where it appears that they want to succeed in the mainstream educational setting, these students demonstrate a lack of confidence that they fit into school or are even welcome in it. Through their narratives, the students demonstrate their resilience while at the same time, their marginalisation. The field notes highlight how this group of students, while small and all attending the same AEP, is not a homogenous group in terms of cultural and symbolic capital, nor is it homogenous in terms of degree of disempowerment experienced.

5.3 TEACHER NARRATIVES

The total staff of the Indigo Centre included two permanent teachers and an art teacher, music teacher and guidance officer employed on a part-time basis (see Figure 4.1). Narratives are presented for three staff members, Tina, Oliver and Richard. Tina and Oliver were the permanent staff members with responsibility for the academic program. Richard was the music teacher who also contributed to literacy and numeracy instruction.

The staff introduced in this chapter are the agents in the field through which the student's educational experience and relationship with formal education is enacted on a daily basis. Whilst the students' relationship with formal education is influenced by overlapping fields and associated individual and collective habitus, the following staff were the gate keepers for the students' relationship with formal education.

5.3.1 Tina

Tina was a woman in her early 30s. She had 10 years' experience as a high school home economics teacher in a different Australian educational jurisdiction as well as teaching overseas for almost two years. She moved to Queensland due to her partner's work and found employment at the Indigo Centre.

Tina articulated fond positive memories of her own primary school but had less positive memories of her experience in secondary school. At university, she had been drawn to disability services but changed to an education degree after two years of study.

She described herself as a "doer." Observational data suggested that Tina was a highly productive individual who was goal oriented. However, both observational and interview data indicated that Tina felt frustration working with the students in the Indigo Centre. She complained that "*They don't really care. They don't value it. They don't value being here".* (Tina, Interview by conversation). Her interactions with the students were guided by her commitment to the program's long-term goal of preparing the students to operate successfully within a mainstream school setting.

In the teacher focus group, Tina articulated a clear understanding of what students needed to do and learn. She said that "*the expectations are the same as mainstream school"* (Tina, Teacher Focus Group). In her interviews, however, she expressed a more reflective perspective, for example, she said "*It's completely different. I think this is significantly different to mainstream."* Furthermore, Tina was able to demonstrate an awareness that the students at the Indigo Centre used different strategies than those they "should" be using. She noted that: "*They will find the easiest path. He (a student) is doing what I'm asking him to do, so he doesn't get in trouble. But he is not doing what he should be doing. He is not learning to write."* (Tina, Teacher Focus Group).

On one occasion, Michael refused to participate in a maths game when instructed. He was meant to be playing a maths game but had left the area and sat down in the room ready for a guitar lesson when Tina approached him. She challenged him by saying that "*If you are not going to be part of the program, then maybe you need to be at home. We have talked about how you need to engage in the program to stay in the program."* (Tina, Observation, Day 5). At first Michael did not respond. Tina then brought the maths game to him, set it up in the guitar room, and started to play. Michael slowly responded, and without saying anything or moving from his seat, joined in the maths game. The game lasted seven minutes before Tina conceded that he had done enough to warrant participation in the guitar lesson. She packed up the game and left, allowing Michael to participate in the guitar lesson.

While both Tina and Michael played the maths game, engagement in an academic learning activity had given way to both teacher and student symbolically complying with the timetable, a maths game before a guitar lesson. The act of conforming (following the timetable) reiterated the symbolic capital and appeared to confer the appropriate cultural capital on the student. Yet both Tina and Michael's behaviour can be interpreted in this instance as conformist resistance, following the expectations begrudgingly, with no critique offered on the legitimacy of such expectations.

Despite engaging in acts of (conformist) resistance herself, it was during her third interview, that Tina expressed deep frustration associated with the perpetuation of the student's acts of resistance, despite her efforts to change them. She said:

> *I don't know why today it got to me more. I think that we had such success in Term 1. Amazing success. I'd worked really hard with Michael. I just felt today it was for nothing. I just felt that we'd done all that, and now he'd gone straight back to his original behaviours.*
>
> (Tina, Interview 3)

Tina used the personal pronouns *I* and *we,* clearly feeling the frustration on a personal level whilst at the same time acknowledging the collective influence on practice. Examined through the lens of individual habitus, she was expressing frustration at working so hard for so long to help Michael find success only to have him revert to his previous behaviours. This could be interpreted as the failure of Tina's

efforts to re-work Michael's individual habitus. Yet acts of resistance are co-constructed (see Chapter 2 Section 2.4) through the interaction of both the teacher's and student's cultural capital, as mediated by the institution's habitus. Therefore, examined through the lens of an institutional habitus, Michael's continued acts of resistance were not a failure of an individual teacher's efforts to change that behaviour but rather Michael continuing to behave as the institution expected him to behave.

5.3.2 Oliver

Oliver is a quiet man with a rugged outdoors look. He spoke with a quiet voice and projected an air of self-confidence. At the time of the data collection, Oliver was in his 50s, married with three young children. His own memories of his primary schooling were positive. He had attended a small all boys' primary school in the area and fondly remembered the feeling of belonging, describing it as like a club where everyone knew everyone. His experience of secondary school, however, was less positive and he recalled leaving school with a negative self-image of himself as a student.

> *I think I just found high school a bit of a struggle, just generally a bit difficult I suppose academically. That was my perception. As it turned out, I didn't realise that what I perceived as being a struggler wasn't actually.*
>
> (Oliver, Interview 1)

Using the phrase *"a general malaise"* to describe his high school years, he was pleased for it to end and he went to work locally. Despite, or perhaps because of, his self-perception as a struggler, furthering his education was always in the back of his mind and he attended night school for various courses. After moving in and out of a few jobs, Oliver enjoyed almost 20 years working on the railways. With the threat of downsizing looming, he took some advice from an older friend and looked into further education, deciding on teacher education.

> *I had this old friend of mine that I used to talk to about how he was educated. He said why don't you do it? You have to look into the Centrelink thing, because he knew about all that stuff, so I had a look at it.*
>
> (Oliver, Interview 2)

After nearly ten years teaching in mainstream schools, Oliver sought out a position in an Alternative Education Program.

> *When I was going through teachers' college, I always wanted to work with kids in need. Then an opportunity arose. I suppose I looked for it.*
>
> (Oliver, Interview 2)

Perhaps, due to his own experience as a student, Oliver's relationship with his students was that of a mentor, offering guidance and support. His interactions with the students were always guided by his personal mantra of "how would I want my child to be treated in this situation" (Oliver, Interview 2). In interviews, he articulated his efforts not to raise his voice or to overwhelm students with too many instructions. Observational data suggested he was reflective, often trying different strategies and ways to work with the students. For example, I observed Oliver sit beside a student who was refusing to work or follow directions. He asked the student about their weekend, slowly drawing the student into a conversation through a series of questions and then slowly asking questions about the work. In this way Oliver was able to support the student to discuss the work and the reasons he was refusing to do it. On another occasion when a student was throwing objects and yelling, and Oliver was making no progress in instructing the student to stop, Oliver changed tack and sat and started to read a book, loudly. While this seemed odd to watch, since the student continued to yell and swear, eventually the student stopped yelling, presumably in order to listen to the story. Oliver kept reading, but slowly his voice became quieter and quieter, resulting in the student coming over and sitting next to him, I assumed, to hear the rest of the story.

5.3.3 Richard

Richard was a quietly spoken man in his 50s with a gentle, friendly demeanour. I knew him from other schools he had worked at and my perception had always been that he was quiet, easy to get along with and popular with most students and staff. Richard's early schooling had been mostly positive. He saw himself as a good student although he felt that his teachers had been overly strict. After completing secondary school, Richard followed his older sibling into teacher training. While it appeared to him to be a natural choice at the time, he found he lacked the motivation for further study and discontinued his teacher training. Music had always been his passion and,

several years later, he once again undertook tertiary studies, this time in music. After graduating, he continued on at university and finished his teacher training, gaining accreditation as a music teacher.

After several years, Richard stopped work as a music teacher, finding greater enjoyment as a private guitar tutor and eventually finding casual employment as the guitar teacher at the Indigo Centre and a professional musician. He was employed for 12 years as a guitar teacher at the Centre until he was offered a contract position as a teacher aide. As part of the role of teacher aide, he continued to give guitar lessons but also became involved in the literacy and numeracy lessons.

Richard articulated a belief in the need for students to build or find some self-motivation in order to succeed, whether in learning guitar or in literacy and numeracy lessons. Observational data suggested that Richard often engaged in negotiation with the students over the work they needed to do in his guitar lessons. He expressed an awareness, however, of the limitations on the ability to negotiate with students on literacy and numeracy tasks.

> *It's very different (for different work), with guitar it's kind of what's behind it, you are doing this and it's going to be enjoyable. That's the end result but if you are helping with maths or writing, the expectation is just that they are going to get the right answer. Whether or not you get enjoyment out of getting the right answer….*
>
> (Richard, Interview 2)

Richard's relationship with the students was neither as an authoritarian (like Tina) nor a mentor (like Oliver). As a teacher aide and not officially as a teacher, Richard had limited power to recognise and legitimise practices, disempowering him within the educational field. His cultural capital however, was recognised and valued by the students: he could play the guitar really well. His other occupation, as a 'muso' also gave him "street cred" in the eyes of the students. That is, he seemed to possess a form of cultural capital the students were familiar with and valued. This, combined with a position of limited power, helped students connect with him. His relationships with the students were mutually respectful and friendly. Throughout the data collection period, I did not observe one occasion when Richard or his practices were the focus of students' acts of resistance. I did observe Richard letting the students 'direct' the

lesson. While he had some clear lesson goals that he told the students at the start, he often allowed the students to set the pace and path of the lesson. I did not observe Richard directly instruct the students they could not do something, however I often heard Richard use 'slang' to redirect students, such as *"get out of it you"*, *"what do you think you are playing at?"*. He would use affectionate terms as a way of informing the boys they weren't behaving appropriately, calling them *"ratbags"* and *"turkeys"*.

On one occasion, I observed a student try and turn on the amplifier and play the electric guitars loudly. I observed Richard redirect the student away from really loud music, by laughing and saying, "*no one wants to hear that, when you are really good you can turn it up loud because then everyone will want to hear you*." (Richard, Observation, Day 3).

5.4 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

As noted in Chapter 4 Section 4.5.1, this study examines some key documents relevant to the operation of the Indigo Centre. Document analysis serves as a way to identify the institutional habitus operating within the Centre. I undertook document analysis as both a precursor to focus groups, interviews and observations, to begin to familiarise myself with the context and culture of the Indigo Centre and in conjunction with the other forms of data collection to enhance and support the depth of analysis (Simons, 2009).

The documents analysed related to the educational history of each of the student participants collectively referred to as *student files* (see Table 4.3). These included referrals, enrolment forms and reports from external organisations. Students' educational achievement was noted through standardised testing reports and other school-based assessment (undertaken in their mainstream schools). Other relevant documents related to the organisation and operation of the Indigo Centre including timetables, curriculum documents and operational matters (see Table 4.4). Analysis of the key guiding documents provides an insight into the key characteristics of the Centre's operations.

The overarching policy guiding the operation of the Centre is the *Department of Education, Training and Employment Strategic Plan 2014 – 2018* (DETE, 2014). This is a high level strategic document, which sets out the vision of the Department in terms of deliverable outcomes, targeted strategies and performance indicators. These

outcomes, strategies, and performance indicators are very broad and therefore able to offer relevancy to the operational guidance of all state schools. However, they are too broad to offer specific guidance or advice for the specialised operational context of the Indigo Centre, and the student numbers too small to impact the performance indicators.

For instance, analysis of the key performance indicators reveals that all five 2014 – 2018 indicators could be associated with the student cohort attending an alternative education program such as the Indigo Centre. These are:

attendance;

literacy and numeracy achievement;

retention to year 12;

improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students; and

transitions to further education, training and employment.

(DETE, 2014)

In relation to the context of the Indigo Centre, while attendance data is kept, the students are not required to attend full-time and some absences not officially recorded, for example when Eric would abscond from the Indigo Centre to his grandparents' home during the day (see Section 5.2.5). There are no standardised assessments undertaken in the Centre to evidence any improvement in literacy and/or numeracy.

The strategic plan also identifies several targeted strategies including:

the provision of a safe, supportive learning environment;

empowering families to be engaged in their children's learning by improving access to information about their child and their school;

using early warning indicators, including attendance, to identify students at risk of disengaging with learning to target interventions; and

develop the skills and knowledge of our staff in culturally appropriate teaching and learning strategies.

While these targeted strategies do not explicitly pertain to alternative programs, they can be related to the operation of the Indigo Centre. As illustrated through data earlier in this chapter, the learning environment in the Centre did not always seem safe nor supportive. Michael for instance was sent home on three separate occasions for

damage to property and extreme verbal abuse directed at staff and students. According to Neil's and Victor's parents, communication between school and home was not strong, with both parents feeling disempowered as a result. William was referred to the Centre for poor attendance, yet over the 14 months of enrolment, his attendance had not improved. There was no information demonstrating any of the staff had received professional development in culturally appropriate teaching, despite the enrolment of Ewan, an Indigenous Australian.

The main document informing the day-to-day organisation and operation at the time of data collection was the *2014 Program Manual*, a 10-page document developed locally by the Behaviour Co-ordinator that informed the teachers' work practices. A number of systemic departmental policies and procedures were influential in the development of the manual, such as *A whole school approach to support student learning* (DETE 2014*); Safe, Supportive and Disciplined School Environment* (DETE, 2014)*; Student Protection* (DETE, 2014); and guidelines such as the *Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students* (DETE, 2014). The *Manual* also draws on the Australian Curriculum (Australian Curriculum and Assessment Reporting Authority [ACARA], 2014). It is through such references to the *Safe, Supportive and Disciplined School Environment* (DETE, 2014) that connections to the targeted strategies set out in the *Department of Education, Training and Employment Strategic Plan 2014 – 2018* (DETE, 2014) can be seen.

The *2014 Program Manual* provides staff with information such as required roles, responsibilities, timeframes and schedules, for example, how to manage the referral process, when to contact schools, what forms are required to be completed at the different stages of the referral process and who should complete them, and where they are to be stored. Information is also given to staff on task expectations. For example, in the first three weeks, the aim is to *"develop an understanding of student interests and identify personal goals through preferred, practical activities"* (Indigo Centre, *Program Manual, 2014*, p. 3), and in weeks 4-6 staff should *"begin to increase the percentage of non-preferred activities students are engaged in"* (Indigo Centre, *Program Manual*, *2014*, p. 3). During the transition phase (weeks 31-40), when students begin to transition back to a mainstream setting, staff are instructed to, *"monitor the transition, ensuring there is a designated 'go-to' person (for support and de-escalation)"* (Indigo Centre, *Program Manual, 2014*, p. 5).

Some of the language in the manual is open to interpretation by staff, such as a step in the referral process that states *"the decision may then be communicated with the family"* (Indigo Centre, *Program Manual, 2014*, p. 4). The use of the word 'may' could suggest that it is the staff's decision if they communicate the decision with the family or not. Similarly, the criteria for referral to the program also includes ambiguous statements such as *"it is preferable that the school has demonstrated some of the (8) strategies prior to referral"* (Indigo Centre, *Program Manual, 2014*, p. 5). 'Preferable' is not the same as 'required', meaning that a school may have demonstrated no strategies prior to referring a student. It is worth noting there is no emphasis on the effectiveness or fidelity of implementation of the strategies, only demonstration.

The alignment to the Australian Curriculum has a caveat, stating that *"given the specialist nature of the program not every learning area or learning area strand or sub-strand is covered. Only those identified as most relevant have been identified"* (Indigo Centre, *Program Manual, 2014*, p. 7). However, there is no indication within the document as to how this identification process was conducted nor how the most relevant areas were decided upon. Given the ambiguity of language and the emphasis on roles, responsibilities, timeframes and schedules, the overall intent of this document can be positioned as ensuring accountability and the effective management of the teachers and thereby students, of the Indigo Centre. Further, the *Program Manual* offers limited guidance regarding the pedagogical approach required for these students other than to state that teachers are to *"use a variety of formats from the practical (manual arts and cooking), creative (art), social (games, experiential, sport), to high interest academic"* (*Program Manual, 2014*, p. 1).

The school-based documents relating to the educational history of the student participants are collectively called a student file. The student file comprised both a physical folder in a filing cabinet and/or an electronic file stored on the Department server. The student files contained a range of information pertaining to academic achievement and behaviour and communications between staff and external agencies and/or parents about the student.

The student referral forms, which were also included in the student files, provided a glimpse into the acts of resistance manifested in the mainstream setting, helping to make visible the habitus of the students through these acts in the alternative

setting. These reasons for referral fall into broad categories of non-compliance (absenteeism, leaving without permission, school refusal, task refusal), and aggression (physical and verbal). The descriptors of aggression were qualified as anger, abuse, and violence.

As part of the referral/acceptance process into the Indigo Centre, students and parents sign a behaviour contract (Figure 5.1) as outlined in the *Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students* (DETE, 2014).

Behaviour Contract

Student: _____

Be Safe

1. I will keep my hands and feet and objects to myself.
   Student: _____ Parent: _____

Be Respectful

2. I will follow all instructions given to me by teachers and teacher aides at the Indigo Centre.
   Student: _____ Parent: _____

Be Responsible

3. I will attend my scheduled days at the Indigo Centre.
   Student: _____ Parent: _____

Date: _____

Figure 5.1 Indigo centre behaviour contract for students

The Behaviour Contract outlines the specific expectations regarding the student's behaviour and the consequences of not meeting the expectations. The Behaviour Contract legitimises, for students, teachers and parents, the practice and expectations (cultural capital) of the centre, included the application of sanctions for not meeting the expectations. The full Behaviour Contract is provided at Appendix I.

At the completion of each day, case notes, that is the daily anecdotal reporting of students' progress, were compiled for each student by the staff. As these case notes (see Table 5.1) essentially only recount some of the events of the day for each student, their contribution to the analysis of a student's habitus is limited. However, they do offer evidence of the perpetuation of acts of resistance within the alternative setting.

Analysis of the case notes alongside the *Program Manual* reveals a lack of specific instructions regarding the case notes, leaving the teachers free to interpret the requirements. In fact, the *Program Manual* makes no mention of case notes at all, despite the staff assertion it was a requirement that they complete these at the end of each day. Lack of clarity as to the purpose of the case notes may explain the errors in the case notes.

The institutional habitus is revealed in the way the teachers interpret the 'unwritten' requirements, recording only the student behaviour and not the educational task or progress made during the day. However, for some behaviours recorded, for example the verbal abuse directed at Tina on 22.4.14, no information is recorded regarding the reasons for the behaviour, nor the strategies employed by staff to assist students to make different decisions, or even the sanctions applied. Without any other specific guidance, the teachers, guided by the institutional habitus, focus on the enactment of the behaviour.

Significantly, across all the student files, while there was substantial information relating to behaviour, and detailed documentation outlining the communication between staff and parents/caregivers about the student's behaviour, there was limited information pertaining to pedagogical approaches that were effective/ineffective, and levels of student academic achievement. There was no information in the student files regarding educational assessment undertaken in the Indigo Centre.

The interpretation of these documents reveals that for the teachers and therefore the students, movement from a mainstream context to an alternative context was not accompanied by an overt or significant change of the school curriculum, pedagogical approach, assessment or behaviour management practices. Specifically, the lack of an overt focus on taking a different pedagogical approach suggests there is no strong challenge made to the hegemonic discourses of the mainstream education setting. The documents guiding the operation of the Indigo Centre provide evidence that even in the alternative education space of the Indigo Centre, the students are still positioned on the margins of formal education by their lack of appropriate cultural capital, operationalised as a result of their behavioural choices.

Table 5.1 *Extract from case notes prepared by teachers*

29.4.14	Victor arrived early and in a very positive frame of mind. Victor joined in all activities throughout the day and complied with all requests and directions. Victor earned 32 PLC Dollars and chose to play Silent Ball. Victor fineshed the the positively and left on time[1].
1.4.14	Victor arrived at the PLC at 8am. He sat outside until 8:30am and then at 8:30 he entered the PLC. Victore had a very successful day at the PLC.
22.4.14	Eric appeared and settled into the routine well. This was upset at approximately 10:30am when another student was off task and Eric decided to join in[2]. This involved barricading themselves in the chill out room. Eric told Tina to "suck my cock" twice when Tina was informing him of expectations. Eric eventually re-joined the group at approximately 11.15am and participated in the remainder of the days activities[3].
09.05.14	Michael was sent home this morning; he was collected at 14:45am by Mum[4]. Michael displayed behaviour that was very uncharacteristic for him[5]. Michael refused to engage in any school work or follow any teacher direction. He poured the water out of his drink bottle on the chai and then on teacher the remainder was poured around the classroom. When Mum arrived Michael refused to leave the grounds. It was only when he was told that if he did not exit the grounds with Mum that the police would be called that he left.
06.05.14	Michael engaged in morning activities. Michael refused to completed school work. Michael commenced his school work at 11:15am after some yelling and screwing up his work. All work was completed[6].

Notes to Table 5.1

1. The case notes are represented here verbatim, including the spelling and typing errors.

2. No information was recorded explaining this decision.
3. No information was recorded as to sequence of events leading up to Eric re-joining the group.
4. While the timelines are unclear, this is presented verbatim.
5. No information recorded as to the uncharacteristic behaviour.
6. No information recorded to explain the changes in Michael's decisions.

Further analysis is undertaken in the following chapter (Chapter 6) and where possible the documents analysed are used to support the data from my observations and field notes, and contribute to the analysis of the institutional habitus and capital available within the field and the role social capital plays in acts of resistance towards formal education.

5.5 OBSERVATION

The use of direct observation was discussed in Section 4.5.4. Observations are used here to describe a day in the life of the Indigo Centre, the alternative education program research setting for this study. This description of the context enriches the study and informs understandings of institutional habitus.

5.5.1 A day in the life of the Indigo Centre

Sitting in a quiet suburban street, nestled among private residences but backing onto a Government primary school, sits a newly refurbished alternative educational facility, the Indigo Centre. The building complex houses two main teaching areas plus three smaller class rooms, a kitchen for cooking lessons, a shed for manual arts such as woodwork, and a small outside play area. The rear half of the complex is surrounded by a six-foot-high steel picket fence, with a gate for access to the adjacent school oval for lessons like science or maths that may require some open space.

The school day is broken into two separate sessions, catering for two cohorts of students: morning programs run from 9am –1pm and the afternoon programs from 1pm – 3pm. Students in the morning session begin to arrive any time after 8.30am with most students present by the 8.55am start of activities, although some students, on some days, arrive as late as 9.45am. The secondary school students (those in Year levels 8-10) arrived on their own, whilst primary school students (Year levels 5-7) arrived with an adult, either a parent or a carer. It is usual for the staff and the

parent/carer to spend a few minutes discussing the morning's events or any other relevant information at the drop off.

For most students, the day started with a game of Uno in the main room; a card game that is easy to learn, able to be played by two or more players and a popular card game in most schools in this area. The use of Uno was explained by the teachers as a way of providing a non-confrontational, transition activity; playing Uno at the start of the day offered those students who arrived late an easy relaxed way to enter, join in the group and start the day. Staff explained that most of the students arrive anxious and/or non-compliant.

Teachers and students all gather around a large round table and there is some general, usually teacher-driven, casual conversation held as several hands of Uno are played. Students generally join in on arrival, however sometimes they do not and in this instance, teachers will encourage them to join, but participation is not forced. It may be suggested they take some time out and read a book, or chat with a staff member.

Gently transitioning the students into the day's events is an important part of the teachers' *modus operandi* as it allows them to gauge the students' mood and ability to carry out the day's tasks. This signifies the "taken for granted-ness" of this student behaviour. The staff seem to expect, and accept, that students will at times arrive unwilling to do the set tasks. The practice of expecting (and planning for) acts of resistance is part of the institutional habitus.

The card game also provides opportunity for staff to encourage students to practise appropriate socialising and self-regulating behaviours. The atmosphere is usually relaxed and casual during this part of the day, complete with smiles, laughs and light banter amongst the game players.

After several hands of Uno are played in the main classroom, staff will communicate with each other, usually non-verbally, about the perceived readiness of students to start the day and one of the teachers moves to announce the day's plan. There are no bells to indicate when different activities start and, in the main classroom, there was no visible timetable of the day's events available for the students (the timetable is on the blackboard in a different room – see Figure 5.2). It is common, however, for staff to give students a verbal warning of any change of task. For example, in one observation, Tina said: *At the end of this hand, I'm going to ask all*

the cards be handed to me and we're going to go into the other room and start our work. (Observation, instruction directed to whole group)

The morning sessions have a consistent yet flexible structure. Uno is often followed by Hangman, a popular literacy game, with students and teachers taking turns with the roles. Students and/or staff stand in front of a whiteboard and lead the game, engaging in light verbal banter with each other as they play. It is common for laughter and friendly challenges and teasing to be present during this time. Students appear to enjoy a sense of competition even though it seems to be a mostly co-operative activity. The rules of Hangman are not followed to the letter by either teachers or students. The focus is not on the game as much as the relational aspect of "getting along", interacting safely and pleasantly. During this session, everyone appears to "get along" and, examined through the concept of capital, the practice of getting on well together holds symbolic capital. Students who are able to interact in field-appropriate ways are positioned more positively by staff then those who disrupt the game or other students.

Games such as Hangman offer "reservoirs" of symbolic capital, from which students can draw from the capital of the staff as they interact with teachers. After a period of time playing Hangman, the exact length of which varied from day to day, students transitioned into individual desks and began the literacy and numeracy lessons that had already been placed on their desks by staff prior to student arrival. The pre-placement of the work is designed to decrease the length of the transition phase and reduce the amount of unstructured time students have to interact with each other. For an observer, this gave a contrasting perspective on what was valued in this field; "getting along" during a structured game such as Hangman held symbolic capital, while "getting along" in a less structured way, for example, between tasks, appeared to hold less value.

The work generally consists of literacy and/or numeracy worksheets that are able to be completed independently or semi-independently. The presence of literacy and numeracy tasks is consistent from day-to-day, however the exact duration of the tasks is flexible, and as such there are no times set for the tasks (see Figure 5.2). This flexibility provides the staff the ability to adhere to the structure of the program despite any issues of non-compliance. That is, no matter how long a student may take to complete a task, the schedule can still be followed, as the student simply moves on with the next task once one task is complete.

While the existence of the timetable illustrates homology of structure (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) between the field under study and those with which it overlaps, it is also the functional homology that warrants closer examination. Viewed through the concept of field, the function of this timetable can be interpreted as the positioning of the students as disempowered within the field.

As seen in Figure 5.2, the timetable holds little information about the set tasks, a strategy that allows teachers flexibility to adapt the work provided and the time allocated to each section of the timetable, dependent on the students' level of compliance. If the students are calm, or what is described by the Indigo Centre staff as "baseline", then the staff can provide more worksheets and stretch out the time the students commit to literacy. If the students are resistant, the staff can adapt the work, shortening the tasks to support the students to complete the set work. If the students engage in acts of resistance such as physical aggression, and the literacy task needs to be delayed for safety reasons, the lack of set times for tasks allows the staff to direct the students back to the point in the timetable they stopped being compliant.

The strategy that empowers teachers to adhere to the timetable despite non-compliance disempowers students' agency in effectively using, or learning to use the timetable, a skill required in mainstream schools. The completion of the class work during the set period of a class lesson, is a recognised cultural practice in mainstream schools. However, in this study, the modification of this timetable (removal of times) restricts the students' ability to effectively engage with the timetable (exercise their agency). In relation to Figure 5.2, how does the student come to understand what *Maths Facts: Subtractions I* means? What is the difference between *Subtraction I* and *Subtraction II*? The lack of information on the timetable places this knowledge out of the reach of the students, disempowers them from, for example, exercising agency in the planning and monitoring of their work in order to finish within the allocated lesson time. The structure of this timetable positions the teacher as the holder of knowledge and as such disempowers the students. These modifications reduce the students' ability to learn the "rules of the game" (Bourdieu, 1997) of the mainstream education.

Staff assisted students, either one on one or in small groups, to complete worksheets focussing on reading comprehension, grammar and addition and subtraction facts. Worksheets typically involved reading and answering questions, word puzzles and colouring in. Students who finished quickly were catered for with

the provision of further literacy and numeracy tasks they can complete (see Figure 5.3).

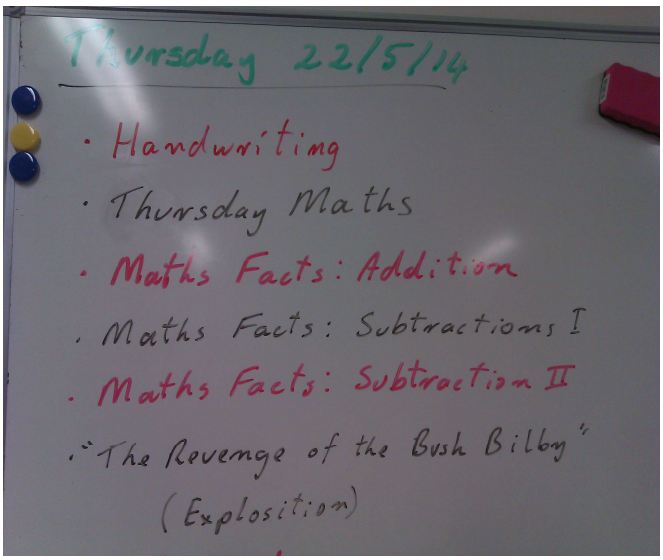

Figure 5.2 Photograph of the Indigo centre timetable for the morning session

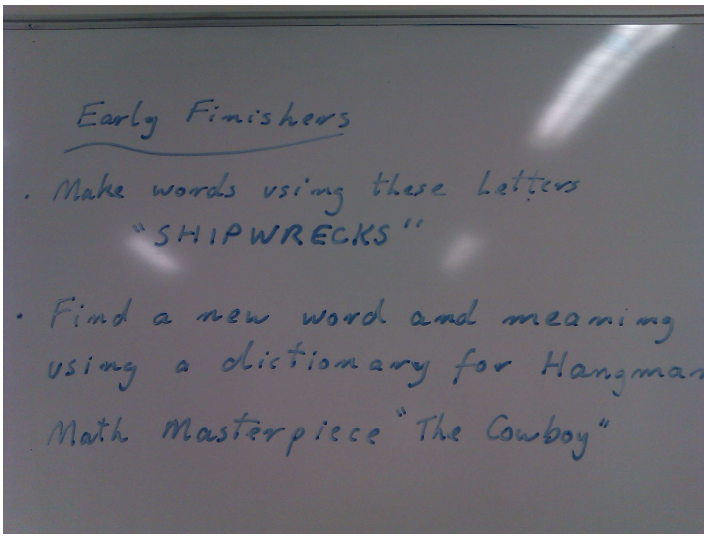

Figure 5.3 Photograph showing the extra work provided for the students who finish their work early

On most days, it is around this point in time when there is a noticeable change in the language (verbal and body language) of both the staff and students and the dialogue between staff and students (Observation 8, May 2014). Swearing, which is a salient feature of the students' language, commonly increased during this session. The swearing also became more directed towards others. It was also noticeable that in the beginning of the day the staff talked directly to the students, however this changed as

the day progressed and staff began to talk *about* the students in the third person, to each other in front of the students. For example,

Tina (to Oliver): Aren't the boys working so well today?

I noted in my observation, and from my own experience as a teacher, that this strategy, while seemingly used by the teachers to demonstrate and transmit the desired cultural capital, was not a strategy that these particular students appeared to connect to learning. These students ignored this conversation style. It appeared the students were not aware the teachers were in fact demonstrating desired cultural knowledge/behaviours.

When teachers did direct the conversation towards the students themselves, the language (during this session) was instructional, focusing on the work and student management. In contrast, students' conversational topics mostly did not reflect the work, but rather reflected the relational structures within the group. The students constantly questioned each other, or pushed the boundaries of their relationships through name-calling and teasing. They told jokes to gain attention of the other students or asked questions of the teachers, such as whether they had kids and did their kids like school. These questions and comments were generally regarded by staff as 'off-task' but not inappropriate behaviours and as such, the students were gently redirected to their work.

Through the lens of capital, it is possible to see the significant shift in cultural practices that the teachers value as holding symbolic capital. The legitimacy and practicality of connecting with one another and getting along, valued in the habitus and social, cultural capital of the students (and valued by staff during Uno) has been replaced by less tangible practices of doing academic work.

During this session, some students undertook and completed the set tasks. Some students did not undertake the set tasks, instead scribbled on the work, often threw work on the floor, and refused to complete it. Sometimes students left the room, simply standing up and walking out, refusing to follow directions to return to their desk. However, this was not the most common method of leaving the room. Most frequently, students left the room by requesting toilet breaks. The teachers told me they were well aware that this is a work avoidance strategy, an observation supported by the fact that the students often failed to go near the toilet, and instead just wandered into other

rooms, engaging in different activities and avoiding the set work. Such actions are direct statements of them resisting and de-valuing certain forms of capital over others.

Whilst during the Hangman game, symbolic capital could be found in the relationship between people, in this session the practical knowledge of not physically leaving the room without the teacher's permission can be seen as symbolic capital, the form capital takes when it becomes "the object of an act of knowledge and recognition" (Bourdieu, 1990, p.111). The students' practice of asking to go to the toilet was evidence of their knowledge and recognition of the symbolic power teachers possess, controlling who leaves the room and why. Leaving the room without permission usually resulted in the students getting in trouble, and this seems to have been avoided by gaining permission (by mentioning the need to use the toilet) before or while leaving. Through such strategies, the students demonstrated an understanding of the "field-legitimate" practices yet resisted it by adopting and co-opting the practices for their own use, creating a counter-culture (Stahl, 2015; Willis, 1997) in enacting acts of conformist resistance (Solorzano & Bernal, 2001).

A few boys, those more interested in completing the set work, found cause to swear and hurl verbal abuse at the others, deeming them to be disruptive and annoying. In the alternative education context, failing to engage in the set work is seen by the teacher as a student's lack of appropriate cultural capital and usually draws sanctions from the teachers. When the other students adopted the dominant behaviours, but applied inappropriate sanctions to the disruptive students, as in verbally abusing them, it can be interpreted as a further example of students (the ones applying sanctions) enacting acts of conformist resistance, as occurred in this case above.

Staff employed a variety of student management strategies and pedagogical devices that included rewards such as the promise of games and reward points to try and keep all students safe, on task, and not engage in any conflict. On Thursdays and Fridays, students had access to guitar and art lessons respectively, and on rare occasions, threatening a ban on the continued access to do these lessons was a strategy used to coax greater compliance from the students.

The recognition by the teachers that such a strategy was required, was an acknowledgement by the teachers of the different cultural capital of the students, specifically their embodied cultural capital. This acknowledgement however was not the same as recognition. The teachers acknowledged the students' habitus, their

embodied dispositions towards behaviours deemed off task and/or unsafe, yet at the same time, the staff failed to recognise the cultural capital of the students and instead mis-recognise the difference in cultural capital as a lack of cultural capital (Dumais, 2002, 2006; Lareau & Weininger, 2003). For example, Tina acknowledged that the students moved between lessons in an inappropriate manner for school, *"racing each other, even pushing each other to get through the door first"*. However, this acknowledgement of their embodied capital is accompanied by a misperception that *"they just don't know any better, no one has ever taught them how to walk into a room"*.

The staff moved to instil the field-recognised capital within the students through pedagogies designed to quickly achieve a change in behaviour. However, as Bourdieu (1986) states, cultural capital "is external wealth converted to an integral part of the person, into a habitus, and therefore cannot be transmitted instantaneously" (pp. 244-245). Therefore, in this instance, while students might have finally complied with the teacher's directions, this could not be interpreted as the accumulation and possession of symbolic capital. In this instance, the compliance was a further act of conformist resistance, evident by the continued verbal critique by the students that accompanied a physical compliance with the instructions in order to gain access to the guitar lesson.

As the day progressed, rivalries and/or alliances between students ebbed and flowed and began to influence the students' interactions with each other and the staff. Most days, staff will manage the situation expertly, and the behaviours peak only at verbal abuse and non-compliance, although the verbal abuse can be quite extreme at times. Through a change in pedagogy, or through modifying groups and student location, staff keep students busy, and/or away from each other. However, on a few occasions, despite the resourcefulness of the staff, the boys would really "kick on", in the words of the staff, and the resulting behaviours were physical assaults, property damage and absconding.

When the students did "kick on", the resulting change to the atmosphere and the interactions between the members of the program rarely returned to the casual camaraderie observable at the start of the day. These "incidents" were usually followed by one or more of the students leaving. This might have been due to the student themselves deciding to run away, or the staff enforcing their removal by contacting their parents or carers.

While such *critical incidents* (the official term used in student records) occurred only four times in the data collection period, such incidents reveal the disconnect between the cultural capital that is recognised by the field and the cultural capital the students enter the field with. The teachers enter possessing the field-recognised cultural capital which is acknowledged and recognised (by the field) as symbolic capital, which in turn legitimises their practice. In contrast, these students do not do not enter possessing the field-recognised cultural capital, and engage in practices that are not acknowledged or recognised as having symbolic value.

The disconnect is mis-recognised when the teachers not only expect the students *to* engage in the field-valued practices, but to *want to* engage in the field-valued practices. In Bourdieu's words, the field "presupposes and entails that all the groups concerned run in the same direction, toward the same objectives, the same properties, those which are designated by the leading group" (Bourdieu, 1984, p, 647). Therefore, the students are perceived as choosing *not to* engage in field-valued practices, legitimising the application of sanctions to encourage them to make better choices. This mis-recognition, along with the shift in what is legitimised as symbolic capital, provides the students with a focal point against which they manifest their acts of resistance.

At the end of the morning session, the students leave, either on their own or are collected by an adult. Students who catch public transport may sometimes leave early to ensure they do not miss their connection. The morning program has an intensive focus on building literacy, numeracy and social skills, as the premise that underpins the program is that these students lack the literacy, numeracy and social skills that would enable them to achieve success in mainstream school.

The afternoon session in contrast, caters for newly referred students; the sessions are shorter and are designed as a transition program for students who are newly referred to the alternate program. The focus of these afternoon sessions is on building rapport with the students and engaging them in activities.

The afternoon activities are more hands-on and are less literacy and numeracy based. Students are transitioned into the morning session as soon as possible. The afternoon session is designed to set the pre-conditions for the flow of capital, facilitating the modification of the habitus through the influx of additional capitals

(Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993; Duckworth, 2013). However, as an observer, I was unable to observe strategies or practices that would facilitate the flow of capital.

The aims of the afternoon transition program are to build rapport and get students ready to engage in the program. However, there are no guidelines outlining the criteria for determining when a student is ready to transition into the morning session. As an observer, there appeared a lack of alignment between the teacher's decisions to transition students from the afternoon program to the morning program yet still state that most of the morning students (who have been through the transition program) arrive anxious and/or non-compliant.

None of the students in the afternoon session gave written consent to participate in the study. The information regarding this session was provided through document analysis and teacher interviews.

The AEP (Indigo Centre) examined by this study can be classified as a blend of Raywid's Type II and III programs (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2.1). However, if Te Riele's landscape map (see Figure 2.1) is applied, the official rhetoric of the Indigo Centre locates it in the 4th quarter. The Indigo Centre has a long term, solid structure, operating as an established service within the formal education system, and the program's espoused aims are to provide a positive educational experience that meets the students' educational needs. However, students referred to the program must maintain contact with their previous school, with some students maintaining part-placement across the mainstream school and the Indigo Centre, and after a defined (yet flexible) period of time in the Centre, the intention is for students to be returned to mainstream schooling. Staff are provided with training in behaviour management techniques and students are expected to engage in activities designed to increase pro-social behaviours. Therefore, despite the rhetoric, the Indigo Centre can be more accurately located in Te Riele's 2nd quarter, with a focus on changing the student so they can be 'successful' back in the mainstream educational field. This lack of clarity between the purpose and the operation of the Indigo Centre risks possible inconsistency between the program goals and student needs.

5.6 SUMMARY

This first findings chapter introduced the students and their teachers in the form of narratives. It gave structure and history to their relationship with formal education

and expressed this through the lenses of capital and habitus. The chapter highlighted the similarities in their relationship with formal education while illustrating their unique characteristics and motivations.

A brief examination of each student's educational history revealed similarities in terms of the disconnect between the student's cultural capital and the capital valued by the educational field. Examining some of the practices undertaken within the Indigo Centre demonstrated how the students are positioned as disempowered and, as such, struggle to understand the rules of the game. Resistance theory allows us to understand how the cultural trajectories experienced by these students, including this disconnect, have shaped their resistant habitus and how the lack of flow of capital restricts any re-working of the habitus.

The next chapter will draw on habitus, capital, field and resistance theory to analyse and interpret the role social capital plays in the enactment of resistance to formal education by students attending alternative education programs.

Chapter 6: Analysis

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The data chapter (Chapter 5) introduced the students and teachers, contextualising their lived experiences and the cultural trajectories contributing to the capitals they bring with them upon entry (through referral or employment) to the alternative education program, the Indigo Centre. This chapter takes a critical pedagogy perspective, drawing on the insights of both Bourdieu and Willis to underpin the analysis and interpretation of the key themes outlined in Chapter 4: the mechanisms for the recognition of capital/s available within the field, and the (students') resistant stance towards the mechanisms of recognition (and accumulation) operating within the field.

This chapter argues that for the students, the struggle for the recognition of their capitals restricts the accumulation of additional capitals, whether by conversion or acquisition. Social capital becomes the platform for acquisition (and conversion) and recognition, with the staff and students each privileging their own form of social capital over the other. In this way, the students' acts of resistance are co-constructed through the competition for recognition.

The analysis begins with the field that is the students' relationship with formal education (Section 6.2). Following Bourdieu and Wacquant's (1992) steps to field analysis, the field is firstly located in respect to the wider field of formal education (6.2.1), then the "objective structure of the relationships between positions occupied by the agents" (p.105) is mapped (6.2.2), and then the habitus of the students and teachers is analysed (6.2.3). Field analysis reveals that those capitals privileged in the mainstream education field continue to be privileged in the alternative education field and as such the students, who lack these capitals, continue to be positioned as disempowered. There is little recognition of new capitals and therefore little potential for change in habitus (institutional and individual), leading to the relationship between the students and formal education remaining largely unchanged.

Conceptualised as a Bourdieuian field, the students' relationship with formal education is structured around the struggle for capital, with different forms of capitals,

and different platforms for accumulation holding more value, or recognition, than others within this field (Bourdieu, 1986; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Naidoo, 2010). In this field, the struggle for accumulation is entwined with the struggle for recognition, emerging as a struggle over what 'work' is more productive, the work to have the capital already possessed recognised (and then converted to educational capital), or the work to acquire already recognised (educational) capital.

Drawing on Bourdieu (1986), I use the terms 'recognised' and 'unrecognised' to denote those capitals that are valued by the field (recognised) and those lacking field value (unrecognised). The term 'educational capitals' will be used to refer to the specific 'already' recognised configuration of symbolic and social capital within this field. The theme of recognition (Section 6.3) captures the practices and strategies employed by the teachers and students to have their capital(s) recognised within the field. The institutional habitus orientates teachers to privilege the same educational capitals privileged in the mainstream education field, contributing to the lack of recognition afforded the students' cultural capital in this alternative field. The students' habitus, as discussed in Chapter 3, lacks alignment with the institutional habitus and orientates them to engage in practices and strategies to resist the lack of recognition afforded to their capitals (see Section 3.2.1). This continued privileging of mainstream educational capitals limits the potential flow and recognition of new and additional capitals within the alternative education field. For these students, the lack of recognition experienced in the Indigo Centre mirrors the lack of recognition experienced throughout their educational history and as such, these acts of resistance (AoR) continue to be co-produced in the alternative education field.

Along with the struggle for recognition of capital, there exists within this field a struggle to accumulate capital, and in Chapter 3 (see Section 3.2.2) social capital was conceptualised as the platform by which the accumulation of other capitals occurs. Again, the teachers are orientated to privilege the officially recognised tasks and routines (pedagogies) of the wider formal educational field as the recognised accumulation process or social capital platform (6.3.1). This process again fails to recognise the capital the students already possess, and students react and resist by attempting to create their own social capital.

Challenging the notion that youth, including the students in this study, rely on adult or recognised social capital, this study builds on research that conceptualises

youth social capital as a significant resource that youth can use to overcome being disempowered (Billett, 2012a, 2012b; Raffo & Reeves, 2000; Weller, 2006). Drawing on the literature that conceptualises resistance as a critique of the lack of social justice existent in formal education systems (Giroux, 1983; Solórzano & Bernal, 2001; Tuck & Yang 2014; Willis, 1977), the youth social capital generated by the students in this field is conceptualised as justice capital (6.3.2). For the students, the officially sanctioned social capital is another mechanism by which their embodied capital goes unrecognised. Yet justice capital also lacks recognition in this field. While justice capital may offer a platform for both recognition and accumulation, the lack of recognition afforded justice capital blocks the flow of capital within the field and further contributes to the student's engagement in AoR.

This chapter then offers an analysis in relation to the research question. In answering what role does social capital play in the enactment of resistance to formal education by students attending alternative education programs, it is the competition between forms of social capital, rather than social capital itself, that plays a significant role in the enactment (and continued enactment) of resistance. Both students and teachers attempt to strategise, with different levels of proficiency, in separate yet connected struggles to recognise and (for students) to accumulate capital through different forms of social capital. This struggle for recognition of capital (whether cultural or social) blocks the flow of new or additional capitals within the field. Without the influx of additional capitals, the potential for re-working of the habitus is low (Adkins, 2005; Mills & Gale, 2002), resulting in social reproduction. Therefore, AoR are reproduced as acts of self-defeating resistance and the potential to produce acts of transformative resistance remains limited.

6.2 ANALYSING THE FIELD

In analysing the field, it is necessary to both define the field and the relationship between the agents operating within the field. The steps in analysing the field involve firstly locating the field, mapping the relationships within the field, and then analysing the habitus of the agents (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Locating and mapping the relationships within the field and examining the habitus of those positioned within the field are important to ensure the relational aspect of Bourdieu's concepts is foregrounded rather than the concepts themselves (Maton, 2018). In other words, viewing the field with a relational gaze (Maton, 2018) allows us the opportunity to

uncover the logic behind the resistant acts rather than simply describing the acts that occur within the field.

6.2.1 Locating the field

As stated in Chapter 3, field is defined as "a structured space of positions in which the positions and their interrelations are determined by the distribution of different kinds of resources or capital" (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 14). In the context of this study, field has been conceptualised as the structured space, or the relationship, through which students engage with formal education (see Chapter 3). The students' relationship with formal education is experienced through their habitus, in relation to the fields of mainstream education, alternative education and family.

In Chapter 3, I drew on Bathmaker (2015) to conceptualise this field as an overlapping field, as illustrated in Figure 6.1.

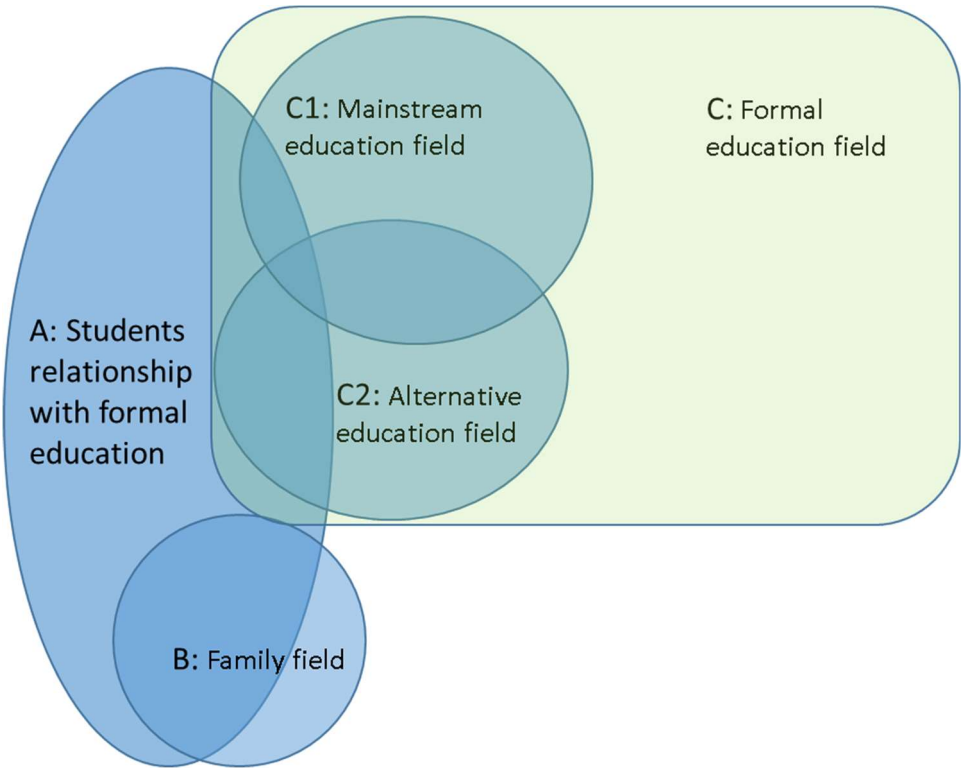

Figure 6.1 The overlapping fields influencing the students' experience with formal education

The students' relationship with formal education (A) is enacted through the way they experience the formal education field (C), through the interactions with people and practices they encounter within mainstream education (C1), alternative education

(C2) and their family (B). As illustrated, both the mainstream education field (C1) and the alternative education field (C2) are sub-fields of the wider field of formal education. The boundaries of these fields are defined by the configuration of (cultural, social and symbolic) capitals available (within each field) and the struggle for the validation and accumulation of those capitals (Gorski, 2013).

Students enter the formal education system when they enrol at a mainstream educational setting (C1), bringing with them the cultural capital and embodied dispositions towards formal education recognised in the family field (B). For example, Neville's father's disposition towards formal education ("*Neville's not doing the work that is required. I don't blame him you know, he turns 15 this year so legally he is allowed to finish school")* may influence Neville to see the value of school attendance as simply to meet a legal requirement. Also, after hearing how his mother described her schooling (*"I hated it, hated with a passion"),* Michael would not have anticipated school would hold much enjoyment or connection for him.

The analysis of the student's educational history highlights this point with an almost immediate disconnect upon entry to the education field (see Chapter 5). Therefore, the students' relationship with formal education (A) is also influenced by the way their family field (B) positions, and is positioned by, formal education. As the students move from C1 to C2, their relationship with formal education continues to be enacted through the people and practices they encounter in the Indigo Centre.

Similarly, the teacher's relationship with formal education is based on how they are positioned in the formal education field, and enacted through the interactions with the people and practices they encounter as they move from C1 to C2. Document analysis (see Section 5.4) reveals the 2014 Indigo Centre *Program Manual* operationalises the teacher's relationship with formal education as one of accountability to the values and expectations of the field. Teachers are accountable for their time and the time of their students. This is evidenced by the overt focus on assigning roles and responsibilities to each teacher and timeframes to the movement of students in and out of the Centre. The wider field of formal education attempts to manage the time (and subsequently the behaviour) of the students by ensuring teachers are accountable for their (and their students') time. As an official document, with references to Department policy and procedures (see Section 5.4) the teachers are

orientated through the *Program Manual* to be accountable for the students, ensuring the work is completed in the expected way, within the expected time frame.

The *Program Manual* sets out in writing the expectations of the institutional procedures and (thereby the institutional habitus), using the same conceptual language (recognised capitals) as found in the mainstream education field. The *Manual* for instance, sets expectations on establishing students' learning goals, transitioning the students in and out of the Centre, timetabling preferred and non-preferred activities aligned with the Australian Curriculum. The teachers, already possessing the recognised cultural capital of the mainstream educational field, find terms and tasks they are familiar with and therefore understand the symbolic capital associated with following the procedures in the *Manual*. In this way the 2014 *Program Manual*, adopts, without changing, the demands of the formal education field for the operation of the Indigo Centre, effectively using the expectations of the mainstream education field to structure the alternative field. Therefore, in order to maintain their existing relationship with formal education, the teachers need only 'manage' the adherence to the guidelines set out in the *Manual*. The familiarity of expectations that the teachers experience as they move from C1 to C2 negates any motivation for a critical review of practice. In other words, the document analysis reveals the teachers encounter an institutional habitus they are familiar with (from their mainstream experience) and therefore continue to experience a strong relationship with the wider field of formal education.

The Indigo Centre, the alternative education program at the centre of this research, is the physical and social space through which these students' relationships with formal education is most frequently enacted. The teachers' primary focus within this program is to make students work, while the students, interacting through a resistant habitus, are focussed on winning symbolic space and resisting the work (Willis, 1977). Even the physical and social space of the field is constructed to recognise specific field valued cultural capital, leaving little space for the recognition of alternative forms of cultural capital. It is very much a traditional classroom, with tables, desks, and whiteboards, designed to assist the teachers as they manage the students' completion of set work. In the following extract, the teachers are referring to the physical layout of the Indigo Centre and its impact on the cultural practices.

Oliver: *I think the space is a negative.*

Interviewer: *In what way?*

Oliver: *You (the students) can't escape.*

The fact that students have 'no escape' away from teacher reflects the accountability focus of the institutional habitus; students 'do the work' and teachers 'make them work'. Oliver went on to articulate the expectation that staff not allow students to be in a room with the door closed without a teacher in the room. The students, Oliver explained, were required to be under constant visual supervision from staff, for safety reasons. The lack of a strong and unified institutional habitus allows Oliver to recognise the negativity associated with this expectation, while the strength of Oliver's relationship with formal education means he still reinforces the expected practices.

Using Te Riele's (2007) landscape map (see Chapter 2, Figure 2.1) the Indigo Centre is structured to perform the function of changing the student to fit back into the mainstream educational field. As the moving of students between the sub-fields of formal education (C1, C2) cannot be a function of a sub-field but must be a function of the wider formal education field, the purpose of this type of AEP must be to serve the function of the wider formal education field. Therefore, the students' relationship (as the teachers') with formal education (A) is an overlapping field of both mainstream (C1) and alternative education (C2) which are both sub-fields of formal education. This overlapping field encompasses an array of shifting alliances and interactions, layering the landscape with social obligations and obstacles which individual students must navigate on a daily basis from their positions within the field. Thus, similarities arise between the sub-fields (C1 and C2), resulting in the students' relationship with formal education (A) being similar regardless of the sub-field through which the relationship is experienced.

Identifying the configuration of capitals that structure this field (A) highlights the alignment of field valued practices and symbolic capital. For instance, the symbolic value for students in understanding the importance of co-operating with the teachers and following their directions can be seen in Tina's response when asked to elaborate on why some students do not co-operate: *"They don't have the skills. They don't understand the importance to cooperate"*.

When asked, "*How do you know when they [the students] are co-operating?"* Tina clearly articulates how the recognised cultural capital is knowing what they have to do: "*They are following the flow of the day, they know what they've got to do".* This reveals that significant structural homology exists between this field (A) and the fields of mainstream and alternative education. Analysis of Tina's statement, in conjunction with the document analysis of both the *Program Manual* and the students' case notes, serves to highlight the alignment between Tina's habitus and the expectations of the institutional habitus. The Indigo Centre's *Program Manual* informs the operation of the Centre, and the theme of accountability can be heard in Tina's words, "*follow the flow of the day…know what they've got to do."* This aligns with Tina's (and Oliver's) completion of the students' case notes at the end of each day that really only list information relating to the students' levels of compliance throughout the day. Both my observations, document analysis and Tina's own words illustrate the institutional habitus as orientated towards ensuring discipline rather than learning (Te Riele, 2014, p. 26) and that symbolic capital can be found in the practice of complying with teacher directions.

Wallace (2017) demonstrated that some students are well aware of what cultural practices are required and appropriate in school even when those practices differ from the students' own cultural practices, with Bourdieu (1986) stating that some cultural practices, once recognised, become symbolic capital. Therefore, in the Indigo Centre, co-operating and following the teacher's directions demonstrates possession of capital that aligns with the institutional habitus. Not questioning why they should follow directions demonstrates the possession of symbolic capital. For example, Neville understands the symbolic value in co-operating, as according to Tina he "*gets that he has to cooperate".* As Tina states, Neville knows "*it's just easier if he does that".* Tina's statements suggest that some of the other students lack the understanding of the symbolic value of this cultural practice in this field.

The structural homology between the alternative and mainstream fields allows the same capitals to be privileged in both fields, and therefore the tensions these students experienced (and the expectations of the teachers) in mainstream school are re-played in the alternative program. Observations and interviews conducted on different days, when different students were present, reveal students' relationship with formal education to be not only an overlapping field, but a dynamic field, with multiple

sub-fields; yet one in which as a collective, students are consistently positioned as disempowered.

6.2.2 Mapping the positions within the field

The teachers and students enter the educational fields (C) and are positioned based on the relationship between their capital and the field-recognised capital. For these students, entering the educational field lacking the expected educational capital (McGregor & Mills, 2012) yet having, accumulating and internalising their family cultural capital, predisposes their habitus to certain "position-taking" (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 35) strategies. Subsequently these students take up disempowered positions within the mainstream education field, from which they experience the continued reinforcement of their unequal status (in terms of expected capital) by the school (Bourdieu, 2002).

In terms of the daily routine of the Indigo Centre, the different positions of students and teachers manifest in the different ways students connect socially (with others) and connect academically (with the work) in contrast to how the teachers expect them to connect. Graphically representing the field (Figure 6.2) illustrates how the teachers and students are positioned differently in respect to expectations and practice and how this co-constructs resistant stances (Christ & Wang, 2008).

In Figure 6.2 the vertical (Line A – academic connections) and horizontal axis (Line B – social connections) illustrate the different student (Dot 1 - blue) and teacher (Dot 2 - black) perspectives that influence practices. For example, from the students' perspective, connecting with and having a laugh with their friends is positioned in opposition to staying out of trouble with their teachers (Line B).

From my observations and from their interviews it is clear the students don't deliberately set out to get in trouble, but often, in a similar way to Willis's lads (1977), appear to challenge teacher directions and authority as a way to connect and have fun with each other. The teachers hold the expectation that the students will stay out of trouble by following their directions. These two different perspectives position the students and teachers in opposition, especially when the teachers enforce the following of expectations.

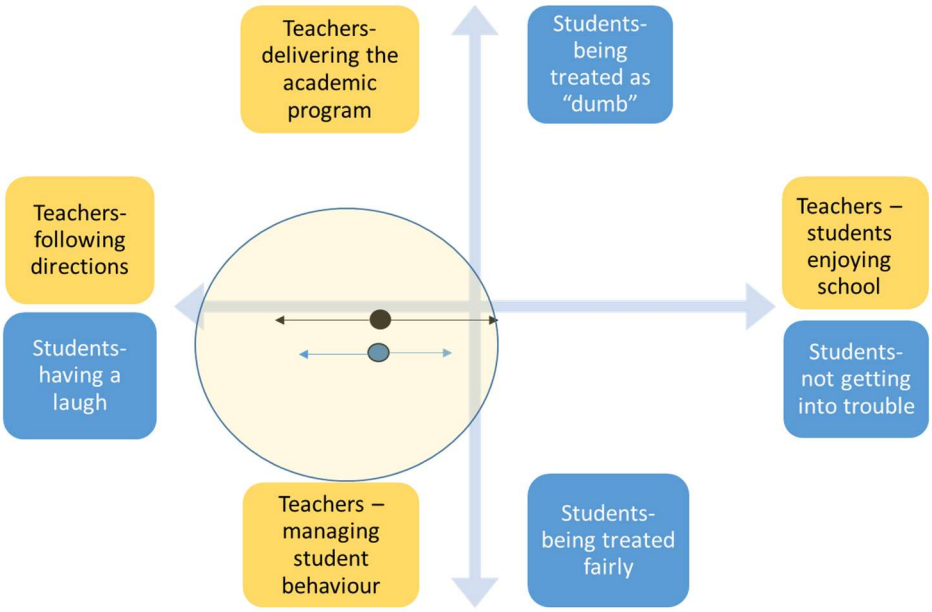

Figure 6.2 A graphic representation of the students' relationship with formal education

While enforcing the expectations creates an unenjoyable climate for the students (and teachers), enforcing the expected practices is part of the institutional habitus and is guided by documents such as *Safe, Supportive and Disciplined School Environment* (DETE, 2014) and the *Responsible Behaviour Plan for students* (DETE, 2014). It is not that the teachers do not want the students to have fun and enjoy their school experience. Rather, the form that fun takes must be a recognised form that aligns with the teacher's interpretation of these policies and procedures. As indicated in Section 5.4, the overarching theme of the documents guiding the operation of the Centre is accountability and management. Therefore, the decision as to what constitutes "approved" fun is guided more by the staff focus on the safety and good management of students. This is often in opposition to what the students, through the lens of a different habitus, see as fun. For example, students are allowed to play card games such as Uno but are unable to play other card games such as poker. Students are allowed to play balls games such as Handball and Silent Ball, a game that involves throwing a ball to each other while remaining silent and still, with those who make a noise having to sit out until there is only one person left standing who claims victory. However, the students are not allowed to play other ball games such as soccer or rugby. The exact games students can or cannot play are not written down or specified in any documents, however these decisions are made by the teachers for the safety of the

students and can be seen as the teachers interpreting such documents as *Safe, Supportive and Disciplined School Environment* (DETE, 2014) through the institutional habitus. The teachers are accountable for the safety of the students. The students, however view the decisions through a different habitus and see the choice of games as restrictive, 'boring' and 'babyish' and blame the teachers for making such decisions.

Critically, for teachers to achieve success in any of their practices, the students must recognise the teachers' capital as the legitimate capital of the field. The Indigo Centre, through its structure and operation, privileges this recognition, bestowing it with symbolic capital. My observations conducted within the Centre show that the students acknowledge, yet actively resist, this recognition as it perpetuates the students' disempowered position. Figure 6.2 illustrates how the recognition of the teachers' capital comes at the expense or devaluation of the students' capital.

The vertical axis (Line A) shows how the students and teachers are positioned differently in relation to the academic program. As shown in Section 5.4, the official documents articulate an expectation that the teachers will ensure the students complete the work. However, the teachers are provided limited guidance regarding the scope of the academic program or pedagogical requirements. For instance, while the *Program Manual* refers to the Australian Curriculum, it states that only limited aspects of the curriculum can be covered, and the pedagogical approach should incorporate hands-on and student-preferred activities.

A further and stronger layer of expectations placed on the teachers is one of managing student behaviour. The overt focus on ensuring the students behave appropriately, combined with a lack of specific guidance around the alignment of curriculum and pedagogy, results in the students being provided with worksheets as a strategy to manage their movements and behaviour. The strength of the institutional habitus in guiding teacher perception to focus on behaviour management can be seen in how Michael's complaints (and then acts of resistance) regarding having to complete more "boring worksheets" is seen as non-compliance towards completion of the work, rather than a critique of the academic rigour.

Within Figure 6.2, the blue dot (Dot 1) represents the possible movement of the students. For example, during interviews and observations, the students expressed the desire to not get in trouble and to get on well and have a laugh with the other students,

and even with the teachers. The arrows pointing to both directions at the same time symbolise the tension created from the desire to move in both directions simultaneously, which the students view as not only impossible but unjust. The black dot (Dot 2) represents the staff, wanting the students to enjoy and value the work while positioned within the limitations imposed by the institutional habitus (i.e., the aim of the program is to ensure the students can follow directions and re-enter a mainstream school).

As represented by the arrows attached to both the dots, small changes in position are possible through the relaxing of the institutional habitus and the distribution of capital, within the field. The yellow oval however represents the boundary of the movement possible for both the students and the teachers in this field. The positions occupied "produce in agents and institutions particular ways of thinking, being and doing" (Bathmaker, 2015, p. 66), and are therefore observable in the interactions between teachers and students and in the way teachers and students talk to and about each other. The movement is limited by the strength of the institutional habitus (as reflected in the documents guiding and influencing operations) and the flow of recognised capitals within the field.

This limited movement or change in the students' relationship with formal education is observable through the limited change in student practice since entering the alternative education field. For example, prior to being referred to the Indigo Centre, both Victor and Neil had already spent time in the alternative education field through their referrals to other AEPs. Michael had been referred to the Indigo Centre for violent behaviour in his mainstream school. On three separate occasions during the data collection period (18 days) he had to be sent home for the same type of behaviour. Neville was referred to the Indigo Centre for refusal to attend school and refused to attend the centre for 40% of the data collection period. William had spent time in three separate AEPs for school refusal, yet William only attended 10% of the data collection period. Analysis of Eric's student file revealed staff had described this limited movement as Eric being 'very resistant to intervention'.

It is worth noting the agency attributed to Eric in his student file. It states he is *"resistant to intervention"*. It is subtle, but it is further evidence of an institutional habitus that validates deficit constructions of these students and leads staff (Richard) to state in the staff focus group, *"I'm thinking that he has even regressed a little"*. It is

perhaps easy to blame Eric and find him at fault for his own lack of success, as, in a similar case as Neil (see Section 5.2.4), Eric's student file does not provide any information pertaining to what interventions have been tried, have failed or why, limiting our ability to genuinely understand where the lack of success lies for this little boy.

The potential for students to experience greater movement within their relationship with formal education could be influenced by a greater flow of capital within the field which would be influenced by, and in turn influence, the institutional habitus. The argument can be made that the flow of capital is constrained by an institutional habitus that privileges uniformity over diversity (Te Riele, 2007), while what is required is an institutional habitus that orientates both students and teachers towards practices that promote dynamic field positioning that would increase the flow of capital.

6.2.3 Analysing the habitus

Drawing on the theory of habitus, the data demonstrated that within this field there is a disconnect between the students' habitus and the collective or institutional habitus. While this lack of alignment between each individual is visible and known to both teachers and students, the teachers are more aligned with the institutional habitus and therefore their habitus is camouflaged by the institutional habitus, resulting in the teachers perceiving their own behaviours as "normal" and "right". While the students' habitus is frequently positioned at odds with the institutional habitus, by both the teachers and the students themselves, an individual's habitus is influenced by the collective habitus (Bourdieu, 1977; Dumais, 2002, 2006; Lareau & Weininger, 2003). Therefore, it can be argued that the resistant habitus of the students is in actuality an incorporation of the expectations of the institutional habitus, as it is the institutional habitus that makes some decisions and actions "routine" (Reay, David & Ball, 2001, p. 52). Therefore, even as the students' acts of resistance are seen as 'wrong' and incur sanctions by the teachers, the practices, operation and structure of the Indigo Centre influence the perpetuation of these acts of resistance. In other words, these students are behaving as these students are expected to behave. This is evidenced in the documents and artefacts that support the institutional habitus of the Centre, such as the timetable. The daily timetable is constructed in such a way so that students' acts of resistance do not disrupt the flow of the day. The removal of the start and finish

times for lessons means that if a student is resisting, the lesson can be stopped and started again once the student's behaviour has been dealt with, allowing for minimal disruption that may occur if lessons had strict start and finish times. Whether a successful strategy or not, for the timetable to be constructed this way there must be an expectation that the students *will* be resistant. The manifestation of acts of resistance is therefore an expectation of the institutional habitus. The timetable, and the way it is used in the Indigo Centre, reveal an institutional habitus that expects they will be disruptive. It is this institutional habitus that guides the way the teachers structure and enact the educational program in the Indigo Centre.

Student Habitus

The students display a resistant habitus through acts of resistance relating to the capitals available within the field as they experience a disconnect between their habitus and the field (Duckworth, 2013; Reay at al., 2007). The students' resistant stance is demonstrated though their interactions with staff, both within the alternative education field and the mainstream field prior to entering the alternate field.

In his own words, Ewan's habitus is orientated towards recognising the 'practical'. Even though his mother purchased him the appropriate hat to wear so that he would not get into trouble at school, Ewan could not wear it, due to the hat being several sizes too big; he subsequently got into trouble, with the teacher telling him to *"take that hoodie off".* For Ewan the issue of an ill-fitting hat could be solved using the tools at his disposal *"I took it off and I walked away and put it (the hoodie) back on underneath my hat because my hat was too big"*.

This disconnect between his own habitus that was based on improvisations and 'adjustments', and the school rules, led to Ewan receiving a sanction by the teacher ("*I got TAP*[3] *room")* which served to confirm his expectations of the field; it also reinforced the disconnect and, therefore, his resistant stance towards school. A key disposition of Ewan's habitus is resistance, here, resisting the devaluing of his practical solution by the teacher. While the sanction made visible (to both Ewan and the teacher) the disconnect between their habitus, Ewan's recount of the event (*"that bitch teacher, well she's a fucking pain")* many months after the event, demonstrates a continued

[3] TAP – Time Away from Play - time out room for students displaying inappropriate behaviour in the playground

resistant stance towards internalising the symbolic capital of the wider formal educational field, expressed in its dismissal - *"It's just a rule".* This continued resistant stance towards the dominant capital, operationalised as expectations and rules, has similarities to the findings by Factor et al. (2011) regarding the engagement in high-risk behaviours by members of non-dominant groups. Their findings indicate that members of non-dominant groups may "develop a collective identity in opposition to that of the dominant group" (Factor, et al. 2011, p. 1293) and feel a need to openly disregard the rules and expectations of the dominant group.

Similarly, analysis of Victor's student file (specifically the referral form completed by the school referring Victor to the Indigo Centre) shows that he regularly received sanctions for failing to follow teacher directions. In his interview Victor was able to articulate the practical orientation of his habitus through his resistance towards an arbitrary pace at which he was expected to work: "*I don't think it's quite fair for somebody who's slow, to always be told to hurry up".* Victor made additional comments that he liked most of the work and had no strong desire to not complete the work, demonstrating that his acts of resistance were towards the impractical pace at which he was expected to work.

Importantly, analysing Victor's comments alongside the analysis of the daily timetable demonstrates the complexity of the issues that need to be navigated to support the needs of this heterogeneous group of resistant students. While the daily timetable shows a degree of homology between the different fields (mainstream and alternative) and can be interpreted as disempowering some students within this field (see Section 5.5.1), it also very clearly demonstrates that genuine attempts are being made by staff within the field of alternative education to counter the issues experienced by these students in the mainstream field. Victor's critique of the pace of the mainstream lessons is perfectly countered by the design of the timetable in the Indigo Centre (see Figure 5.1) which provides flexibility, with no times set for the tasks. This demonstrates that within the practices and expectations of the Indigo Centre, there are alternative structures and practices which could be better matched to the students' individual resistant identities rather than applied to the students as a collective. The timetable that disempowers some students may well be a structure that empowers Victor.

Neil, in responding to the focus group vignette (Appendix F) about the fictional student Albert going to a skate park before school and getting in trouble for wearing the wrong clothes to school, expressed a considered, practical strategy for staying out of trouble at school when he suggested: "*put an extra pair of clothes in the bag, if that's why he's getting in trouble".* Yet he also questioned why a student should get in so much trouble for staying too long at the skate park anyway, posing the questions *"he is learning isn't he? Learning each time he makes a mistake?"* The posing of these questions is evidence of Neil's orientation towards a more practical method of learning than is often employed in school.

Michael, in his interview, expressing a similar practical view of learning to that of Neil, questioned the 'accepted' symbolic nature of learning: "*why do teachers ask you questions they already know the answers to?"* With this question Michael positions himself in opposition to the instructional habitus and the 'accepted' pedagogical practices of the teachers. He continued with, "*there are 2 paddle pops and you get 5 paddle pops and then how many you got? Like the teacher is that dumb they don't know".* Michael's body language and facial expressions (and the silly voice he used when saying this) suggest Michael does not believe the teachers are dumb and don't know the answer, but rather has come to the same realisation as Willis's lads, that "most available work is essentially meaningless" (MacLeod, 1995, p. 18). The questions Michael asks, and the added visual and acoustic prosody, demonstrate Michael is not only aware of the disconnect between his and the teacher's habitus but that, through his parody, he is able to own and identify with that disconnect.

The comments by Neil and Michael are reflective of a difference in the position students and teachers occupy in the formal education field and the narratives of learning associated with those positions. Michael critiques an example of the *problem-posed* learning narrative (Freire, 1970), where the teacher posed the problem and waits for Michael to give the correct answer. As the teacher obviously knows the answers beforehand, the aim of this practice according to critical educators (Freire, 1970; Shor, 1992) would be to ensure the correct knowledge has been "deposited" into Michael. The dominant position of the teachers gives power to this learning narrative as the accepted way to learn. From Michael's disempowered position, he has limited avenues through which to voice his critique.

Neil, in contrast, appears to be himself providing an example of *problem-posing* learning narrative (Freire, 1970). Posing the questions, "*he is learning isn't he? Learning each time he makes a mistake?",* Neil is opening up the conversation to a discussion on the different perspectives on learning. Such questions can be interpreted as Neil going beyond the simple rejection of intellectual labour (Willis, 1977) and attempting to engage in a critical debate. This is evidence of an (embryonic) attempt to go beyond the self-defeating resistance of Willis's 'lads' and engage in a more transformative type resistance (Solórzano & Bernal, 2001).

While analysed individually, the questions posed by Michael and Neil demonstrate their resistant stance. When viewed collectively, their questions take on a greater significance. Michael demonstrates a habitus orientated towards a critique of the structures of domination, in this case the dominant pedagogical approach. Neil demonstrates a habitus orientated towards social justice and an examination of the different perspectives that underpin the dominant constructions of knowledge. Together these characterise the motivations described as necessary for transformative resistance (Solórzano & Bernal, 2001).

In her early recollections of school, Von spoke quite negatively when remembering her teachers, using words such as "disrespectful" and "degrading" when describing their behaviours. These descriptions are evidence of her own habitus/educational field disconnect, influencing her ability to "do school". Von's habitus influenced the structure of the family field and therefore Ewan's ability to "do school" is related to Von's ability to "do school". Growing up with a mother who hated school structured Ewan's primary field and can be seen as the objective structure that produced within Ewan the subjective disposition towards school that recreated his own lack of ability to "do school". As Bourdieu (1977) states, "The habitus acquired in the family underlines the structuring of school experience" (p.87). In other words, the relationship Von experienced with formal education is reproduced in Ewan, pre-disposing him to also experience the poor fit (described in Chapter 5) with the formal education system. This same pattern is evident in the narratives of Tracey and her son Michael. Tracey is vitriolic in narrating her memories of school. *"I hated it",* she says in the first interview, her tone of voice and facial expressions emphasising the word 'hate'. *"The teachers were mean…nasty".* As a student, Tracey was excluded from school: *"it was a relief to not have to go back".*

In all these examples, Ewan, Victor, Neil, Michael, Von and Tracey all show awareness of, and are resistant towards, the different expectations of the institutional habitus. Yet individually, their acts of resistance amount to little more than 'pyrrhic victories' (Tuck & Yang, 2014) that allow the students to feel temporarily empowered but which ultimately fail to change the teacher's practices and expectations. This is due to their habitus being the embodiment of the capitals available to them in the family field, capitals not valued in the wider educational field. As such the students' habitus lacks alignment with the institutional habitus and they fail to grasp the thinking behind the teachers' practices and expectations. An alignment of habitus would facilitate understanding and acceptance of the teacher practices and expectations, while an understanding of the logic of practice behind the teachers' practices and expectations would empower the students to engage in socially transformative acts of resistance (Giroux, 1983; Solórzano & Bernal, 2001).

Teacher Habitus

The teachers, possessing capital that aligns with the wider formal education field (Marsh, 2006), are not resistant towards the hegemonic discourses, and engage in 'accepted' practices, making it difficult to distinguish their individual habitus from the institutional habitus. The teachers' habitus orientates them towards recognising and rewarding valued practices (symbolic capital), and the application of sanctions that devalue all those practices that are different to the expected institutional practices. While Willis (1977) argues against viewing such differences as representative of superior and inferior cultural patterns, the teachers do engage in such practices by recognising and rewarding those who are in possession of symbolic capital, and by applying sanctions on students who do not possess it. This devaluing of cultural practices that are different to the accepted institutional practices as inferior or "wrong' practices, is an aspect of the institutional habitus that is adopted by the teachers, resulting in them viewing the students from a deficit perspective (Carter, 2005; Wallace, 2017). For example, the teacher's insistence on Ewan removing his hoodie can be interpreted as the alignment of the teacher's habitus with the institutional habitus and the knowledge that only certain practices are legitimate. To the teacher the hoodie is not just a tool Ewan can use to ensure the hat stays on, but rather is symbolic of an illegitimate habitus.

The influence of the institutional habitus is evident as Oliver talks about his own schooling experience: *"I went through grade twelve and did all that usual stuff and got accepted to go into teaching"*. Recognising the procedures and process of the formal education system (in this case, the application for tertiary education) as normal *("all the usual stuff")* is evidence of an alignment between Oliver's habitus and the values of the wider educational field. This is more than seeing a value in education, it is understanding of the process of gaining educational capital and how to then leverage it for further capitals. Oliver strategised and planned, drawing on the configuration of capitals that he possessed, a configuration recognised in the field. Oliver's narrative reveals that his habitus (re)produces this configuration or capitals through (re)producing practices recognised in the education field.

Educational resources, including digital technologies, can be seen as artefacts that both illustrate and support an institutional habitus. Including these artefacts as part of the document analysis revealed that in the Indigo Centre there was a lack of artefacts that support learning. In the classrooms of the Centre, posters, pictures, pens, books, calculators, scissors and the like are absent from view. The spaces are bland and sparse with educational resources under lock and key, brought out only when the lesson requires these resources and then locked away again. In discussing this ("*the spaces aren't nice to be shut in, but we can't make them nice because of the clientele"),* Tina suggests the lack of furniture, visual displays on the walls, educational resources and other general décor normally present in classrooms are not found in the Centre because the students would destroy them, steal them, and/or use them as weapons. Thereby, Tina's comment indicates how those who lack institutional capital are deprived further, which sets a cyclic process of selective inclusion into the system. The lack of these educational resources not only contributes to deficit construction and reconstruction of the students and their ongoing disempowerment in the educational field, but is evidence of an institutional habitus focused on managing the physical environment over providing an educational experience

Tina's institutional habitus orientated both her value judgement of the classroom (*"they aren't nice to be in)"*, and the association of the students with this when she noted, *"because of the clientele"*. Her value judgement about the spaces, specifically the classrooms, was also a value judgement based on her capital, of the clientele's (students') positioning and who was to blame for the situation. In this statement, Tina

revealed her acceptance or 'taken for granted-ness' of the positioning of the students in the field. Her institutional habitus mis-recognised how the field positions the students as inferior, and then subsequently blames them for the position they occupy. Therefore, in her view, the education spaces (classrooms) created *for* these students were not 'nice' *because* of the students.

Tina positions the students by how their practices align with what cultural practices she views as legitimate in this field; the "position in the field inclines agents towards particular patterns of conduct" (Mills, 2008, p. 86). For example, Tina states, "*often when you ask the kids to do anything, their response is to be defensive, to be defiant".* She perceives their lack of aligned practices as a deficit of valued cultural capital, explaining that *"without even thinking they say no because they don't know anything better".* However, Tina also reveals an orientation towards blaming the students for this deficit, as if they were choosing to be seen the way she perceived them: "*they say no because they don't want to follow directions".* Tina's perspective explains how the contrast between the practices of the students and the practices valued in the field (by the teachers) positions the students as a disempowered group.

In this section, field was located as an overlapping field, with students' positions mapped on the configurations of capitals available and contested over within the field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), and within the specific field of alternative education, the habitus of the occupants was examined. The next section considers the practices and strategies used to recognise those capitals as having value in the field.

6.3 RECOGNITION OF CAPITAL WITHIN THE FIELD

The theme of recognition is an attempt to capture the practices and strategies employed by the students and teachers in order to have their capital recognised and to resist them being unrecognised within the field. The students' and teachers' practices and strategies are generated by, and reflective of one's embodied capital, or habitus, and their position within the field (in relation to other positions within the field). In other words, these practices are not the result of a simple decision to recognise or not recognise but emerge from the complex relationships and experiences inherent within the field.

For the teachers, their assimilation of the dispositions and beliefs of the institutional habitus influence their acts of recognition, resulting in the teachers self-

recognising their behaviours as the 'norm'. For example, in the mainstream educational field, pedagogy has the privileged position as the recognised strategy for accumulation of capital, and therefore, some pedagogies are seen as 'accepted' or normal by the teachers. In the Indigo Centre, although it is offers an alternative program, the goal of transitioning students back into the mainstream affords the same mainstream pedagogies to be similarly privileged, or accepted, with minimal questioning by the staff.

6.3.1 Teachers' Pedagogy – the recognised Social Capital

To facilitate the production of educational capital, or to gain 'an education', or in this Centre to achieve the transition back to mainstream school, the teachers choose work for students to complete and arrange the physical environment to best encourage completion of this work and compliance with behaviour expectations. While staff explain these pedagogical choices as either drawn from an educational perspective to develop greater literacy and numeracy skills, and/or a behaviour management perspective to change the behaviour of the students, from a Bourdieuian perspective the institutional habitus in this field is strongly orientated towards managing the behaviours of the student. This perspective is supported by the analysis of the documents that showed how the overall intent of the document guiding the Centres operations, the *2014 Program Manual,* can be positioned as ensuring accountability and the effective management of the teachers and thereby, the students of the Indigo Centre (see Section 5.4).

Furthermore, the combination of a focus on compliance with the teacher's expectations (of behaviour) and completion of work tasks (set by the teacher) exemplifies Freire's (1970) dehumanising pedagogy. From a critical pedagogy perspective, the teachers are positioned within the field (in relation to the students) in a dominant position, and hold the power to determine which knowledges, resources and practices are recognised and which are not. For example, in Picture 5.3, early finishers are allowed to complete a *Maths Masterpiece*, which is a colouring-in art activity that involves solving mathematical equations to determine what colours should be used to complete the art work. This type of colouring-in activity, when completed as per the timetable, is deemed an acceptable practice, whereas a student, in this case Michael, choosing to sit and draw instead of completing work as instructed by the teacher, is seen as displaying unacceptable behaviour. This clearly signals to

the students their powerlessness. Further to this, while the timetables (see Figures 5.2 and 5.3) clearly focus on literacy and/or numeracy basics, seen as an element of best practice (Gutherson et al., 2011), it shows no connection to students' prior knowledge and lived experiences (capitals). This stands in contrast to the type of student-centred and individualised curriculum also advocated as effective practice (Gutherson et al., 2011).

From their position of power, teachers use pedagogy to create the illusion that both teachers and students are equal participants in the learning process. Through a series of strategic pedagogical choices (e.g., asking the students what they want to do, where they wish to work, giving student the choice of several options regarding how the task is done, the order of tasks, the amount of support the student wishes to receive), teachers can 'mask' their dominance, allowing students to perceive themselves as occupying a less dominated position within the group. As Tina explained, this positioning is a pedagogic strategy: *"you give them choice without really giving them choice"*.

Tina took this further, attempting to inculcate the norms and values of the institutional habitus (Blaxter & Hughes, 2003) in the students, stating: *"I word it in a way that they think they've got a choice but they don't really. It's teacher instruction"*. Here Tina was showing how she is able to use her position in the field (empowered) and the relationship she has with the students (dominant) to manipulate the students' thinking (Bourdieu & Wacquant 2002; Moi 1991). Examined through the lens of critical pedagogy, Tina uses her dominant position to privilege beliefs that justify, and practices that reproduce, her dominance.

Oliver also described the strategies he undertakes to assist students accumulate recognised (educational) capital: "*We try to make it sort of successful for them. We do try to definitely make it so they can achieve success in the classroom. We manipulate it so that students can succeed"*. That the teachers do try to change some variables throughout the day is undeniable: they form small groups of students, pairs of students, or work one on one with students. Teachers have students sit at individual desks or larger group tables. These are examples of recognised practices of the mainstream educational field and the teachers' habitus is positioned to view these as normal and how school success is achieved. These pedagogical principles perpetuate the symbolic

capital associated with recognising them as normal and accepted (Giroux, 2005; McLaren, 2015).

However, the students I observed were not passive receptacles and did not share the collective habitus of the staff, and therefore for them, these types of practices were hard to recognise and accept. Richard was able to acknowledge the difficulty students had in recognising what the teachers saw as normal pedagogical processes: "*They (the students) can't see the light at the end of the tunnel. William can't see that, that he just has to do A, and he'll get B".* Oliver shared Richard's view: "*They don't seem to be able to see how the pieces will fit together".* The words such as *'can't* and *'don't'* that both Richard and Oliver used demonstrate how, mediated by the institutional habitus, they have constructed a deficit view of these students.

The strong alignment between Oliver's and Richard's habitus and the institutional habitus positions them to misrecognise education requiring students simply following directions. Follow the lesson plan, do the work and achievement follows. *'Do A, and he'll get B'.* Whether this formula is indeed simple, or correct, is less important (for this study) than the symbolic power inherent in complying with the teacher's directions: *"Do A".*

Initial anecdotal evidence from staff suggests the type of pedagogical approach described by Tina and Oliver is varied in its effectiveness in increasing compliance and work output. As Tina stated, "*It depends on the child and what we want them to do".* Initial observations suggest students often joined in the 'negotiation' with teachers around the completion of tasks. However, analysis illustrated that students were unfamiliar with the 'rules of the game' and struggled to understand when the rules appeared to change. For example, Tina stated "*there is always room for negotiation",* yet she followed up with: *"there is no negotiation on reading",* and the students' unfamiliarity with the institutional habitus (and the importance placed on reading) may make these two statements seem contradictory.

Examining Tina's actions through the conceptual lens of institutional habitus shows that Tina assimilated the values of the institutional habitus, enacting practices that legitimised the 'doing' of the work over all else, while positioning the students at odds with the 'recognised' way of thinking, "*We put out work knowing that the majority of the kids aren't going to complete all of it, they will probably say no".*

Tina was complicit with the expectations of the institution, getting the students to engage in doing work, and more work, and applying sanctions if students did not complete the right amount of work, saying "*with Michael, if he doesn't do work, he's staying until he does".* On the surface, this seems a logical goal to find in a school setting: students do school work and learn. However, in her acknowledgement that "*he's smart enough to finally do the work so he can go home",* Tina revealed her acceptance of and complicity in reproducing the symbolic capital of schooling with its recognised mantra 'do the work'.

Michael's pre-existing ability to do the work (according to Tina) yet his ongoing resistance towards doing the work, demonstrated a lack of recognition of the symbolic capital that could be produced by engaging in the teacher's pedagogy. A shared recognition of this symbolic capital would see Michael simply complete the work, "*Do A, and He will get B".* The lack of shared belief in the symbolic power of the pedagogy negates the ability of this pedagogy (in its current form) to fulfil the promise as *the* social capital platform that will assist Michael to accumulate symbolic capital.

These examples show how the influence of the institutional habitus limits the number of ways students can complete the work 'correctly'. In other words, despite the rhetoric of alternative education and the illusion that other modes of thinking are recognised, alternative modes of thinking are devalued through a series of strategic pedagogical choices that continue to privilege the expectations and practices of the mainstream educational field. Knowledge is "a fixed possession of the teacher" (Freire & Shor, 1987, p. 14) and there is a (teacher-driven) process for transferring that knowledge. In other words, there are limited recognised ways you can 'do school'.

However, neither collective nor individual habitus preclude agency, and the teachers (and students) are able to resist or "rework the dominant institutional discourse" (Morrison, 2007. p. 2). An example of this presented as a collaboration between the teachers and Neville on writing a song. It was a departure from the regular educational program of the Indigo Centre due to the fact that on this day, only Neville was in attendance. During this activity, the behaviours and interactions of teachers and student changed from what had been the norm. There was what could be perceived as genuine co-operation towards the completion of a goal – writing a song. Yet there was actually limited compliance by Neville, for example suggestions for lyrics were made by the teachers which Neville ignored, with no consequence or assessment of right or

wrong by the teachers for this behaviour. There was collaboration on the lyrics, with both teachers and student having inspiration and interrupting each other as they spoke to contribute their ideas, yet there were no consequences for the interruptions or for not allowing others to speak. Every behaviour seemed to be accepted as part of the creative process.

The conversation was loud, fast paced with the occasional silly suggestion made by teacher and student alike. There was laughter. Moments of off-task behaviour were not corrected. At one-point Neville jumped up and ran into a different room without an explanation. No one followed, no one asked where he was going. He returned after a moment with a dictionary to assist him with the task at hand. This was in stark contrast to other times when I observed students being reprimanded for not leaving the classroom the 'correct' way, i.e., asking permission.

The teachers and student connected through a focus on creating and expressing, not right or wrong. Neville went off on a tangent several times, appearing to not be focused on the task yet this too seemed accepted as part of the creative process. Certainly, as an observer I could not question his (nor the teachers') engagement in the task. The shared production and refinement of lyrics and melody, the shared enjoyment of the task, were obvious and the alignment of goals emerged as a shared mode of thinking. To the observer there appeared no teacher or student, no dominant or oppressed. All participants were recognised. The institutional habitus that had started to become visible to me through observations, interviews and document analysis, was now invisible. The lyrics written in the activity are provided (with Neville's permission) in Appendix J.

Furthermore, as staff reflected on this activity afterwards there was recognition of Neville's possessed capital and agency, *"It was great, he really got into it. He is so creative. He has some real talent".* Neville's own reflections of the activity (*"it was better than other stuff we do here because it was more interactive")* shows that students are not passive recipients of an 'education', but desire and value the opportunity to actively construct their own learning.

These moments of shared recognition were observed infrequently over the data collection period, but their existence is interpreted as a waning in the strength of influence of the institutional habitus that allowed the institutional habitus to be mediated by the individual (Morrison, 2017). In these moments, the struggle for

recognition (and the enactment of resistance as critiques of recognised capitals) diminished, allowing the flow of capital to increase, allowing the students' "individual and collective strengths and achievements … hidden behind more visible and publicly recognised social problems: to be unearthed" (Bottrell, 2009, p. 498). While a strong alignment between teachers' habitus and the institutional habitus predisposes the teachers to reproduce the dominant modes of thinking, these moments of shared recognition demonstrate that the teachers' habitus does possess a transformative element.

However, from my analysis, I conclude that despite the "alternative" rhetoric, the institutional habitus of the Indigo Centre does not position teachers towards increasing the capitals available within the field (increasing the flow of capital), but rather strongly orientates them to privilege the officially recognised tasks and routines of the wider educational field, as the recognised accumulation process (the banking educational model (Freire, 1970)), or social capital platform, and as such, (re)produces the symbolic capital existent in the field. This has the effect of de-valuing the students' capital and, with a lack of flow of capital within the field, reducing the students' ability to acquire further capitals. Furthermore, this situation results in a powerful event such as the song writing described above, that perhaps could have informed the teachers' future interactions with Neville, if not the whole student group, failing to gather recognition. Overall, the pedagogical strategies privileged by the teachers in the Indigo Centre are not only largely unsuccessful, but ignore student agency, shut down student voice and limit opportunities for collaborative learning, all approaches advocated by critical pedagogy.

Drawing on the concept of youth social capital, I argue that these students, positioned within this field as disempowered, and lacking the recognised social capital which would enable them to acquire other capitals, attempt to create and use their own social capital (Billett, 2012a, 2012b; Davison et al., 2012; Holland, Reynolds, & Weller, 2007; Leonard, 2005). I draw on resistance theory to conceptualise the collective strategies that make up the youth social capital within this field as 'justice capital'.

6.3.2 Justice Capital - the Unrecognised Social Capital

Drawing on the 'counter-school culture' of Willis (1977), and Raffo and Reeves's (2000) conceptualisation of "individualised systems of social capital" (p.

148), the youth social capital in this field can be described as a loose, fluid collection of strategies enacted by the students as a counter (or resistance) to the de-valuing experienced at the hands of the formal education field. Willis argued that "counter school culture and its processes arise from definite circumstances in a specific historical relation and in no sense are accidentally produced" (Willis, 1977, p. 120), and through the meanings applied by the students to their own behaviours, their actions represent an expression of their agency in a struggle against their perceived injustice.

> *"It's not only the things she said, it was just the tone of voice, like you could hear it in her voice she's thinking, 'Oh, I'm better than you, you're nothing"* - Neil
>
> *The teacher called me a retard, a stupid retard with no manners.* - Neville
>
> "*When you got to go to the toilet they're always saying, "No, no. You have to wait until it's time."* – Ewan
>
> *"You can't talk. When you just try to say something they're like, "Shh."* **-** Michael

It is not within the scope of this study to argue whether there is in fact any injustice occurring within the Indigo Centre. Suffice to say that students attending the Centre have the perception of experiencing injustice throughout their educational history due to the differing habitus and capital they bring which clashes with the institutional forms; they act to resist this perceived injustice, either through overt contestation to subversive behaviours or to compliance (Giroux, 2001; Pitt, 1998; Sassatelli, Santoro & Willis, 2009).

The term "justice capital" is an attempt on my part to conceptualise the way in which students attempt, individually and collectively, to resist the de-valuation of their capitals but also to accumulate symbolic capital. It is not just a struggle to acquire recognised capital but also a struggle to have the capital they already possess recognised as having some value. Justice capital is not just the struggle to be recognised, but a challenge to the hegemonic structures that disempower and fail to recognise. It is a struggle for the "right" to be recognised.

William touches on this lack of the right to be recognised when he explains why in the past he verbally abused teachers and truanted from school: *"My teacher was mean to me. He kept on calling me a loser."* William later clarifies that the teacher did not actually use the word loser "*but he was just putting me out like he was calling me a loser".* Through the repeated dismissal of William as a recognised member of

the field, the teacher positioned William as (in his words) a loser. William explained the phrase, 'putting me out' as *"teachers say they believe but you know they don't, or they say they are listening but you can tell they don't care about you*". William's words, emphasised by his body language during the interview, screwing his face up, frowning, hold testimony to the perceived lack of justice bestowed upon William by this teacher.

Victor, who experienced a similar situation to William, offered a practical resolution that involved simply being positioned as 'different' rather than inferior:

> *They should give a person another chance when they do something wrong. Don't always take what other teachers say straight away. Hear what the teacher has to say and then what the student has to say.*

As this quote exemplifies, Victor demonstrated awareness of his lack of recognition within the field, "*Don't always take what other teachers say straight away",* is an appeal to the powerlessness experienced in being unrecognised. Victor acknowledged and offered a practical strategy to resolve the lack of equal recognition within the field through informal, practical strategies that recognise their individual capital.

An important aspect of the students' symbolic capital was valued relationships, relationships in which social justice was available. Throughout their educational history the students had not been able to form these relationships with their teachers. Effective interactions between teacher and student are critical components of the teaching and learning process and, as the data has shown, interactions such as how the students respond to directions from a teacher, and levels of co-operation between staff and students, show that these interactions cross over between the educational and the social. In the focus group, the students were read a vignette about a fictional student, Albert, and then asked to respond.

> Researcher: *He [Albert] is at this meeting with the principal and his mum and the principal is talking about him not going to high school, either going to a PLC or repeating. How do you think Albert's going to feel?*
>
> Ewan: *Angry.*
>
> Eric: *Real annoyed.*

Victor*: Sad, because he won't see his friends again.*

Here the students do not see the principal's decision as in favour of their education, but rather see it as a restriction, and de-valuation of their symbolic capital. In this instance, justice capital would come in the form of the principal recognising the value the students place on their social relationships and valuing this when any educational decision is made. In the focus group example, on the educational decision to repeat a year for Albert or send him to an alternative program, the students responded with a focus on the social implications of how this would affect Albert's friendships. The deep value towards developing and maintaining social relationships that the students demonstrate stands in stark contrast to the teachers' focus on improving literacy/numeracy skills.

In many of the interviews, the students' perspectives around school showed this disconnect with the interactions with friends as positive and interactions with teachers as negative. This view was summed up by Victor:

Researcher: *Would you say that you liked school or disliked school?*

Victor: *My friends, lunchtime.*

Researcher: *What about things you didn't like about school?*

Victor: *Teachers. They force you to do stuff that you don't want to do.*

In this way justice capital was established through such an identity confirmed, or 'stood up for' by one's peers, family and ultimately by teachers. This is the capital the students recognise and value.

Victor: *My friends are awesome, they always step up for me. And they always have my back when something happens.*

This aspect was sometimes misunderstood by teachers (and parents) as synonymous with 'getting away with it' and therefore students were often not viewed as credible*: "If I get punched, and I say, "That kid did it," and the teachers don't believe me".*

As a counter-culture capital, the struggle for justice capital does not easily dovetail with the struggle for the more mainstream educational capital; indeed the simultaneous acquisition of both can seem dialectally opposed. The struggle for justice

capital can be observed in the students' surreptitious (although sometimes overt) revolt against ephemeral academic processes, polarising participation structures, and seemingly arbitrary rules of behaviour.

Justice capital potentially may allow the students to forge identities of pride within their peer network, with siblings and family and at school, other than the 'disruptive student' identity they have traditionally worn, potentially making up the difference for students self-identifying with weak academic identities, allowing students to reframe themselves in a more personally meaningful role within the school setting.

From the teachers' perspective, justice capital is both unrecognised and misrecognised as *the* goal. However, for students, the goal of having justice capital recognised is *in order* to leverage this for further capitals. Justice capital is about being recognised for who you are and having such an identity confirmed, or 'accepted' by one's peers, family and teachers. The desire for justice capital is generated by the students' habitus, the embodiment of their unrecognised capital in their relationship with formal education. The struggle to accumulate justice capital is the struggle to be recognised and to resist being devalued by the field.

The students' unrecognised, informal set of strategies to reposition themselves relationally within the field and gain recognition stands in contrast to teachers' pedagogy, which is more about consolidating positions in the field than changing them. The two separate forms of social capital, pedagogy and justice capital, form two separate accumulation pathways with competition between forms of social capital blocking the flow of capital, restricting the accumulation of further capitals by the students and subsequently limiting the modification of the habitus. The historical nature of the students' disconnect with the institutional habitus denies them the field position from which they can recognise the sanctioned pathway for accumulation as 'for them'. This disconnect however, does shield the students from all but a weak influence of the institution, providing small opportunities for them to exercise their agency. Generally enacted through disruptions to the class or program, this type of agency is limited by their position in the field (based on their recognised capitals) and as such, manifests as self-defeating resistance (Willis, 1977).

6.4 SUMMARY

In this second analysis chapter, two themes were addressed. The concepts of Bourdieu and Willis were used to explore the how teachers and students negotiate both recognition and resistance within the Indigo Centre. There are two competing forms of social capital within the field, and across the students and teachers, there is a lack of shared recognition in the legitimacy of the different forms of capitals. The analysis in this chapter showed that despite the educational setting of the Indigo Centre, it is actually the social 'power play' of recognition that forms the basis for much of the interactions between staff and student. The tension regarding the legitimate standing of the different capitals being fought for and the strategies employed to acquire it is divisive. It is this tension that generates and perpetuates the acts of resistance within the field.

The theoretical framework presented in Chapter 3 operationalises the students' habitus through the disposition of recognition (see Section 3.4), and the continued lack of recognition afforded to the students' capitals contributes to the production of educational resistance. In this chapter, resistance theory, along with the concepts of capital, habitus and field were employed to understand how acts of resistance manifest and continue to manifest within this field. The tools of field, habitus and capital helped in understanding how the different acts of resistance emerged from the students' lived experiences. The chapter demonstrated how acts of resistance were attempts to influence the valuing (and resist the devaluing) of the differing forms of capital. Flow of capital necessitates that a synergy must exist between the capital targeted for acquisition, and the method of acquisition. Within the students' relationship with formal education, this synergy is interrupted, with two distinct forms of social capital operationalised.

Furthermore, the desire and struggle by the students to accumulate justice capital as discussed above signifies that students attempted to involve themselves in the creation, recognition and accumulation of capital. Therefore, crucially, the acknowledgement of justice capital and the desire and struggle to have it, signifies that students wanted their voices to be heard, to be recognised for who they were, and in this process, were also attempting to involve themselves in the creation of power.

From the data drawn from observations within this Centre, teachers do attempt to enhance, or strengthen, the students' relationship with formal education through the

transmission of further formal symbolic capitals; however, the effectiveness of the officially sanctioned form of social capital is limited. By reframing the students' acts of resistance as desire for the accumulation of justice capital, it is possible to see that the students' behaviour truly "emerges out of a latent or overt ideological condemnation of the underlying repressive ideologies" (Giroux, 1983, p. 288).

While the struggle to achieve recognition of justice capital signifies that students have the aspiration to involve themselves in accumulation of capital, it is the struggle for the recognition of capital, rather than the accumulation of capital, that consumes the field with the continued privileging of one capital over another, blocking the potential flow of capital. The implications of this are explored in the next chapter.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

> "Inclusion contests the established explanation that low achievements in school are a result of students' individual pathological characteristics and weaknesses…In inclusive education, the view is social and relational, that the school system itself contributes to the students' academic failures."
>
> (Haug, 2017, p.208).

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapters 5 and 6 provided the analysis of the instrumental case study to illustrate how acts of resistance were attempts to influence the valuing (and reject the devaluing) of the different forms of capital. This chapter will take on that analysis and discuss the implications for practice. The chapter starts with an overview of the research and the argument presented throughout this thesis. The research problem is then addressed through a discussion of the research question and a presentation of the key findings. The implications of this research to theory, research, policy and (personal) practice are discussed and a model for effective practice, based on the findings of this research, is presented. The limitations are discussed and the chapter ends with recommendations for further research and an overall conclusion.

7.2 RESEARCH OVERVIEW

This instrumental case study critically examined how the students' social, cultural and symbolic capital are valued or devalued within the students' relationship with formal education (the field) in a specific alternative education program, the Indigo Centre, which caters to students who are removed from mainstream schools. The overall argument presented is that devaluing of the students' capital and habitus that occurs in the mainstream and alternative education context is met with resistance by these students, as they perceive no difference in the institutional habitus in either educational setting. This case study provided analysis of a complex and contextualised social and educational phenomenon of student resistance, perpetuated within and

against the very alternative education programs that are designed to support students' educational success.

A critical literature review demonstrated the continuing relevance of the work of Willis (1977) to the study of inequalities inherent in formal education systems. Resistance Theory was shown to play a further role, allowing the students in this research to be redefined as school resistant students, a conceptualisation that acts as a counter to the traditional deficit constructions of such students. I made the argument that examining acts of educational resistance using Bourdieu's (1977, 1990a, 1998) theoretical constructs of capital, habitus and field, affords us a deeper understanding of the social influences that perpetuate these acts of resistance. The analysis of social and educational inequality, performed through the lens of capital, field and habitus, linked Willis's insights to reveal the logic of practice that creates and maintains the students' resistant habitus.

7.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM

The overall problem was framed as "how do we address the challenging behaviours displayed in school by our resistant students?" Yet, I understood that this is not a simple question, as it is not about simply enforcing the "correct" behaviours and making the students comply with teacher directions, but rather, adopting an inclusive approach that begins with comprehending the social, cultural and historical complexities that create and maintain school resistant identities.

The research problem is compelling. Just ask any teacher who has ever tried to manage challenging student behaviours while trying to teach and keep every other student (and themselves) safe. What must the days at school where a student exhibits such challenging behaviour be like for the teacher? Just ask the student exhibiting verbal or physical abuse, smashing things, running away from school, or all of the above? What must those days at school feel like for that student? More importantly, where in all this is an education taking place? While not all challenging behaviours in our schools can be classified as resistant behaviours (Bottrell, 2007; Solórzano & Bernal, 2001), where they do occur, as Giroux (1983) notes, acts of student resistance are a condemnation of our formal education system, and by the very students the system is meant to support.

Significantly, the research problem of this study acknowledged that acts of resistance are seen only as punishable, and attempted to understand how individual acts of resistance can be seen as individual agency, offered as a critique of the education that is offered to these students. The study examines the problem that these students, and youth like them, face in attempting to participate equitably in mainstream education, where they struggle to acquire the symbolic capital and legitimate credentials necessary to succeed. The immediate problem for these students is that there is little shift from the mainstream field to the alternative field in type of habitus and capital preferred, and their attempts to create their own capital, justice capital, is not recognised nor accepted. Quite simply, the research problem is about understanding how to include, rather than exclude, an alternate mode of operating within the education field.

7.3.1 The Research Question

The main research question, *what role does social capital play in resistance to formal education by students attending alternative education programs?* contributes to solving the research problem by focusing on understanding the role played by social capital, the platform through which other capitals can be acquired and accumulated, in the enactment of acts of resistance. Informed by the theory of educational resistance (Willis, 1977), and a Bourdieuian understanding of social capital, the students' acts of resistance were critically examined through the conceptual lens of capital, habitus and field. This study sought to understand and explain the following sub-questions:

What capitals are available within the field and does availability influence acts of resistance; and,

To what extent are the different forms of capital validated by the field and does validation influence acts of resistance?

In relation to the sub-questions, my research reveals configurations of capital are existent within the students' relationship with formal education, but not all are readily available, particularly for the students. Social capital can be seen as the platform for the acquisition of additional capital and therefore is a factor in how "available" other capitals are. Revisiting the debate of youth versus adult social capital (see Section 3.2.2), much of the literature on social capital has traditionally centred on adult conceptualisations and use of social capital. This study builds on research (Helve &

Bynner 2007; Raffo & Reeves, 2000, 2003; Weller, 2006) that suggests youth can and do, proactively and strategically, attempt to create their own social capital. In the Indigo Centre the students involved themselves in the attempted creation of their own social capital, *justice capital*, through informal networks and connections. For students whose reserves of capital have been historically and consistently de-valued, the symbolic value of justice capital is in the ability to accumulate or create capital in a way that identifies them and their agency.

I have conceptualised justice capital as a fluid collection of strategies that recognise and draw on the positive aspects of personal connections, such as a sense of trust, loyalty and humour. Students work to make others laugh, pride themselves on displaying loyalty, or "having your back", and are hurt by teachers or adults who insult them or don't believe them. They send out and respond to calls for action that form allegiances, swapping shoes or running away from teachers, picking on other students. Their attempts to create social capital are embryonic and as such should be recognised and shaped, not blocked.

The availability of justice capital is limited as it is linked strongly to the dynamic nature of relationships and the symbolic values attached to them (Raffo & Reeves, 2000; 2003). The students' attempts to create justice capital are hindered by the position of the Indigo Centre within Te Riele's (2007) alternative education landscape (see Figure 2.1) and how this position influences the lack of recognition of justice capital by the teachers. Their attempts to create their own social capital are also mitigated by the sporadic attendance patterns in the Centre, with different students attending on different days, and resultant changes in the social dynamics. The implications this has on the policy and practice of alternative education programs will be discussed in the next section.

Student social capital is not the only capital available within this field. Teachers bring their own cultural capital and the institution privileges its own cultural and symbolic capital. However, this research supports and builds on the work of Weller (2006) and Coburn (2011) in finding that teachers do misrepresent, or perhaps more accurately, over-emphasise the importance of achieving educational success, of possessing the capitals traditionally recognised in the educational field. This over-emphasis may come from a misunderstanding of how students use and/or create capital, a situation which has implications for future research.

In my research, the teachers' habitus was found to privilege participation in the officially recognised tasks and routines of the formal education field. The tasks and routines that constitute recognised pedagogy draw on the resources within the group to accumulate or produce educational capital. As such, the teachers' official pedagogy becomes the recognised social capital in this field.

The physical layout of the Indigo Centre also validates certain capital/s: the way the students are always in physical view by the teacher, the way the day is timetabled to focus on literacy and numeracy tasks, the rules (including the unwritten rules) in place that students must comply with, and the sanctions applied for non-compliance. All these structures mirror the structures of mainstream education contexts and as such continue to validate the same capital as in mainstream. As such, the continuation of these structures perpetuates acts of resistance. From a Bourdieuian perspective, this alternative education program is not alternative.

The relationship between social capital and resistance is complex, revealed in the finding that competition between two different forms of social capital contributes to the perpetuation of the enactment of resistance. The existence of two different forms of social capital, one recognised and one unrecognised, creates a struggle for recognition, effectively limiting flow or availability of capital. This study confirmed that students engage in acts of resistance within the Indigo Centre and that the acts of resistance enacted within the Centre are consistent with the behaviours that resulted in their being initially referred to the Centre. As the form of the enacted resistance is related to the capital possessed by the resistant student, a change in the form therefore requires the accumulation of additional capitals.

Therefore, the role social capital plays is complex and potentially significant in achieving social transformation. The students attempt to create their own social capital without appreciable success. The teachers continue to privilege the official social capital, and in doing so de-value the students' social capital. This situation limits the potential of social capital in "establishing or reproducing social relationships that are directly useable in the short or long term" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 251).

7.4 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

In this section, each key finding is presented individually. Overall the findings confirm that students' manifestations of acts of resistance are in response to the lack of recognition afforded to their cultural and social capital within the formal educational field. The findings also confirm that the students' resistant identities emerge within dominant and exclusionary social structures inherent in the mainstream educational field before they enter the alternative educational field.

A synthesis of the three key findings reveals that the service provided by the Indigo Centre focuses on changing the students in order to "fix or rehabilitate those who are pushed out of mainstream schooling" (Newton, Thompson, Oh, & Ferullo, 2017, p. 419), which, despite the good intentions and hard work of the staff, reinforces and continues the exclusionary and marginalising structures of the mainstream field. The students are viewed as an homogenous grouping, their different capital mis-recognised as either wrong or a lack of capital. In this way, the Indigo Centre fails to hold and promote inclusivity as a central tenet.

Unlike the disconnect experienced when these students first entered the formal educational field and encountered a lack of alignment between their habitus and the field, in moving from the mainstream to the alternative education field, these students encounter a very similar institutional habitus to that they have previously experienced. The students do not experience any disruption to their habitus through exposure to the institutional habitus of the alternative education program due to its alignment with the institutional habitus found in the mainstream system. Therefore, referral into the alternative education program is no catalyst for a re-working of their habitus. They employ the same forms of resistance as the expectations that surround them continue to devalue and disempower them.

Key findings

1. There are significant similarities between alternative and mainstream education as operationalised in the Indigo Centre.
2. The students involve themselves in unrecognised attempts to create their own justice capital.
3. There is limited flow of capital within the Indigo Centre, restricting the habitus modification needed to achieve social transformation.

7.4.1 Key Finding One – Similarities between alternative and mainstream education

This key finding shows that significant structural and functional homology exists between the fields of alternative education and mainstream education. This homology is influenced by the similarity of the institutional habitus operating within the Indigo Centre and local mainstream schools the students previously attended, as evidenced through policy interpretation and observations of enacted practices. In Chapter 6, these two fields were conceptualised as overlapping sub-fields of the wider formal education field (see Figure 6.1). Taylor and Singh (2005) suggest that the less distinct the boundary between sub-fields, the less difference, or specialisation, in the institutional habitus of each sub-field. Chapters 5 and 6 presented evidence that the boundary between these two overlapping sub-fields can be seen as indistinct. For instance, staff working in the Indigo Centre are sourced from mainstream schools and require no additional training to move between sub-fields easily, as the pedagogies employed are the same in each field.

Additionally, at a systemic level, departmental policies and procedures such as the *Department of Education, Training and Employment Strategic Plan 2014 – 2018* (Department of Education, Training and Employment, 2014a) and the *Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students* (Department of Education, Training and Employment, 2014b) guide the operation of all state schools, including the operation of the Indigo Centre. Such overarching policies are broad and contain limited information that is specific to alternative education programs such as the Indigo Centre. The gaps in program-specific guidance on pedagogy and curriculum are navigated through an institutional habitus that privileges the operationalisation of mainstream pedagogy and curriculum. In the Indigo Centre, departmental policy is interpreted and enacted in a similar manner to that of a mainstream setting.

It is important to note also, that while the institutional habitus influences the way policy is interpreted at a local level, policy itself has influence on the institutional habitus. For example, the *Department of Education, Training and Employment (DETE) Annual Report 2013–14* (DETE, 2014) reflects the structure, operations and performance of the Department as a whole and states that key reforms such as the *Great teachers = Great results* (DETE, 2014) action plan gives "state school principals more independence and flexibility to use disciplinary measures that meet the specific

behavioural needs of the student" (p. 61). This flexibility includes the use of "a broad range of strategies and responses …to address unacceptable student behaviour" (p.61). Example strategies provided include suspension, expulsion, cancellation of enrolment and the provision of alternative school environments (DETE, 2014). While the Department espouses the underpinning philosophy of "ensuring positive, safe and supportive learning environments for all students and staff" (p. 60), the strategic reforms are indicative of, and contribute to, an institutional habitus that perpetuates deficit views of marginalised students and justifies the application of punitive actions that further marginalise them.

The similarities between the alternative and mainstream fields are further evident through the creation and application of the local policy document guiding the operation of the Centre. As discussed (see Section 5.4 and Chapter 6) the 2014 *Program Manual* guides the operations of the Centre and outlines practices and expectations aligned to the systemic policies and procedures.

Therefore, in regard to their relationship with formal education, students moving from a mainstream setting to an alternative setting continue to be disempowered due to the similarities between the institutional habitus guiding the structure and operation of the Indigo Centre and that of mainstream schools, such as the teacher-designed daily timetable, teacher-assigned seating arrangements, class work assigned to the students by the teachers, and behaviour expectations that emphasis compliance with the teacher's directions (see Figure 7.1).

As demonstrated in Section 5.5.1, the modifications made to the daily timetable in the Indigo Centre are seen by the staff as supporting the students to complete the work despite any potential behavioural issues. However, removing the start and finish times, reducing the tasks to a few words, such as *Maths Facts: Subtractions* (see Picture 5.2) disempowers the students by reducing their knowledge of the expectations of the task, preventing them from accessing and using the timetable to plan and 'own' their learning. The timetable also provides extra work for early finishers, students who manage to complete all the set tasks provided by the staff. However, this extra work is disconnected from the initial work (see Picture 5.3) and from the students' lived experiences, and sends a strong signal of the abstract nature of this learning and of the lack of value placed on the capital students bring with them. The timetable reinforces the teachers' role to provide work and the students' role to do the work.

As shown in Section 6.2.3, the modifications to the timetable do address at least one of the critiques made by Victor about his mainstream educational experience. However this modified timetable is for all students. A strategy that may offer effective support for one student is applied to all students, and as such fails to promote a pedagogical approach that is inclusive of students' individuality.

The students' movements within the Indigo Centre further reveal similarities between the alternative and mainstream field. These students, disempowered in the mainstream schools, are subject to the same disempowering structures in the Indigo Centre. For instance, teachers decide when students can sit together (to play a teacher-approved game) and when they must sit at individual desks (when completing worksheets). The teachers determine when games, such as the Uno game at the start of the day (see Section, 5.5.1) finish. Teachers even determine when a certain type of work is appropriate and when it is not. For example, a colour-in activity is appropriate when teacher-directed and on the timetable (see Section 6.3.1) yet not appropriate when a student chooses it over a different task. These practices position the teacher as the leader and the students as the followers, in the learning process.

This finding confirms that of the cultural, symbolic and social capitals available within the field, some hold value within the field and some do not hold field-value. It is through the value of the capital possessed, that students and teachers are positioned within the field. The similarities between fields can be seen as the same as those valued/devalued in the mainstream educational context. The students' position in the field disempowers them. The teachers' position however not only empowers them but predisposes them to recognise and reward the same field-valued capital as in the mainstream field, that is, the recognition of meritocratic work.

The physical layout of the Indigo Centre also supports and facilitates the teachers' surveillance and control over the students, to "keep them working". This surveillance and control approach, combined with a pedagogical approach in which teachers are seen as the holders of the knowledge, effectively works to silence the students' voices. In this way, the features of the Indigo Centre such as the physical layout, operation and pedagogy all work together to make a distinction between the "superiority" of school knowledge and the "inferior" experiences the students bring to school. It is this positioning that allows the dominant mainstream educational values, such as the notion of meritocracy, to continue to hold dominance within the alternative education context.

The students, experiencing a similar pedagogical approach across mainstream and alternative educational contexts, continue to challenge and resist. This can be seen in Michael's questioning of the teacher's pedagogy and the field-accepted symbolic nature of learning when he asks, *"why teachers ask you questions they already know the answers to?"* (see Section 6.2.3). Essentially labelling the work available as meaningless, Michael's critique shares a powerful connection with Willis's (1977) lads who, Willis noted, rejected mental labour as it "carries with it the threat of a demand for obedience and conformity" (Willis, 1977, p. 103).

According to Reay (2004) and Edgerton and Roberts (2014), when a student's regular practices are not responded to by the field in a way anticipated by the student, a disruption to the habitus can occur. It is through this disruption that a reworking of the habitus can be undertaken. However, for the students in the Indigo Centre, as they moved between the two smaller overlapping fields of mainstream education and alternative education, they have continued to experience structures of disempowerment, exclusion and marginalisation and therefore limited disruption to their resistant habitus.

However, also of significance is the finding that the teachers' habitus did enable them, in the right conditions, to preference the non-dominant capitals (those that lack field-value) possessed by the students. This relaxing of the institutional habitus, visible when Neville and the staff collaborated on writing a song (see Section 6.3.1) may be possible due to the relatively small size of the Indigo Centre, low staff numbers and the constant change in attendance patterns that sees different numbers and configurations of students attending on different days. The lack of a strong unified institutional habitus is significant and has implications for practice and the enabling of

the flow of capital (see 7.4.2). This finding illustrates that within the wider field of formal education, these students are collectively positioned as disempowered by their lack of field-valued capital, regardless of the educational context. However, the research also found that the students disregard the field-valued capital in preference to creating their own form of capital.

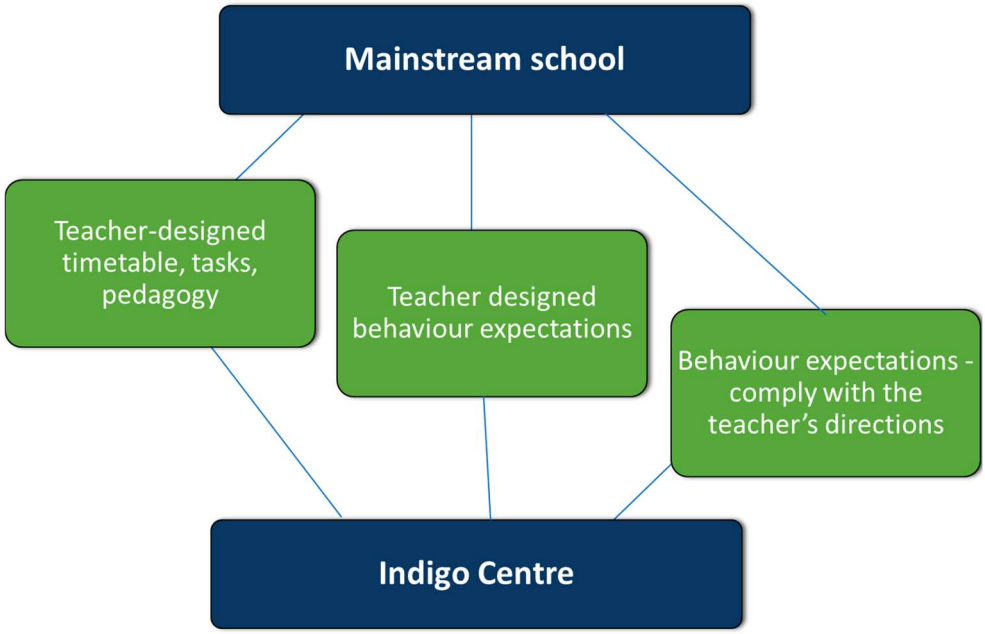

Figure 7.1 Examples of similarities between mainstream school and the Indigo centre

7.4.2 Key Finding Two - Justice Capital

Of great significance is the finding from this research that both individually and collectively, the students are engaged in the attempted creation of their own social capital, justice capital. Equally significant is the finding that their attempts, and justice capital, are unrecognised within the field.

The students in the Indigo Centre possess a resistant habitus and resist the accumulation of the recognised educational capital. Yet the habitus, even a resistant habitus, is orientated towards the accumulation of further capital (Mills & Gale, 2002). Therefore, orientated towards accumulating capital, yet faced with a capital they devalue and resist, the students attempt to create their own capital.

While the students' habitus is predisposed to engaging in acts of resistance, it is the capital available in the field that influences the *form* of the acts of resistance.

Therefore in order to change self-defeating acts of resistance to transformative acts of resistance, the influx of additional capitals is required (Bourdieu, 1993; Duckworth, 2015). This finding demonstrates that the students are already engaged in the accumulation of further capitals that could facilitate a transformation in the form of their resistance. Yet the institutional habitus is orientated towards recognising a specific configuration of capital and does not recognise the students' attempts to create their own.

This decision, to engage in the creation of their own capital, is a critical finding as it confirms that the agentic potential to move from engaging in acts of self-defeating resistance to engaging in transformative resistance already exists as a part of the students' habitus (Reay, 1995). Further, this finding demonstrates that the function of the Indigo Centre is to not only change the students but to control that change. In focusing on operationalising this function, the staff at the Indigo Centre fail to recognise the "long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 47) that generate the students' (counter) efforts to "change the learning environment". Nor do they recognise that the similarities between the fields (see 7.4.1) position justice capital and educational capital as opposing capitals, and how it is this struggle for recognition that restricts the flow of capital (see 7.4.3) and contributes to the lack of success of the students and the lack of effectiveness of the Indigo Centre. In other words, just as the Centre focuses on changing the students' habitus, their success is sabotaged by failing to recognise and support the flow of capital.

This finding suggests recognising the students' resistant identities and validating justice capital as a resource could empower students to engage in a different (transformative) form of resistance. This has significant implications for practice as it highlights how important empowering the students to shape their own educational adventure is, as opposed to trying to ensure students adhere to a pre-determined educational journey.

Figure 7.2 illustrates the ways in which students attempt to create justice capital and the ways in which these attempts go unrecognised by staff. For the students, the act of someone believing what they say is important. It is a validation of who they are. Victor's words, *"Teachers don't believe me",* demonstrate how the students are disempowered, their voice and agency taken away simply by not being believed. The students therefore attempt to create capital, building networks or alliances with those

who will believe them. In the context of the Indigo Centre where for most students attendance is restricted to students referred from mainstream schools for challenging behaviours, such alliances are largely restricted to other students who are positioned by the same lack of credibility and capital. The implication for practice is for justice capital to be recognised and used as a resource, an investment in increasing the capital within these networks and alliances is required.

Within the Indigo Centre, the staff have consistent expectations regarding behaviour, whether it be the way students speak to others, move around the Centre, or engage in the work. Regardless of who is present or absent, the expectations remain consistent. Some students however view the absence of other students as a reason to 'relax' the expectations. While staff perceived this as *"thinking the rules don't apply today"* (Tina, Teacher Focus Group), another interpretation is that the students see this as an opportunity to (temporarily) move positions within the field and forge closer relationships with the staff. Students statements such as *"Why have I got to do this, I'm the only one here"* (Ewan, Observation, Day 7) can be interpreted as a critique of the lack of value placed on the social context when applying rules and/or expectations. The pedagogy of the teachers and the practices and behaviours of the students valued when interacting as a class, continued to be valued by the teacher even if only one student was present. For the students however, the relational aspect of justice capital is overlooked by teachers when the rules/expectations do not consider the capital of who is present.

For example, on the day that only Neville was present, the regular educational program was modified (see Section 6.3.1), resulting in modification of the associated behaviour expectations. For instance, leaving the room without permission, interrupting when another person is speaking, are unacceptable. However for this activity on this day, Neville (and the staff) engaged in these very behaviours as a part of the collaborative construction of a song. Neville's comment, *"it was better…it was more interactive"* (Neville, Interview 3) illustrates how having fluid expectations for all students all of the time supports "individualised systems of social capital" (p. 148) and can potentially increase the flow of capital.

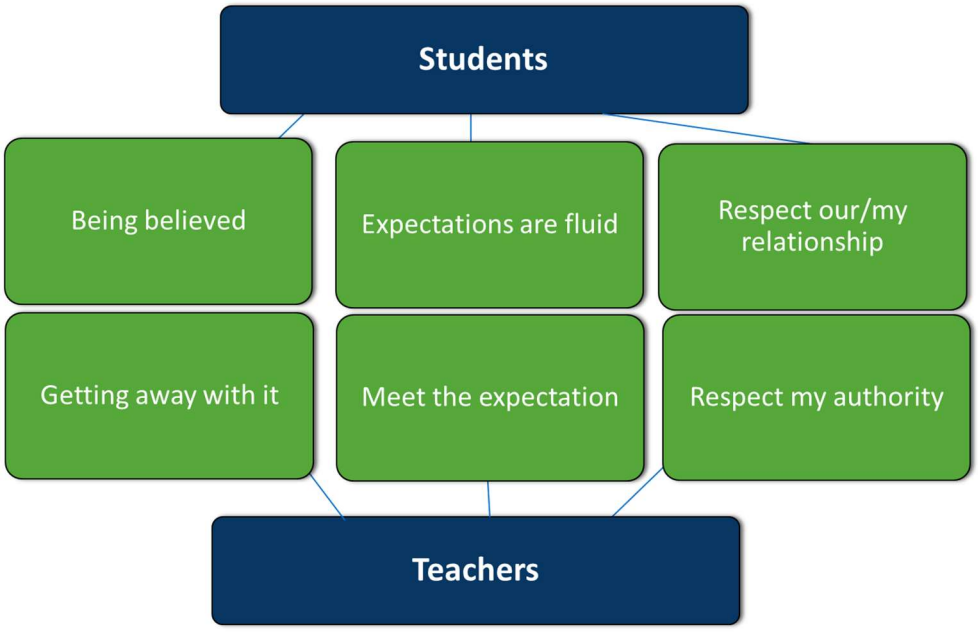

Figure 7.2 Unrecognised justice capital

Justice capital is about recognition, the right to be seen as an equal partner in the relationship with formal education. Justice capital is created through relationships that recognise and respect the value in diversity and serve a purpose. The belief in the students as not only learners but credible learners, combined with fluid expectations, allows respectful relationships, a key aspect of justice capital, to be cultivated between staff and students. In simple terms, teachers enforcing the expectations *because it's the expectation* undermines the validity of their relationships.

7.4.3 Key Finding Three – Restricted flow of capital

The re-working of the habitus, to affect a change in form of the acts of resistance, requires the accumulation of additional capitals (Ade-Ojo & Duckworth, 2015; Adkins, 2002; Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993; Mills & Gale, 2002). In Chapter 3 social capital was conceptualised as a platform for the acquisition of the further capitals (see Section 3.2.2), and significantly this key finding is the existence of two competing forms of social capital within the field, with recognition of one form seemingly only available at the expense or devaluation of the other form. The competing relationship between the pedagogy of the teachers and the students' justice capital as accumulation pathways, effectively blocks the flow of capital within the field and as such, restricts the movement in the journey towards transformational resistance.

As the form of the enacted resistance is related to the capital possessed by the resistant student, a change in the form of resistance therefore requires the accumulation of additional capitals. This finding reveals that the teachers' continued positioning of dominant forms of pedagogy (see Section 6.3.1) as the recognised accumulation, or social capital platform, contributes to the devaluation of the students' attempts to create capital. As discussed in Sections 5.4 and 6.3.1, the dominant mode of pedagogy in the Indigo Centre perpetuates deficit views of these students and perpetuates the same disempowerment they experienced in the mainstream field.

The dominant or recognised pedagogical approach positions the teacher as the leader in the learning process. This "leading the learning" is observable in the way the teachers use instructional language to tell the students what the behavioural and work-related expectations are, and direct the students to behave and work as per the expectations. Such an approach disempowers the students in their relationship with formal education. As discussed in Section 5.5.1, the students' language is more relational, attending to, probing, questioning, and testing the boundaries of their relationships both with teachers and other students. This behaviour by the students, mis-recognised by Indigo Centre staff as off-task behaviours and a distraction from the work, can now be seen as students attempting to create justice capital. These attempts to create justice capital are restricted by the devaluing caused by this mis-recognition and continual redirection back to the recognised work.

Without the influx of additional capitals through the platform of social capital, re-working of the habitus is restricted. This, is turn, means the form of enacted resistance remains constant. In short, it is not social capital, but rather the struggle for recognition of social capital that influences, restrictively, the flow of capital and any potential change in the form of resistance enacted. This has implications for the practice within the Indigo Centre, the pedagogical approach taken, and decisions regarding the employment and capability building of staff (see Section 7.5.2).

7.5 IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

This research provides rich evidence regarding the interactions between teachers, students and their parents in an alternative education program. There are implications for policy at a strategic level in relation to how these students are identified and included in formal education. There are implications for practice in relation to

procedures guiding the purpose, structure, staffing and operations of alternative educational programs and the professional learning for staff working within them. There are implications for theory and research into how students with diverse and non-dominant capitals are included in the formal education system and the role of social capital.

While changes to policy and the practice of the alternative education program are required, these may become superficial changes unless a shift in the institutional habitus of the alternative education program is also effected. Creating a shift in the institutional habitus has implications that include, but go beyond, policy and practice. Shifting the institutional habitus has implications for staff employment and training, and the entry process for students. The next sections outline the implications for policy and practice and the implications for teachers and students operating within alternative education. The implications for theory and further research are also outlined.

7.5.1 Implications for policy and practice

Currently the espoused purpose of the alternative education program is policy driven, with a focus on "fixing" the students so that they can operate successfully within a mainstream educational context. This is a deficit perspective that camouflages the existing capital of the students and their families (Beckett & Wrigley, 2017), and ignores the "political, social and economic factors that have conspired to marginalise the learners" (Ade-Ojo & Duckworth, 2015, p. 106) in the first place. When the alternative educational field perpetuates the mainstream construction of students with deficit identities, the locus of change moves away from recognising hidden capitals (Fraser, 2000), to 'fixing' the student to ensure the ongoing recognition of dominant capitals.

The purpose of alternative education programs for students whose experience of formal education has thus far has been one of marginalisation and exclusion, needs to be the recognition and inclusion of the capital/s the students bring with them. The structure, activities and staff of the programs need to recognise these *a priori* capitals and allow the teachers and students to use them to create new educational experiences, that is, to move the locus of change from the students to the educational experience.

The overarching implication of this study is the need for policy and practice to align with the purpose of shifting the institutional habitus of alternative education

programs such as the Indigo Centre, to be more inclusive of all capitals within the field and increase the flow of capital. Increasing the flow of capital requires a recognition of the capital the students bring with them and the recognition of the students' attempts to create their own social capital as a resource. In Table 7.1 the current operational characteristics of the Indigo Centre are compared with the operational characteristics of an alternative program whose institutional habitus is orientated towards increasing the flow of capital.

Table 7.1 *Key differences between current and proposed model of alternative education*

Current characteristics	Proposed characteristics
Referral is seen as a consequence for students challenging and field-inappropriate behaviour as determined by the school. Entry is by student referral from the mainstream school.	The affective value of being included in this program is collaboratively generated and discussed and reviewed by student, mainstream school, Indigo Centre staff and parents.
Students' marginalised relationship with formal education is acknowledged and enforced through attendance at an education program run off-site or segregated from the mainstream school.	Students' marginalised relationship with formal education is acknowledged and visibly addresses the students' status as educationally and socially marginalised through a community and school connected program.
The focus of the program is on improving literacy/numeracy and behaviour of students through a transmission or banking model of education. Teachers are in charge.	The focus of the program is on reshaping the students' experiences with education through the creation of new knowledge using a collaborative, socially based, cognitively challenging curriculum.

Visible and/or affective inclusion strategy. The implications of this study, based on the manner in which the alternative education programs are structured and operate, point to the need for a policy that outlines, and practices that enact, visible and affective

inclusion. The current iteration of the Indigo Centre is on the same physical grounds as a mainstream school but is separated by a 6-foot-high steel fence, a visual marker of exclusion (see 5.5.1). Earlier iterations were, as indeed are other AEPs, offsite, another visible form of the exclusionary structure of alternative education.

Such highly visible exclusionary structures must be overcome by equally visible and/or affective strategies for inclusion. The offsite location of AEPs and the Indigo Centre's 6-foot high fence are structures of exclusion, and moving to a more inclusive model may call for a consideration of amalgamating the two sites. However taking down the 6-foot high fence, or operating onsite in a mainstream school does not on its own create inclusion. The inclusive strategy must be effective. It must be designed to increase the students' sense of belonging, of having a genuine relationship with the formal education system. While consideration needs to be given to the bricks and mortar that house our educational activities, the focus needs to be on the relationship.

However, operating onsite in a mainstream school does offer benefits that address Key Findings One and Two. Proximity would allow the pedagogical approach taken in alternative programs to be viewed alongside that taken in mainstream classes, allowing structural similarities and differences to be easily recognised. Teachers across mainstream/alternative settings could undertake observation and feedback pertaining to the effectiveness of various pedagogical approaches across the two contexts. Such a physical location would also allow students the opportunity to forge relationships and alliances with students who are dissimilarly positioned within the field. However with the locus of change firmly on the educational experience, these strategies would be a priority and could potentially be realised without the necessity of an onsite program. The planning and implementation of collaborative learning between alternative and mainstream teachers, flexible timetables allowing students from alternative and mainstream to engage in extra-curricular activities together, are two simple strategies that would facilitate a focus on pedagogy and promote wider relationships between students.

The physical unification of alternative program and mainstream setting may also have the additional benefit for the alternative program of access to greater resources than possible in a small setting such as the Indigo Centre. Greater resources create a greater flexibility in terms of the provision of the kind of cognitively challenging and

negotiated curriculum featured in alternative education best practice literature (Connor, 2006; Mills & McGregor, 2010; Mitchell & Carbone, 2011; Zyngier, 2008).

Operating onsite would also allow the AEP to provide wider opportunities for the incorporation of the relational aspect of building youth social capital into the alternative program. The small numbers of students referred to the Indigo Centre, combined with the irregular attendance patterns, is one example of the "constraints and opportunities afforded to similar [groups of] young people because of the specific social relations they experience" (Raffo & Reeves, 2000, p. 153). An alternative education program operating onsite in a mainstream school could support the creation of youth social capital by being 'inclusive' of the social connections available in the wider student cohort. Structures and discourses that promote or deny inclusivity also need to be considered in the positioning of students in the mainstream field, whether application of sanctions or the referral process into alternative settings.

Student-powered transition into the program. Students are currently powerless within the referral/transition process into the Indigo Centre. Mainstream school authorities make the decision to refer students to the Centre based on school needs with little more family input required than a signature from a parent/carer. The referral often occurs with little opportunity provided to students/parents to understand and/or contribute to the program and its purpose. The days and hours of attendance are determined by the staff, aligned to the operations of mainstream school. Students are mandated to attend and are required to wear the uniform of their mainstream school. This effectively marginalises them further by identifying where they failed (and asks the students to show loyalty to the school that didn't want them). These structures are archaic remnants of the dominant structures within formal education against which the students have forged their resistance and which in a genuinely "alternative" education program would be non-existent.

The implication of this is the need to empower students to make an educational choice that works for them. Positioning the Indigo Centre as an innovation and flexible learning choice would enable the school to extend a genuine invitation to the students that would empower them in their educational journey.

A collaborative, socially based, and cognitively challenging curriculum. Rather than a banking or transmission model of education that enables transmission of capital in only one direction, this learning choice should position the teachers as learners, and

the learners as teachers, empowering the flow of capital in both directions. There is a need to focus on co-operative based learning tasks than require literacy and numeracy skills, rather than literacy and numeracy-based worksheets and games. In line with the Key Findings One and Three the locus of change needs be on the student's experiences with education rather than on changing the student to fit the educational experience.

This can be achieved through a focus on the collaborative creation of new knowledge. Based on Key Findings Two and Three of my research and drawing on Giroux's (2005) critical border pedagogy, a model of alternative education pedagogy is presented (Figure 7.1) that focuses on reshaping the student's experience with education rather than changing the student.

7.5.2 Implications for teachers and students

This study provides some evidence of the need for a richer diversity in the staff cohort. I draw on the connection the students demonstrated with Richard the teacher aide/guitar teacher as evidence of the complementary value such staff could provide the formal teaching staff. A wider range of staff, with different experiences and perspectives, and with a habitus less strongly aligned to the formal education field, would also contribute to a greater flow of capital. The model proposed in Section 7.5.4 elaborates on how a greater diversity of capital (through community members/family/friends) could be incorporated into the alternative education program.

The need to create a shift in the institutional habitus also has implications for the staff and students operating within the Indigo Centre. Currently the espoused pedagogical practices are not aligned to the enacted pedagogical practices, with the majority of the work, described as "dull" by the students (see Section 5.5.2, Michael's interview extract) being worksheets and some literacy and numeracy games, as opposed to the hands-on practical activities and a mix of student preferred and non-preferred activities mentioned in the 2014 *Program Manual*. The limited guidance provided by the *Program Manual* regarding alternative pedagogies is camouflaged as teachers "instinctively" fill in the gaps guided by a mainstream institutional habitus. Staff unfamiliar with the operation of a mainstream or even an alternative educational program, and students empowered with greater choice of learning, would not have the institutional habitus that instinctively fills the gaps.

Furthermore, there are currently no additional qualifications, professional learning or experience required of teachers wishing to work in alternative education. Currently a mainstream teacher can apply and be given a transfer into alternative education programs through the regular transfer process. This can contribute to the social practices and values of the mainstream institutional habitus being maintained within an AEP. The implications for teacher capability building is the need to develop a shared understanding of the locus of change (Te Riele, 2007), a critical pedagogical approach, and justice capital.

7.5.3 Implications for theory and research

This study makes a timely and important contribution to educational research as it examines a pressing local and international issue of how to effectively cater for students who do not fit with the socio-political construct that is the formal education system. While my research gives voice to a small number of students, it shines a spotlight on the much greater and far-reaching moral imperative, to prepare all students to lead full and rich lives within our society. My thesis reveals the inequalities inherent in our formal education system, particularly those hidden within the smaller field of alternative education, obfuscated by inaccurate terminology and hegemonic structures that isolate learning, devalue and block the flow of capital. It contributes to a deeper understanding of:

the social influences existent within alternative education programs that perpetuate resistant identities;

the role flow of capital and acts of resistance play in the cycle of social reproduction; and

the potential role justice capital may play in the generation of transformative acts of resistance.

7.5.4 A model for socially just pedagogy

The pedagogical model presented in this section draws on the key findings of this research and Giroux's (2005) critical border pedagogy to address the implications for practice, namely the purpose, staffing and pedagogy of alternative educational programs. This pedagogical model also draws on and deepens Te Riele's (2007) work defining alternative programs based on whether they are aimed at changing the students, or changing the educational experience for the students. Te Riele (2007)

suggests that "opportunity and hope for marginalised young people are concentrated in the 4th quarter of the map: changing educational provisions" (p. 64). Reviewing the Indigo Centre against Te Riele's landscape map (see Figure 2.1), I found it to be located in the 2nd quarter (see Section 2.2), as the focus is on changing the student to be successful when they return to the same educational context in which they were unsuccessful. The proposed pedagogical model reshapes the pedagogy of the Indigo Centre to better reflect the characteristics of a 4th quarter program: changing the educational experience.

This model aligns with Te Riele's (2007) argument for the advantages offered by alternative programs located in the 4th quarter, that is those programs that are stable and focused on changing the education provision. Further, this model drills deep into the 4th quarter, elaborating on Te Riele's (2007) work by suggesting a pedagogical approach that enables a change in education provision.

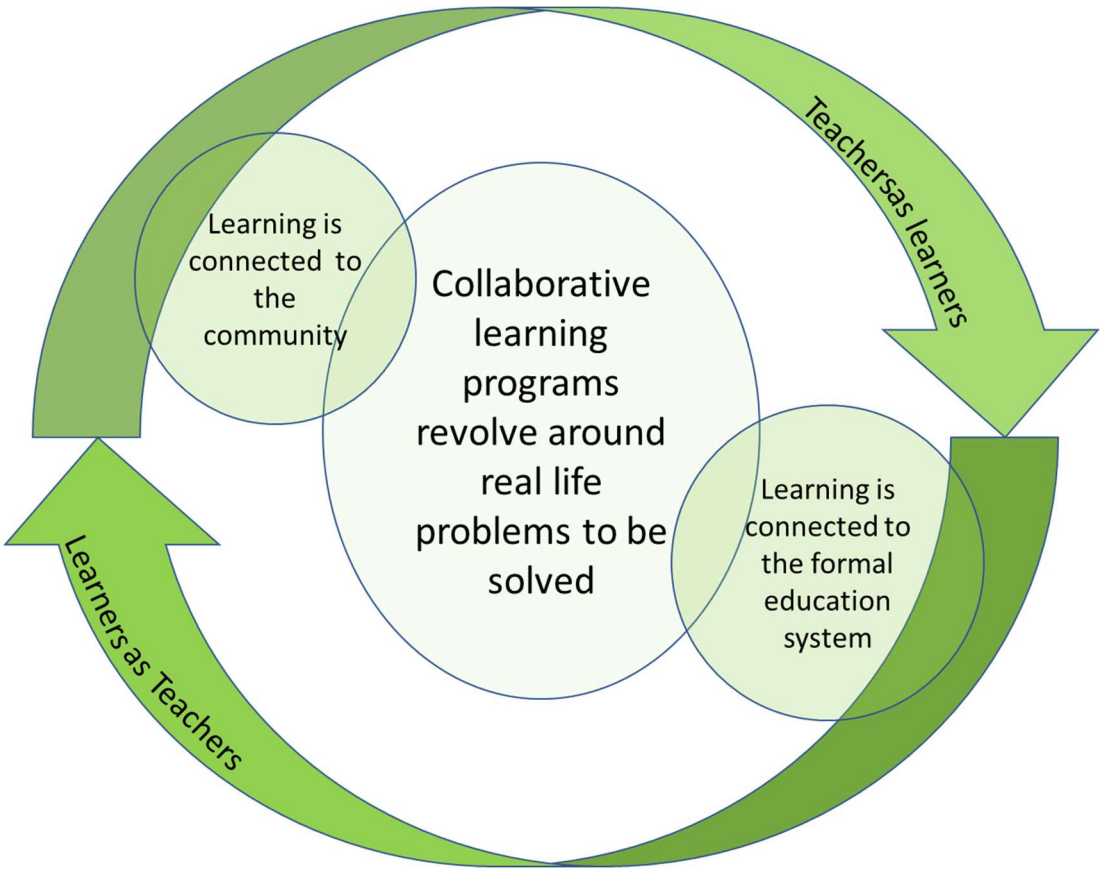

Figure 7.3 Proposed pedagogical model for alternative education programs

The Indigo Centre's focus on improving literacy/numeracy skills (educational capital) is positioned counter to the student focus on strengthening relationships (justice capital) with students resisting and critiquing the educational tasks offered as dull and meaningless to their lives. These critiques manifest as student acts of resistance that are seen by the educational field as evidence of a deficit in the recognised capital and are responded to with strict sanctions. My research revealed that the current pedagogy enacted within the Indigo Centre reinforces these deficit constructions of the students, which further legitimises the use of surveillance and control as a response to student acts of resistance.

The aim of the proposed pedagogy model (Figure 7.1) is to acknowledge and utilise student agency and reposition formal education as a resource students can use, rather than as a practice 'done to' students. This empowerment begins and is supported by a student-powered transition process (see Section 7.5.1). Once transitioned into the alternative program the focus is on student and teacher collaboratively solving a real-life problem, relevant to the students. The pedagogical model builds on Te Riele's (2007) suggestion of "building on the unique interests, capacities and experiences of the students" (p. 65). For example, some of the students at the Indigo Centre are not dropped off by a parent/carer but find their own way to the Centre, yet the only public transport available is by rail, is not cheap, with the closest station being quite some distance away. A real-life problem could be, why is there is no free (or subsidised) public transport available for students to use to access AEPs?

In order to collaboratively identify and prioritise transport as a real-life problem to be addressed, information would need to be gathered, critiqued and communicated by the student. This provides an opportunity for the teachers to demonstrate how aspects of formal education such as strong literacy and numeracy skills support student agency and strengthen their action of solving real-life problems. While the central focus is on a real-life problem, learning is connected to the formal education system by supporting the students to identify those aspects of formal education (such as conventions associated with literacy and numeracy) that could assist them to solve a real-life problem. Rather than focus on increasing literacy and numeracy skills, in isolation, disconnected from the students' current and prior knowledges (capital), this model weaves the learning of literacy/numeracy into the learning, learning *through* literacy/numeracy.

Further, a focus on solving a real-life problem means there are no pre-determined answers and as such teachers and students are positioned as equals, each contributing to the transformed educational experience. For example, rather than the learning requiring students to comply with teacher instruction to acquire privileged academic content, the learning would now require student creativity and collaboration to construct the process and critique the content. For example, is simply knowing why there is no free transport available an acceptable outcome? Is the answer open to critique and further challenge on a social level? The teachers' role becomes supporting students to understand how they can use what they have learnt and what further learning is required.

The pedagogical model connects formal education with the student's social world, supporting students to develop "social capital through trustworthy reciprocal social relations within individualized networks" (Raffo & Reeves, 2000, p. 151). New learning is created through connections to real life contexts in and outside of school, with access to friends, community services and experts and parents, a social pedagogy acknowledging and supporting the creation of justice capital through "social relations enriched by outside, yet authentic and culturally appropriate, significant others" (Raffo & Reeves, 2000, p. 153). For example, who do the students know who uses public transport? Who would the students turn to for advice outside of school? Can those people help with this problem?

This would provide students an opportunity to view the dominant capital of the educational field from a different perspective, as tools they could use to create knowledge and relationship through which they could forge new educational identities rather than tools that are used to exclude them. This model facilitates the "sharing of power between teacher and the student in the learning" (Ade-Ojo & Duckworth, 2015, p. 107), and promotes the alternative education program as a way for students to develop an understanding of the different perspectives and knowledges that influence their identity as a student, and supports them to investigate the different ways to be a student. In this model, teachers act as guides, similar to Stanton-Salazar's (2011) institutional agents, working to increase the availability or flow of capital within the field.

7.6 LIMITATIONS

As a small-scale qualitative case study, this study has limitations which require acknowledgement. First, the research was conducted within one educational setting and included the narratives and observations of seven students and three teachers and as such does not allow for a strong case for generalisability.

The entire student cohort was male, due to there being only male students enrolled in the program at the time of data collection. As noted in Chapter 4, the AEP does take both male and female student referrals, however the referrals and enrolments have historically been predominantly male. While the predominance of male referrals may indicate underlying gender issues, it was not within the scope of this research to examine this.

My personal history as a previous teacher of some of these students and a colleague of the teachers within the program might influence my interpretation of the data. This is accounted for through the recognition of my connections with the teachers and students and the use of a theoretical framework that recognises the social construction of reality and the "local and … co-constructed nature of data" (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 193). However, it was that connection that enabled the participants to reveal much of their personal narratives, providing a basis for trust between the researcher and participants.

7.7 IMPLICATIONS FOR MY OWN PRACTICE

The implications of undertaking this doctoral research have reached every corner of my own professional practice. During the course of my doctoral journey, I left the classroom and moved into the role of Director, School Improvement within the Queensland Department of Education. In this role I lead state-wide capability-building of school teams to measure and understand the impact of their practice on student outcomes. Over the course of this research I began to enact my role through an ever increasingly critical lens, aware of how different interpretations of the same policy can reinforce or mitigate the exclusion of certain students. My work in capability-building shifted from supporting school teams to enact policy, to guiding the interrogation of policy and practice through reflective questioning that supported school teams to challenge assumptions and dominant perspectives, and consider the hidden capitals of themselves and their students.

I have most recently returned to a school-based role leading the enactment of the Department's renewed *Inclusive Education Policy* in a mainstream school. The stated goal of the policy is to ensure all students are able to access, participate and achieve in education. One personal implication of my doctoral journey is the awareness of the barriers inscribed through the institutional habitus, and how the way some students are positioned within the field impacts on their educational success. This has impacted on my view of the way I speak and interact with parents, students and other staff. I am much more critically self-reflective on my own practice and how the institutional habitus influences the "choices" teachers, students and parents make.

7.8 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

My research contributes to knowledge and practice regarding the operation of AEPs catering for students redirected to alternative educational settings for displaying challenging behaviours in mainstream settings. Drawing on, and extending my work, future researchers could undertake a long term, quantitative or ethnographic study examining youth social capital in alternative contexts, how it is created, and its potential role in the education process as a platform for understanding capital, its diverse forms, symbolic power and use. Such future research may consider the impact of gender on referral into alternative education programs, and the relationship of students with formal education post-attendance in an alternative program.

7.9 OVERALL CONCLUSION

Acts of resistance should not be seen as behaviours to be simply punished, nor the resistors seen as removal objects, to be placed 'out of the way' so that education may carry on uninterrupted. Acts of resistance should be seen as voices from the future, critiquing the education that is yet to take place, voices of those asking, in the only way they currently know how, to be included in that education, voices, which, in an education system inclusive of all learners, are heard.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Student participant information and consent form

Queensland University of Technology Brisbane Australia	**CONSENT FORM FOR QUT RESEARCH PROJECT** – Student Interview/Focus Group/Observations –
Educational Engagement: A Capital Idea **QUT Ethics Approval Number 1300000842**	

RESEARCH TEAM CONTACTS

Steven Newton	Dr Derek Bland	Dr Radha Iyer
School of Cultural & Professional Learning	School of Cultural & Professional Learning	School of Cultural & Professional Learning
Faculty of Education, QUT	Faculty of Education, QUT	Faculty of Education, QUT
Phone 38166666	Phone 3138 3469	Phone 3138 3418
Email steve.newton@student.qut.edu.au	Email d.bland@qut.edu.au	Email Radha.iyer@qut.edu.au

STATEMENT OF PARENT CONSENT

By signing below, you are indicating that you:

- Have read and understood the information document regarding this project.
- Have had any questions answered to your satisfaction.
- Understand that if you have any additional questions you can contact the research team.
- Understand that your child is free to withdraw at any time, without comment or penalty.
- Understand that you can contact the Research Ethics Unit on 3138 5123 or email ethicscontact@qut.edu.au if you have concerns about the ethical conduct of the project.
- Have discussed the project with your child and what is required of them if participating**.**
- Understand that the project will include an audio recording.
- Agree for your child to participate in □ focus group
  □ Interview
  □ classroom observations

Name .....

Signature .....

Date .....

STATEMENT OF CHILD CONSENT

Your parent or guardian has given their permission for you to be involved in this research project. This form is to seek your consent to participate in the research.

By signing below, you are indicating that you:

- Have read and understood the information about this project.

- Have discussed the project with your parent/guardian.
- Have had any questions answered to your satisfaction.
- Understand that if you have any additional questions you can contact the research team.
- Understand that you are free to withdraw at any time, without comment or penalty.
- Understand that you can contact the Research Ethics Unit on 3138 5123 or email ethicscontact@qut.edu.au if you have concerns about the ethical conduct of the project.
- Understand that the project will include an audio recording.
- Agree to participate in □ a focus group
  □ Interview
  □ Classroom observations
- □ Give consent for the for the researcher to access your student file held at Indigo Centre

Name .....

Signature .....

Date .....

***Please return this sheet to the investigator*.**

Appendix B: Parent participant information and consent form

Queensland University of Technology
Brisbane Australia

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION FOR QUT RESEARCH PROJECT
–Parent Interview –

Educational Engagement: A Capital Idea

QUT Ethics Approval Number 1300000842

RESEARCH TEAM

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DESCRIPTION

This project is being undertaken as part of a Doctor of Education research project for Steven Newton. The purpose of this project is to explore and understand the social factors influencing the educational decisions of students attending an Alternative Education Program. You are invited to participate in this project because you are a parent of a student attending the Indigo Centre. **Only one parent of each student is required to participate in an interview.**

YOUR PARTICIPATION

Your participation will involve a commitment of approximately 3 hours which will include

- an audio recorded interview at Indigo Centre or another agreed location that will take approximately 1 hour, on three separate occasions, each approximately 1 week apart. According the literature this format, 3 interviews over 3 weeks, reduces the influence of the immediate environment on interview outcomes. The questions will be on topics such as your thoughts about school, including the curriculum and behavioural expectations and your child's school experiences.

Your participation in this project is entirely voluntary. If you do agree to participate you can withdraw from the project without comment or penalty and that if you withdraw, any identified data will be not be used for the study and will be destroyed. Your decision to participate or not participate will in no way impact upon your current or future relationship with QUT or with the Indigo Centre.

YOUR CHILD'S PARTICIPATION

Your child will be invited to participate and their participation will involve

- An audio recorded focus group at Indigo Centre that will take approximately 1 hour.
- An audio recorded interview at Indigo Centre or another agreed location that will take approximately 30 minutes of your time, on three separate occasions, each approximately 1 week apart.
- Observations (30 hours across 3 weeks) conducted of the regular timetabled lessons at Indigo Centre. These observations are in order to gain a better understanding of the relationship between staff and students.

As your child is under 18 you will be asked to provide your written consent in addition to their written consent to participate.

ADDITIONAL CONSENT

To complement the data collected from the aforementioned methods, the research team is asking your permission to access your child's student file as held at the Indigo Centre. The information sought from this file relates to the reasons for your child's referral to the Indigo Centre.

EXPECTED BENEFITS

It is expected that this project will not benefit you or your student directly. However, it may benefit other students attending Alternate Programs as it is anticipated the research may assist in the development of new curriculum for Alternative Programs.

RISKS

There are minimal risks associated with your participation in this project. These include:

- *Inconvenience in determining venue and times for interviews.*

- *A low risk of discomfort in the negotiation process*
- *A low risk of discomfort for you when discussing your experiences and thoughts about school.*

In order to minimize any inconvenience to you, the exact time and location of interviews will be negotiable. At the beginning of the interview, procedures to follow should you experience any discomfort during the interview will be outlined. These may include a requesting a short break, withdrawing from the interview and/or the rescheduling of the interview. If during the interview process you choose to withdraw from the interview your data will not be utilised. QUT provides for limited free counselling for research participants of QUT projects who may experience discomfort or distress as a result of their participation in the research. Should you wish to access this service please contact the Clinic Receptionist of the QUT Psychology Clinic on 3138 0999. Please indicate to the receptionist that you are a research participant.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

All comments and responses will be treated confidentially. The names of individual persons are not required in any of the responses. As the project involves audio recording, you will have the opportunity to verify your comments and responses prior to final inclusion and the audio recording will be destroyed at the end of the project.

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

We would like to ask you to sign a written consent form (enclosed) to confirm your agreement to participate. We would also ask you to provide written consent on your child's consent form to confirm your agreement for them to participate.

QUESTIONS / FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROJECT

If have any questions or require further information please contact one of the research team members below.

Steven Newton
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Dr Derek Bland
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CONCERNS / COMPLAINTS REGARDING THE CONDUCT OF THE PROJECT

QUT is committed to research integrity and the ethical conduct of research projects. However, if you do have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the project you may contact the QUT Research Ethics Unit on 3138 5123 or email ethicscontact@qut.edu.au. The QUT Research Ethics Unit is not connected with the research project and can facilitate a resolution to your concern in an impartial manner.

Queensland University of Technology
Brisbane Australia

CONSENT FORM FOR QUT RESEARCH PROJECT

– Parent Interview –

Educational Engagement: A Capital Idea

QUT Ethics Approval Number 1300000842

RESEARCH TEAM CONTACTS *Please list all members and organisations in this section*

Steven Newton
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STATEMENT OF CONSENT

By signing below, you are indicating that you:

- Have read and understood the information document regarding this project.
- Have had any questions answered to your satisfaction.
- Understand that if you have any additional questions you can contact the research team.
- Understand that you are free to withdraw at any time, without comment or penalty.

- Understand that you can contact the Research Ethics Unit on 3138 5123 or email ethicscontact@qut.edu.au if you have concerns about the ethical conduct of the project.
- Understand that the project will include an audio recording.
- □ Agree to participate in the project (interview).
- □ Give consent for the researcher to access your students file held at the Indigo Centre.

Name .....

Signature .....

Date .....

.

***Please return this sheet to the investigator*.**

Appendix C: Approach letter to the Behaviour Co-ordinator

TITLE OF PROJECT: Education Engagement: A Capital Idea
QUT Ethics Approval Number: 1300000842
RESEARCHER: Mr Steven Newton
RESEARCH TEAM:

Steven Newton
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Dear XXXX,

This letter is to request your permission and assistance to undertake a research study at the Indigo Centre. The purpose of the study is to explore and understand the social factors influencing the educational decisions of students attending an Alternative Education Program.

As part of the process of seeking to undertake research within Department of Education, Training and Employment (DETE) sites, I have applied and gained approval from the Principal Research Officer, Strategic Policy and Portfolio Relations, Department of Education, Training and Employment and as such have attached the approval documentation. I have also attached the ethics approval documentation obtained from Queensland University of Technology Ethics Committee.

This research project is a qualitative case study design, incorporating

- document analysis – student files of currently enrolled students
- classroom observations – 30 hours over 4 weeks
- focus groups – current students
- interviews with current students, staff and parents.

The purpose of this letter is to initiate a discussion with you, in your capacity as Behaviour Coordinator regarding

- your permission to enter the Indigo Centre in the capacity as a researcher
- informing staff, parents and students of the Indigo Centre of the project and inviting them to participate in the research project
- requesting your permission to access student files relevant, on condition of the informed consent of parents and students as well.
- Undertaking classroom observations during a 4-week period within the regular operating hours of the Centre, on condition of the informed consent of the teachers and students concerned.

Thank you for considering my request and I look forward to hearing from you.

Steven Newton

Appendix D: Behaviour Co-ordinator consent form

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION FOR QUT RESEARCH PROJECT
–Behaviour Coordinator –
QUT Ethics Approval Number 1300000842

RESEARCH TEAM

Principal Researcher:	Steven Newton, Student, Queensland University of Technology
Associate Researchers:	Dr Derek Bland, QUT, Dr Radha Iyer, QUT

DESCRIPTION

This project is being undertaken as part of a Doctor of Education research project for Steven Newton. The purpose of this project is to explore and understand the social factors influencing the educational decisions of students attending an Alternative Education Program. Participation is voluntary with participants being asked to consent to being interviewed, observed (students/teachers) and participating in focus groups.

PARTICIPATION OF THE CENTRE

Participation of the Centre (staff/students/parents) is voluntary and will involve

- **Focus Groups** - Audio recorded focus groups at Indigo Centre will take approximately **1 hour** of the student's time. Students will be asked to provide responses to a fictional student's experiences at school. A short story will be read to the group and students will be asked for their thoughts about the story, specifically how the student might respond to the events in the story.
- **Interviews** – Approximately 3 hours of audio recorded interviews per participant, structured as three 1-**hour** interviews conducted **on three separate occasions, each approximately 1 week apart**. According the literature this format, 3 interviews over 3 weeks, reduces the influence of the immediate environment on interview outcomes. The interviews will be conducted at the Indigo Centre or another mutually agreed upon location. The interview questions will be on topics such as your thoughts and feelings about school, including curriculum and behavioural expectations.
- **Classroom Observations** (30 hours across 3 weeks) conducted of the regular timetabled lessons at Indigo Centre. These observations are in order to gain a better understanding of the relationship between staff and students.
- Analysis of relevant student file (subject to informed consent from students/parents and approval by relevant DETE authority)

The exact time and location of **interviews** and **focus groups** will be negotiated with teachers, parents and students to limit the inconvenience of their participation. It is necessary for **classroom observations** to be conducted during class time over a 3-week period in Term 2, 2014 with the exact lessons observed to be negotiated with the staff to limit inconvenience for teaching staff.

PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT

Due to the small number of students attending the Indigo Centre, a straightforward recruitment process will be employed with **ALL** staff, students and their parents being contacted and invited to attend an information session. The information session would outline the purpose of the project and the voluntary nature of their participation. There will be no selection process as such, with **ALL** participants who provide written consent able to be included in the project.

YOUR PARTICIPATION

As manager of the coordinator of the Centre, your participation is voluntary and will involve

- Providing written consent for the researcher to undertake this project at the Indigo Centre.
- Allowing an initial information session to be held in the Centre after school.
- Approaching staff, students and parents to provide information and invite participation
- Allowing the researcher to undertake 30 hours of classroom observation over a three-week period.
- Facilitate researcher access to relevant student file (subject to informed consent from students/parents and approval by relevant DETE authority)

EXPECTED BENEFITS

It is expected that this project will not benefit you directly. However, it may benefit staff and students in Alternate Education Programs.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

All comments and responses will be treated confidentially. The names of individual persons are not required in any of the responses. All the audio recordings will be destroyed at the end of the project.

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

We would like to ask you to sign a written consent form (enclosed) to confirm your agreement to participate.

QUESTIONS / FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROJECT

If have any questions or require further information please contact one of the research team members below.

Steven Newton School of Cultural & Professional Learning Faculty of Education, QUT Phone 3816666 Email steve.newton@student.qut.edu.au	Dr Derek Bland School of Cultural & Professional Learning Faculty of Education, QUT Phone 3138 3469 Email d.bland@qut.edu.au	Dr Radha Iyer School of Cultural & Professional Learning Faculty of Education, QUT Phone 3138 3418 Email radha.iyer@qut.edu.au

CONCERNS / COMPLAINTS REGARDING THE CONDUCT OF THE PROJECT

QUT is committed to research integrity and the ethical conduct of research projects. However, if you do have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the project you may contact the QUT Research Ethics Unit on 3138 5123 or email ethicscontact@qut.edu.au. The QUT Research Ethics Unit is not connected with the research project and can facilitate a resolution to your concern in an impartial manner. ***Thank you for helping with this research project. Please keep this sheet for your information*.**

Queensland University of Technology
Brisbane Australia

CONSENT FORM FOR QUT RESEARCH PROJECT

- Behaviour Coordinator –

Educational Engagement: A Capital Idea

QUT Ethics Approval Number 1300000842

RESEARCH TEAM CONTACTS *Please list all members and organisations in this section*

Steven Newton School of Cultural & Professional Learning Faculty of Education, QUT Phone3816666 Email steve.newton@student.qut.edu.au	Dr Derek Bland School of Cultural & Professional Learning Faculty of Education, QUT Phone 3138 3469 Email d.bland@qut.edu.au	Dr Radha Iyer School of Cultural & Professional Learning Faculty of Education, QUT Phone 3138 3418 Email Radha.iyer@qut.edu.au

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

By signing below, you are indicating that you:

- Have read and understood the information document regarding this project.
- Have had any questions answered to your satisfaction.
- Understand that if you have any additional questions you can contact the research team.
- Understand that you are free to withdraw at any time, without comment or penalty.
- Understand that you can contact the Research Ethics Unit on 3138 5123 or email ethicscontact@qut.edu.au if you have concerns about the ethical conduct of the project.
- Understand that the project will include an audio recording.
  - Agree to participate in the project, specifically
    - □ allow researcher to enter and approach staff, students and parents of the Indigo Centre
    - □ allow researcher to access student files as per informed consent by participants
    - □ allow classroom observations as per informed consent by participants

Name .....

Signature .....

Date .....

***Please return this sheet to the investigator*.**

Appendix E: Staff participant information and consent form

Queensland University of Technology Brisbane Australia	**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION FOR QUT RESEARCH PROJECT** **–Staff Interview –**
Educational Engagement: A Capital Idea **QUT Ethics Approval Number 1300000842**	

RESEARCH TEAM

Principal Researcher: Steven Newton, Student, Queensland University of Technology
Associate Researchers: Dr Derek Bland, QUT, Dr Radha Iyer, QUT

DESCRIPTION

This project is being undertaken as part of a Doctor of Education research project for Steven Newton. The purpose of this project is to explore and understand the social factors influencing the educational decisions of students attending an Alternative Education Program. You are invited to participate in this project because you are a staff member at the Indigo Centre.

PARTICIPATION

Your participation will involve

- Approximately 3 hours of audio recorded interviews structured as three 1-**hour** interviews conducted **on three separate occasions, each approximately 1 week apart**. According the literature this format, 3 interviews over 3 weeks, reduces the influence of the immediate environment on interview outcomes. The interviews will be conducted at the Indigo Centre or another mutually agreed upon location. The interview questions will be on topics such as your thoughts and feelings about school, including curriculum and behavioural expectations.
- Allowing the researcher to undertake 30 hours of classroom observation over a three-week period. These observations are in order to gain a better understanding of the relationship between staff and students.
- Facilitate researcher access to relevant student file (subject to informed consent from students/parents and approval by relevant DETE authority)

Your participation in this project is entirely voluntary. If you do agree to participate you can withdraw from the project without comment or penalty and that if you withdraw, any identified data will be not be used for the study and will be destroyed. Your decision to participate or not participate will in no way impact upon your current or future relationship with QUT or with the Indigo Centre.

EXPECTED BENEFITS

It is expected that this project will not benefit you directly. However, it may benefit other staff working in Alternate Education Programs.

RISKS

There are minimal risks associated with your participation in this project. These include:

- *Inconvenience in making time to participate in this project*
- *A low risk of discomfort in the negotiation process in determining venue and times for interviews*
- *A low risk of discomfort for you when discussing your experiences and thoughts about school.*

In order to minimize any inconvenience to you, the exact time and location of interviews will be negotiable. At the beginning of the interview, procedures to follow should you experience any discomfort during the interview will be outlined. These may include a requesting a short break, withdrawing from the interview and/or the rescheduling of the interview. If during the interview process you choose to withdraw from the interview, your data will not be utilised. QUT provides for limited free counselling for research participants of QUT projects who may experience discomfort or distress as a result of their participation in the research. Should you wish to access this service please contact the Clinic Receptionist of the QUT Psychology Clinic on 3138 0999. Please indicate to the receptionist that you are a research participant.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

All comments and responses will be treated confidentially. The names of individual persons are not

required in any of the responses. As the project involves audio recording, you will have the opportunity to verify your comments and responses prior to final inclusion and the audio recording will be destroyed at the end of the project.

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

We would like to ask you to sign a written consent form (enclosed) to confirm your agreement to participate.

QUESTIONS / FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROJECT

If have any questions or require further information please contact one of the research team members below.

Steven Newton
School of Cultural & Professional Learning
Faculty of Education, QUT
Phone 3816666
Email steve.newton@student.qut.edu.au

Dr Derek Bland
School of Cultural & Professional Learning
Faculty of Education, QUT
Phone 3138 3469
Email d.bland@qut.edu.au

Dr Radha Iyer
School of Cultural & Professional Learning
Faculty of Education, QUT
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Thank you for helping with this research project. Please keep this sheet for your information.

Queensland University of Technology
Brisbane Australia

CONSENT FORM FOR QUT RESEARCH PROJECT

– Staff Interview –

Educational Engagement: A Capital Idea

QUT Ethics Approval Number 1300000842

RESEARCH TEAM CONTACTS *Please list all members and organisations in this section*

Steven Newton
School of Cultural & Professional Learning
Faculty of Education, QUT
Phone3816666
Email steve.newton@student.qut.edu.au

Dr Derek Bland
School of Cultural & Professional Learning
Faculty of Education, QUT
Phone 3138 3469
Email d.bland@qut.edu.au

Dr Radha Iyer
School of Cultural & Professional Learning
Faculty of Education, QUT
Phone 3138 3418
Email Radha.iyer@qut.edu.au

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

By signing below, you are indicating that you:

- Have read and understood the information document regarding this project.
- Have had any questions answered to your satisfaction.
- Understand that if you have any additional questions you can contact the research team.
- Understand that you are free to withdraw at any time, without comment or penalty.
- Understand that you can contact the Research Ethics Unit on 3138 5123 or email ethicscontact@qut.edu.au if you have concerns about the ethical conduct of the project.
- Understand that the project will include an audio recording.
- Agree to participate in the project, specifically □ interview
  □ classroom observations

Name .....

Signature .....

Date .....

Please return this sheet to the investigator.

Appendix F: Student focus group fictional vignette

Albert is in Year 7. He is really good at skating and spends a lot of time practising tricks. His mates say he is really good and if he practised more could be famous. He spends a lot of time at the skate park.

Skateboards aren't allowed at school. If Albert rides his skateboard to school, he has to lock it in office until 3pm. When he goes to school he likes Science and Sport. He likes sport but not all the games that they have to play for sport. Sometimes the games the teacher picks aren't as good as others. Sometimes they involve lots of running, even when it's hot. Sometimes Albert just sits out and doesn't play even though he knows he can get in trouble for that.

Sometimes they have to do writing and reading and maths and Albert isn't that good at that. Some maths is fun though but Albert isn't always sure what to do and he doesn't like it when the other kids know that.

The school has a dress code and Albert is always told he can't wear his clothes. Sometimes it's just easier to stay at the skate park where he doesn't get in trouble.

Albert missed some of the year 8 orientation days to the high school he is going next year with his mates. He was away one day and in trouble the other day. Albert gets in trouble at school a fair bit. He has even been suspended. That made mum angry.

The principal has made a meeting with Alberts mum and talked about the options for next year. He said maybe Albert could repeat Year 7. Maybe Albert could go to a different school, an alternate school; just to start the year and he can work towards going to high school later in the year.

Appendix G: Sample Interview Questions

N.B. The data gathered from Focus Group will inform the final interview questions.

Students **Interview One**	Thinking back to when you started school, what activities did you do and which did you like the most. Which did you like the least? Did you get in trouble? When? What for? How did you feel about the rules? The consequences? Is there anything you wanted to change? Did you try to change things? If so, how?
Interview Two	At school are there any rules, tasks, you don't understand? Can you describe your thoughts on the consequences given at school for appropriate/inappropriate behaviour? Do you think other students agree with you, if so tell me about them? Are there students who do not agree with you, if so tell me about them?
Interview Three	Looking back, how did you feel about your schooling so far? If you could change anything about your schooling what would it be?
Parents **Interview One**	Thinking back to when your child started school, were there tasks/events ways of doing things you didn't understand? Or disliked? If so, did you question the school's way of doing things? What can you remember about the teachers, the school work/homework? other students? Do you remember when your child first started to dislike school? Did they start getting in trouble? If so, what for? How did you feel about the rules? The consequences? Is there anything you wanted to change? Did you try to change things? If so, how?
Interview Two	At school are there any rules, tasks, you don't understand? Do you question them? Do you know whether there is a process where parents can question the actions of the school? Can you describe your thoughts on the consequences given at school for appropriate/inappropriate behaviour?
Interview Three	Looking back on your child's time at school, what are your thoughts? Would you change anything?
Teachers **Interview One**	Thinking back to when you started school, what tasks did you do and which did you like the most. Which did you like the least? Did you ever dislike school? Do you remember why? Did it change? If so how? Did you ever get in trouble? If so, what for? How did you feel about the rules? The consequences? Is there anything you wanted to change? Did you try to change things? If so, how?
Interview Two	Why did you become a teacher? How was it when you started? Have things changed at all since you started? Why did you move into behaviour services?
Interview Three	If you could change things for these students, what would you change? Why? How would you change it?

Appendix H: Alignment of Research Question through to Data Interrogation

Research Question	Analysis foci	Data Sources	Participants	Example questions	Data interrogation
The role social capital plays in the enactment of resistance in AEPs	• What capitals are available within the field? What makes/limits their availability? • To what extent are the different forms of capital validated? • How does validation occur? • Does validation or lack of, influence resistance? • How do acts of resistance effect social interactions with peers? Family? Teachers? • How do social interactions affect acts of resistance? • In what forms is resistance towards formal education enacted? • Is resistance validated?	**Document analysis**	Students (teachers as authors)	What types of behaviours are accepted, expected, valued? How are these expectations expressed?	Types of resistant acts
				What types of consequences are recorded/validated? How are they validated?	Acts that are least acceptable to school
				Are other people implicated or involved? Is there evidence of influence from other inside/outside the AEP?	Friendships/Membership in school community
		Focus Groups	Students, Teachers	Why did the vignette elicit those responses? (Student)	Roles/positions
				Thoughts on the motivations behind actions	Validation of Capital
				Discussion on the types of consequences given in school	Types of resistant acts acceptable in social groups
				Are there shared expectations/understandings of consequences?	
		Interviews	Students, teachers, parents	At school are there any rules, tasks, you don't understand or disagree with?	Valued capital
				Describe your thoughts on the consequences given at school for appropriate/inappropriate behaviour	Habitus
				Why do you think that way? Who else thinks that way about this? Who disagrees? Why do they disagree with you?	Social connections, perceptions
		Observations	Students, teachers	What types of behaviours are evident? Are these behaviours resistant acts?	Types of Resistant acts
				If resistance is evident, how is this resistance constructed/influenced? Can behavioural antecedents or influencing factors be observed?	
				Any differences in the interactions between student/student and student/teacher.	Social groups/influences

Appendix I: Indigo Centre behaviour contract for students

Code of Behaviour

Student: _____
DOB: _____

Be Safe

1. I will keep my hands and feet and objects to myself.
   Initial: _____

2. I will stay in the room that I am scheduled to stay in. I can only leave this room with permission from the teacher in charge of the room.
   Initial: _____

3. I will use equipment properly and not damage property of the Centre.
   Initial: _____

Be Respectful

4. I will follow all instructions given to me by teachers and teacher aides at the Centre.
   Initial: _____

5. I will speak to and about other students and teachers respectfully while at the Centre.
   Initial: _____

6. I will respect other student's belongings or activities.
   Initial: _____

7. I understand that if I physically or verbally threaten any student from Centre inside or outside school hours, my enrolment may be cancelled.
   Initial: _____

Be Responsible

8. I will attend my scheduled days at the Centre.
   Initial: _____

9. I understand that language and maths activities are a part of my program.
   Initial: _____

10. I understand that if I don't follow the Code of Behaviour my parents/carers will be phoned to collect me. If this continually happens my enrolment at the Centre may be cancelled.
    Initial: _____

Signature of Student: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

Appendix J: Song lyrics (by Neville)

I've been waiting for the day
When it all would go away
Why did they choose me
Can someone help me please
Why do some days hurt more
When I'm thrown to the floor
I pretend it doesn't hurt
But deep inside it's crushing me

Don't stand back
Find your voice
Don't be scared
Make the right choice
Be brave
And stand with me
Help me get up off the floor
Help me close the door
Can you make it alright
I don't want to cry anymore

Don't stand back
Find your voice
Don't be scared
Make the right choice
Be brave
And stand with me
Help me get up off the floor
Help me close the door
Can you make it alright
I don't want to cry anymore

RAP
I was the bully
I was a right tool
When we went to school
I made you look like a fool
So much time has passed us by
I want to apologies
I feel guilty for what I've done
Please put down the gun
Tell me what I can do
To make it up to you
Don't kill me, because I've got a son
He is now a victim like you
Please put down the gun

Appendix K: Ethics approval certificate

University Human Research Ethics Committee

HUMAN ETHICS APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

NHMRC Registered Committee Number EC00171

Date of Issue: 11/2/14 (supersedes all previously issued certificates)

Dear Dr Derek Bland

A UHREC should clearly communicate its decisions about a research proposal to the researcher and the final decision to approve or reject a proposal should be communicated to the researcher in writing. This Approval Certificate serves as your written notice that the proposal has met the requirements of the *National Statement on Research involving Human Participation* and has been approved on that basis. You are therefore authorised to commence activities as outlined in your proposal application, subject to any specific and standard conditions detailed in this document.

Within this Approval Certificate are:

* Project Details
* Participant Details
* Conditions of Approval (Specific and Standard)

Researchers should report to the UHREC, via the Research Ethics Coordinator, events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project, including, but not limited to:

(a) serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants; and
(b) proposed significant changes in the conduct, the participant profile or the risks of the proposed research.

Further information regarding your ongoing obligations regarding human based research can be found via the Research Ethics website http://www.research.qut.edu.au/ethics/ or by contacting the Research Ethics Coordinator on 07 3138 2091 or ethicscontact@qut.edu.au

If any details within this Approval Certificate are incorrect please advise the Research Ethics Unit within 10 days of receipt of this certificate.

Project Details

Category of Approval:	Human Negligible-Low Risk		
Approved From:	11/02/2014	**Approved Until:**	11/02/2017 (subject to annual reports)
Approval Number:	1300000842		
Project Title:	Educational engagement: A capital idea		
Experiment Summary:	This research seeks to critically examine how the social and educational fields of students attending an alternative education program in South East Queensland, Australia, influence those students' decisions to resist engaging in formal education.		

Investigator Details

Chief Investigator: Dr Derek Bland

Other Staff/Students:

Investigator Name	Type	Role
Dr Radha Iyer	Internal	Associate Investigator
Mr Steve Newton	Student	Ethics- Student- Research- Doctoral

University Human Research Ethics Committee

HUMAN ETHICS APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

NHMRC Registered Committee Number EC00171

Date of Issue: 11/2/14 (supersedes all previously issued certificates)

Conditions of Approval

Specific Conditions of Approval:
No special conditions placed on approval by the UHREC. Standard conditions apply.

Standard Conditions of Approval:
The University's standard conditions of approval require the research team to:

1. Conduct the project in accordance with University policy, NHMRC / AVCC guidelines and regulations, and the provisions of any relevant State / Territory or Commonwealth regulations or legislation;

2. Respond to the requests and instructions of the University Human Research Ethics Committee (UHREC);

3. Advise the Research Ethics Coordinator immediately if any complaints are made, or expressions of concern are raised, in relation to the project;

4. Suspend or modify the project if the risks to participants are found to be disproportionate to the benefits, and immediately advise the Research Ethics Coordinator of this action;

5. Stop any involvement of any participant if continuation of the research may be harmful to that person, and immediately advise the Research Ethics Coordinator of this action;

6. Advise the Research Ethics Coordinator of any unforeseen development or events that might affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project;

7. Report on the progress of the approved project at least annually, or at intervals determined by the Committee;

8. (Where the research is publicly or privately funded) publish the results of the project is such a way to permit scrutiny and contribute to public knowledge; and

9. Ensure that the results of the research are made available to the participants.

Modifying your Ethical Clearance:
Requests for variations must be made via submission of a Request for Variation to Existing Clearance Form (http://www.research.qut.edu.au/ethics/forms/hum/var/var.jsp) to the Research Ethics Coordinator. Minor changes will be assessed on a case by case basis.

It generally takes 7-14 days to process and notify the Chief Investigator of the outcome of a request for a variation.

Major changes, depending upon the nature of your request, may require submission of a new application.

Audits:
All active ethical clearances are subject to random audit by the UHREC, which will include the review of the signed consent forms for participants, whether any modifications / variations to the project have been approved, and the data storage arrangements.

End of Document