Improving the Effectiveness of Intersectoral Education:

A Qualitative Study

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the
requirements for the award of the degree

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by

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to analyse the major obstacles which hinder the achievement of effective intersectoral education in Australia, together with the appropriate strategies that could be employed to overcome these obstacles. Australia is now in an era of mass participation in tertiary education, and the relationship between vocational and university education is a key focus of strategic policy aimed at ensuring the country continues to be equipped with the necessary range and depth of skills to ensure international competitiveness.

The thesis employs a qualitative approach using the methodology of grounded theory. A case study example is used of a dual-sector university in Australia to analyse the interview responses of a range of participants.

The grounded theory analysis of interview responses uncovered the central, core category of ‘preciousness’ as constituting the main blockage to effective intersectoral education. Preciousness is an attitude associated with something that is highly treasured, loved, esteemed, or cherished, to the extent that it possesses great value, sometimes to the extent of being beyond value. The various elements that constitute ‘preciousness’ are examined in the thesis, together with the strategies that could be utilised to ‘unblock preciousness’ and hence potentially pave the way to more effective intersectoral education.

The thesis possesses several theoretical and practical implications. By examining the extant literature in the topic area of intergroup relations a number of contributions are suggested to advance the theoretical literature, notably in the areas of intergroup bias and conflict, and strategies for reducing such conflict. The thesis also advances the argument that since ‘preciousness’ is constituted of psychological, social, and cultural concepts, then far more attention needs to be paid to these elements if further progress is to be made in making intersectoral education more effective. Some ways to achieve this are suggested in the thesis.
Acknowledgements

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Ron and Marjorie (deceased) Ballantyne, my parents, who provided me with educational opportunities which enabled me to undertake this PhD.

Beverley Ballantyne, my wife, for her patience, support and understanding throughout this learning journey.
Declaration

I, Richard Ronald Ballantyne, declare that this thesis, submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy from the Faculty of Business and Enterprise, Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, Australia:

1. Contains no material which has been accepted for the award to myself of any other degree or diploma, except where due reference is made in the text of this thesis;
2. To the best of my knowledge contains no material previously published or written by any other person except where due reference is made in the text of this thesis

Ethics Approval

This thesis has been approved by the Swinburne University School of Business Ethics Sub-Committee, Application 2004/004.

I certify that all conditions pertaining to this ethics clearance have been properly met and that annual reports and a final report have been submitted

Signed

Richard Ronald Ballantyne
Dedicated to all my students:

- they create the need for me to continually boundary span between TAFE and Higher Education
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Chapter 1

Purpose, significance, and context of the thesis

This chapter serves as an introduction to the thesis by examining the purpose, scope, significance, and context of the study. An analysis is undertaken of the historical contextual background to the thesis in terms of the significant government reports and legislation that have shaped the nature of tertiary (post-secondary) education in Australia since the early 1960s. An analysis is also presented of the two major structures that design and deliver tertiary education – higher education (HE), and vocational education and training (VET).

Purpose, significance, and scope of the thesis

The purpose of this thesis is to analyse the research question ‘what are the main issues in making intersectoral education effective?’ Australia is now in an era of mass participation in tertiary education. This change has been developing since the Second World War and has been progressively financed by the Commonwealth Government (Davies, 1989). Since the early 1960s a series of Government reports have been initiated resulting in on-going legislative reform of the tertiary education system. Prior to the 1980s a strict hierarchy existed in the tertiary education system with universities at the top and technical colleges at the bottom. Commencing in the 1980s, significant government reforms were instituted aimed at structural reform of the Australian economy to make it more internationally competitive. Education was perceived at this time as being able to play a key role in economic reform aimed at improving the nation’s stock of globally-acceptable skills. The roles of schooling and tertiary education were reconceived so as to make them more relevant to the needs of industry. The main purpose of education was perceived in functional terms as the economic preparation of young people with employment competencies.

A noticeable characteristic of the demarcation in tertiary education between university education and vocational training has been the generation of radically different cultures, seen in terms of a so-called binary divide. Government policies have been keen to encourage a seamless transition for young people moving between technical training
and university education but a series of endemic blockages have acted to prevent such transitions taking place in a seamless or effective manner. Cultural differences between the two divisions have, in the main, been responsible for such blockages in intersectoral education. Therefore, the significance of this thesis lies in the attempt to analyse the main blockages that prevent seamless and effective intersectoral education occurring and thus make a contribution to both the theoretical and practical debate in this area.

The scope of this thesis is restricted to a case study within a so-called dual-sector university situated within a southern state in Australia. Dual-sector universities are not common in Australia, with the majority of them situated in the same state. Dual-sector universities are institutions that combine higher education and vocational training within the ambit of the same organisation. However, the nature of this combination differs from one institution to the next in terms of its structures and systems, as will be explained in chapter 2. The dual-sector institution that forms the case study in this thesis comprises a university and a technical college situated on the same site, although physically separated from one another. In addition, various other campuses exist which form part of the overall institution and these are mainly part of the technical and further education (TAFE) system. This complicated organisation has been brought about by a series of mergers over many years.

The methodology employed in the thesis is that of an emergent, qualitative approach using grounded theory in the Straussian tradition (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, 1998). This is explained in more detail in chapter 3.

Context of the thesis

The current state of affairs in intersectoral education in Australia cannot be fully understood without an analysis of the historical developments that have occurred during recent decades. These developments have been driven by a series of Government reports and subsequent legislation. This section of the thesis presents the contextual significance of the major Government reports that have occurred since the early 1960s, together with a description of the two main structures that comprise the tertiary education system – higher education, and vocational education and training.
Government reports

Six significant Government reports have been published since 1961. These reports, and their recommendations, are analysed below, emphasising the importance of the contextual circumstances within which the reports and subsequent Government legislation were instituted.

Martin Report

The Committee on the Future of Tertiary Education in Australia (Martin Committee) was established in 1961 to consider the pattern of tertiary education in Australia in relation to the country’s resources and needs. It reported in 1965 (Martin, 1965). Box 1.1 shows the main recommendations of the Martin Report.

Box 1.1

Recommendations of the Martin Report

At that time the tertiary sector consisted of four main types of institutions: universities, institutes of technology or technical colleges, teachers’ colleges, and specialist institutions (generally agricultural or paramedical colleges). The Martin Committee considered that technical education was undervalued. It recommended an increase in financial support for colleges, the separation of recreational and trade courses from those concerned with general education and the technologies, and the establishment of standards recognised throughout the country. In response, the Government agreed to support a new system of Colleges of Advanced Education (CAEs) parallel to the universities, although they were to remain primarily a State responsibility.

Source: Parliament of Australia (n.d.)

CAEs were designed to complement universities, creating a binary system which was already in existence in the UK and on which this new system was modelled. Within the tertiary education structure there existed a definite status hierarchy. CAEs were ranked below universities but above technical colleges. CAEs were designed to provide formal post-secondary qualifications chiefly in areas such as teaching, nursing, and accountancy which were more vocationally oriented than traditional university education. At the lower end of the scale technical colleges offered trade qualifications. CAEs were state-owned and controlled, in contrast to universities which were federally...
funded and independent. Whereas universities offered degrees, the CAEs offered certificates and diplomas. Additionally, research was only carried out in universities not in CAEs, and university staff enjoyed higher pay scales than CAE staff as well as other more favourable working conditions. The Martin Report stated ‘teaching and research are closely linked university activities, and a body concerned with only one of them is clearly no longer a university’ (Martin, 1965, vol. 1: 48). According to Mahoney (1993: 3) ‘this was an important distinction because in many other respects the CAEs became the universities’.

Although the original intention was that CAEs should not offer degrees, this policy began to progressively break down over the years. The CAEs were originally designed to be the intermediary between universities and technical colleges and concentrate on sub-degree courses based on vocational skills, but with changing standards of staff and students their role had changed by the late 1970s when the larger CAEs resembled universities (Stevenson, 2007). CAEs continued in operation until the early 1990s when the binary system was abolished. The binary system of higher education in Australia was based on a division between pure and applied study and research. There was an economic motive behind the government’s motivation to expand higher education in the form of creating institutions that would be cheaper to establish and maintain than universities. This was overlaid with an ideological component which ascribed different functions to different types of institutions that were ostensibly equal but different in that they were designed to be comparable in standard but different in function (Davies, 1989). This ideological demarcation was stressed by the Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Advanced Education which stated in its first report (CACAE, 1966: paragraph 2.42) that in the colleges there would be:

- Students with somewhat different types of interests
- A primary emphasis on teaching
- A more applied emphasis
- Far less attention to post graduate training and research
- A more direct and intimate relationship with industry and other relevant organisations
• A greater concentration upon part-time studies associated with employment, especially in scientific fields

In the two decades following the Martin Report knowledge and practice changed substantially. There occurred increasing professionalisation of occupations in the health and social sciences, the applied sciences, management, and the arts. These changes increased the breadth of inputs into higher education that society demanded. In Australia the college sector absorbed a large part of this growth in addition to the increased demand for programs already established in universities (Mahoney, 1993). Eventually only medicine, dentistry, and veterinary science were solely run by universities. However, there were limitations with some courses offered by CAEs due to the non availability of research funding (Mahoney, 1993).

Stevenson (2007) claims that the identity of technical education suffered as a result of the implementation of the Martin Report, especially due to the movement of its higher-level courses to the new CAEs. A distinctive qualification in the form of a diploma became the exclusive responsibility of CAEs, and universities relinquished their diplomas and concentrated on higher level study and research training. Therefore, CAEs took responsibility for diplomas from universities and technical colleges. Trade, advanced trade, and certificate courses still retained theoretical and practical components however they became more isolated from other higher level courses on offer. By 1977, diplomas represented only 0.7% of enrolments in the VET sector (vocational education and training) and 3% of university enrolments, but accounted for 44.6% of enrolments in the CAEs (Williams, 1979: 20).

*Kangan Report*

The Kangan Report was published in 1974 (Kangan, 1974). Its full name was TAFE in Australia: Report on Needs in Technical and Further Education and the committee was chaired by Myer Kangan. The significant findings and recommendations of the report are shown in Box 1.2.
Box 1.2

Recommendations of the Kangan Report

The report examined needs and priorities in technical and further education and made a series of recommendations, particularly in relation to funding. The report recognised the importance of technical and further education as an integral part of the nation’s education system, and saw its primary role as the development of the individual rather than merely the development of skilled manpower. Other themes of the report included the need to provide opportunities for recurrent education to people throughout life, the need to link general and vocational education, the need to create pathways in education and training, the need for flexible delivery, and the need for research and data collection.


A significant aspect of the Kangan Report was that it drew attention to the social and community responsibilities inherent in technical and further education, especially the need for recurrent education and for mature people who suffered from inadequate initial education.

The report envisages a major shift of emphasis. It abandons the narrow and rigid concept that technical colleges exist simply to meet the manpower needs of industry, and adopts a broader concept that they exist to meet the needs of people as individuals… The Report takes a long step in the direction of lifelong education and of opportunities for re-entry to education. It recommends unrestricted access for adults to vocationally-orientated education (Beazley, 1980: 48).

The Kangan Report represented an important turning point in that it defined the role and the mission of what has now become known as the TAFE system. The report was significant in that for the first time technical education was given a status which gave it a recognised place within the tertiary (post-secondary) education system. Until this time, vocational education had not been wholly consolidated as a sector separate from schooling and higher education. Thus, the acceptance by the Government of the recommendations of the Kangan Report designated TAFE as a distinct sector of education which followed a pattern that had already been established with the formation of CAEs. TAFE continued to be funded by the states but also partly by the Federal Government in that access to Commonwealth funds was available for both recurrent purposes and capital works which allowed for the transformation of TAFE. The Government stipulated that its earmarked partial funding of TAFE could be identified and accounted for separately (Moodie, Wheelahan, Billett, and Kelly, 2009). Hence, the
report gave TAFE a national identity which led to the development of national TAFE policies and standards (Goozee, 1995). As a result, technical education began to receive increased support and direction:

The lower levels of technician, trade and adult education included in the area which became known as TAFE began to receive much more attention than had previously been the case and the necessity to improve TAFE was argued vigorously by politicians, economists and industrialists as a means of increasing productivity and lessening unemployment (Connell, 1993: 324).

It is interesting to note that the Technical Education Commission was established under the Technical and Further Education Act of 1975 whereby life skills were introduced into technical courses and the needs of young people in relation to society were included in the curriculum. However, this was narrowed down in the late 1970s to the extent that individual and social concerns intruded only when they were regarded as economically important (Stevenson, 2007).

Kirby Report

The Kirby Report was published in 1985 (Kirby, 1985). Its full name was the Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Labour Market Programs and the committee was chaired by Peter Kirby. The establishment of the committee was sparked by the Hawke Government’s concern with structural reform of the economy and unemployment. The committee focused on creating a coherent framework for government intervention in the labour market (Goozee, 1995). The report recommended the rationalisation of labour market programs, the introduction of traineeships, and the establishment of the Australian Traineeship System (ATS).

The recommendation to develop a system of traineeships was based on the combination of broad-based vocational education and training in an institution with relevant work in a related occupation. The formal off-the-job training component was to be a minimum of 13 weeks in the form of day-release for two days a week. This training would be provided by TAFE institutions. It was also intended that graduates of the scheme would have the opportunity to pathway to more advanced areas of education, training, or employment (Goozee, 1995).
The primary objective of the ATS was to provide a system that borrowed the strengths of the apprenticeship system, that is the co-ordinated combination of work and study, but without the stringent legislative obligations and to introduce the system in areas where traditionally there had been little provision of formal training. The clerical and retail areas were two that were specifically targeted (Goozee, 1995: 88).

**Dawkins Reforms**

The reforms of 1987 initiated by John Dawkins (Dawkins, 1987) restructured higher education by abolishing the binary system and merging many of the CAEs with universities. John Dawkins was the Federal Minister of Employment, Education, and Training, a new super-ministry formed by the newly re-elected Hawke Government. The new government was pre-occupied with transforming the nature of the Australian economy to become more efficient, effective, and responsive to the needs of global developments. Economic reconstruction became a key priority as well as the need to broaden the export base. The necessity to compete effectively in international markets demanded improvements in national productivity which would involve new technologies and new forms of work organisation. Education became regarded as a significant factor in driving this reconstruction and it was for this reason that the previously separate portfolios of education and employment were amalgamated under the direction of John Dawkins. The term ‘multi-skilling’ came into vogue ‘denoting the need to ensure that the labour force acquired both a wider range and a higher level of skills. There was also recognition of the need for education and training of adults throughout their working life’ (Goozee, 1995: 105). The most significant aspects of the Dawkins reform agenda were as follows:

1. Abolition of the so-called binary system, which made a clear distinction between universities and CAEs with respect to roles and funding, and replacement by a new unified national system of higher education.

2. Major consolidation of institutions through amalgamation to form larger units

3. Substantial increases in the provision of student places and various efforts to improve student progress rates in order to increase the output of graduates
4. Increased emphasis on fields such as applied science, technologies, computer science, and business studies, perceived to be of crucial importance to economic recovery and economic growth.

5. A more selective approach to research funding, with increased emphasis on research into topics of national priority, and substantial increases in research funding.

6. Changes to the composition of governing bodies to make them more like boards of companies, and strengthening of management of universities and colleges, particularly to give them much greater power and authority to chief executive officers.

7. Major changes in staffing, particularly aimed to increase the flexibility of institutions, improve staff performance, and enable institutions to more successfully compete in staff recruitment in priority areas.

8. Changes to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness of the higher education system, including reduced unit costs in teaching, improved credit transfers, and rationalization of external studies.

9. Moving some of the financial burden for higher education to individuals and the private sector, and encouraging institutions to generate some of their own income (Harman, 1989: 6).

As a result of these reforms, Goozee (1995) states that for all sectors of education the years 1987 to 1990 were ones of dislocation and constant restructuring due to economic imperatives and the strong interventionist policies of John Dawkins. Thus, for example, in Victoria the University of Melbourne merged with the Melbourne College of Advanced Education and the Victorian College of Agriculture and Horticulture, substantially broadening its curriculum and research base. The manner in which these amalgamations were managed had a considerable impact on the extent of resistance and resentment engendered. Shoemaker, Allison, Gum, Harmoni, Lindfield, Nolan, and Stedman (2000: 77) state ‘in Victoria, higher education and VET institutions were
impelled to blend by the state government, which appears in some instances to have bred a stronger resistance to cooperation between the sectors than in other states where the partnering was voluntary’.

It was hoped that through such amalgamations it would be possible ‘to blend the cultures of the CAEs and the universities in order to use the strengths of each to enrich educational opportunities’ (Mahoney, 1993: 9). Nevertheless, the intention was that the new higher education system would be unified by implementing university norms. This intention, however, had the consequence that whilst one binary system was being phased out, another was in the process of formation, namely ‘the new relationship between the two identities of higher education and TAFE’ (Connell, 1993: 330). Over time the higher education system started to dispense with its responsibility for delivering qualifications such as diplomas and advanced diplomas. Increasingly, the TAFE system took on these responsibilities as they were vacated by the universities (Moodie, 2003). By 2006 approximately 96% of diploma and advanced diploma students were attending VET institutions, not higher education institutions (Moodie, Wheelahan, Billett, and Kelly, 2009). Diplomas and advanced diplomas started to play an important role in providing access to degree level or higher studies via pathway arrangements. Karmel (2008) noted that 32% of diploma and advanced diploma graduates aged 25 or under went on to study at this level, while 14% of graduates aged 25 or over did so. In some fields such as banking and accountancy, the percentage of those under 25 years who went on to study at degree level was over 50%.

Finn Report

The Finn Report was published in 1991 (Finn, 1991). Its full name was Young People’s Participation in Post-Compulsory Education and Training and the committee was chaired by Brian Finn. The significant findings and recommendations of the report are shown in Box 1.3.
Box 1.3

Recommendations of the Finn Report

The report proposed new national targets for participation and levels of attainment in post-compulsory education and training, recommended reform of entry-level training arrangements, and identified six key areas of competence essential for all young people in preparation for employment. Key competencies apply to work generally, rather than being specific to work in a particular occupation or industry. Competencies are those skills that are considered essential for people to participate effectively in the workforce. The six key areas of competence were subsequently developed into seven key competencies in 1992, namely:

1. Collecting, analysing, and organising information
2. Communicating ideas and information
3. Planning and organising activities
4. Working with others and in teams
5. Using mathematical ideas and techniques
6. Solving problems
7. Using technology


Lewis (1992) claimed that the Finn Report, which followed hot on the heels of the Dawkins reforms, was an integral part of a worker-led economic recovery and the means by which Australia’s recovery could make the transition to a post-industrial era. The reforms emanating from the report were intended to make schooling and the curriculum more relevant to the needs of industry. This direction clearly mirrored the views of Dawkins that the main purpose of education is economic and that the function of schooling is the preparation of young people with employment competencies.

At the same time the States and Commonwealth agreed to jointly fund the national training system through the establishment of the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) and the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF). The introduction of the AQTF established a nationally-agreed standard for all registered training organisations (including TAFEs) in the national VET system. Its key objective was to provide the basis for a nationally consistent, high quality, vocational education and training system. The first competency-based national training packages were endorsed in 1997. As from 2002 all registered training organisations had to comply with these standards and be audited against them in order to retain their accreditation (Pickersgill, 2004).
In response to the Finn Report, Lundberg (1995) argued that it was appropriate for Australia to set targets for the overall rate of participation of young people in post-compulsory education and training and that quantitative participation targets were being supplemented by targets for the levels of outcomes attained. The question remained, however, whether Australia was setting sufficiently ambitious targets for the level and mix of attainments in post-compulsory education and training for skill formation to play a suitable role in improving Australia’s international competitiveness. It is important that this issue is kept continually in the foreground otherwise there is always the risk of sacrificing educational standards to broader participation in post-compulsory education and training. However, another risk to be guarded against is not to confuse quality standards with academic snobbery in the social valuation of different types of learning and related occupations: ‘they are about seeking to do whatever is being done as well as one can, and striving to meet high standards of achievement in that field of endeavour’ (Lundberg, 1995: 17).

Meeting the needs of the market and operating within a more competitive global market were two economic pressures that were influencing post-compulsory education and training at this time during the 1990s. The other value at stake was social justice which is strongly affected by fair access to education and training and the opportunities for which education and training is a preparation:

The equity-related issue that is a central concern…is the question of providing a fair choice of pathways to individuals with minimal structural distortions or constraints upon the effective exercise of choice (Lundberg, 1995: 17).

It has earlier been argued that as the old binary system was being dissolved (CAEs and universities) a new binary system was developing in its place (TAFEs and universities). But as the TAFE system moved towards an emphasis on national, standardised vocational competencies it was also observed that a trend had commenced towards higher education awards being offered through VET institutions, most notably in the form of degrees and associate degrees. This was seen as the new access route to higher education qualifications (Moodie, Wheelahan, Billett, and Kelly, 2009). By 2009 ten TAFE institutes had been registered by their state higher education registering bodies to offer higher education qualifications, most of them in Victoria.
During the twenty-year period between 1987 and 2007 the total number of higher education enrolments in Australia increased enormously from approximately 394,000 in 1987 to over 638,000 in 1996 and around 1.03 million in 2007. This number included significant growth in international students studying here and at offshore campuses of Australian universities (Moodie, Wheelahan, Billett, and Kelly, 2009). In addition, Victoria’s demographic structure had also been changing. In 2001, 13 per cent of the Victorian population was aged 65 years and over. By 2042, it is predicted that this will have grown to 25.8 per cent of the community, thus doubling the 65+ population over a period of approximately 40 years. The Department of Education and Training (2005) argued that the increasing importance of knowledge-based skills in the labour force, as well as social policy concerns, will promote more involvement in lifelong learning, and higher education will provide second-chance opportunities as well as continuing professional development.

It was against this backdrop that the Bradley Report was published in 2008 (Bradley, 2008). Its full name was the Review of Australian Higher Education and the committee was chaired by Denise Bradley. The review was established by the government to examine the future direction of the higher education sector, its fitness for purpose in meeting the needs of the Australian community and economy, and the options for ongoing reform. The executive summary of Bradley (2008) states:

Australia is falling behind other countries in performance and investment in higher education. Developed and developing countries alike accept there are strong links between their productivity and the proportion of the population with high-level skills. These countries have concluded that they must invest not only to encourage a major increase in the numbers of the population with degree-level qualifications but also to improve the quality of graduates…Within the OECD we are now 9th out of 30 in the proportion of our population aged 25 to 34 years with such qualifications, down from 7th a decade ago. 29% of our 25-34 year olds have degree level qualifications but in other OECD countries targets of up to 50% have already been set. These policy decisions elsewhere place us at a great competitive disadvantage unless immediate action is taken (Bradley, 2008: xi)

Based on this background, the Bradley report made a number of significant recommendations for reform which, in effect, advocated the introduction of a demand-driven, student-entitlement system.
• 40% of the 25-34 year old cohort should have attained at least a bachelor’s degree by 2020
• All qualified students should receive an entitlement for a Commonwealth subsidised higher education place
• Students should have a choice of where to study at recognised institutions
• Funding should follow the student
• Institutions should have freedom to enrol as many students as they wish
• Funding for low socio-economic status students should be significantly increased
• Funding for provision in regional and rural areas should be increased
• A greater focus on accreditation, quality assurance, evaluation of standards, and use of outcome measures

In response to this, the Federal Government issued a paper entitled Transforming Australia’s Higher Education System (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009) which adopted the review’s recommendations. The paper included another major outcome of creating a more open market for domestic undergraduate students across all Australian universities by 2012. As part of the 2009 budget, the government announced an additional $5.4 billion to support the achievement of the Bradley Report’s recommendations.

Although generally welcomed in many quarters, especially in the business sector, the Bradley Report was received with misgivings and open criticism from some sources. There were fears of a general decline in academic standards if the 40% target was to be achieved. The Victorian government also forecast a diminishing in demand for diplomas and other qualifications in the TAFE sector, and stated that the Victorian TAFE sector was also moving towards a more open market by 2011 (Victorian Government, 2008).

A more constructive connection between VET and HE nationwide is therefore crucial in balancing the competitive features of the two systems, achieving the access targets, maintaining standards and ensuring industry’s need for degree and VET qualified workers continues to be met (Matthews and Murphy, 2010: 7).
To this end the Commonwealth Government decided to establish the Ministerial Council for Tertiary Education and Employment (MCTEE), with responsibility for higher education, vocational education and training, international education, adult and community education, the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), employment, and broader youth policy (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009). The first two meetings of this council held during 2011 focused on skills development to meet the changing needs of the economy, thus fuelling the fears of many commentators that higher education was in eminent danger of being commodified.

The Bradley Review is remiss in making no distinction between skills-based training and university education, and as a consequence threatens the further degradation to an already savagely eroded tertiary education system…the commodification of higher education refers to the deliberate transformation of the educational process into commodity form for the purpose of commercial transaction (Maddock, 2009).

Structures

Sommerlad, Duke, and McDonald (1998) state that terminology can be problematic in that it can build assumptions in people’s minds which misconstrue meaning and understanding. *Higher education* is equated with the universities in most people’s minds and is associated with conceptual and critical thinking based upon research that results in the award of a degree. However, an increasing proportion of higher education now takes place outside the universities, especially in TAFE. In contrast, *vocational education and training* (VET) is associated in most people’s minds with acquiring practical skills and competencies in a training environment that are almost immediately transferable to the world of work and are attained without the need for critical thinking or conceptual reasoning. However, much university education is now also concerned with imparting practical and vocational skills to students across a range of several professional-type degrees, such as nursing, accountancy, information technology, and so on. Finally, the term *tertiary education* refers to all post-secondary education; whilst *sector or system* are terms which are used to describe the whole or one or other part of the tertiary system.
**Higher Education**

Universities have a governing Council concerned with the strategic directions of the university. The council is usually the employer of staff, and is invested with legal, financial, and regulatory authority over the activities of the university. In addition to the council there usually is an academic board. The academic board has responsibility for and authority over the academic programs of the university and while degrees are formally awarded by the council, the council rarely decides any academic matter without the advice of the academic board (Wheelahan, 2000). These arrangements are underpinned by the premise that universities are autonomous and free to run their affairs without interference from government (Anderson and Johnson, 1998). This is derived from the notion of ‘the university’, where intellectual freedom and institutional autonomy are considered intrinsic to universities being able to fulfil their social mission as citadels of learning and knowledge creation (Marginson, 1997).

This view of universities is often proclaimed as one reason why there should not be greater collaborations between higher education and VET: the exalted and pure mission of universities is contrasted to the vulgar and instrumental mission of VET, seen as merely to train and supply labour market needs, based on uncritical and unreflective approaches to existing practice, concerned only with skills, and not underpinning knowledge. VET practitioners, in contrast, often proclaim higher education to be divorced from real-world concerns, in pursuit of esoteric knowledge of little use to anyone (Wheelahan, 2000: 22).

This conception of higher education is also reflected in the objects of the Higher Education Support Act (2003). This legislation recognises the status of universities in Australia in law, codifies the existing aims of universities, and introduces measures to strengthen the knowledge base. The legislation facilitates funding of the higher education sector with the following objectives:

a) support a higher education system that:

- Is characterised by quality, diversity, and equity of access
- Contributes to the development of cultural and intellectual life in Australia
- Is appropriate to meet Australia’s social and economic needs for a highly educated and skilled population

b) support the distinctive purposes of universities, which are:
• The education of persons, enabling them to take a leadership role in the intellectual, cultural, economic, and social development of their communities
• The creation and advancement of knowledge
• The application of knowledge and discoveries to the betterment of communities in Australia and internationally

c) strengthen Australia’s knowledge base, and enhance the contribution of Australia’s research capabilities to national economic development, international competitiveness, and the attainment of social goals

d) support students undertaking higher education.

These objectives were stated within an overall context of a climate of equity of access designed to move Australia from an elite system to one of mass education. Student numbers increased from 175,000 in 1985 to 650,000 in 36 public universities in 1997 (Coaldrake and Stedman, 1998). University enrolments overall almost doubled between 1983 and 2000 (Auditor General Victoria, 2002). This massification of higher education led to the structural changes of reducing the number of institutions due to many being relatively small and the blurring of boundaries with staff at colleges of advanced education (CAEs) involved in applied research and universities expanding their range of vocational courses (Coaldrake and Stedman, 1998). The creation of the unified national system in terms of the Dawkins reforms resulted in the amalgamation of the then 47 CAEs and 19 universities into 36 (later 38) publicly-funded universities (Marginson, 1997). The Government established benchmarks on the minimum size of universities, which were between 5000 and 80000 equivalent full-time student units, to ensure that universities were viable and able to offer a comprehensive range of courses. All new universities seeking membership of the Australian Vice-Chancellors’ Committee had to meet certain criteria before they were granted membership (Maling and Keeps, 1998).

These changes were intended to produce economies of scale and assist in the process of institutions developing their own areas of strength and specialisation. Economies of scale and niche markets reduced the amount of government financial support required to maintain the institutions and enabled the minimisation of funding across the university sector. At the same time there were initial moves towards a user-pays system and expectations that universities would seek funding from sources other than government.
One response by universities to the minimisation of funding and the move to user-pays was an increased emphasis on attracting full-fee-paying international students (DEETYA, 1993).

As already stated, Australia’s higher education sector comprises 38 universities and a number of other higher education institutions, including private providers of higher education. There is a good deal of diversity across the sector, largely reflecting factors such as institutional history, location, and specific mission. The most significant and highly regarded universities are known as the G8 universities (group of 8). These are comprised of the older universities located in the major capital cities known as ‘sandstone’ – University of Sydney, University of Queensland, University of Melbourne, University of Adelaide, and University of Western Australia – plus three others, Australian National University, Monash University, and University of New South Wales. These universities offer a wide range of courses, are more selective in their recruitment, and have significant research programs and reputations. Less privileged, and usually with a narrower teaching and research base, are the post-war but pre-1975 universities or ‘gumtrees’, the ‘unitechs’ (former colleges of technology), and the new universities (former colleges of advanced education). Some universities, particularly in Victoria are ‘dual sector’ institutions combining TAFE programs and higher education programs. Some have a large segment of their student population undertaking distance studies or part-time studies. Others have the majority as school leavers who are full-time on-campus students (SEWRSBERC, 2001). Dual-sector universities in Australia are Victoria University, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, Swinburne University of Technology, University of Ballarat, and Charles Darwin University. As these institutions seek to develop and deliver dual-sector courses they therefore must accommodate both higher education and TAFE accreditation processes.

The creation of the Unified National System in 1988 encouraged autonomy and competition between institutions and was intended to foster diversity as universities sought to meet the diverse needs of the market. Most believe that increased competition has instead promoted increasing convergence while the funding indicators adopted by the Commonwealth Government have also smothered diversity. Commercialisation has intensified this trend, because the fee-paying market has a focus on areas such as
business administration, economics, and some information technology programs (Senate Employment, Workplace Relations, Small Business and Education References Committee, 2001).

Students enrolling in middle-level courses in TAFE have traditionally paid a lower fee than their university counterparts undertaking similar courses. For some students the option of paying back their university loan (Higher Education Contribution Scheme) at a later date has been a preferred method as opposed to the upfront fee required to undertake a TAFE course. This price differential has had a distorting effect on enrolment patterns in jointly-badged courses where there has been the option of taking the first one or two years of study in either institution. Summerlad, Duke, and McDonald (1998: cxvii) refer to this practice as ‘ducking and weaving’ to find ways around the system, and differentiate this from ‘swirling’ behaviour of students who create their own pathways and schedules ‘among what might be called rationally and competitively priced products’.

PhillipsKPA (2005: 23) provided a list of examples of differences in the way in which students were defined and funded in HE and VET at the time of their writing:

- Fee structures are fundamentally different
- There is no loans scheme for VET students
- Permanent residents are treated differently
- Recognition of prior learning is recognised and reported in VET but not in higher education
- There are differences in the way mode of delivery is defined and reported
- There are differences in the way remote area delivery is defined, funded, and reported
- Field of education classification is used in both sectors, but for different purposes. In higher education it is used at the unit level and is linked to funding clusters and HECS bands
- Student activity is defined and reported differently, namely, contact hours in VET and student load in HE
These types of differences have traditionally affected not only reporting requirements but also the educational structures and approaches of dual-sector institutions, including the development of dual-sector awards, which in an ideal world could have been a major differentiating feature of dual-sector institutions (PhilipsKPA, 2005). These differences have also made it difficult for the dual-sector institutions to achieve the benefit of a seamless enrolment process, single enrolment form, single student system, and single reporting regime for all their students.

Managing the boundary between the university and TAFE has to do largely with the extent to which the institution changes its structures, culture, routines, and practices so as to promote exchange and mutual learning between the two organisations. Universities may be ranged along a continuum in relation to this. At one end are strategies for limiting the TAFE relationship. At the other end is cultural, structural, and procedural integration with TAFE (Sommerlad, Duke, and McDonald, 1998).

**Vocational Education and Training (VET)**

The VET sector aims to:

- Provide and educate a skilled and flexible workforce to enable Australian industry to be competitive in domestic and international markets
- Improve the knowledge, skills, and quality of life for Australians, having regard to the particular needs of disadvantaged groups (ANTA, 1994).

The VET sector operates quite differently from higher education in that institutions have little say in qualifications or units of competence endorsed by the national industry training advisory body (ITAB). However, they do have considerable discretion in constructing programs of study and choosing learning resources to meet the requirements of nationally-endorsed qualifications. Programs are usually constructed by a program manager and approved by the head of school (or associate director) who is at a comparable level of Dean in higher education. Some TAFE institutes may have a board of technical studies that examines course proposals. This is usually a single stage approval process thus allowing VET to develop new courses and adapt existing courses
quickly, provided the course fits within nationally-endorsed qualifications and competencies (Wheelahan, 2000).

The TAFE system’s recent history has been influenced by its expansion following the release of the Kangan Report in 1974. Anderson (1997: 3) states ‘this placed TAFE on a clear philosophical and policy basis for the development of a distinctive identity for the technical and further education system in Australia’. It was as a consequence of this report that technical and further education acquired the acronym TAFE. The sector has been in continual change since then. Since the early 1990s the objective has been to develop an effective and competitive training market with both public and private suppliers of training. This has meant a shift from delivering training almost exclusively by TAFE to TAFE being just one provider among many. TAFE however remains the dominant provider in the market (Greer, 1998). In most States and Territories this is achieved through State and Territory governments purchasing training from providers, rather than directly delivering and administering training. This separation between the two functions has been created through the establishment of increasingly autonomous TAFE institutes and private providers. This was seen to be a precondition for placing VET within a market as no provider would ultimately have favoured status. In theory this approach makes providers more responsive to users, as the government purchases required training from providers rather than mandating requirements (Wheelahan, 2000).

The training reforms that commenced in the early 1990s signalled the beginning of a changing relationship between education and industry. While issues relating to the quality and quantity of VET were being explored, neo-liberal thinking increasingly challenged the fact that technical and further education institutions should operate as a protected state monopoly, and that a purchaser-provider split was needed (Harris, Simons, and McCarthy, 2006). It was the implementation of the National Framework for the Recognition of Training in 1992 (later the Australian Quality Training Framework) which provided the mechanism for the registration of private training providers. Burke (2000: 26) states ‘various strands of reform thus coalesced into a series of policies which included the goals of introducing greater competition between suppliers of VET, reforming the management and regulation of VET, and establishing greater accountability measures of those in receipt of public funds’. 
A revised policy framework established the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) with the aim of setting strategic directions for the development of the VET system, and to govern the activities of VET providers known as registered training organisations (RTOs). Mechanisms to promote mutual recognition of qualifications awarded by all providers and to assure the quality of VET provision became core components of this framework. Greater competition between public and private training providers has been promoted through the twin mechanisms of competitive tendering and the implementation of user choice (Noble, Hill, Smith, and Smith, 1999). Over time the training reforms have ‘cohered into a strategy to develop a market-based approach to VET provision’ (Anderson, 1996: 114).

For the year 2003 the National Centre for Vocational Educational Research (NCVER) recorded 1949 registered training organisations in Australia in receipt of government funds, comprising 72 TAFE institutes, 531 community education providers, seven other providers, and 1339 other registered (including private) providers. An additional 1871 private providers did not receive government funds. This totalled 4,423 registered training organisations in operation in that year.

**Structure of the thesis**

The thesis is divided into seven chapters:

Chapter 1 – this chapter deals with the purpose, significance, scope, and context of the thesis. An analysis is undertaken of the major Government reports published since the early 1960s, together with their recommendations. A description is also provided of the two main structures that comprise tertiary education in Australia – HE and VET.

Chapter 2 – this chapter deals with the topic of intersectoral education and collaboration. Following a background analysis of the topic, the chapter is then divided into three sections – the forms of collaboration practiced, and the benefits of, and blockages to, effective collaboration between higher education and vocational education and training.
Chapter 3 – this chapter presents the methodology employed in the thesis together with an exposition of the data collection, coding, and analysis. A detailed audit trail of the data is presented to show how thematic categories and properties emerged from the data.

Chapter 4 – this chapter presents the findings of the thesis as they relate to the core category of preciousness. A two-way process of preciousness exists between TAFE and HED which acts as a blockage to the achievement of intersectoral collaboration.

Chapter 5 – this chapter presents further findings of the thesis as they relate to the series of strategies that emerged from the interview data. Effective implementation of these strategies acts to unblock preciousness. This serves the purpose of reducing intersectoral tensions and hence enabling smoother intersectoral collaboration through the process of transforming blocking into facilitating.

Chapter 6 – this chapter examines the extant literature on intergroup relations in an attempt to analyse the underlying theoretical issues that impact upon the nature of the interaction between separate groups (such as TAFE and HED).

Chapter 7 – this chapter concludes the thesis. It examines the contribution made by the thesis to the literature, as well as the implications of the thesis, the criteria for evaluating the thesis, and the limitations of the thesis.

Summary

This chapter has provided a broad contextual background to the research question analysed in this thesis – ‘what are the main issues in making intersectoral education effective?’ The chapter has been structured into two major sections: (i) a historical chronology of the major developments in the area, presented through the vehicle of the major Government reports published since the 1960s, and (ii) an examination of the major structural divisions between Higher Education (HE) and Vocational Education and Training (VET). In conducting this examination a number of issues have been raised that will be taken up and further analysed and contextualised in subsequent chapters, namely:
- Shifting nature of binary divisions
- Conceptual and practical differences between university education and vocational training
- Massification of higher education
- Linking education and training to the needs of the market, industry requirements, economic growth, productivity, exports, and globalisation
- Growing influence of neo-liberal concepts on such topics as:
  - Commodification of education
  - Students as customers
  - Demand-driven and user-pays issues
  - Privatisation of, and competition between, different providers.

The next chapter examines the topic of intersectoral education, paying attention to the forms of collaboration practiced, and the benefits of, and blockages to, effective collaboration between higher education and vocational education and training.
Chapter 2
Intersectoral education and collaboration

This chapter examines the topic of intersectoral education and collaboration. Following a background analysis to the topic, the chapter is then divided into three sections - the forms of collaboration practiced, and also the benefits of, and blockages to, effective collaboration between Higher Education (HE) and Vocational Education and Training (VET).

**Background to intersectoral education and collaboration**

Kirby (1994) argued that intersectoral collaboration heralds the future of the education and training system albeit indirectly in that it would be an unimaginative view of education in the twenty-first century to see each individual’s learning experiences being confined to the same educational institutions operating within the same parameters currently in operation. Intersectoral collaboration between higher education and vocational education and training is in part seen as one way to create seamless pathways which will build access to education and training and lead to the development of skills for existing and future workers. This cooperation can also be seen as institutions from different sectors coming together to either provide facilities, services, or educational programs or a combination of these for the communities which they serve (Robinson, Duke, and McDonald, 2003). One of the major purposes of intersectoral collaboration between educational institutions is the maximisation of opportunities for credit transfer and articulation. Wheelahan (2000) describes credit transfer as the advanced standing students will receive based on the courses they have completed and the qualifications they have achieved. Articulation, on the other hand, refers to a set of pre-determined pathways which define how one qualification will lead to another and the level of advanced standing that will automatically be available.

Intersectoral education has been a topic of interest since the Dawkins reforms of 1987 which restructured higher education by abolishing the binary system of advanced education. However, as earlier discussed, this reform simultaneously created an alternative binary system of tertiary education between higher education and TAFE.
The parallels with the Martin binary proposals of almost three decades ago appear almost complete. Yet there are some important differences: the main players, Australian Vice Chancellors’ Committee and TAFE representatives, seem anxious to work together so that there is much articulation between two sectors with completed TAFE studies becoming a direct route to university along with well co-ordinated university credit systems (Mahoney 1993: 11).

This contrasts with the scenario surrounding the Martin Report in that there was often a lack of co-operation between the universities and the Colleges of Advanced Education (CAEs).

If the recent history of tertiary education, both in Britain and Australia demonstrates anything, it is that established systems seem to need alternatives, who may become competitors, to cope with continually evolving highly pluralist demands of modern societies for tertiary education (Mahoney, 1993: 12).

In the last two decades there have been changes in the rate and patterns of participation in higher education and in vocational education and training which have occurred in response to a changing economic environment. This has led to a rethinking of traditional and separate methods of planning, administering, and delivering higher education and vocational education training among the different sectors - universities, schools, TAFE, industry, and community. In the past each sector located their buildings and facilities on separate campuses and governed operations separately. There are now signs of increasing inter-sectoral co-operation.

Varying in forms and degrees of intensity, intersectoral co-operation may consist of institutions only sharing the same piece of ground, to institutions sharing the same management and decision-making structures. In all cases, however, intersectoral co-operation must operate within the confines of government legislation and funding policies (Robinson and Misko, 2003: 10).

Intersectoral co-operation in HE and VET has become part of a strategy to build on the concept of seamless pathways. This encourages access to education and training which in turn leads to the development of skills for existing and future workers.

This focus on lifelong learning promoted by governments at home and abroad, is seen as the vehicle by which societies and individuals continuously maintain their economic competitiveness in rapidly changing and increasingly globalised economies (Robinson and Misko, 2003: 10).
Matthews and Murphy (2010) believe that connected and converging structures and systems between TAFE and higher education can and should be the essence of a cohesive dual-sector university while at the same time recognising and maintaining the distinctive missions of each: ‘students and teachers, industry and research, indeed the entire Australian community, will be the beneficiaries of more agile and cohesive dual-sector universities’ (Matthews and Murphy, 2010: 3). In turn, an increased focus on quality has become a central feature of the reform agenda recommended by the Bradley Review. The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) has the objective of enhancing the higher education and VET systems via accrediting providers, evaluating the performance of institutions and programs, encouraging best practice, simplifying current regulatory arrangements, and providing greater national consistency.

TEQSA will focus initially on regulation and quality assurance for higher education and from 2013 will expand to encompass vocational education and training organisations. This will help drive greater interconnection and partnership between VET and higher education sectors to give students the best opportunity to develop the skills required for the workforce of the future. The Government will allocate $57 million over four years to TEQSA (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009: 31).

The Commonwealth Government has also set a target to raise the proportion of people achieving Year 12 or equivalent qualification to 90 per cent by 2015 and to enrol and complete an additional 217,000 students at bachelor level or above by 2025, which equates to 40% of all 25 to 34 year olds. To achieve this, a less fragmented and easier tertiary framework is needed: ‘it should be straightforward for students to enter post-school education and move between vocational and higher education as appropriate to enhance their skills and qualifications’ (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009: 43). The government has set a direction wherein the tertiary education system in Australia is regarded as a continuum of delivery with better connections between sectors in both directions, while avoiding one sector subsuming the other.

One of the possible ramifications of such a direction is that diversity could be driven out of the system and replaced by bland homogenisation. The term ‘academic drift’ refers to the process whereby lower-status, non-university, institutions aspire to and work towards becoming more like universities (Pratt and Burgess, 1974). This can extend to mimetic insomorphism where organisations facing similar environmental challenges model themselves on others that they see as successful (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983).
Why, it might be asked, should duals be any different from their predecessors in drifting away from their original intentions to retain equal commitment to further as well as higher education? After all, education is a positional good, the possession of which confers status on individuals and affords them a place in the social hierarchy (Garrod and McFarlane, 2008: 9).

Garrod and McFarlane (2008) believe that dual-sector institutions must strive to achieve mission extension while avoiding mission drift. This will allow them to occupy a new type of space in tertiary education that is responsive to community needs in the era of universal higher education.

The critical factor here is not competition between sectors for student EFTSU, contact hours, resources, or course offerings: rather, it is responsiveness to student learning needs and cooperation for delivery of seamless learning (Shoemaker, Allison, Gum, Harmoni, Lindfield, Nolan, and Stedman, 2000: 79).

An interesting development in this evolving scenario is that the federal government has been eager to restrict the number of places universities are able to offer in non-degree courses, the objective being to safeguard enrolments at TAFE institutions and private colleges while the number of students a university can enrol in most bachelor-level or higher degree courses will be uncapped from 2012. Senator Chris Evans, the Tertiary Education Minister, is quoted as saying: ‘we want to see greater collaboration between universities and TAFEs rather than have universities expand their course offerings downwards in the demand-driven funding system to push TAFEs out of the market’ (Collins, 2011).

Wheelahan (2010) points out that the Bradley Review has significant implications for the VET system. Within the VET system a key distinction is drawn between higher-level qualifications and lower-level qualifications. TAFE Directors Australia/Universities Australia (2010) defines tertiary education qualifications as those at diploma level and above. Wheelahan (2010) states that at best this may also include certificate IV but nothing lower. Such qualifications embed pathways from the level below. To achieve educational equity in Australia strongly implies increasing access by disadvantaged students with lower-level VET qualifications to diploma-level qualifications because labour market outcomes are lower at the certificate level. These students would then be potential diploma candidates which is the key qualification used
by VET students to access HE: ‘the outcomes of lower-level VET qualifications are a key concern of tertiary education policy’ (Wheelahan, 2010: 8). Wheelahan (2010) opines that there is a need for more consistent arrangements between VET and HE via funding, governance, quality assurance, definitions, and policies if the Federal Government wishes to build a coherent tertiary education system, promote collaboration between institutions, and support student pathways.

**Forms of collaboration**

Different opinions about the future shape of post-secondary education lead to different views of collaboration and its forms and outcomes. For example, one view could see collaboration as a merger between institutions or as differentiated partners with complimentary strengths, but both could perceive benefit in collaboration because they are not naturally and predominantly in competition. Sommerlad, Duke, and McDonald (1998: xxiii) argue: ‘so long as differentiation and diversity within and between sectors remain unstable and under contest, forms of partnership and collaboration will also oscillate with changing understandings of this policy environment’.

At present, various institutional structures and arrangements have been established to facilitate collaboration between the TAFE and HE sectors. These range from:

- incorporating the sectors within one institution
- co-locating sectors on the same or adjacent sites
- arrangements made between institutions to facilitate articulation and credit transfer
- institutional policy made in isolation that provides students with a general outline of the access and credit they may expect for prior study at another institution (Wheelahan, 2000: 15).

Robinson and Misko (2003) state that whereas each of the sectors traditionally located their buildings and facilities on separate campuses, and managed operations along separate academic and administrative lines, there are now signs of increasing intersectoral co-operation among the sectors. This co-operation includes access to
courses, programs, and facilities and equipment for all clients whether they are students in schools, TAFE and universities, workers in industry, or community organisations, or individuals in the community:

Varying in forms and degrees of intensity, inter-sectoral co-operation may consist of institutions sharing the same piece of ground, to institutions sharing the same management and decision-making structures. In all cases, however, intersectoral co-operation must operate within the confines of government legislation and funding policies (Robinson and Misko, 2003: 10).

Sommerlad, Duke, and McDonald (1998) describe collaborations as amalgamations, partnerships, and associations. Dual-sector universities, institutions working together to attract clients and sharing specific programs, are examples of these collaborations. However, although these typologies are useful for looking at intersectoral co-operation they do not always define the complete interactions that take place within the sectors. This is due to local implementation of co-operation at the site or department level which may cut across these categories (Robinson and Misko, 2003).

There are four dual-sector universities in Victoria (Victoria University, Swinburne University of Technology, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, and University of Ballarat) as well as one in the Northern Territory (Charles Darwin University). Swinburne University of Technology and Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology are in the middle of the higher education status hierarchy while the remaining three are towards the lower end of the hierarchy. None can be defined as elite universities. (Wheelahan, 2008).

Figure 2.1 shows how a dual-sector university connects TAFE and HE in contrast to the connections offered by single-sector institutions.
Figure 2.1
Cross-institutional versus dual-sector collaboration

Source: Matthews and Murphy (2010: 4)

The current higher education system is an amalgam of an elite, mass, and universal system with different parts of the system functioning in different ways (Bathmaker and Thomas, 2007). MacLennan, Musselbrook, and Dundas (2000) make a distinction between ‘selecting’ universities, that are high demand elite universities, and lower demand ‘recruiting’ universities that have to actively compete with each other for students.

Recruiting universities have more flexible entry requirements, provide flexible study options, and more credit for prior studies (particularly for TAFE studies) and emphasize vocational relevance and outcomes for students. They are more likely than elite universities to admit students from low socioeconomic backgrounds and to admit students from TAFE (Wheelahan, 2008: 32).

Much of the above implies that there exists a comprehensive, consistent, and coherent framework underpinning tertiary education in Australia. However, the reality is that arrangements may not exist or may be sporadic as courses in either sector change or develop. There is therefore a requirement to continually maintain them. Much greater
levels of co-operation are required within these collaborative arrangements on an institutional and government level (Wheelahan, 2000).

The different areas of collaborative activity include such activities as teaching, research and development, professional development, consultancy, promotion and marketing, and shared infrastructure. Teaching is the main activity at present. This includes credit recognition and transfer, articulation, licensing and sub-contracting, and joint provision. Properly managed, these policies can result in efficient and effective practices in relation to quality, seamlessness, and winning market share. The focus has traditionally been on the progression from TAFE to university, even though more students move in the opposite direction from universities to TAFE (Sommerlad, Duke, and McDonald, 1998).

Wheelahan (2000) points out that pathways provide opportunities to develop coherent programs that cross sectors which result in less duplication and expenditure. The combination of vocational, general, skills-based, and theoretical components in a course of study lends itself to identifying areas of overlap in each sector and then developing appropriate arrangements to minimise expenditure and maximise potential for students to move through these pathways. This can give back resources and time for each sector to focus on those areas that are unique to that sector. This will involve crossing boundaries where potential benefits can be cutting-edge and where change, innovation, and discovery are more likely to be generated. The advantage of this process is that it helps to break down silos and moves traditional thinking out of its usual ruts. The disadvantage is that it can create culture or role conflict, leading to tension and confusion (Harris, 2008).

Koegleiter, Smith, and Torlina (2008) state that boundaries are multi-dimensional including social, information, communication, and structural. It is the structural category, the physical and geographic aspects, organisational design, and procedures that apply to learners studying in VET and HE organisations. Structural boundaries may lead to lack of information sharing, restrictive procedures, limited decision-making capacity, and lack of accessibility which can contribute to the negative aspects of organisational boundaries. However, the other boundaries may also be at play when considering staff interactions. Social boundaries are created by individuals or groups via
social identification. Social identification theory involves the process of categorisation (defining the in-group and out-group boundaries) and self-enhancement (where a group member assesses the members of the in-group with regard to attitudes and actions more favourably than other groups). In turn, re-categorisation can occur which involves including out-group members into an extended in-group where all members share an obvious similarity. However, de-categorisation can also occur, defined as dissolving the in-group and out-group boundaries through interaction on a personal rather than group level (Gefen and Ridings, 2003).

Information boundaries are influenced by organisational structures which, if highly hierarchical, can prevent information leaving different hierarchical levels and organisational functions.

Such programmed information structures reduce the number of interfaces to external entities to a minimum and make informational boundaries difficult to span. Such boundaries also reduce the opportunity for new organisational knowledge to be created (Koeglerreiter, Smith, and Torlina, 2008: 170).

In those scenarios where the presence of boundaries can act as a disincentive to communication, Carlie (2002) offers three potential communication approaches that can be employed – syntactic (building a common language), semantic (creating similar thought worlds), and pragmatic (offering a compromise). Additionally, Sommerlad, Duke, and McDonald (1998) argue that for the process of bringing partnerships into existence across extant boundaries to be successful it is necessary to offer some kind of incentive. The choice of partners often appears opportunistic or is historically driven. Conscious thought is seldom given to cultural compatibility which is a necessity for success. Trust and early tangible outcomes are important as are defining and managing boundaries preferably by a designated supported boundary spanner. Reflexivity and capacity for organisational learning are necessary for organisational learning as they move from simple to more complex mature forms.

Within the context of dual-sector institutions, some interviewees in a recent research project (Matthews and Murphy, 2010) suggested that organisational structure was a strong symbol of dual-sector intent, even if it did not always translate into immediate practical cooperation. However, integrated structures have not always assisted
collaboration, and reversions back to separated or mixed structures have often taken place. Figure 2.2 shows the organisational models for dual-sector universities that have traditionally been adopted in Australia.

**Figure 2.2**

Organisational models for a dual-sector university

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Organisational Structure</strong></th>
<th><strong>Positive Aspects</strong></th>
<th><strong>Negative Aspects</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Separated:** Completely separate sectors, each under its own management | • Strong sector identity  
• Each sector able to compete with their external rivals | • Silo structure, builds mistrust  
• May not realise full dual sector benefits  
• Potential for damaging competition |
| **Transitional:** Separately managed sectors but some dual-sector organisational units | • Acknowledge dual-sector units  
• Engage with both sectors of the university | • Confused reporting lines  
• Uncertain identity for the units  
• Additional administrative load |
| **Mixed:** Both sectors under one management. Individual organisational units may be single-sector or dual-sector. Possible multiple DVC/PVC at parallel levels, e.g., RMIT | • Able to maintain sector identity and mission  
• Leadership attend common management meetings  
• Can develop closer ties between department & faculty leadership, hence better able to realise some dual-sector benefits | • Mistrust that senior management is dominated by one sector (usually HE)  
• HE management often ignorant of TAFE  
• Industry wants to deal with unambiguous entities and management  
• TAFE tends to have subservient role at operational levels |
Figure 2.3 shows the different adoption of such models amongst the five dual-sector universities in Australia.

### Figure 2.3

**Evolution of organisational models within the dual-sector universities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNIVERSITY</th>
<th>MODEL ADOPTED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charles Darwin University</td>
<td>Established as a single-sector university in 1987 (University College of the Northern Territory), then merged with Darwin Institute of Technology in 1989 to become the dual-sector Northern University, as an integrated model. Merged with Centralian College in 2003 to become Charles Darwin University. From 2009, shifted to a mixed model with some departments remaining as dual-sector educational units.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Ballarat</td>
<td>Established as a single-sector university in 1994, merged with Wimmera TAFE and the School of Mines Ballarat to become a dual-sector university in 1999 as a separated model, moved to transitional model in 2001 and from 2010 shifted to a mixed model.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology</td>
<td>Established in 1992 as an integrated model. Since 2008, shifted to a mixed model, with some schools remaining as dual-sector educational units.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria University</td>
<td>Established in 1992 as a separated model and retains this structure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swinburne University of Technology</td>
<td>Established in 1992 as a separate model and retains this structure.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Matthews and Murphy (2010: 17)
Interestingly not one institution in this list is committed to the retention of an overall integrated structure. Matthews and Murphy (2010) found that their interviewees believed that the revision of integrated structures in dual-sector universities was due to the loss of identity of TAFE and the capacity, or lack of capacity, of individuals to work cooperatively.

Importantly many observed that it was the attitude of people within the structure, particularly those in leadership roles, rather than the structure itself which was most likely to lead to a cohesive approach (Matthews and Murphy, 2010: 15).

Coles and Oates (2005: 12-13) believe that ‘zones of mutual trust’ are needed between ‘individuals, enterprise and other organisations’ to recognize qualifications between institutions and sectors. They ‘exist through the behaviour of people who are participating in them, operating through, or anticipating, common values and concerns. Zones of mutual trust cannot be imposed. They are dependent on processes of consensus and voluntary participation’. In this regard, Woodley, Henderson, De Sensi, and Gabb (2005) state that some faculties in Australian dual-sector universities choose TAFE articulants from within the university only as a last resort while others are willing to take TAFE students usually as a consequence of established relationships and high levels of trust between the two sectors.

Matthews and Murphy (2010) argue that cohesion is far greater when all levels of management including council members demonstrate supportive attitudes for both sectors. Induction, forums, workshops, and short-term secondments are all methods that can be employed to build deeper understanding. An interesting observation is that all five dual-sector universities have now combined their higher education Academic Board and TAFE Board of Technical Studies into a single Board that is responsible for all internal program accreditation and quality control. However, this development has not necessarily brought in its wake equality in access to debate.

A common observation was that, despite equal representation, debate in the Board meetings was dominated by higher education issues and therefore by higher education staff. This was seen as a negative and counter-productive feature. Debate was seen as an essential part of academic life in a self-accrediting institution but not as prevalent within TAFE which operates in a more nationally regulated environment with much less scope for debate at the institution level (Matthews and Murphy, 2010: 18).
Shoemaker, Allison, Gum, Harmoni, Lindfield, Nolan, and Stedman (2000) state that even when operations are centralised within dual-sector institutions there is still a need to have an individual who has the role to ensure that cross-institutional matters are given due process. Goodwill is an essential ingredient to the partnership which can be fragile and is influenced by changes in leadership. Agreements must be strong enough to endure changes in management culture and continue to support the original intent but be flexible enough to adapt to such changes.

Those institutions that implement the function of a boundary spanner (Sommerlad, Duke, and McDonald, 1998) who is proactive and prevents the development of spot fires generally have better cross-sectoral communication and activity (Shoemaker, Allison, Gum, Harmoni, Lindfield, Nolan, and Stedman, 2000: 80).

Tensions around governance can be counterproductive to the implementation of joint initiatives. Shoemaker, Allison, Gum, Harmoni, Lindfield, Nolan, and Stedman (2000) conclude that if the university assumes the role of senior partner then a manager of TAFE can operate as a ‘bridge builder’. Boundary-spanning activities have the objective of facilitating communication and information flows and may occur formally involving individuals on higher hierarchical levels (Aldrich and Herker, 1977) or informal communication and social networking (Mandev and Stevenson, 2001; Tushman and Scanlan, 1981). Boundary-spanning roles involve the connection between the environment and the organisation which encompass gathering internal and external information. Tushman and Scanlan (1981) also call such people external gatekeepers.

**Benefits of collaboration**

The requirement for upgrading the education and training of the Australian workforce is linked with the need to make Australian industry and all other aspects of Australian society which underpin our export industries more internationally competitive (Finn, 1991; Carmichael, 1992). In advanced industrial societies like Australia the pyramid shape of the skills profile of the population has been replaced by a diamond shape, in which there is diminishing demand for people with low skill levels, and higher expectations of the skill levels of most of the workforce. These higher expectations include a capacity for initiative and adaptability based on increased understanding of complex processes – a scenario that during earlier periods was generally limited to a
smaller elite of people within the industrial society. Advanced industrial societies now require ‘flexible specialisation’ combining adaptable workers with flexible equipment, which requires higher levels of generally vocationally-specific education and training (Cesnich, 1992; Young, 1993; Ruby, 1994).

The notion that education and training early in one’s life would be sufficient for the remainder of one’s working life has now been replaced by recognition of the need for life-long learning for everyone who participates in the workforce. Finn (1991) argued that there is a trend to converge work and learning as well as general and vocational education. Lundberg (1995) argued that post-compulsory education and training will be provided in an increasingly competitive market scenario. The intention is that operating in a competitive market will make education and training more relevant. Setting goals to improve Australia’s systems in terms of improving past levels of performance is beneficial in terms of motivating improvements in Australia’s performance. This needs to be extended to include targets in relation to the continually improving economic and industrial performance of our competitors to ensure that the objective of improving Australia’s international competitiveness is more likely to be obtainable.

This focus on lifelong learning promoted by governments at home and abroad, is seen as the vehicle by which societies and individuals continuously maintain their economic competitiveness in rapidly changing and increasingly globalised economies (Robinson and Misko, 2003: 10).

Therefore, Lundberg (1995) believes a central issue is to continually ask what structural and networking arrangements in post-compulsory education and training will impose the least structural distortions upon individual choices of pathways within the entire system of intersectoral education. Networking, articulation, and credit transfers should permit flexible use by individuals of the services available. Networking is an effective method of providing a range of innovative programs by economical use of local resources and expanding the range of provisions accessible in participating institutions.

Robinson and Misko (2003) state that one of the major purposes for intersectoral collaboration between educational institutions is the maximisation of opportunities for credit transfer and articulation. The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) created a national system of qualifications to support the diverse needs of the workforce and
students. It was introduced in 1995 with full implementation taking place in 2000. This included guidelines for each qualification. National guidelines for cross-sectoral linkages were developed jointly by the Australian Vice Chancellors’ Committee and the Australian National Training Authority in 2002. National principles and guidelines for recognition of prior learning were added in 2002-2003. Four editions of the AQF Implementation Handbook were published between 1995 and 2007. In 2011, the AQF was revised with the objectives that qualification outcomes remain relevant and nationally consistent, continue to support qualifications pathways, and enable national and international portability and comparability of qualifications (AQF, 2011).

The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) is a nationally consistent framework that allows for credit transfer and articulation between qualifications. The comprehensive framework spans all education sectors – schools, VET, and higher education. It covers all qualifications recognised in post-compulsory education, and consists of guidelines that define each qualification along with principles and protocols covering articulation, issuing of qualifications, and transition arrangements (ANTA, 1999: 4).

Table 2.1 shows the progression of qualifications as outlined in the Australian Qualifications Framework, with particular relevance to dual-sector institutions.
Table 2.1
An educational model relevant to dual-sector universities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Category</th>
<th>Formal Qualifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>1. Senior Secondary Certificate of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Certificates 1 to 111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Apprenticeships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Traineeships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Certificate IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further</td>
<td>6. Diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Advanced Diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8. Associate Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. Bachelor degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10. Vocational Graduate Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11. Vocational Graduate Diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12. Graduate Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13. Graduate Diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14. Honours Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>15. Master degree by coursework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16. Master degree by research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17. PhD and Professional Doctorates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Matthews and Murphy (2010: 5)

Table 2.1 reveals the extent of the overlap between different offerings at both TAFE and higher education levels. For instance, levels 1-13 are covered by TAFE whilst levels 6-17 are covered by higher education. The zone of overlap encompasses levels 6-13 (diploma, advanced diploma, associate degree, bachelor degree, vocational graduate certificate, vocational graduate diploma, graduate certificate, and graduate diploma). Depending on the saliency of a range of factors, this overlap has the potential to produce either considerable synergy or considerable conflict. These factors are explored in more depth later in this thesis.

With reference to one of the dual-sector universities – Swinburne University of Technology – Wheelahan (2008) states that this institution benefited by increasing its TAFE intake to the higher education division from 13 percent to 25 percent from 2000 to 2005. The outcome of this strategy was to increase its TAFE intake and decrease its school leaver intake which in turn increased the tertiary entrance rank (TER) school students needed to undertake its degrees. The Vice Chancellor (VC) of Swinburne at the time, Professor Ian Young, stated that Swinburne’s strategy had the effect of increasing the status of its degrees because it only admitted school leavers with a TER that placed
them in the top twenty per cent in that State (Young, 2005). Swinburne also put in place transition strategies to support students moving from a TAFE institution to a higher education learning environment which took into account the problems of aligning the competency-based curriculum. This emphasized the social justice aspect of pathway arrangements. An interesting observation was that the academic progress and retention rates of TAFE students were similar to that of school leavers studying Swinburne degrees (Wheelahan, 2008).

The Swinburne experience shows that a focus on boundaries and the development of mechanisms to support transition across the boundaries facilitates such transition and that institutional policies matter a great deal (Wheelahan, 2008: 40).

An additional benefit of intersectoral collaboration is that substantial economies of scale and efficient use of resources can be achieved by locating institutions on the same site. For example, the Blacktown campus of the University of Western Sydney occupies a shared site with TAFE, Wyndham College, and Terra Sancta High School, and comprises what is known as the Nirimba Education Precinct.

Students attending the Nirimba Precinct have access to swimming pools, tennis courts, gymnasium, computers, and libraries. The availability of TAFE and university courses means that students have an expanded set of HSC (Higher School Certificate) choices. Credit transfer arrangements between institutions and programs means that students can accelerate the completion of their qualifications (Robinson and Misko, 2003: 15).

Finally, other benefits can also flow to staff and to the community as a result of intersectoral collaboration. Staff benefits include development opportunities via interacting with academics and teachers from other sectors and from being involved in joint decision making (Robinson and Misko, 2003). Local communities and industry can enjoy social, educational, and economic benefits through providing citizens, community service organisations, and businesses with access to library, recreation, and consultancy services. With regard to consulting, dual-sector institutions have the opportunity of responding to market needs in para-professional or professional areas. Pathways with multiple exit and entry points can provide access to life-long learning (Chapman, Doughney, and Watson, 2000a).
Blockages to collaboration

Lundberg (1995) argues that severe blockages to cross-sectoral collaboration are rooted in the basic nature of the political process. Australia’s system of government gives the various States the responsibility for funding vocational education and training whilst the Commonwealth has the responsibility for funding higher education. This means that cross-sectoral collaboration is an inter-governmental issue as well as being overlaid by conceptual differences about the nature of cross-sectoral collaboration. Thus, for example, it can be expected that the States would not favour sharing TAFE resources with universities, such as allowing TAFE classrooms to be used for delivering lectures to university students. In a situation where the various States are always engaging in high-level disputes with the Commonwealth about the equitable distribution of funding, it can be expected that they do not relish handing over resources that will be seen to benefit the Commonwealth.

Doughney, Carter, and Butterworth (1999) also argue that the pursuit of seamlessness within and between institutions is beset with problems. The problems of differing reporting, accountability, and funding arrangements relate to dual-sector institutions as well as to those institutions wishing to develop joint courses and awards, or joint facilities and resources. These difficulties present a substantial barrier to full policy development promoting seamlessness. If integration does take place complex arrangements and administrative processes need to be implemented to facilitate seamlessness. Disaggregation is then needed for reporting purposes.

The anomalies arising from sector-based funding create operational difficulties for institutions, provide conflicting messages to students, and are a major disincentive to staff interested in providing cross-sectoral courses (Chapman, Doughney, and Watson, 2000b: 22).

Watson, Wheelahan, and Chapman (2002) go some way to suggesting a solution to this problem. They firstly define cross-sectoral funding as:

A system of distributing public funding for post-compulsory education and training based on principles that are consistently applied, regardless of the sector in which studies are undertaken (Watson, Wheelahan, and Chapman, 2002: 36).
They suggest that an incremental approach be taken to developing a cross-sectoral funding model where there would be an objective of increasing the degree of consistency between the funding systems of each sector. Six areas were identified as the different aspects that needed consideration:

- Funding levels per student
- Accreditation frameworks
- Processes for determining funding priorities
- Mechanisms for allocating resources to institutions
- Student contributions
- Equity strategies (Watson, Wheelahan, and Chapman, 2002: 37)

The Bradley Review argues: ‘what is needed is a continuum of tertiary skills provision primarily funded by a single level of government (Bradley, 2008: xvi). Additionally, Moodie (2011: 24) points out that:

Skills Australia recommends that student entitlements up to certificate III or apprenticeship level be subsidized fully by government and that entitlements for certificate IV and above be partly subsidized by government and the entitlements for income contingent loans (to students). This would make vocational education more similar to higher education and would establish a seamless student entitlement system from foundation programs up eight qualifications levels to bachelor honours...It would support the vertical integration of tertiary education that has developed apace during the past five years.

Wheelahan (2000) argues that administrative impediments place teaching staff in a difficult position in dual-sector universities. As a result, staff find it difficult to construct effective learning experiences for students:

The administrative obstacles are a serious impediment to developing educational programs that are innovative, drawn from both sectors, and tailored to meet student needs (Wheelahan 2000: 41).

A specific example involving most institutions providing vocational courses in Australia is that they are funded only for competencies they deliver under training packages which does not allow flexibility for vocational providers to change their curriculum to facilitate a student’s transition to higher education (Wheelahan, 2000). Shoemaker, Allison, Gum, Hamroni, Lindfield, Nolan, and Stedman (2000) argue that
there is a lack of joint performance measures between TAFE and HE. Outcome measures currently being used are either non-complimentary, incompatible, or contradictory.

For example, TAFE would consider gain of employment by a student, mid-course, as a measure of success while the higher education sector would see this as relating to attrition. Similarly, some higher education institutions would view movement from university to TAFE a failure whereas the VET sector would view this as uptake of skills development and a successful outcome (Shoemaker, Allison, Gum, Harmoni, Lindfield, Nolan, and Stedman, 2000: 98).

Speaking generally, different student management information systems, timetabling, quality assurance and course review cycles, staff industrial awards, funding rates, and answering to different regulatory bodies and governments, all combine to make integration difficult (Wheelahan, 2008). Matthews and Murphy (2012) offer a number of ideas and suggestions with regard to these issues. Of the five dual-sector universities, two, RMIT and Swinburne, operate a single Student Management System over both sectors. This could be assisted by both sectors taking on a common metric for student load which would in turn simplify administering programs across the sectors. A single student identifier would also assist in identifying student entitlement. In regard to timetabling:

The overlap of VET and higher education in AQF levels 5 to 8 programs suggests that teaching calendars should converge. There may be justification in maintaining a separate four term calendar for AQF levels 1 to 4 to ensure greater coordination with the secondary sector to suit industry needs (Matthews and Murphy, 2012: 25).

Matthews and Murphy (2012) state that TEQSA and Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) have established a joint working group to review the place of dual-sector universities in this new regulatory environment however have not as yet created processes in regard to regulation processes. The authors also extol the advantage of an initiative pioneered at Charles Darwin University in August 2011 which entered into an industrial agreement that integrates all academics and TAFE lecturers into a single classification entitled ‘academics’. This agreement includes teaching-focused and research-active classifications.
A difficult blockage to collaboration relates to attitudinal problems held by staff in both sectors: ‘staff in both will have to confront long-held prejudices if full collaboration is to occur’ (Doughney, Carter, and Butterworth 1999: 10). Some participants see collaboration as a threat to the integrity of the current higher education and training sectors which can hinder their ability to respond to emerging social and economic needs (Kirby, 1994). This difference in attitudes is particularly pronounced between those who argue for and against the existence of the binary system in tertiary education.

It has already been shown that at the same time as Australia ‘finalised its closure of the binary system of higher education’ it simultaneously opened the door to a new binary system in tertiary education (Mahoney, 1993: 12). One of the drawbacks of the creation of this new binary system for some commentators was that it generated a discourse whose aim was the ultimate destruction of this new binary system. For example, Ruby (1994) argued for the establishment of a broad inclusive and holistic approach to education and training where the convergence of general and vocational education is seen as a positive opportunity to extend liberal education to people who have in the past been channelled into narrow vocational training. Lundberg (1995) adopted a similar position, arguing that there should be more respect for practical skills in academic courses and there should be more opportunity for broader educational experiences for those taking vocational courses. Mahoney (1993) advanced the argument that research, scholarship, and theory will need to influence teaching practice in TAFE, as it does in other areas of education, while practical application will have great importance in the professional preparation programs of universities. Ramsey (1991) has argued the case for an integrated national tertiary or higher education system, consisting of universities and TAFE. Within this integrated system there would occur continuous two-way movements involving, for example, university graduates undertaking more specific vocational competency programmes in TAFE. Such cross-contagion, it is suggested, is necessary to cope with the continually evolving and highly pluralist demands of modern societies for tertiary education.

However, NBEET (1995) has adopted a somewhat cautious approach to the magnitude of such cross-fertilisation, drawing the line at processes which threaten the missions or boundaries of each sector. The Board has argued that cross-sectoral collaboration is a valuable component of the total education and training system and it is one that should
be encouraged to assist the ability of the education and training sectors to meet the needs of their end users. These needs cannot be addressed by one sector in isolation and so the scope of collaboration between the sectors will increase, and the make-up of the post-secondary education and training system may need to change, although the dimensions of this are not known. However, the Board did not want to see cross-sectoral collaboration taken to a level where it alters the missions of the HE or VET sectors, or ‘to the extent that the boundaries between them dissolve’ (NBEET, 1995: 2). In consequence, funding agencies were likely to act to keep them within the current divides of the sectors.

During their research, Matthews and Murphy (2010) found that that there was a difference in language and terminology used by TAFE and HE personnel to describe themselves and their programs. This was seen as a major barrier to creating a cohesive dual-sector university and a source of misunderstanding and mistrust between the two sectors. Bradley (2008) argues that there is a need for common terminology and common graded assessment across the two sectors, with strong pathways in both directions. It must not be presumed that articulation and the acquisition of skills and knowledge occurs in a linear manner, as industry and individual needs change, and the movement between VET and HE can operate in the reverse. The stereotype of the higher education academic is that he or she is anchored in abstract analysis rather than real-world issues, while the stereotype of the TAFE teacher is one who trains students with little concern for critical thinking. Matthews and Murphy (2010) believe that a cohesive dual-sector university should be characterised by good intersectoral relationships between teachers and academics. However, such attitudes are only held by a minority, in most cases by those who regularly engage through a day-to-day working relationship between the sectors. Another minority of staff hold negative attitudes, while the majority hold neutral attitudes mainly those that are focused on their own work and do not engage in intersectoral interactions. The difference in attitudes for general staff across the sectors is far less severe than those between the academic and teaching staff.

It is up to institutions themselves to develop strategies to overcome these prejudices, and to allow staff to more fully understand the other sector. However, this task is made more difficult by the government derived reporting and accountability requirements which make collaboration much more difficult to implement (Doughney, Carter, and Butterworth, 1999: 10)
Wheelahan (2008) argues that epistemological differences are promoted by sectoral separatists who believe that separate missions of the sectors define their separate purposes, and as such provide a strong argument for separateness. Wheelahan (2008) is more comfortable with an approach that sees both sectors seeking to develop broadly-educated graduates for the changing society and workforce. But, of similar concern is the denial of epistemological differences by dual sector champions as this retains the status quo rather than creating a coherent curriculum across the sectors. Wheelahan (2008) continues by stating that there are concerns that TAFE students do not have enough exposure to the disciplinary knowledge related to vocational practice thus creating transition problems. In contrast, HE qualifications are created via syllabus, processes of learning and assessment, and outcomes... ‘epistemological boundaries must be explicitly navigated rather than ignored, if students are to be supported in crossing them’ (2008: 36). Epistemological issues also arise in the difference between dual-sector universities on the one hand, and TAFE institutions that are building their own higher education courses on the other. The former ‘seek to transcend sectoral boundaries’ whereas the latter seek to establish sectoral boundaries ‘by emphasising the distinctiveness of their higher education provision in contrast to their VET provision’ (Wheelahan, 2008: 37).

**Summary**

This chapter has examined the topic of intersectoral education and collaboration paying attention to the various forms of collaboration practiced, together with the benefits of, and blockages to, effective collaboration. In particular, the analysis has emphasised the role played by dual-sector institutions. Such institutions face a potentially problematic juggling act in trying to balance the considerable overlap between TAFE and HE responsibilities that exist within their remit. It has been noted that, depending on the circumstances, such institutions may be able to enjoy the benefits of considerable synergy, or, at the other extreme, may experience tension and conflict between the two distinct sectors. It has been observed that attitudinal differences can exist between staff in the different sectors giving rise to endemic and long-held prejudices (Doughney, Carter, and Butterworth, 1999). In addition, Matthews and Murphy (2010) have reported how staff in the different sectors use competing discourses to describe
themselves and their programs. Unless properly managed, these differences can be a source of misunderstanding and mistrust, creating barriers to effective collaboration.

These issues are further examined in the subsequent chapters of this thesis through the vehicle of a case study analysis of one particular dual-sector institution in the State of Victoria in Australia. The next chapter presents the methodology adopted in this thesis, together with a detailed analysis of the way in which the data was collected and analysed.
Chapter 3

Methodology, data collection and analysis

This chapter presents the methodology employed in the thesis together with an exposition of the data collection, coding, and analysis. A detailed audit trail of the data is presented to show how thematic categories and properties emerged from the data.

I was 47 years old when I commenced my PhD. By this stage my working career had been roughly spread over three distinct employment areas: a human resources officer in industry; a TAFE lecturer in human resource management; and currently a university academic in HE (higher education division). Working across these distinct sectors I have experienced severe cultural barriers between all three. In particular, my move from TAFE to HE made me aware of the distinct worlds in which TAFE teachers and HE academics reside. Since I was employed at a dual-sector institution I became absorbed in the conundrum of how the institution could better manage its intersectoral development. I considered myself to be at an advantage because I felt myself able to analyse the situation through a joint lens. I was able to understand both worlds. But at the same time I was keenly aware that many other staff seemed able to look at the world only through the narrow lens of their own dominant logic. Organisational myopia was a problem in my opinion.

Therefore, the topic area for my PhD originated from a topic of professional interest and importance to me. My initial research question was quite simple: ‘what are the main issues in making intersectoral education effective?’ Since I was already employed at a dual-sector institution this provided a convenient and relevant case study for my analysis of this research question. In view of issues relating to confidentiality and anonymity the name of this institution is not revealed in this thesis, and I have also been careful not to indulge in any descriptions which could possibly lead to an identification of the institution. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the nature of the research undertaken falls under the heading of ‘insider research’ in the sense that it refers to a study of one’s own people (Hayano, 1979), whereby the researcher possesses permanent identification and full internal membership. This role is also referred to as ‘complete member research’ whereby the researchers are already fully immersed in the culture that they study (Adler and Adler, 1987). Such research confers on the investigator the unique advantage of ‘being there’, possessing an intimate understanding and feeling for
the various issues at play. Denzin (1989: 27) has argued that the concept of the ‘objective outsider’ should be abandoned on the grounds that data can never be separated from the meaning placed on it by individual perception.

**Methodology: Straussian grounded theory**

The essential nature of the research question lends itself more readily to a qualitative research methodology. The main issues in making intersectoral education effective were not known and hence would have to be emerged from the available data in an inductive manner. Denzin and Lincoln (2000: 3) state that qualitative research ‘makes the world visible’ and is essentially interpretive in nature. It ‘focuses on naturally occurring, ordinary events in natural settings, so we have a strong handle on what real life is like’ (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 10).

A popular methodology in qualitative research is grounded theory. The approach was introduced into the literature by Glaser and Strauss (1967) based upon the principle of discovering theory from data. It has proved popular in management research for three reasons: it is useful for developing new theory or fresh insights into old theory; it generates theory of direct interest and relevance for practitioners; and it can uncover micro-management processes in complex and unfolding scenarios (Locke, 2001). According to Jones and Noble (2007: 84) grounded theory was promulgated in the objectivist tradition based upon the ‘assumption that there exists a mind-independent reality that researchers can discover and record’. After 1967 the original partnership of Glaser and Strauss went their separate ways in further developing the mechanics of grounded theory, resulting in the establishment of two separate schools – Glaserian and Straussian. According to Charmaz (2000: 513) both schools continued to endorse a realist ontology, in that ‘both assume an external reality that researchers can discover and record, Glaser through discovering data, coding it, and using comparative methods step by step; Strauss [and Corbin] through their analytic questions, hypotheses, and methodological applications’. Jones and Noble (2007: 86) point to a further distinction between the two schools in the sense that:

In contrast to the Glaserian notion of the non-knowing researcher who allows only the emergent data to shape theorising, Strauss allows a much more provocative, interventionist, and interrogationist researcher influence over the data.
A final crucial distinction between the two schools also lies in their respective stance towards the development of theory. The Glaserian approach always leads to the discovery and enunciation of a theory. However, the Straussian approach permits the construction of both theory and non-theory depending upon the circumstances of an individual research study. Because the research question in this thesis is not necessarily aimed at the generation of a theory I decided to adopt the Straussian approach to grounded theory as the methodology for this thesis.

The following sections are devoted to an exposition of the relevant aspects of Straussian grounded theory using the headings: open coding, axial coding and the paradigm, selective coding, core category, theoretical sampling and theory development.

### Open coding

In his first book Strauss (1987: 28) defines open coding as the initial coding done during a research project. This type of coding is ‘unrestricted’ and ‘the aim is to produce concepts that seem to fit the data’. Further articulation of how to go about open coding is provided in Strauss’ next two books co-authored by Juliet Corbin (1990, 1998). Open coding is defined as ‘the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualising, and categorizing data’ (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 61) and ‘the analytic process through which concepts are identified and their properties and dimensions are discovered in data’ (Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 101). Open coding is performed through three distinct steps: (i) moving from raw data to concepts, (ii) moving from concepts to categories, and (iii) developing categories in terms of their properties and dimensions.

Step (i) is concerned with the process of conceptualisation. A concept is defined as ‘a label placed on discrete happenings, events, or other instances of phenomena’ (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 61) and ‘labelled phenomena: an abstract representation of an event, object, or action/interaction in the data’ (Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 103). Concepts allow the researcher to label many different happenings or events under the same name. Conceptualisation is performed through two processes, first, ‘asking questions’ (What is this? What does it represent?), and second, ‘making comparisons’ (comparing incident with incident to give the same name to similar phenomena). Strauss and Corbin (1990) give examples of this process, as shown in table 3.1, in relation to a set of field notes derived from observation of the actions performed by a ‘lady in red’ in a busy restaurant.
Table 3.1
‘The lady in red’ in a restaurant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raw data</th>
<th>Concept</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focusing on everything and taking mental notes</td>
<td>Watching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone asks her a question and she answers</td>
<td>Information passing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She notices everything</td>
<td>Attentiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walks up to a waiter and tells him something</td>
<td>Information passing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She does not disrupt events</td>
<td>Unintrusiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She turns and walks quickly and quietly</td>
<td>Efficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She keeps track of everyone and everything</td>
<td>Monitoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She moves in to help a waiter</td>
<td>Provide assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She looks at a schedule</td>
<td>Information gathering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talks with the maitre d’</td>
<td>Conferring</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source, derived from Strauss and Corbin (1990: 64-65)

Step (ii) is concerned with the process of categorisation. Strauss and Corbin (1990: 61) define a category as a ‘classification of concepts. This classification is discovered when concepts are compared one against another and appear to pertain to a similar phenomenon. Thus the concepts are grouped together under a higher order, more abstract concept called a category’. Categories are important not only because they group concepts together and hence make them more manageable, but also because of their analytic ability to explain and predict what is going on. When researchers give a name to a category it should possess three distinct attributes: more abstract, of a higher order than the concepts it represents; logically related to the data it represents; and graphic enough to remind the researcher of its referent. Strauss and Corbin (1990: 67-68) suggest two methods by which categorisation can be performed. Either, take each concept and ask – to which class of phenomena does it seem to pertain, and is it similar or different from the one before or after? Or, step back and look at the entire observation with many concepts in mind and ask, what does this seem to be about? Either method reaches the same conclusion. Thus, in relation to the three concepts of monitoring, conferring, and watching in table 3.1, the researcher is able to group these into a higher order category called ‘types of work for assessing and monitoring work flow’ as shown in table 3.2.
Table 3.2

Moving from concepts to category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concepts</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring</td>
<td>Types of work for assessing and monitoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conferring</td>
<td>work flow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: derived from Strauss and Corbin (1990: 66)

Step (iii) is concerned with the process of developing categories in terms of their properties and dimensions. A property is defined as ‘an attribute or characteristic pertaining to a category’ and a dimension is defined as ‘the location of a property along a continuum’ (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 61). Each category has several general properties (and sub-properties) and each property varies over a dimensional continuum. For example, our data may reveal that a certain category is composed on four properties – frequency, extent, intensity, and duration. Each of these properties also has a dimensional range. For instance, ‘frequency’ can vary from often to never. ‘Extent’ can vary from more to less. ‘Intensity’ can vary from high to low. ‘Duration’ can vary from long to short. This process of dimensional profiling is the gateway to theorising in grounded theory. For example, we could pose the question ‘under what conditions is the frequency of this category often observed as opposed to never being observed?’

Axial coding and the paradigm

In his first book Strauss (1987: 32) defines axial coding as ‘intense analysis done around one category at a time in terms of the paradigm items (conditions, interactions, strategies, and consequences). However, in his second book co-authored with Corbin (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 96) axial coding is defined as ‘a set of procedures whereby data are put back together in new ways after open coding by making connections between categories. This is done by utilising a coding paradigm involving: conditions, context, strategies, and consequences’. However, the actual label placed on a category does not necessarily denote whether that category is a condition, a context, a strategy, or a consequence. This has to be decided by the researcher who personally identifies each category under these distinct terms. Within this scenario, Strauss and Corbin (1990) also introduce the notion of a ‘phenomenon’ which is defined as ‘the central idea, event, happening, incident about which a set of actions or interactions are directed at managing, handling, or to which the set of actions is related’ (1990: 96). The
phenomenon is identified by asking questions such as: ‘what is the data referring to’, and ‘what is the action/interaction all about?’ Strauss and Corbin (1990) link these separate notions in the following sequence, as shown in figure 3.1.

**Figure 3.1**

**The paradigm model**

![Diagram of the paradigm model](source: derived from Strauss and Corbin (1990: 99))

Each aspect of the paradigm model is defined as shown in table 3.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conditions</td>
<td>Events, incidents, happenings that lead to the occurrence or development of a phenomenon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phenomenon</td>
<td>The central idea, event, happening, incident about which a set of strategies is directed at managing or handling, or to which the set is related</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context</td>
<td>The specific set of properties that pertain to a phenomenon along a dimensional range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies</td>
<td>Actions devised to manage, handle, carry out, or respond to a phenomenon under a specific set of perceived conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervening conditions</td>
<td>The structural conditions bearing on strategies that pertain to a phenomenon and which facilitate or constrain the strategies taken within a specific context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consequences</td>
<td>Outcomes or results of action strategies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: derived from Strauss and Corbin (1990: 96)

In order to illustrate the linkages involved in the paradigm model Strauss and Corbin give the following example: ‘when I have (condition) arthritic pain (phenomenon) I take aspirin (strategy): after a while I feel better (consequence)’ (1990: 98). However, to better illustrate the paradigm model, the authors give a far more elaborate example of a person who suffers a broken leg whilst hiking through the woods, as shown in figure 3.2
Figure 3.2
Illustration of the paradigm model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Phenomenon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broken leg</td>
<td>Pain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Properties of broken leg</td>
<td>Specific dimensions of pain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple fractures, compound break, sensation present, broken two hours ago, fall in the woods</td>
<td>Intensity: High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Duration: Continuous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Location: Lower leg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trajectory: Early</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Obtained help: Long wait</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pain management context

Under conditions where pain is intense, continuous, located in the lower leg, early in the trajectory, and there is a long wait for help, then:

**Strategies**

Splint the leg, go for emergency help, and keep the person warm

**Intervening conditions**

Lack of training in first aid; long way to go for help; and no blanket available

Source; derived from Strauss and Corbin (1990: 100-102)

Strauss, in his second co-authored book with Corbin (Strauss and Corbin, 1998), took a modified approach to axial coding and the role of the paradigm model. Previously, the use of the paradigm model had been postulated as mandatory: ‘in axial coding subcategories are related to their categories through what we call the paradigm model...unless you make use of this model your grounded theory analyses will lack density and precision’ (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 99). However, in their 1998 book Strauss and Corbin soften this prescription:

When working with actual data, the relationships between events and happenings are not always so evident. Because linkages between categories can be very subtle and implicit, it helps to have a scheme that can be used to sort out and organise the emerging connections. One such organizational scheme is what we call the paradigm. In actuality, the paradigm is nothing more than a perspective taken towards data,
another analytic stance that helps to systematically gather and order data… (Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 128, italics added)

In other words, the paradigm model is now seen not as the only linkage model that can be used to order data but as one of many that could possibly be employed. One could speculate why this change of emphasis occurred between the two editions of the book, but one possible explanation could be as a reaction to the criticism of Barney Glaser (Strauss’ original partner in the development of grounded theory). In *Emergence versus Forcing* (Glaser, 1992) severe criticism is reserved for Strauss’ new approach to grounded theory which Glaser regards as too prescriptive and equivalent to forcing the data into pre-ordained categories rather than letting the categories emerge from the data. Glaser (1992: 44) refers to Strauss’ new approach as ‘full conceptual description’. Strauss and Corbin’s (1998) concession to less prescription and more emphasis on emergence is also evident in their caution to beginning researchers as below.

Beginning analysts tend to be very dogmatic about their approach to analysis. They rigidly code for the paradigm components without having an understanding of the nature and types of relationships these denote…we realise that beginners need structure and that placing data into discrete boxes makes them feel more in control of their analyses. However, we want them to realise that such practices tend to prevent them from capturing the dynamic flow of events and the complex nature of relationships that, in the end, make explanations of phenomena interesting, plausible, and complex. Analysts who rigidify the analytic process…fail to capture the essence of the objects represented. Our advice is to let it happen (Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 129)

Strauss and Corbin (1998) also change the definition of the paradigm model as well as the components of the model. The paradigm is now defined as ‘an analytic tool that helps to gather and order data in such a way that structure and process are integrated’ (1998: 127). This new emphasis on structure and process helps to identify the important role of dynamic flow in the analysis. Structure and process are linked in the sense that together they capture the dynamic and evolving nature of events. Structure, by itself, explains why but not how certain events occur. Process, by itself, explains how persons act and interact but not why. Structure sets the stage for analysis in that it represents the conditional context in which a category (phenomenon) is situated. It creates the circumstances in which problems, issues, happenings, or events pertaining to a phenomenon are situated or arise. However, process denotes the sequences of actions and interactions over time of persons, organisations, and communities in response to certain problems and issues pertaining to a phenomenon. To accommodate this change Strauss and Corbin (1998) also make a significant change to the definition of a
phenomenon which they now define as ‘a problem, issue, event, or happening that is significant to respondents’ (1998: 124, italics added). This wording is now very close to that of Glaser’s (1978) namely ‘the main concern of the participants’.

Finally, Strauss and Corbin (1998) make a change to the components which comprise the paradigm model. The basic components of the paradigm are now amended to conditions (causal, intervening, and contextual), actions/interactions, and consequences. However, in line with their new approach, they advance the warning: ‘the important issue is not so much one of identifying and listing which conditions are causal, intervening, or contextual. Rather, what the analyst should focus on is the complex interweaving of events (conditions) leading up to a problem, an issue, or a happening to which persons are responding through some form of action/interaction, with some sort of consequences’ (Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 132).

Selective coding

Selective coding is defined by Strauss and Corbin (1990: 116) as ‘the process of selecting the core category, systematically relating it to the other categories, validating those relationships and filling in categories that need further refinement and development’. The core category is defined as ‘the central phenomenon around which all the other categories are integrated’ (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 116). This means that the researcher delimits coding only to those categories that relate to the core category. Because of their pre-occupation with the paradigm model at this time this meant that the integration mechanism was extremely simple, namely the linkages provided by the preconceived elements of the paradigm: ‘the relating of categories to the core category is done by means of the paradigm – conditions, context, strategies, and consequences…this identification essentially orders them into subcategories in paradigmatic relationship. Simplified, the analytic ordering looks something like this: A (conditions) leads to B (phenomenon), which leads to C (context), which leads to D (action/interaction, including strategies), which then leads to E (consequences)’ (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 124).

However, this approach undergoes a dramatic change in Strauss and Corbin’s second co-authored book (1998). Selective coding is now defined as ‘the process of integrating and refining the theory’ (1998: 143). Of major significance in this rendition is that the authors now drop the use of the paradigm model as the integrating mechanism. In its
place, the authors suggest several techniques, most notably the use of diagrams and writing and sorting memos. This latter technique is identical to Glaser’s approach of ‘sorting’ and represents a further nod in the direction of an emergent approach. In order to refine the emerging theory the authors also lay emphasis on such approaches as densification, property development, and theoretical saturation, all of them representing concessions to Glaserian terminology.

Core category

The notion of a core category has already been referred to in the discussion above but requires far more elaboration. The development of a core category is a central process in grounded theory analysis. For Glaser (1978) the core category represents the method by means of which the main concern of the participants is resolved. However, in Straussian terminology the notion of a core category follows a much more tortuous journey. Jones and Noble (2007) have analysed how the terminology shifts between the three books published in 1987, 1990, and 1998, as shown in Box 3.1.
Box 3.1

Shifting terminology in Strauss’ notion of a core category

In agreement with Glaser, in his first book in 1987 Strauss concurs that a grounded theory revolved around a core category. However, Strauss appears to stray away from Glaser’s notion of a core category that continually resolves the main concern of the participants. Rather, a core category is depicted as ‘central to the integration of the theory’ (1987: 21), which ‘best holds together (links up with) all the other categories (1987: 18). For example, in analysing the phenomenon of ‘pain management’ (1987: 41) Strauss (1987: 14) settles on the a priori study topic of ‘whether and how the use of machines in hospital affects the interaction between staff and patients’. Instead of employing the Glaserian approach of searching for the participants’ main concern and how they resolve that concern, Strauss (1987: 31) directs researchers to search for the discovery of ‘what’s the main story here, and why?’ This is aimed at uncovering the ‘story line’ (1987: 180) and the ‘main theme’ (1987: 35). In consequence, the core category is described as trajectory (1987: 189) defined as ‘the physiologic course of a patient’s disease and the total organization of work to be done over that course’ (1987: 224). This is a far broader concept than the Glaserian notion of the resolution of the participants’ main concern.

In Strauss’ later two books with co-author Corbin, he continues the procedure of ‘explicating the story line’ (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 119) and the core category is similarly defined as ‘the central phenomenon around which all the other categories are integrated’ (1990: 116). To derive the core category the researcher must search for the ‘main idea’ (1990: 121), or the ‘main problem’ (1990: 119), or the ‘primary issue’ (1990: 120), or ‘what seems most striking’ (1990: 119). However, in their 1998 book the terminology is changed to the ‘central category’ referred to by the authors as representing ‘an abstract rendition of the raw data’ (1998: 159), and variously defined as ‘the central integrative concept’ (1998: 156), ‘central explanatory concept’ (1998: 161), and ‘a central idea under which all the other categories can be subsumed’ (1998: 146). This time the researcher is urged to search for ‘what this research is all about’ (1998: 146) and ‘the main issue or problem with which these people seem to be grappling’ (1998: 148). This latter phrase comes extremely close to the Glaserian notion of ‘the main concern of the participants’.

Source: Jones and Noble (2007: 89-90)

Six criteria for choosing a core (or central category) were first elaborated in Strauss (1987: 36) and more clearly codified in Strauss and Corbin (1998: 147), as below:

1. It must be central, that is, all the other major categories can be related to it
2. It must appear frequently in the data. This means that within all or almost all cases, there are indicators pointing to that concept
3. The explanation that evolves by relating the categories is logical and consistent.
   There is no forcing of the data
4. The name of the category should be sufficiently abstract that it can be used to do research in other substantive areas, leading to the development of a more general theory
5. As the concept is defined analytically through integration with other concepts, the theory grows in depth and explanatory power.

6. The concept is able to explain variation as well as the main point made by the data. That is, one should be able to explain contradictory or alternative cases in terms of the central idea.

**Theoretical sampling and theory development**

In their first co-authored book Strauss and Corbin (1990) defined theoretical sampling as 'sampling on the basis of concepts that have proven theoretical relevance to the evolving theory' (1990: 176). In their second co-authored book theoretical sampling was given a more extended definition: ‘theoretical sampling is a method of data collection based on concepts/themes derived from data. The purpose of theoretical sampling is to collect data from places, people, and events that will maximise opportunities to develop concepts in terms of their properties and dimensions, uncover variations, and identify relationships between concepts (Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 143).

These definitions are fully in line with the notion of theoretical sampling as originally expounded by Glaser and Strauss in their *Discovery* book (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) and also in Strauss’ first single authored book (Strauss, 1987). For Strauss, ‘the key point about theoretical sampling is this: once you have even the beginnings of a theory (after the first days of data collection and analysis) then you begin to leave selective sampling and move directly to theoretical sampling’ (Strauss, 1987: 274). Thus, theoretical sampling is ‘a means whereby the analyst decides on analytic grounds what data to collect next and where to find them’ (Strauss, 1987: 38, author’s italics). Strauss identifies a basic question that should be asked in theoretical sampling: ‘what groups or subgroups of populations, events, or activities does one turn to next in data collection, and for what theoretical purposes? (Strauss, 1987: 38, author’s italics). In this respect the process of data collection is controlled and directed by the emerging theory. The researcher is led by the analysis to ask: ‘where can I find instances of x or y? The researcher, after previous analysis, is seeking samples of population, events, activities guided by his or her emerging (if still primitive) theory’ (Strauss, 1987: 16). Thus once a concept has been unearthed by the analysis the researcher wants to develop this concept by using theoretical sampling to make comparisons that discover variations and densifications in properties. By thinking comparatively the researcher will often want to
search for opposites, differences, contradictions, and anomalies in order to advance the evolving theory.

That the use of theoretical sampling should be used to *develop theory* was undisputed both in the original *Discovery* book (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) and in Strauss’ first single authored book (1987). Strauss (1987: 5) states ‘the methodological thrust of the grounded theory approach to qualitative data is toward the development of theory’. Although this emphasis is not abandoned in his co-authored books with Corbin, it is noticeable that other purposes are also embraced as well – in particular the pursuit of non-theory. We find the first evidence of this in chapter 5 (open coding) of their 1990 book whilst the authors are conducting their famous analysis of ‘the lady in red’. Curiously, the authors state ‘if we were doing a real grounded theory study we couldn’t stop here just with the initial observations and coding. (Although if your purpose is just to pull out themes, then you could pretty much stop here). You want more than just a listing of concepts or even a grouping of them’ (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 67). It is intriguing that the authors identify the notion of a ‘real grounded theory study’. Presumably they are correlating a real grounded theory study with the development of theory. But they appear to have raised the possibility of a study whose purpose might be to ‘pull out themes’ or ‘a listing of concepts or even a grouping of them’. However, at the end of chapter 7 (axial coding) the authors become quite explicit about their intent:

> We suggest that those of you who are only interested in, or whose projects involve, theme analysis or concept development might consider stopping your reading of the book here. You will have probably absorbed enough of grounded theory procedure for those alternative purposes. If you are concerned with developing a theory, read on! (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 115)

This demarcation is explicitly recognised in Strauss and Corbin’s 1998 book when they introduce the notion of *conceptual ordering*. This is defined as ‘the organization of data into discrete categories (and sometimes ratings) according to their properties and dimensions and then using description to elucidate those categories’ (Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 19). The authors acknowledge that there can be many types of conceptual ordering as researchers use classificatory schemes in an attempt to make sense of their data. In this respect, Strauss and Corbin give legitimacy to conceptual ordering as ‘the desired end point of some investigations’ (1998: 20).
Corbin and Strauss (2008)

Juliet Corbin decided to publish a third edition of the co-edited book with Strauss in 2008, despite the fact that Strauss had passed away many years earlier (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). From a methodological point of view this third edition adds little or no further insights. In fact, the tools and techniques which were so evident in Strauss (1987), Strauss and Corbin (1990), and Strauss and Corbin (1998) are either downplayed or ignored in Corbin and Strauss (2008). For example, there are no separate chapters on open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. In fact there is no mention of selective coding anywhere in the book, and the definitions and distinctions between open coding and axial coding are all but eliminated.

In previous editions of this book there was mention of something called axial coding...axial coding (the act of relating concepts/categories to each other) was presented as a separate chapter as though it occurred separately from open coding (breaking data apart and delineating concepts to stand for blocks of raw data). [But] open coding and axial coding go hand in hand. The distinctions made between the two types of coding are artificial and for explanatory purposes only, to indicate to readers that though we break data apart, and identify concepts to stand for the data, we also have to put it back together again by relating those concepts. As analysts work with data, their minds automatically make connections because, after all, the connections come from the data (Corbin and Strauss, 2008: 198).

One of Corbin’s primary objectives in producing this third edition was not just to talk about analysis but to actually do the analysis. With this in mind well over half the book is devoted to an analysis of the experience of soldiers during the Vietnam War. Her analysis leads her to uncover the central concept of ‘survival’. She writes: ‘the concept of survival appears in some form in every interview and every memoir. Despite all the talk about patriotism, desire for adventure, wanting to be a pilot or marine, in the end it all comes down to wanting to survive deployment. Every memoir I read was essentially a survival story because the individual(s) lived to tell about it’ (Corbin and Strauss, 2008: 248). By the end of chapter 11 Corbin had managed to identify several patterns of survival strategies adopted by ex-combatants. She states: ‘I could stop here with the analysis…and certainly this would be enough for some research projects’ (Corbin and Strauss, 2008: 261). However, she continues in chapter 12 to ‘integrate the categories’ she had developed previously to evolve a theory of ‘survival: reconciling multiple realities’. In this sense this third edition of the book serves the useful purpose of further emphasising the point made in previous editions that theory development is not necessarily the end point of all grounded theory research studies.
The book is not limited just to persons who want to build theory. Theory construction is a long process made up of many analytical steps. Persons using this book can do quality research without going on to the final step of theory building as long as they make it clear that they are not out to build theory. There is a chapter in this book devoted to theory construction, but many of the analysis chapters are designed to be useful to researchers who are interested in thick and rich description, concept analysis, or simply pulling out themes (Corbin and Strauss, 2008: x-xi).

Data collection, coding, and analysis

Glaser (2001: 179) instructs researchers to commence their data collection in a ‘concentration site’ that is a unit where the area of interest goes on in concentration. Early participants should be selected because they are judged to have some knowledge of the domain being studied. Accordingly, they can be expected to know a lot about the specific research question. Glaser also instructs us to allow the issues and themes of the research topic to emerge naturally without forcing answers from respondents through structured or leading questions. His principal advice is to ask very broad initial questions to respondents of the variety: ‘tell me about…[specific research topic]’.

First four scoping interviews

With this advice in mind, in 2004 I commenced the first of four scoping interviews with the Chair of the main intersectoral committee that existed at that time in the institution. I chose this person in the belief that he would be the most knowledgeable person about broad-based intersectoral developments from a big picture point of view. I posed the broad question to this respondent: ‘what are the main issues involved in making intersectoral education effective?’ As he spoke I tried to keep as silent as possible, rarely interrupting, and allowing him to raise issues in an emergent manner. The interview was tape recorded, lasted for over one hour, and covered nearly eight pages of single-spaced transcript. As soon as the interview had been transcribed I immediately commenced the process of open coding by fracturing the raw data into analytical pieces (Glaser, 1978). This coding was performed line by line. My first pass of the data resulted in fifteen different codes as shown in table 3.4.
Table 3.4
Initial coding of interview 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conceptual strategic framework</th>
<th>Planning infrastructure</th>
<th>Coordinated committee structure</th>
<th>Integration and prioritisation of strategic objectives</th>
<th>Strategic driver or agent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intersectoral communication structures</td>
<td>Clear vision, mission, and objectives on the intersectoral theme</td>
<td>Strategic funding for intersectoral issues</td>
<td>Intersectoral projects</td>
<td>Dual awards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective processes</td>
<td>Lack of commitment from some staff to intersectoral development</td>
<td>Some managers pay lip service</td>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>Evolutionary progression</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I was struck by the nature of this interview. Most of the issues mentioned by the respondent emphasised the importance of building what could be called the ‘strategic architecture’ of the institution. The initial issues raised by the respondent were concerned with frameworks, structures, committees, processes, objectives, planning, funding, and projects. In many ways, given the role of the interviewee and his skills and experiences within the institution, I could have expected him to emphasise the importance of such issues. Nevertheless, the stark reality of his exclusive concentration of these ‘strategic architecture’ issues did come as somewhat of a surprise to me. It was only towards the end of the interview when I prompted the respondent to offer any additional comments that he raised the issues of commitment, marketing, and lip service. However, these observations seemed to be somewhat of a side issue to him rather than being of central significance.

Following the process of theoretical sampling I asked myself ‘where can I now go to get extra information about these emergent themes?’ I still wanted to keep the level of discussion at a fairly macro level in order to emerge some of the more significant big-picture issues. Accordingly, interview 2 was conducted with the Director of TAFE who also occupied the role of Deputy Vice Chancellor at the institution. Open coding emerged a number of additional codes as shown in table 3.5.
The nature of this interview was significantly different from interview 1. The general tone of the issues raised by the respondent concentrated around the theme of ‘pushing the barrow of TAFE’, hardly surprising given the role occupied by the respondent. Lack of knowledge and understanding emerged as a significant issue. So did the concepts of status hierarchies, the growing importance of TAFE, and the barriers that faced TAFE.

To even out the emphasis on TAFE given in interview 2, I next attempted to interview a Faculty Dean in order to obtain a HE angle. However, I quickly took the opportunity to commence an interview with a student rights’ officer who was situated at an outer campus of the institution. This interview was momentous in a number of ways. The interviewee spoke with passion and energy. His delivery was strident and accusatory. All his views were given bluntly and provided plenty of opportunities for me to employ \textit{in vovo} coding – using the exact words of the interviewee as a code because of their evocative nature. Table 3.6 shows some of these codes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mutually understood between the two sectors</th>
<th>TAFE capabilities not understood</th>
<th>HE has no understanding of TAFE</th>
<th>TAFE has moved on from apprenticeships</th>
<th>TAFE is large and diverse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication is poor</td>
<td>Associate degrees and graduate certificates are now important</td>
<td>Turf battles</td>
<td>Barriers caused by TAFE and HE having different masters</td>
<td>Funding issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation is more evident at lower levels</td>
<td>Student admin system is deficient</td>
<td>Too many TAFE qualifications don’t have a HE articulation</td>
<td>Status is a problem – higher ed and lower ed</td>
<td>Intersectoral development is not only about pathways</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.6

Initial coding of interview 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fundamental lack of respect</th>
<th>Power imbalances</th>
<th>Chronic under-resourcing of TAFE</th>
<th>TAFE is clearly secondary</th>
<th>TAFE is merely tacked onto the side of HE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Different but equal</td>
<td>No communication</td>
<td>Marriage of convenience</td>
<td>Bizarre structures and systems</td>
<td>Programs slapped together in a top-down manner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students left in the dark</td>
<td>Floundering around in the dark</td>
<td>HE wants to take over TAFE</td>
<td>No concept of two-way synergy</td>
<td>TAFE is seen as a back-door entry into HE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This respondent’s cynicism was evident throughout the interview. He saw most problems as stemming from a fundamental lack of respect for TAFE from HE. The system had been constructed in such a way as to keep TAFE beholden to HE and to continue to serve the interests of HE. With my ears ringing from this interview I then proceeded a short time later to complete my interview with a Faculty Dean. In many ways the Dean concurred with the comments and opinions expressed by interviewee 3. Frustrations were evident throughout the system but with careful analysis and planning they could be overcome. Some of the significant themes raised in interview 4 were as follows.

Table 3.7

Initial coding of interview 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frustrations are caused by arrogance and cultural values</th>
<th>Each side needs to learn mutual respect</th>
<th>Knowledge and understanding are required</th>
<th>HE staff need educating about TAFE</th>
<th>Managers learn on the run</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work out what is commercially real</td>
<td>Don’t compete, collaborate</td>
<td>Academic integrity that turns a buck</td>
<td>Defensiveness</td>
<td>Ideological preciousness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This Faculty Dean raised similar issues as already identified by previous interviewees such as lack of respect, knowledge, and understanding and the frustrations this can cause. For the first time, the *in vovo* code of ‘preciousness’ was employed by an interviewee. The Dean raised the additional issues of managers not being formally educated about TAFE and having to pick up their knowledge on the run. However, for the first time in my interviews I observed a respondent paying more attention to
possible strategies that could be employed to overcome the barriers and frustrations. Interviewee 4 was a pragmatist and tended to employ ‘corporate’ language. Accordingly, strategies were suggested along the lines of devising programs that would be of benefit to both TAFE and HE. Collaboration should succeed over competition. ‘Commercial reality’ and ‘academic integrity that turns a buck’ were quotes that were suggestive of this realism.

**Emergent themes from scoping interviews**

At this stage of completing the first four interviews I felt it prudent to stand back from the process of data collection and analysis and adopt a big picture view of the issues and themes that seemed to be emerging. As a result I was able to detect the early emergence of five broadly-based categories – attitudes, knowledge, communication, context, and strategies.

(i) **Attitudes**: One aspect of the interviews that intrigued me was that all the interviewees were extremely opinionated in the manner in which they stated their views. Maybe this should be expected from highly educated people in the academic profession. But it was certainly observed that they stated their views in a forthright manner. My initial coding of the transcribed interviews revealed many instances where I coded data under the labels ‘attitude’, or ‘perception’, or ‘belief’, or ‘assumption’. However, I soon realised that I needed to be more discriminating in the way I assigned these codes. For example, the statement that “TAFE enjoys a lower status than Higher Ed” (or a similar sentiment) was made by several respondents. On three separate occasions I coded this statement as ‘perception’, ‘belief’, and ‘assumption’. Equally I could also have coded the sentiment as ‘attitude’. The various definitions of these separate terms (both academic and dictionary) are shown below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belief</td>
<td>a feeling or opinion that something exists or is true, and in which some trust or confidence is placed (Compact Oxford English Dictionary)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assumption</td>
<td>a thing that is assumed to be true (Compact Oxford English Dictionary)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception</td>
<td>a way of understanding or interpreting something; intuitive understanding and insight (Compact Oxford English Dictionary)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a process by which individuals organise and interpret their sensory impressions in order to give meaning to their environment (Robbins, Millett, Cacioppe, and Waters-Marsh, 1998: 123)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>a complex mental state involving beliefs and feelings and values and dispositions to act in certain ways (Onelook.com Dictionary)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>an evaluative statement, favourable or unfavourable, concerning objects, people, or events. It reflects how one feels about something (Robbins, Millett, Cacioppe, and Waters-Marsh, 1998: 169)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, I soon realised that coding is crucially dependent on its context. For example, one respondent made the statement “TAFE enjoys a lower status than Higher Ed” within the context of trying to explain his perception of what the majority of other HED academics (excluding himself) felt about the role of TAFE. On this occasion I coded the sentiment as ‘perception’. However, when a TAFE interviewee expressed a similar sentiment whilst referring (in a critical manner) to the way in which TAFE was treated within the institution, I coded this as ‘belief’.

I realised that one way in which a more discriminating (yet consistent) approach could be employed to such coding is to adopt the overall code ‘attitude’. Within the academic literature ‘attitude’ encompasses a less narrow interpretation in that it simultaneously defers to concepts of ‘emotion’ and ‘intended behaviour’. For example, when one of the respondents mentioned the status difference between TAFE and HE he immediately
followed it up with the statement “this is a bad development from my point of view”. This reflects an affective component. By employing the overall code ‘attitude’ I could capture these nuances within the one code and then distinguish between the various components.

The academic literature (for instance Robbins, Millett, Cacioppe, and Waters-Marsh, 1998: 169) distinguishes between three components of an attitude: cognition, affect, and behaviour

- **Cognitive** component: the opinion, belief, or value statement segment of an attitude, for example ‘discrimination is wrong’.
- **Affect** component: the emotional or feeling segment of an attitude, for example ‘I dislike John because he discriminates against Aborigines’.
- **Behaviour** component: the intention to behave in a certain way towards someone or something, for example ‘I will avoid John because of my feelings about him’.

These three components are linked: cognition influences affect which in turn influences behaviour. Correspondingly I decided to adopt the coding convention of ‘attitude’ as divided into its three separate components for the purpose of my initial fracturing of the data. One interviewee provides a good example within a single sentence of how aspects of cognition, affect, and behaviour can chase one another in sequence: “there is all this ‘them and us’ stuff (cognitive) and there is still suspicion of one another (affect) and a reluctance to let go (behaviour)”. This respondent’s statement is couched in general perceptive terms, but other interviewee’s comments were delivered on a more personal level in terms of an experience that critically affected them as an individual. For instance, a TAFE respondent stated:

“I attended a residential writers’ workshop and the first evening at dinner the person next to me asked what faculty was I from and I said ‘oh I am from TAFE’ at which stage without any further conversation they picked their chair vertically up and turned their back to me so that they can talk to the person on the other side (cognitive), and it was just devastating, I was so demoralised because I already felt a bit alone and I had been quite brave to break into that group and I was snubbed (affect), and I just packed up the next day and went home before breakfast (behaviour).”

(ii) **Knowledge**: Because I was personally familiar with aspects across the TAFE-HE divide it came as somewhat of a revelation to me how ignorant most interviewees were
of issues that were not contained within their realm of operation. Certainly, this lack of knowledge seemed to be implicated in many misunderstandings between interviewees from the two sectors. I noticed many examples of ignorance in relation to factual details and processes. Interviewees simply had got their facts wrong (in my opinion) although I did not reveal my observations on these matters to interviewees at the time. I also noticed that interviewees were quick to attribute motives to people ‘on the other side’, and that these motives (again in my opinion) seemed to be misinformed. This lack of knowledge emerged as a significant category within the first couple of interviews.

(iii) Communication: Another significant category emerging from the first four interviews was that of communication (or the lack of) between TAFE and HE. Despite the institution being dual-sector it was remarkable how frequently it was mentioned that the two sectors were extremely poor at communicating with each other. Most people worked and thought within clearly segmented silos. Unless aspects of their operations involved a clear need to liaise with the other division then people simply ignored their counterparts in the other division. My initial thinking was that the two categories of ‘knowledge’ and ‘communication’ were linked in the sense that it was perfectly understandable that if people did not communicate with one another then there would be very few opportunities for them to acquire knowledge and understanding of one another.

(iv) Context: Because the first four interviews targeted people who possessed a broad-based, big-picture, view of the world there occurred much discussion around the significant contextual issues that acted as constraints within which the two sectors operated. For example, ‘history’ acted as a significant contextual issue, as did other issues associated with legislation, culture, and working conditions. The two sectors were located within dramatically different contextual environments and naturally one would expect that these different contexts would have exerted considerable influence on many other variables over the years.

(v) Strategies: As mentioned earlier, the theme of ‘strategies’ first arose in a concerted manner during interview 4 with the Faculty Dean. This interviewee spoke in very measured and pragmatic terms, pointing out problems and issues and then suggesting alternative ways that matters could be pursued. The interviewee was clear at suggesting ‘it would be better if we adopted an approach that emphasised X’ or ‘we have done
things this way for some time now but I have recommended to the university that we should now try Y’. Once this theme had emerged I went back and re-read the first three interviews with a keen eye to try and emerge some strategies that I missed on the initial coding. It was surprising how many such incidents could now be discerned that had previously been overlooked. Even in interview 3 (which was notable for the ferocity of its cynicism and seeming negativity) I was able to emerge some ‘strategies for improvement’ which had previously been hidden to my coding.

Moving on to interview 5 and beyond

I was fully aware that these five initial categories (attitudes, knowledge, communication, context, and strategies) were not definitive. I now had to go on to conduct further interviews to see if these five categories were robust enough to stand up, or whether they would be amended or abandoned in the light of further data. Adopting the spirit of theoretical sampling I now asked myself ‘where do I go to next to acquire further information about these five categories?’ These five categories would act as my guide for further interviews and questions but I was also cautious to be on the lookout for additional categories and themes that may emerge from additional data.

Interviews 5 and 6 were conducted with TAFE teachers who possessed long experience in working with pathway arrangements between TAFE and HE. I did not specifically refer these interviewees to any of the five initial categories that had emerged so far. I still operated at the level of asking the broad question about the issues involved in making intersectoral education effective so that I could detect any additional categories that may emerge as well as adding to the richness of the existing categories. Interviewee 5 was involved in the operation and teaching of an intersectoral program at the postgraduate level which was regarded as a pioneering program within the institution and had been operating with some success for several years. This interviewee concentrated her discussion around the ‘personalities’ involved in the program, emphasising the difference between people she could work with and people she could not. The latter group of people encompassed those who acted in a superior manner and tended to look down on TAFE. She found that such people tended to play games and harboured other agendas. They were not open or on the level and tended to give negative feedback instead of being supportive. Interviewee 6 was more broad ranging and mentioned a wide variety of barriers and challenges, such as: promising one thing
and not delivering, differences in quality between campuses, structural impediments in the selection process, marketing inconsistencies, differences in working conditions, culture of blame, serving different masters, some HE departments do not understand TAFE, and inconsistencies in granting credits. As with interviewee 3, this interviewee was extremely blunt and critical in tone. He referred to certain practices and approaches as ‘a laughing stock’ and ‘a joke’.

Interview 7 was conducted with a senior manager in the HE division at a level higher than Dean. Again, this interview tended to elicit heated views from the respondent, but, as with the TAFE respondents, such views reflected the dominant logic of a person well entrenched within a siloed context (in this case HE). This interviewee started off with the observation that intersectoralism is not only about pathways but about opportunities. This must be a two-way arrangement. However, at present everything seemed to be one-way, namely from TAFE to HE and this caused tensions between the two divisions. The interviewee stated that a plethora of opportunities existed for intersectoralism to be successful and proceeded to name some of these. However, in the opinion of this interviewee, TAFE was singularly unimpressive in their contribution and constantly put the onus on HE for articulation. From this point on the interview then constituted a tirade against the philosophy and practices of TAFE, namely:

- TAFE wants HE to always be accommodating of their programs which are often not in our interests or do not benefit us, or are of low academic integrity
- TAFE wants to participate only when it suits their interests
- TAFE is always trying to claim a wider territory from skills-based to knowledge-based education (‘academic creep’) and are continually trying to grab issues beyond their turf
- New developments such as TAFE degrees, associate degrees, and graduate certificates merely confuse the market
- TAFE does not understand the restrictions placed on HE such as lower flexibility and the heavy and diverse workloads of HE academics
- TAFE should stick to its mission and HE should stick to its
- TAFE and HE should work in partnership to ‘grow the pie’ and expand opportunities, but TAFE always wants to block this
After transcribing, coding, and analysing interviews 1-7 I felt able to sketch out the following rough draft of an initial diagram. The basic process foresees a set of external contextual constraints which result in various blockages to effective intersectoral education. These blockages can be removed or resolved through the introduction of various strategies aimed at facilitating intersectoral seamlessness. This simple process is shown in figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3

Facilitating intersectoral seamlessness: transforming blocking into facilitating

At this stage in my data collection, coding, and analysis I was reminded of the words of Corbin and Strauss (2008) that the distinction between open coding and axial coding is really an artificial one. The two are interwoven together in the sense that as soon as the analyst identifies a number of open codes there is an instinctive reaction to attempt to group these under broader categorical names, and that these processes are performed simultaneously. In essence, this is what has occurred in figure 3.3. Earlier in this chapter I have also presented an analysis of the role of the paradigm model in the process of axial coding and how this has undergone a somewhat chequered trajectory during the course of Strauss and Corbin’s various books. I have taken the later advice of Strauss and Corbin (1998) and Corbin and Strauss (2008) not to force the various open codes into pre-conceived categories of conditions, consequences, strategies, and so on. They recommend that dynamic flow should be preserved in any emerging model in order to
ensure the integration of structure and process. In a simple way, this is captured in figure 3.3. But it is also noticeable that although there was no prior intention in my mind to specifically look for conditions, context, or strategies etc, these are still observed as important elements in the flow of figure 3.3. Thus, my early thinking after the first seven interviews had been coded and analysed was that both TAFE and HE teachers, academics, managers, and administrators operate within a strong set of external contextual conditions. In consequence, a number of blockages have been created militating against the effective nature of intersectoral education (in the form of discordant attitudes, poor communication, and inadequate knowledge and understanding). In spite of this, various strategies can be instituted to overcome these blockages. Thus, it is possible to claim that a paradigm model has been incorporated within figure 3.3 (in the form of context, consequences, and strategies) although there was no pre-conceived explicit attempt to do so on my part.

Interview 8 and beyond

From interview 8 onwards I was eager to obtain more data relating to the elements of figure 3.3. In the light of more emerging data I was ready either to abandon some categories, or to add to them, amend them, merge or split existing categories, or discover new categories as necessary according to what the data was telling me. As more data came in I was ready to use the technique of ‘constant comparison’ with the extant codes and categories in order to discover evolving themes. I asked myself the basic question of theoretical sampling ‘where can I now go to next in order to add to the theoretical depth of my evolving model?’ In answer to this question, I was eager to add more depth to the two categories ‘blockages’ and ‘strategies’. I needed responses both from TAFE and HE respondents and also from higher-level personnel (TAFE Heads of School and HE Deans) and also from lower-level personnel (administrators and ‘coal-face’ teachers and academics).

Interviews 8-10 were conducted with three Faculty Deans. Interviewee 8 was quick to raise the issue of status hierarchy between TAFE and HE. He admitted that the common perception amongst HE academics was that HE was more prestigious. In his opinion this acted as ‘a major obstacle’. He also reeled off a litany of other obstacles, namely: different timetabling systems; different tiers of government; different funding regimes; different rules and regulations; different buildings and locations (with HE students
unable to use TAFE facilities); different agendas and objectives; different award and industrial relations systems; and insufficient opportunities and forums for mixing between TAFE and HE staff. However, obstacles merely represent an opportunity for improvement, and the Dean was keen to stress a number of strategies that could be employed. His main strategy was to push the barrow that the two sectors ‘are not equal, equivalent, or identical’. They are not the same. We should not deny differences between the two sectors. Rather, we should ‘celebrate those differences in order to generate synergy’. Both sectors, in the opinion of the Dean, must have ‘buy-in’ to this concept, in the sense that they believe that ‘intersectoral advantage actually is an advantage’. This can only be achieved ‘when it is clear what the payback and benefits will be’.

Interviews 9 and 10 concentrated on similar aspects: the different missions of TAFE and HE (overlapping or discreet); the more ‘refined concept’ of HE; inter-marrying vocational and liberal education for societal success; competition or co-operation; logistical issues; cultural barriers; structural issues; Government agendas; continuous learning opportunities; bridging forums; and marketing issues.

Analysis of interviews 8-10 allowed me to develop a number of sub-categories within the main categories of ‘discordant attitudes’, ‘poor communication’, and ‘lack of knowledge and understanding’. In particular, it became clearer that poor communication occurred across separate levels – higher level, faculty level, and individual level. Also, lack of knowledge and understanding was evident within HE in regard to a number of issues, namely: the motives for TAFE articulation; the motives for TAFE market expansion; and a failure to grasp the diversity and complexity of TAFE. Finally, discordant attitudes towards TAFE were expressed across a number of aspects, including its status, students, staff, and qualifications.

Because interviews 8-10 had been conducted with senior HE personnel I was keen to pursue my theoretical sampling by next interviewing some senior TAFE personnel. I was eager to continue to fill out the sub-categories generated above, but this time from a TAFE perspective. This would aid the technique of constant comparison and also add variation into the concepts generated. Consequently, interviews 11-13 respectively, were conducted with a senior TAFE teacher, a director of a TAFE school, and an executive director of the TAFE support services. Concepts emerging included: lip
service; tensions; turf wars; HE bureaucracy; funding issues; strength of TAFE students; and the continuing problems surrounding HE’s attitude of treating TAFE like second-class citizens. This latter point came out strongly in all of the interviews 11-13. Some significant attitudes displayed during these interviews included the belief that ‘the dominant cultural paradigm is all about HE’. The ramifications of this are that: the Vice Chancellor is really about HE; HE possesses the power; them and us; higher ed and lower ed; value judgements about TAFE’s merit and legitimacy; TAFE always regarded as whingeing; token consultation; what about me?; and please can we play? Because of the high-level nature of these interviewees their comments also came accompanied by many strategies for improvement. This could be summed up in the overall strategy ‘respect for and understanding of the different missions of both sectors’. Encompassing this overall strategy were approaches involving celebration of differences, more interaction, sharing resources, active consultation and collaboration, training, seamless not sameness, and the development of a common language.

Analysis of interviews 11-13 allowed me to further develop the sub-categories within the main categories of ‘discordant attitudes’ and ‘lack of knowledge and understanding’. Three discordant TAFE attitudes were generated, namely: attitudes towards the dominance of the HE paradigm, the prevalence of lip service, and the homogenisation of pedagogic traditions. It also became clearer that lack of knowledge and understanding was also exacerbated by the perception that HE placed a low priority on TAFE issues, and that, in turn, TAFE misunderstood HE processes and academic workloads.

**Emergence of the core category – ‘preciousness’**

During interviews 8-13 I had progressively given more thought to the nature of the core category. I had written a number of personal memos to myself around the theme of ‘what is really going on here?’ I had made a lot of progress in adding more density to the main category of ‘blockages’. I wrote a memo to myself that there appeared to be a processual flow relationship between the three sub-categories – ‘inadequate communication’, ‘lack of knowledge and understanding’, and ‘discordant attitudes’. This was causing intersectoral tensions. My musing was that humans tend to harbour discordant attitudes against groups or units for which they possess insufficient knowledge and understanding and that, in turn, such lack of knowledge and
understanding is the result of poor communication. In such a flow relationship it is usually not possible to isolate the ‘chicken’ or the ‘egg’. Each variable influences the other in a continual circular flow, and exacerbated by the tensions that are inherent within such a system. Thus, if external contextual circumstances generate a structure of inadequate communication between TAFE and HE, then one could argue that this scenario results in inadequate knowledge and understanding of each other within the sectors, causing tensions that fuel discordant attitudes. Once such attitudes have become entrenched the two sectors become less willing to communicate with one another thus generating further rounds of tensions and ‘vicious’ behaviour, as shown in figure 3.4.

**Figure 3.4**

Preciousness as a blockage to intersectoral collaboration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inadequate communication</th>
<th>Lack of knowledge and understanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structural separation</td>
<td>HE regards TAFE as diverse and complex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-level communication arrangements</td>
<td>HE places low priority on TAFE issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty-level communication arrangements</td>
<td>HE misunderstand the motives for TAFE articulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-level serendipitous communication arrangements</td>
<td>HE misunderstands the motives for TAFE market expansion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discordant attitudes</td>
<td>TAFE misunderstands HE processes</td>
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<tr>
<td>HE attitudes towards different status</td>
<td>TAFE misunderstands HE academic workloads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HE attitudes towards TAFE – its students, staff, and qualifications</td>
<td>Intersectoral tensions</td>
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<td>TAFE attitudes towards the dominance of the HE paradigm</td>
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<td>TAFE attitudes towards the prevalence of lip-service</td>
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<tr>
<td>TAFE attitudes towards homogenising pedagogic traditions</td>
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</table>
In searching for the core category I was struck by the frequency of references to the different statuses occupied by TAFE and HE. The word ‘preciousness’ first emerged in interview 4 and was repeated by other respondents thereafter. Sometimes different words were employed but always with the same meaning: superiority, elitism, arrogance, and prestige. The implication was clear, that HE personnel felt themselves to be ‘better’ and more ‘refined’ than TAFE personnel. But the process was not simply one-way. TAFE personnel stood accused by HE of acting in a similarly precious way in the manner in which they ‘pushed their demands upon HE’. This was a (perhaps ‘the’) major cultural impediment to the achievement of a more effective system of intersectoral education. Preciousness appeared to be a paradigm that was observed in both divisions. Removing, or softening, the magnitude of such preciousness was perceived to be a necessary remedial action.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the concept of a core category has experienced a shifting definition during the course of Strauss and Corbin’s various books. Basically, the core category can be regarded as ‘the central phenomenon around which all the other categories are integrated’ (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 116). Variously, researchers are urged to search for the story line, main theme, main idea, main problem, primary issue, what seems most striking, what the research is all about, and the main issue or problem with which the people seem to be grappling. I had commenced my research by asking respondents the broad question ‘what are the main issues involved in making intersectoral education effective?’ By the end of interview 13 I had arrived at the stage of elevating the concept of preciousness to become the core category. Table 3.9 shows the various definitions of other alternative concepts that could have been chosen as the core variable in place of preciousness. However, I decided on preciousness because its broad emphasis appeared to subsume the other alternative definitions and laid a focus on motive, emotion, and behaviour.
Table 3.9
Preciousness and associated concepts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preciousness</td>
<td>Associated with something that is highly treasured, loved, esteemed, or cherished. It carries connotations of something that is excessively elegant or refined. Accordingly, it tends to possess great value, sometimes to the extent of being beyond value. People who might be accused (often disparagingly) of acting preciously are usually assumed to be affectedly (emotionally) concerned with style, manners, or language. By paying too much attention to such details they are often perceived to be behaving in a very formal and almost unnatural way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superiority</td>
<td>Associated with behaving in a proud way as if someone thinks they are better than other people in quality or skill, or more important, or having greater power, or higher status or position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elitist</td>
<td>Supporting or based on a system in which a small group of people have a lot of advantages and keep the most power and influence to themselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrogance</td>
<td>Overbearing pride evidenced by a superior manner towards inferiors or behaviour that shows that you think you are better or more important than other people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prestigious</td>
<td>Having a high standing or reputation or respect that has been earned through impressive achievements, high quality, success, influence, or wealth</td>
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Source: derived from OneLook.com (online dictionary)

Selective coding

Once I had decided upon the core category I was now aware that my analysis had entered the stage of selective coding. As analysed earlier in this chapter, selective coding is defined as ‘the process of selecting the core category, systematically relating it to the other categories, validating those relationships, and filling in categories that need further refinement and development’ (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 116). Thus, from now on I would delimit coding only to those categories that relate to the core category – namely ‘preciousness’. The essence of the tentative model or framework generated up to this stage consists of transforming ‘blocking’ into ‘facilitating’. To achieve this one must consider firstly the nature of the external contextual constraints that are embedded within the process. These constraints create blockages in the process. It is these blockages which give rise to the concept of preciousness – the core category of the thesis. Preciousness can be unblocked in the overall process by a set of strategies. These strategies are aimed at militating the impact of preciousness and hence enabling a movement towards intersectoral collaboration. Figure 3.5 depicts this delimited model.
I now realised that my task from now onwards was to validate these relationships and add further density to the various categories in terms of refinement and development. I started to pay particular attention to the two broad categories of ‘contextual constraints’ and ‘strategies’. With regard to ‘contextual constraints’ I commenced a literature search to identify the major pieces of legislation and policy directions that have impacted upon the development of TAFE and HE over the past several decades. I then started to interweave these factual details with the comments and perceptions that had emerged from respondents during the various interviews. With regard to ‘strategies’ I was aware that so far during the interview coding and analysis I had tended to concentrate on higher-level personnel at TAFE and HE who had been more forthcoming with their views on how intersectoral education could be made more effective. I had not paid a lot of attention to the development of properties and sub-categories but rather had tended to simply code such incidents as ‘strategy’ and then place in a specific folder in my data file.

The time had now arrived for me to make further progress on these issues. Following the dictate of theoretical sampling I decided to concentrate on interviewees who had more experience at the coal-face of teaching and lecturing in TAFE and HE and whose experiences had exposed them to intersectoral issues. I progressively moved away from asking a broad-based question and started to narrow down my questioning by focusing on specific aspects of the analysis that appeared under-cooked and needed more density.
My next 8 interviews (14-21) consisted of two interviews with HE academics and six interviews with TAFE teachers all of whom possessed some intersectoral exposure. Interviewee 14 had been in the academic profession for forty years and was near to retirement. He had started his career in TAFE, moved into HE, and possessed enormous experience as an administrator, manager, and academic. His main message was that HE was now changing dramatically and that the future lay in non-traditional university entrants. Intelligent student recruitment was needed in order to capitalise on these developments. There was a requirement to build greater capacity in this area. Various problems were raised by this respondent including: pathway arrangements changed unilaterally by one party without informing the other (poor communication); frequent turnover of experienced staff (organisational memory loss); unsuitability of students for university study; inadequate data capture; inadequate time for academic scrutiny; and inappropriate and unsuitable budget models. As the interviewee raised these problems I was quick to probe further by asking him to suggest suitable remedies (‘strategies’) for solving the issues.

Interviews 15-20 consisted of interviews with TAFE teachers and once again the common issues of HE arrogance and preciousness, poor communication, and intersectoral misunderstandings always seemed to bubble to the surface at the first opportunity. By this stage I was beginning to feel that ‘I’ve heard all this before’. No new properties were emerging. The stage of ‘saturation’ seemed to be approaching very quickly. When I sensed that such issues were beginning to dominate the interview I tried to switch the focus towards ‘strategies’ by asking ‘in your opinion what measures could be put in place to solve the issue you are talking about’. In response to this focused question respondents gave such replies as: more sharing (resources, facilities etc); more movement of staff between sectors (tutors, secondment, permanent recruitment etc); more communication (forums, seminars, events etc); and changes in the dominant discourse (so as to unseat the dominant hegemony of HE power).

Interview 21 was conducted with a long-serving and experienced HED academic who had pioneered the structure of establishing a sub-committee within a certain faculty, composed of both HE and TAFE personnel, which would personally oversee all intersectoral issues within the ambit of the faculty and provide a focus for referral and action. This respondent was extremely perceptive about a wide range of micro-level issues that can (and have) gone wrong when trying to run effective intersectoral
collaborations. The contrast between the ‘worldview’ of this interviewee (dominated by micro issues of personalities, incidents, and individual events) and the worldview of interviewees such as Deans and senior managers (dominated by policy issues and big-picture thinking) was extremely stark but very interesting. Different personnel inhabit different silos not only in respect to HE and TAFE but also with regard to teaching, research, administration, management, and policy issues across the two sectors. During interview 21 I was again keen to not allow the respondent to run away on the theme of their favourite hobby-horse, but to interrupt as necessary at appropriate points in the interview and ask ‘how do you suggest this problem issue could be solved?’

Once I had transcribed, coded, and analysed interviews 14-21 I now paid special attention both to further development of the extant categories and sub-categories already generated, and also to fleshing out the categories, sub-categories, and properties under the label of ‘strategies’. My task in this endeavour was facilitated by the fact that my emerging model already contained a structure-process, dynamic flow set of relationships in regard to the main category ‘blockages’, as shown in figure 3.4. I mused to myself in a memo written at the time that ‘perhaps I can arrange my strategies into the same sub-categories and properties that have already been generated in the ‘blockages’ category?’ Thus, for example, a sub-category labelled ‘inadequate communication’ already existed, divided into four properties: structural separation, high-level communication arrangements, faculty-level communication arrangements, and low-level serendipitous communication arrangements. Accordingly, strategies to address each of these issues could be arranged under the same label, for example, strategies to address structural separation, strategies to address high-level communication arrangements, and so on. As a result of this activity I was able to generate a set of strategies as shown in figure 3.6.
Once I had completed this exercise I was still not satisfied that the model was complete. I wanted to go on and further validate the relationships and develop sub-categories and properties as much as I could. Most of the concepts I was generating were not simply ‘one-off’ instances advanced by individual interviewees but seemed to occur on a regular basis. I was confident that a picture of regularity was beginning to emerge. Accordingly, I continued with a set of further interviews, taking care to follow the principle of theoretical sampling. In order to bring better evocativeness to my analysis, and also to serve the purpose of providing more illustrations to my conceptual points, I wanted to acquire more ‘examples’ of certain sub-categories and properties. This is not to say that I had ignored this issue during my previous interviews. I had always been eager to ask respondents ‘can you give me an example of that?’ However, in earlier
interviews it is natural that the emphasis is inevitably on leaving respondents to emerge their own points and concepts. The analyst is keen, during these early stages, to aim for the emergence of conceptual density. What I now wanted to do was to fill in some gaps in my analysis where concrete examples appeared to be lacking in support of specific conceptual properties.

Interviews 22-28 followed this objective. I interviewed four TAFE teachers, one TAFE administrator, and two HE academics (one of them was a faculty Deputy Dean at the time). These interviews fulfilled my desire to secure additional examples and ‘stories’ to flesh out conceptual issues, such as: the battling mature Thai female student in TAFE; cutting emails sent between different staff; separate librarians for the TAFE and HE divisions; audacity of a TAFE-certificate hairdresser who declares ‘I’ve also been to that university’; fox-terrier attitude of TAFE (always scratching at the door); and the battle lines of politically-motivated intersectoral forums where people have to ‘watch their mouth’ for fear of reprisal. These interviews were coded and used to flesh out the extant conceptual properties of the model and also provide more examples for illustrative purposes. By the end of this exercise I became convinced that ‘saturation’ had been reached. I was sitting through interviews and thinking to myself ‘I’ve heard all this already; no new properties are emerging; and I can almost predict what this person is going to say next’. These were significant indications to me that it was now time to cease the interview process. I was sufficiently convinced that conducting extra interviews would not be cost-effective enough (in terms of extra density or property development of the model) to justify carrying on. I had commenced the interview process in February 2004 and my final interview (number 28) was conducted in February 2009. It is an important issue that PhD students in the modern era are now more aware of these limitations of time and cost. I was not immune from that pressure.

In order to provide a handy summary of the progression of my interviews, table 3.10 shows the chronological progression of my interviews and the position occupied by each respondent at the time the interview was conducted. However, for the purpose of anonymity the exact role of each interviewee is not revealed.
Table 3.10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schedule of interviews</th>
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Summary

This chapter has presented an exposition of the methodology of Straussian grounded theory as employed in this thesis. Twenty eight interviews were conducted between 2004 and 2009 with various personnel at a dual-sector university. The research question was ‘what are the main issues in making intersectoral education effective?’ My data collection, coding, and analysis resulted in the emergence of a model wherein a series of external contextual constraints (in the form of structures, systems, legislation, working conditions, and history) have consequentially created a series of blockages (in the form of discordant attitudes, poor communication, and a lack of knowledge and understanding) which have, in turn, hindered the facilitation of intersectoral collaboration. These blockages form the core category of ‘preciousness’. However, a series of strategies also emerged from the interview data. The thesis models the process that effective implementation of these strategies (‘unblocking preciousness’) could serve the purpose of reducing intersectoral tensions and hence enable smoother intersectoral collaboration through the process of ‘transforming blocking into facilitating’.

The next chapter presents the findings of the thesis as they relate to the category of ‘blockages’. This is depicted through the concept of ‘preciousness’ as a blockage to intersectoral collaboration.
Chapter 4

Preciousness as a blockage to intersectoral collaboration

This chapter presents the findings of the thesis as they relate to the core category of ‘preciousness’. As shown in chapter 3, the data has revealed that a two-way process of preciousness exists between TAFE and HE which acts as a blockage to the achievement of intersectoral collaboration. Although this concept was mainly raised by TAFE personnel as a descriptor for their perception of HE attitudes and behaviours, the thesis finds that elements of preciousness are harboured by teachers, academics, managers, and administrators across the TAFE-HE divide. Thus, preciousness appears to be a paradigm that is observed in both divisions.

Figure 4.1 reproduces the model from chapter 3 of ‘preciousness as a blockage to intersectoral collaboration’. The composition of the model forms the basis for the structuring of this current chapter into three main sections – discordant attitudes, inadequate communication, and lack of knowledge and understanding. The processual flow of the model foresees that inadequate communication and a lack of knowledge and understanding across the TAFE-HE divide creates intersectoral tension through the generation of in-groups and out-groups on either side of the divide. These tensions fuel discordant attitudes which, in turn, tend to fuel further rounds of inadequate communication and a lack of knowledge and communication.

One of the benefits of employing qualitative methodology to collect, code, and analyse data is that the richness and evocativeness of the statements and expressions made by respondents can be retained in the exposition of the findings. Most respondents were insightful, thoughtful, and reflective during their interview, capturing the interest that they displayed in the topic. It has already been observed in chapter 3 that many respondents spoke with passion. Some of the interviews appeared to have a cathartic effect on some respondents. In presenting the findings of this thesis I am eager not to lose the richness of this data. Many of the codes derived from the data were in vovo in nature, this is, they captured the words and phrases used by the informants. Such codes are often ‘catchy’ in the sense that they ‘immediately draw your attention to them’ (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 69). Correspondingly, I chose to write this chapter in the
style of a bricolage of *in vovo* codes. Through this device I was able to meld together the actual words and expressions used by informants in order to construct an overall narrative account. This melding process involved employing my own linking arguments in order to make sense of the divergent *in vovo* phrases used by respondents and create a meaningful flow of themes. In presenting the findings in this manner I have chosen not to use quote marks in order to distinguish the *in vovo* codes used by respondents from my own words and phrases. This would have resulted in a panoply of such quote marks, to the detriment of the overall flow of the argument. In any case, the essence of the arguments raised by each respondent has already been enunciated in detail in chapter 3.
Each of these categories and sub-categories of the core category *preciousness* will now be presented in the rest of this chapter.
Discordant attitudes

The interviewees provided a wide range of attitudes in relation to TAFE and HE. As already indicated, the device of an in vovo bricolage has been employed in order to meld together the actual words and expressions used by respondents in order to construct an overall narrative account, as below.

HE attitudes towards different status

Universities differ from TAFE in a number of key aspects. Historically, they have been regarded as academic run institutions, largely democratic, and organised on the basis of academic peers. The pursuit of research and the conduct of critical and conceptual education have been key demarcations. Academic staff are invariably doctorally qualified and take as their mission the pursuit of generating new knowledge and questioning established thinking. Academic respondents described the nature of university education as involving robust deep thinking that aims to instil in students the ability to critically question and analyse content and then develop as a questioning member of the civil society, looking to progress world society. In contrast, TAFE institutions are managerially run organisations, with academically lower qualified staff, conducting no research, and teaching existing knowledge to students. Such training is competency orientated and of a task-based vocational nature.

Whilst academic respondents stress the important and valuable nature of TAFE training it is clear that they do not perceive that TAFE and HE enjoy the same status. HE is regarded as existing on a different level. HE awards the most prestigious qualifications and occupies a higher status. It is sometimes regarded as elitist. TAFE offers a lesser product. TAFE is regarded as inferior to HE and clearly secondary. It is often perceived as occupying a poor cousin status. This is invariably exhibited in the type of language employed. For example, the distinction between Higher Ed and Lower Ed is often stressed, as well as references to HE being the First Eleven and TAFE the Second Eleven. In addition, students are referred to as moving up to HE from TAFE rather than moving across. As a result, TAFE and HE represent divided communities having a separate us-and-them existence.
HE attitudes towards TAFE – its students, staff, and qualifications

This separate existence manifests itself in a range of behavioural patterns exhibited by HE academic staff, managers, and administrators towards TAFE. Perhaps the most prevalent attitude can be located in the assumption that TAFE is obsessed with expanding its market by seeking more and more avenues to find a way into different university faculties in terms of the articulation of their programmes. This obsession can even reach the point of being rabid, whereby TAFE continually pushes rafts of material up to HED for which there is often no home. In seeking to protect their patch HE staff can be perceived as acting with contempt, looking down their noses, showing arrogance, acting totally superior, exhibiting a fundamental lack of respect, having a gatekeeper mentality, acting rudely, having a negative attitude, coming over quite officiously, and believing they are above it. How can one account for the attitude of a HE academic who on learning that a TAFE representative was also attending the same meeting was prompted to remark that he would now have to speak slowly? Or the senior HE manager who often and publicly states that TAFE Graduate Certificates are a waste of time? Or the academic who terminated the services of a TAFE teacher on an international programme without informing her, providing no communication, and giving her no opportunity to say goodbye to her students, so that the staff member only found out accidentally at the eleventh hour? Or those academics who send poisonous emails, shout and scream at TAFE staff in public, or fail to deal with TAFE staff on an equal basis? Or those who believe that TAFE-related work is a waste of time and they do not have time to look at it? A lot of damage can be created by such behaviours. Even HE academics can sometimes become disenchanted with the behaviour of their own colleagues, especially those quite high on the totem pole, referring to them as being very slack in the way they deal with TAFE staff and refusing to listen.

The effect on TAFE staff and students can be demoralising. TAFE students are sometimes perceived by HE academics as being hopeless. This derogatory mindset about the doubtful quality of TAFE students applies equally to local and international students, although the latter are often singled out for failing to reach the required standard. Such criticisms invariably relate to the different perceptions of quality between HE and TAFE. Tertiary qualifications and TAFE qualifications are seen as different beasts. The TAFE emphasis on vocational competency-based training and
assessment brings forth the critique that TAFE students lack depth in their analytical approach. The absence of significant theoretical underpinnings means that TAFE students cannot benefit from HE education and often struggle in their new environment. For example, the argument is often advanced that TAFE Graduate Certificates do not inter-relate with HE subjects. They are taught at a different standard and are meant to deliver clear, practical, and vocational outcomes. It is not appropriate for students from these subjects to receive substantial credit into a Masters degree. They are simply worlds apart. This raises the question of what is the value of TAFE students when they come through to HE? TAFE can often be perceived as a back-door entry mechanism into university for students with inadequate grades, thus dumbing down the whole university. HE staff often complain about the removal of examinations from TAFE units. When such students progress onto higher education they often fail because of their inability to write examinations. HE staff may find themselves pressured to work closely with TAFE staff, but why would they want to work with someone who refuses to incorporate an examination into their unit? Thus TAFE is perceived as failing to adequately prepare its students for higher education, letting down not only those students but also the university and the community. It is HE academics who have to wear the consequences of dealing with inadequately prepared students who cannot cope, want to leave or drop out, suffer stress and illness, or threaten to commit suicide. Instead, the university then comes under pressure to drop its own examinations, further degrading academic standards. This is seen to be particularly a problem in dual-sector institutions which are more subject to this pressure, rather than those universities without a link to any specific TAFE. Statistics actually reveal that TAFE students perform well once they enter into the HE environment. However, even when this evidence is presented to HE staff they appear not to want to see it, or believe it, another indicator of an attitude of arrogance.

Dumbing-down stories are readily recounted by HE academics. Some see it as part of a conspiracy driven by corporate objectives seeking greater numbers of students for monetary gain. Greater numbers of lower qualified students would see students struggle and fail under normal circumstances, but since higher failure rates would not be tolerated by corporate managers then the inevitable consequence is perceived to be the lowering of standards and the abandonment of educational integrity. Dumbing-down stories can become part of the folklore of the institution and are sometimes related in a
sarcastic manner. For example, inter-sectoral institutions share common internet websites between their TAFE and university arms. This raises the conundrum of maintaining a relevant balance between the types of issues of interest to both sectors. Websites act as the institution’s window to the rest of the world. How is the credibility of the university enhanced when the main webpage announces that a horticultural plant sale is being held that weekend at one of the institution’s campuses? If the university is trying to attract top professors and students would they be discouraged if this is the first thing they see on the website? International media outlets are continually looking for interesting or controversial stories to publicise. Off-the-wall short courses (such as ‘make-up for drag queens’) could well be regarded as relevant in a TAFE environment but are almost guaranteed to receive local and even international media coverage. When this occurred in our case example many senior academics at the university received ribbing from their local and international colleagues questioning whether they worked at a real university. They were displeased to see these types of issues promoted under the name of the university. There is no need to wave them around. If the institution is marketing itself as a whole university then there are some things that are detrimental to the credibility of the university.

Within dual-sector institutions the external image of the organisation often does not distinguish between the TAFE and HE arms, much to the chagrin of some HE academics. A senior academic relates the story that when she told her hairdresser the nature of her occupation she received the reply that the hairdresser ‘had also attended that university’. In actuality, the hairdresser possessed a certificate in beauty therapy from the TAFE section. Other examples related by academics refer to the wording on the business cards or email electronic signatures of TAFE teachers. These often fail to mention that the holder in question is actually located in the TAFE division. This indistinguishable nature of the overall institution can also act to reduce the credibility of the university sector.

This derogatory view of TAFE subjects and students can result in an equally derisory mindset towards TAFE teachers - morons teaching the lobotomised! TAFE teachers sometimes believe that HE academics think they have two heads. Certainly they are not regarded as academics. There can exist the perception that they are unintelligent – you are only a TAFE teacher, what do you know? They only teach in TAFE because they
are not capable of aspiring to be an academic in HE. Being a TAFE teacher implies that they have not quite made it to HE, a culture which seems to regard them as a sub-human species. Accordingly TAFE staff do not really feel part of the HE community. TAFE staff can be seen by higher education academics as too protective of their students. This can be reflected in behaviour such as molly-coddling students, making them feel warm, comfortable, and fuzzy within an environment where they feel safe to learn. TAFE staff like to get very close to their students to the point of calling them ‘dear’, ‘honey’, and ‘darl’, but this can leave such students unprepared for higher education where there is a strong atmosphere of individual self-reliance, and a sink or swim approach. This can be compounded by the prevalence of smaller and more intimate classes in TAFE which does little to prepare students for the large lecture classes in higher education. Accordingly, it may occur that academics start to resent TAFE and its teachers for forcing them to accept lower achieving students, degrading standards, and hampering the university in its quest to excel. TAFE staff are regarded either as highly misguided or highly pressured to achieve key performance indicators and targets that are not in the best interests of either sector. In addition TAFE staff may be resented when they are perceived to be acting unethically in terms of misuse of subject material. When TAFE teachers also act as university sessional (casual) lecturers they have access to university subject content which can then be re-directed for use in a number of possible different outlets – TAFE teaching, private consultancy, or fee-paying TAFE courses. This difficulty in controlling how and where university material is used is seen as problematic by academics.

HE academics may perceive TAFE staff as having a chip on their shoulder. They can see them as being rabid, pushy, smart, contemptuous, and sarcastic in their own one-eyed pursuit of grabbing more territory from traditional academic areas and seeking ever more avenues, credits, and exemptions for their students progressing to higher education. Such behaviour is perceived as an irritation, dubbed the ‘fox-terrier syndrome’, with TAFE staff continually scratching at the door of HED. If satisfaction is not obtained from one academic then TAFE staff will make the accusation that ‘you do not pay attention to me’ and will hawk their demands around other academics hoping to find a weak link in the chain. TAFE has its own range of smugness based on what they do and what they are perceived as being good at. Senior administrative academics can become especially annoyed by such behaviour. One such respondent recounts how a
proposal for articulation was plopped on her desk at 5pm the evening before Academic Board was due to meet with the request (demand) that the university faculty should support the articulation for presentation at the Board meeting. The academic’s response was to go ‘crazy angry’ and completely whitewash the incredibly unreasonable process and proposal.

How do TAFE staff react to such attitudes? To a large extent they already feel themselves to be under the pump in relation to HE. There is a power imbalance between the two sectors resulting in under-resourcing of TAFE, lower rates of remuneration, pressure on budgets, casualisation, and higher contact hours. But when TAFE teachers also have to weather the impact of derisory attitudes towards them how do they respond? On the one hand they can become despondent. The attitudes and behaviour that they describe as awful and appalling can result in them becoming demoralised. They tend to become apathetic and increasingly withdrawn. On the other hand, they can become quite belligerent. Situations can become tense. TAFE staff can become defensive and aggressive, reacting quite emotionally to criticism or perceived slights. Hostility, anger, and agitation can ensue. They can describe academics in candid terms such as bullies, fools, and arrogant prats. Tempers can flare. For example, when a HE academic enquired from a TAFE representative during a meeting whether TAFE had a problem with HE this sparked an angry, accusatory twenty-minute diatribe from the TAFE member, castigating HE academics. This leads HE academics to counter with the accusation that derisory attitudes exist on both sides. The process can work both ways.

**TAFE attitudes towards the dominance of the HE paradigm**

These attitudes can have serious consequences for the concept and operation of inter-sectoralism. Why bother dealing with TAFE? What is there to gain? Why do we have to have a TAFE? We are better off not having a TAFE. Within such a climate TAFE can be regarded as something tacked on the side, supplementing the HE process. TAFE issues do not sit comfortably within HE structures and systems, and this has implications for TAFE students dealing with HE administrative staff. There is a suggestion that the latter regard TAFE students as a nuisance because they do not fit neatly into their systems and often lie outside their area of knowledge and expertise. Accordingly, such students can find themselves going backwards and forwards between
TAFE and HE administrations in pursuit of resolution to their problems. The dominant culture and language is perceived to be all about HE. HE always assumes that their way is the best way. Everything comes with a HE paradigm – culture, structures, and systems. The vast majority of emails on the system relate to HE and TAFE staff can become frustrated having to continually delete them. Even the Vice Chancellor is perceived as part of the HE paradigm. The VC is regarded to be the Head of HE and really has nothing to do with TAFE at all. HE achievements and awards in research are richly publicised and celebrated but TAFE achievements receive a more muted reception. Because TAFE is seen as secondary to the HE mission there is constant pressure on it to provide things that HE expects. TAFE staff find themselves in a situation where they have to be bilingual. Approaches inevitably appear to be always one way – from TAFE to HE. Invariably the situation is one of TAFE staff having to impress HE. From a TAFE perspective this can feel like the young kid saying to their big brother ‘please can I play’? TAFE just wants to be able to play, and will do all it takes just to be allowed to play. But always HE has the final say on whether they will or will not be permitted to play. It’s difficult for TAFE staff to raise issues without feeling that they are whinging.

The creation of a TAFE-HE binary division inevitably leads one to think in terms of opposites, separateness, and the privileging of one term over the other. In this case ‘higher education’ is seen as the privileged term, resulting in perceived power imbalances in resources, structures, systems, and processes across the binary division. Imbalances in expectations may be expected to foster problems in creating an environment characterised by genuine interactive processes between peers with different experiences, different backgrounds, and different strengths. The concept of intersectoralism can easily become devalued if it is perceived as merely a pathways program arrangement – just an administrative mechanism for moving students around different subjects. TAFE can easily become regarded as secondary to HE, its purpose being to provide things that HE is expecting. This can indicate a reduction in status of TAFE which is then seen as secondary to the HE mission. This process of privileging the HE paradigm can be regarded as resulting from, and impacting upon, a range of other variables and attitudes.
Under-resourcing of TAFE

The TAFE sector is widely perceived to be under-resourced in relation to HE resourcing levels. This can be attributed to TAFE’s historical training mission as opposed to HE’s research direction. It is claimed that there is more pressure on budgets at TAFE level resulting in lower salary structures, difficulties in securing permanent staff, higher rates of casualisation, and a larger number of contact hours. Leadership styles differ markedly between the two sectors, with the TAFE division emphasising managerial models and HE emphasising collegial approaches. TAFE staff often experience severe problems in raising even a few hundred dollars to support promising projects or basic pieces of infrastructure, whereas it is claimed that academic staff have access to far more favourable sources of funding. This impact could probably be moderated by more equitable sharing of resources across the divisions, but HE is perceived to be unwilling to do this. One example relates to software packages. HE faculties are often favourably resourced with such packages, but if they fail to share these assets with TAFE schools then the latter finds itself disadvantaged when trying to raise the level of its students to a level where they can favourably pathway to HE. One TAFE school found itself having to buy a separate package for its own use. Because of budgetary considerations only the basic version could be purchased as opposed to the full version possessed by HE. Not only did this constitute an ‘unnecessary’ piece of expenditure, it also failed to provide the TAFE students with total familiarity with the package to aid their transition to HE: thus amounting to both an inefficient and ineffective piece of expenditure.

The concept of separate and unequal is often observed in terms of the division of resource assets across the binary divide where TAFE students do not receive the same level of support across wide areas. The inability of TAFE students to access one-on-one career counselling advice is one example, when such resources are available to HE students. Inadequate services can also be observed in relation to disability support services and remedial English, Mathematics, and essay writing support. Such support is often piecemeal and ad hoc, being available only on certain days of the week and provided by personnel who travel in from other campuses. It could be argued that such resource arrangements do not lend credibility to the concept of intersectoralism and perpetuate the idea that there exist two groups of students who should be treated differently. The same argument could also be applied in relation to differences in the provision of librarian resources. When different subject librarians are provided for
TAFE and HE students this can be perceived as treating TAFE students as some sort of sub-human species. In line with the concept of intersectoralism it could be argued that providing the same librarian in charge of a certain discipline from TAFE to PhD would create a different sensation around the notion of seamless education.

Ownership of courses
A major structural impediment between TAFE and HED lies in the ownership of the two sets of courses. TAFE does not own its courses. They are imposed either from a State or National level, with structured curricula that must be followed by TAFE teachers. In contrast, university courses are devised by individual academics and reflect the skills, prejudices, quirkiness, interests, and independence (academic freedom) of these academics. They can readily and easily change the content of their subjects according to their own individual requirements, pending internal approval. TAFE teachers possess far less individual freedom. The difference between the two structures has historically created problems when TAFE courses change, necessitating further rounds of re-accreditation with higher education. This was often regarded as a ‘palaver’ in terms of extra paperwork. Because of the different structures, systems have been devised to suit separate purposes and hence are found not to align across the binary division. The meshing of subject contents can also be troublesome, especially in science and engineering areas. The lack of suitable ability in mathematics has been found particularly problematic for TAFE students attempting to obtain pathway accreditation into university courses.

Non-articulating qualifications
The TAFE innovation of providing Graduate Certificates to students could be regarded as supplying a ready source of students entering fee-paying courses in HED. However, problems in securing agreement on articulation into Graduate Diplomas can result in dead-ends for some students moving along this pathway. Some TAFE staff complain that there always seems to be a barrier and suggest that the situation should be a lot easier than it actually is. In refusing to recognise some TAFE Graduate Certificates, university academics point to problems with inadequate quality control, under-qualified TAFE teachers, inappropriate or irrelevant subject content, and inadequate academic rigour.
Non-representative committees and structures

Structures aimed at bridging the gap between TAFE and HE are sometimes seen as inequitable. The terms of conduct inevitably represent the dominant paradigm and processes are carried out on HE’s terms. For example, TAFE staff rarely has equal representation on committees and other structures. There always appears to be an imbalance. The modus operandi seems to be to invite one representative from each of the university faculties but only one or two TAFE representatives to represent the whole sector. Invariably, TAFE representatives complain of being outnumbered and outgunned on important committees. The argument of treating TAFE schools the same as university faculties appears not to have been embraced. Such an approach would see one representative from each school and one representative from each faculty as members of significant committees. In line with the dominant paradigm the location of meetings is biased towards university premises. TAFE staff always have to make the journey up the hill, or across the tracks, onto the university campus. They feel as though they are being summoned from on high and subsequently wrapped up and embraced within the academic processes that reflect the university’s style, symbols, and structures. ‘Why don’t people meet on the TAFE premises?’ represents a plaintive, if rhetorical, question. ‘What would happen if I instituted an intersectoral advisory committee and invited people from HE to come – do it the reverse way?’

One effect of the privileging dichotomy is that such intersectoral committees are often perceived as devices for doing nothing, even as vehicles for actively blocking any initiatives emanating from TAFE. This can occur even when committees are established in an attempt to combat informal processes that are seen as working against the interests of TAFE. One example relates to the formation of an intersectoral interests committee formed in one faculty to combat the delay in obtaining academic sign-offs for several TAFE programs. The previous process had been extremely loose and informal. Requests went from TAFE straight to the relevant university academic concerned. There was no formal monitoring of the system. No records were kept. There was no register of correspondence, no tracking process, and no timelines or time limits. The result was that requests were often delayed or lost, partly through bureaucracy, and partly through the antagonistic or complacent attitude of many academics. Much time and effort was wasted in following up requests. Despite the obvious failings in this ad hoc system, when an attempt was made to formalise the system it was met with the response from a
TAFE representative ‘I hope this is not just another committee that will be blocking what we want to do’. Although the official reason for establishing the committee was in fact the opposite (to smooth out a previously ineffective process) the clash between the two discourses across the binary division is plain to see. The political nature of such committees is an ever-present perception and never far from the surface. New recruits to such committees often have to learn the hard way about this reality. Battle-lines are normally drawn fairly early on in the life-cycle of such committees. One such respondent recalls how in her first meeting she made very positive remarks about the purpose of the committee being to accommodate the needs of the TAFE members. She was chastised after the meeting to ‘watch my mouth’ and be very careful what she said, as the committee is seen to be politically sensitive. Thus, people who want to bring a fresh view into such committees invariably find themselves stymied.

**TAFE attitudes towards the prevalence of lip-service**

So long as the game is played on HE’s terms the perception remains on the part of TAFE that HE only pays lip service to intersectoralism. This is manifested in a number of ways. TAFE staff perceive that there seems to be a major barrier every time. HE is perceived as only wanting to block TAFE to prevent it from evolving. HE staff are seen to be distant and non-communicative. Prime examples occur in trying to obtain HE sign-offs where plenty of promises are given but are slow to take effect, processes are either too cumbersome or none existent, keeping track of correspondence is difficult because of deficiencies in formal registering, so that things get lost, misplaced, or delayed. The exception occurs when an issue is urgent or critical to the interests of a HE academic, in which case TAFE staff are expected to be immediately on call and the issue has to be solved quickly. Other than this it is the TAFE teacher who has to make the phone call or initiate a meeting. Such meetings are invariably held in the HE academic’s office at the university or somewhere else on HE property. Academics do not like going across to TAFE. There are very few serious attempts to bring people together and when this does occur TAFE never has equal representation on anything. When interaction does occur it is invariably at a basic level. Mundane issues proliferate and are usually resolved on the terms of the HE academic. Thus, issues around exemption mapping are common (where HE always like to see two or more TAFE subjects matching to one university subject) as are issues around subject content (where
TAFE teachers are not allowed to make suggestions about prescribed textbooks). But when TAFE staff try to initiate contact about more strategic or forward-thinking issues they find themselves rebuffed. HE academics act cool about such initiatives, do not respond, or attend in very poor numbers. They appear to exude the attitude that they will contact TAFE when they need them.

**TAFE attitudes towards homogenising pedagogic traditions**

The privileging of HE lays an emphasis more on the transition of students from TAFE to HE rather than the reverse. Because of this there is constant pressure on TAFE to provide qualifications that provide things that HE is expecting, such as graded assessments and research components in subjects. It could be argued that this does not facilitate the central concept of intersectoralism of ‘separate but equal’. Competency in an area of learning implies an understanding of the entire area and the ability to apply that particular skill, technique, or knowledge in practice. Graded assessment, in contrast, can allow a student to pass with only a 50% grasp of the subject area and perhaps glaring inadequacies across a wide range of topics. It could be argued that the privileging of graded assessment combined with the emphasis on pathways progression from TAFE to HE provides a movement away from a diversity of learning styles to one particular learning style. The underlying assumption behind this movement is that everybody learns the same way, and that the HE way is the better way of doing it, whereas a genuine embrace of intersectoralism should acknowledge that there exist a variety of learning styles. One pointed example given by a TAFE teacher relates to the teaching of auto apprentices within the system who spend 95% of their time writing in books. It is claimed that such students do not choose an apprenticeship because they want to write in books, nor do their teachers want to assess those books. They want to work in workshops and be assessed in those workshops.

**Lack of knowledge and understanding**

Where do such attitudes originate from? An obvious candidate lies in the potential lack of understanding within each sector regarding the capabilities of the other. This in turn may be accounted for simply by a lack of working knowledge of what each sector does. TAFE and HE have different histories, cultures, and legislative provisions. Accordingly
they exhibit separate reporting relationships, funding arrangements, working conditions, values, missions, markets, structures, and teaching styles.

**HE regards TAFE as diverse and complex**

In particular, the diversity of TAFE programmes and activities has become so broad that many HE academics feel bewildered by its complexity. Traditionally, TAFE has been associated with blue-collar apprentice traineeships, a sort of year 13 level qualification. However, this market has recently shrunk to below 10%, to be replaced by a wide range of other evolving and alternative markets. Key examples include the two-year associate degree program and the graduate certificate program, as well as the rapidly growing advanced diploma in frontline management where the training is predominantly performed in the workplace using the in-house systems of the companies concerned. Graduate certificates now occupy two niches: those approved and accredited by the Academic Board of the university, and those that are externally accredited by the State. These developments have left many traditional university academics behind. They are often surprised to learn that in Victoria alone as many as 42 private organisations are able to offer degree, masters, and PhD level qualifications, including theological colleges, the Australian Institute of Management, and the Bureau of Meteorology. TAFE now finds itself part of a growing network that incorporates such institutions and activities as: a college, university link, foundation and bridging courses, short courses, consulting activities, industry solutions, tailored company programs, and off-campus (in-company) programs, amongst others. Such complexity can lead to confusion and a lack of knowledge and understanding, breeding negativity, angst, and mistrust. Such developments may impede effective intersectoral collaborations between TAFE and HE.

Manifestations of HE academics feeling confused and overwhelmed by the complexity of intersectoral issues are found at many levels. Due to staff turnover a sizeable number of academics are being exposed to intersectoral issues on a continual basis, especially at first and second year undergraduate level. These academics are often junior level people, or have recently been recruited from other universities without a sister TAFE institution. Such academics are often instructed to liaise with TAFE and other colleagues in the preparation and delivery of their subject units, but without any prior organisational memory or a feel for the game they can be left unsupported and exposed. Instructions
might be delivered to the academic via a phone call or email message, or as part of an otherwise crowded meeting agenda. Questions might abound within the mind of the academic – why should I collaborate with outside competition, why should I give away my intellectual property, what are you giving me in return, what is the nature and level of the interaction supposed to be? Such academics can feel totally confused, not only about what to do but how to do it and why they are expected to do it. One such academic found herself attending an ad hoc committee in conjunction with several members from TAFE and its associated institutions. She was instructed to ‘follow the manual’ in regard to subject content. Unfortunately this was the first time she had been made aware of the existence of any such manual, and so the two sides of the committee sat there open-mouthed asking the question to each other ‘well what have you been teaching so far in the unit?’

**HE places low priority on TAFE issues**

Intersectoral issues are usually fairly low on the priority list at lower levels in the university hierarchy and invariably are omitted from the agenda items in departmental and faculty meetings. HE units are too preoccupied with their own internal issues and lack the time, inclination, and resources to do anything different. Intersectoral issues are mostly left to a few usual suspects or those with a known interest in the area. Everybody else is too busy or too absorbed elsewhere, or frankly uninterested. HE academics have to bear the usual criticism that they are too insular within the university environment, too focused on their own sector, so that it is difficult for them to recognise value elsewhere. They do not know about TAFE, do not understand it, and do not want to understand it. Siloed thinking can breed tribal parochialism, sometimes to an unhealthy extent.

**HE misunderstands the motives for TAFE articulation**

If people fail to appreciate the motives underlying the behaviour of other people then this can also account for a lack of inter-relational understanding. Misunderstanding motives can easily happen across the TAFE-HE boundary. A TAFE teacher commented on the presumption held by HE that TAFE is only interested in articulating as many students as they can into HE whilst securing the maximum number of exemptions. For
example, there exists the perception that TAFE is continually pushing to obtain two years of university exemption for two years of TAFE study. This belief is erroneous. The true situation is that TAFE merely wants to achieve due recognition for the learning that its students have undertaken to enable them to be able to progress to other learning opportunities. Due to this misperception, university academics can find themselves disadvantaged when trying to sell their degree programmes to TAFE articulants. They tend to use the wrong language and emphasise the wrong issues. For example, a TAFE teacher cited the presentation made by one university convenor to TAFE students which was heavily weighted towards spelling out the exemptions that these students could obtain. Unfortunately this missed the mark and students failed to enrol in meaningful numbers. He had misunderstood the motives and aims of the students. The explanation was proffered that what students are looking for is an outcome. They do not care if they have to study for an extra six months or an extra year. Their concern is that if they do the extra study will they get a quality degree out of it.

**HE misunderstands the motives for TAFE market expansion**

The fear on the part of HE that TAFE is continually seeking to make a grab for parts of its territory is a factor that can also account for a misperception of motives. The apprehension in HE that TAFE is going to take over some of their market can create a reticence which impedes intersectoral development. The consequences of this apprehension, and the impact on the perceptions of TAFE personnel, can lead to a form of double guessing of what one sector believes the other sector is thinking. The result can be a complex mixture of motive attribution. A university lecturer with some experience of working across the TAFE-HE divide provides some justification of this double guessing by stating that he thinks TAFE thinks that HE always blocks them because it does not want them to evolve. An area rife with mistrust and misunderstandings is that of Management Studies. Many HE academics claim that this market rightly belongs to them to which they possess exclusive rights. Some loudly and publicly proclaim that all management education and training should occur at graduate level only. This can create tensions between Business Faculties and TAFE, especially when the latter is already well ensconced in the advanced diploma in frontline management, many industry training programmes, and some executive training. It could
be claimed that the difference between the rhetoric and the reality of what has actually happened on the ground reveals a basic lack of understanding of TAFE capabilities.

**TAFE misunderstands HE processes**

Viewed from the other side of the fence, HE perceives that TAFE has little understanding or knowledge of the realities of the university academic environment. TAFE is seen by HE to be very creative and marketing oriented. They are able to respond faster than HE to a perceived market. This can make them almost gung ho in their approach. It is little wonder that frustration can set in when their intersectoral partner is perceived to be acting too slowly to capitalise on rapidly evolving opportunities. The problem exists that if TAFE finds a new niche market to which they want to respond, by the time HE provides its approval that market may have disappeared. TAFE is a relatively nimble organisation, but HE is far less flexible. This lack of responsiveness is explained by the strictures of maintaining rigorous academic standards which underlie the essence of a university’s reputation. To lose this reputation would spell doom. Academic Boards are very particular. Quality assurance programs, professional bodies, and external accreditation all place severe restrictions on the speed with which a university can move to implement new programs and respond to the market. Maintaining the integrity of academic standards is of prime concern to the university. However, this is sometimes criticised by TAFE as red tape and bureaucratic lethargy. TAFE does not appear to sufficiently understand how academia works or the constraints and limitations that restrict HE in what it can and cannot do to maintain academic standards. Trying to make TAFE understand this reality is a real problem for HE.

**TAFE misunderstands workload of HE academics**

Frustration can also occur when TAFE sees value in certain programs or markets that HED does not perceive to be in their interests or which will provide no benefit to them. If TAFE is seen by HE to be continually putting the onus on HE to be accommodating then frustration is more likely to be shared across the two sectors, especially when academic personnel already feel overburdened by competing demands. TAFE teachers are also contemptuous of HE academics and wonder how they manage to fill their time.
TAFE teachers invariably spend about 22 hours per week in the classroom face-to-face with students, whereas the average classroom time for most academics is between six and ten hours. What do they do with all the spare time? By contrast with this attitude, academics now claim that they are over-burdened with a wide range of divergent responsibilities, which encompass not only teaching but also conducting research, supervising research students, applying for external grants, performing managerial duties, and serving the community. They are just too busy. The time pressure on academics is now far more severe than it was 10-15 years ago. It is claimed that this is not adequately understood by TAFE, resulting in gross misconceptions about what academics can be usefully called on to perform and within which time frames. Accordingly, when TAFE comes calling with its requests for extra accommodation of programs it is perhaps unsurprising that HE may tend to use arguments that sufficient time does not exist to explore all such developments simply because it would be nice to do. University faculties invariably do not possess the resources to allow people the luxury of exploring new intersectoral possibilities. Without extra funding sources, existing resources are probably deemed to be more usefully expended elsewhere.

Inadequate communication

Why does this perception exist that each sector lacks knowledge and understanding of the other? Perhaps the argument should be accepted, as suggested by a faculty dean, that such a situation comes with the territory. It is natural. When two organisations have very different missions, and are funded from different sources, perhaps we should consider it normal that each shares an inability to fully comprehend the other’s way of doing things. Any resulting tensions and cultural clashes should be accepted and lived with as long as it does not lead to civil war. That is the price that has to be paid. However, whilst accepting the veracity of such a viewpoint, perhaps the argument could be advanced that intersectoral lack of knowledge and understanding could be ameliorated through the existence of adequate communication mechanisms.

Structural separation

Structural arrangements can impact significantly upon the nature of communication. When TAFE and HE staff are co-located within the same school, for example, it could
be argued that this presents less onerous communication issues as compared with the situation when TAFE and HE personnel are located within separate divisions. Communication issues are exacerbated when TAFE and HE divisions are physically separately located, either on the same campus, or spread across a number of different campuses in separate locations. Physical separation is symbolically enhanced by the accompanying discourse which staff tend to use when referring to each other, for example expressions such as ‘across the road’, or ‘the other side of the railway line’, or ‘up the hill’, or ‘suburb X’. These boundaries perpetuate the concept of divided communities leading separate existences. In such a scenario it is easy for staff to become labelled and stereotyped. Categorising people as ‘the person from TAFE’ tends to regard people as advocates of certain group loyalties rather than as a person who may possess a valid idea. Issues can easily become regarded as TAFE-HE issues, reinforcing boundaries and battle lines, and misrepresenting possible legitimate arguments.

**High-level communication arrangements**

In situations where structural separation between TAFE and HE becomes more pronounced a traditional solution to communication issues is usually sought through the creation of bureaucratic mechanisms such as formal committees. The logical starting point is to create a high-level committee whose membership is drawn from senior management personnel. Committees of such a nature tend to be remote and attract mixed reviews from both participants and non-participants. They have little significant impact on the day-to-day activities of most personnel at the coal face. On the positive side they are useful for raising and conducting debates and issues of concern. They can initiate significant developments and assist in pushing along such developments once commenced. On the other hand, the effectiveness of such committees can be hampered if they are not adequately funded and resourced, which is invariably the case. Additionally, problems can be caused when members who possess a wide overview of issues are replaced from one meeting to another by proxies who do not possess the same wide overview. It is difficult to achieve a consistent membership across successive meetings because of frequent absences of key personnel due to overseas trips and competing demands on their time. Effectiveness is also diminished because such committees invariably possess only advisory rather than policy-making powers. At the end of the day decisions about intersectoral activities are made within the two divisions
of either TAFE or HE, and not from a committee that is trying to tell either sector or division what to do, no matter how well meaning that committee may be.

**Faculty-level communication arrangements**

Lower down in the hierarchy such formal mechanisms tend to die away. Faculty-level intersectoral committees tend to be ad hoc or informal mechanisms, varying from one faculty to another according to individual or group initiatives. Such committees may be established to deal with specific issues, such as articulation pathways. Depending on the personalities involved it is easy for such committees to become political in nature, where members act defensively in their behaviour according to the usual battle lines. As the personalities change it is easy for such committees to take on a transient nature by evolving into something else according to personal or group agendas. Some issues fall off the radar screen whilst others get introduced, sometimes repeatedly. The membership may find itself continually debating the same issues and attempting to re-invent the wheel. Changes in membership imply that relationships have to be re-established, which invariably takes time as trust and commitment have to be built up.

**Low-level serendipitous communication arrangements**

The vast majority of communication between TAFE and HE personnel occurs through ad hoc mechanisms. They tend to pick up knowledge accidentally and informally through their own contacts and connections. Serendipity is rampant. A faculty Dean relates how she has never attended any kind of briefing seminar where the differences between TAFE and HE have been explained. Issues of this nature have never been systematically addressed at the corporate level, or served up formally. All her knowledge has been picked up piecemeal and anecdotally along the way. For other TAFE and HE personnel such accidental learning can occur through a variety of channels such as at parties, over drinks and nibbles at special functions, through a friend or spouse, attending a seminar, at a conference, on a leadership course, or attending one-off information sharing days. Such chance meetings often have a positive impact on the recipients. People who meet by accident at events such as conferences are able to share their projects and ideas with one another leading to on-going collaborative relationships across the sectoral divide. A faculty dean with many years of employment at the same
institution reports how he met several senior TAFE personnel, including heads of school, on a leadership training course that he had never met previously. This was a terrific development for him as he was able to get to know them by listening to their challenges and their views of the world. However, it is ironic, and perhaps an indictment of the system, that such a positive result came about as a by-product of a leadership course and not through the inherent communication mechanisms within the organisation.

**Intersectoral tensions**

At low levels in the hierarchy there are little or no attempts (on a regular or systematic basis) to bring together people from across the TAFE-HE divide other than to work on specific or focused issues such as accreditation, pathways, and credit exemptions. Because less information is systematically transmitted there exists the probability of more tensions and misconceptions being generated at this level between TAFE teachers, HE academics, students, and administrators. Students enrolled in the HE division who happen to be currently undertaking TAFE subjects can find themselves caught in an administrative conundrum as they are shunted back and forth between the TAFE and HE administrative machinery. They often receive the impression that nobody knows what they are doing. Inadequate communication can result in serious pedagogical mistakes. A large number of TAFE-HE programs appear to be slapped together in a top-down way with little or any consideration for what the consequences might be for students. When inadequate communication occurs between the two sectors there is little way of identifying whether or not the material taught at TAFE level is responsive to the material taught at HE level later on.

TAFE teachers invariably claim that they possess far more knowledge and understanding of HE culture and activities than HED academics possess about TAFE activities. Virtually all TAFE teachers possess at least an undergraduate degree and hence have experience of HE culture. Increasing numbers are now also obtaining Masters and PhD qualifications. However, only a minority of HE academics possess a TAFE qualification or have experience of working in TAFE. This is particularly pronounced at senior management levels in HE. Accordingly TAFE teachers are more inclined to complain that HE academics do not actually know what is taught in individual TAFE classes, or how it is taught. They rarely take the time to attend TAFE
classes as observers or examine subject outlines in detail. Invariably however TAFE teachers do claim that they examine HE subject outlines and it falls upon them to initiate the communication with HE academics for the purpose of mapping content. TAFE contacts and communications with university faculties can be fraught with potential jealously as different faculties try to defend their respective turfs. Because university faculties and departments sometimes overlap, the TAFE division can find itself negotiating with two or more separate university units. If any department or faculty feels it has been ignored this can spark fiery exchanges of emails – ‘this is our territory’, ‘this is the first time we have heard about this’, and ‘why have we not been consulted?’

On the other hand, HE academics claim that the complexity and diversity of TAFE activities and its associated networks leaves them exposed and isolated when dealing with a cast of thousands where they are left alone to figure out for themselves who is whom and what they are expected to do. Frustrations and intolerance can arise. Decisions made internally within separate divisions, often with the best intentions in mind, can have severe intersectoral implications. Existing agreements and relationships can be continually disrupted when one division makes a decision without consulting or communicating with the other sector. This can occur when elements of TAFE unit modules are suddenly omitted, inserted, or changed without letting the other side know; or when TAFE wins a grant by making certain commitments without consulting the people in HE who may be responsible for delivering elements of the project. This can cause angst and generate tensions.

**Summary**

This chapter has presented the findings of the thesis as they relate to the core category of ‘preciousness’. It is argued that a two-way process of preciousness exists between TAFE and HE which acts as a blockage to the achievement of intersectoral collaboration. Preciousness is composed of three categories - discordant attitudes, inadequate communication, and lack of knowledge and understanding. The model foresees that inadequate communication and a lack of knowledge and understanding across the TAFE-HE divide creates intersectoral tension through the generation of in-groups and out-groups on either side of the divide. These tensions fuel discordant
attitudes which, in turn, tend to fuel further rounds of inadequate communication and a lack of knowledge and communication.

The next chapter presents the further findings of the thesis as they relate to the series of strategies that emerged from the interview data. It is argued that effective implementation of these strategies would act to ‘unblock preciousness’. This could serve the purpose of reducing intersectoral tensions and hence enable smoother intersectoral collaboration through the process of ‘transforming blocking into facilitating’.
Chapter 5
Strategies for unblocking preciousness

This chapter presents further findings of the thesis as they relate to the series of strategies that emerged from the interview data. It is argued that effective implementation of these strategies acts to ‘unblock preciousness’, thus serving the purpose of reducing intersectoral tensions and hence enabling smoother intersectoral collaboration through the process of ‘transforming blocking into facilitating’. Figure 5.1 reproduces the model from chapter 3 of ‘strategies for unblocking preciousness’. The composition of the model forms the basis for the structuring of this current chapter into three main sections, namely strategies to address: inadequate communication; lack of knowledge and understanding; and discordant attitudes.
Figure 5.1
Strategies for unblocking preciousness

Inadequate communication

Strategies to address
Low-level communication inadequacies
Faculty-level communication inadequacies
High-level communication inadequacies
Structural separation

Lack of knowledge and understanding

Strategies to address
Diversity, complexity, and low priority
Misunderstandings about TAFE motives for articulation
Misunderstandings about TAFE motives for market expansion
TAFE misunderstandings of HE processes and workloads

Discordant attitudes

Strategies to address
HE attitudes towards different status
HE attitudes towards TAFE – its students, staff, and qualifications
Dominance of the HE paradigm
Prevalence of lip-service
Homogenised pedagogic traditions

Reduced intersectoral tensions

Each of these categories and sub-categories, which act as strategies for unblocking preciousness, will now be presented in the rest of the chapter.

Inadequate communication

In chapter 4, the following categories of inadequate communication were identified by interviewees:
• Low-level serendipitous communication arrangements
• Faculty-level communication arrangements
• High-level communication arrangements
• Structural separation

Strategies to address these categories of inadequate communication are presented and analysed below.

**Strategies to address low-level communication inadequacies**

The main strategy to address low-level communication inadequacies can be labelled ‘organic serendipity at the local level’. Many intersectoral developments fail to realise their true potential because of the forced nature by which such projects are initiated. A fairly typical approach is that somebody (usually a senior manager or administrator) decides that the institution needs a certain intersectoral program. From this point, bureaucracy takes over. A cast of thousands may be consulted, or, a high-level committee or working party is put together to pursue the initiative. The whole process becomes a top-down affair, inviting communication problems and inevitable resistance. More often than not the process can become mired in organisational politics.

Respondents have suggested that a better approach would involve one of organic emergence at the local level rather than trying to force the process at a high level. Such organic processes can often emerge through building on serendipitous events. For instance, the process can emerge when a TAFE teacher or HE academic says to themselves that they are really interested in a certain issue or development and seeks to get other people involved in the issue. This could be, for example, an area or topic that is emerging and for which a certain amount of demand or potential demand might exist. Or a HE academic may notice that their TAFE equivalent is already working with material that may mutually aid the two sets of students across the binary divide. The process would then evolve from this enthusiasm and common interest between peers. When keen individuals come together at a local level they can often exhibit the ability to plough on regardless of the difficulties they may face. The passion to achieve an outcome can motivate them to forge ahead despite the barriers. It is better at this early
stage to aim for a small team of committed individuals working together at the local level rather than spreading the interest to a large group of individuals for fear of increasing bureaucracy and communication problems sabotaging the project at the outset. Large numbers of people may increase the possibility of the group getting bogged down and sectional or individual self-interests might work against early success.

The nature of the personalities and individuals involved at this stage is a crucial factor in future success. Respondents were able to call upon the successful introduction of Internationalisation at the institution as an example of such a successful development. This process involved visionary people who could see the possibilities and opportunities for future developments. Ideally, such people should be situated in separate divisions across the institution (TAFE, HE, Management). They should be excellent communicators across all levels, who possess a global view of potential opportunities rather than a narrow sectional interest, and who are regarded as movers and shakers who can get things done. They should be the type of people who are not only keen on the success of the project but who know other people to push, when to push them, and how.

The personal touch involving one-on-one relationships and constant communication is a strategy to be recommended. Things can be made to happen by putting effort into building relationships and constantly talking to key people who can make things happen. These people need to be kept constantly informed about what is going on but without incurring too much interference which could jeopardise the manageability of the emerging project by making the group too large. Verbal interaction of a face-to-face nature is often touted as a better communication mechanism than emails or blog correspondence. Because trust is a necessary element of organic developments, personal contacts are recommended as superior to electronic communication which can sometimes be misinterpreted or taken as offensive or curt. The necessity to avoid upsetting people is paramount. For example, a TAFE teacher who has had a lot of success in developing intersectoral interaction states that his strategy is to get to know as many people as possible on a personal level. He finds the name of a relevant person through the institution’s website and always telephones that person or knocks on doors to introduce himself and explain his issue. He will ask that person to agree to a personal meeting where they can discuss relevant points. He will treat such meetings as a problem to be solved or an opportunity to be taken advantage of. Inevitably, goodwill is
generated when things are done this way. Rarely has this personal approach failed to work for him.

**Strategies to address Faculty-level communication inadequacies**

Faculty level communications can range between the formal and informal. At the formal level, one mechanism, for example, could be a subcommittee of the Faculty Academic Committee comprised of its own chairperson and regular membership. As explained by one interviewee, this would mean that for every course where a relationship existed then this would be subject to regular review and every new development would be automatically analysed by the same group of regular members. Similar arrangements might also exist in the form of exemption advisers for each of the discipline areas. Such people would examine each particular syllabus and decide suitable articulation arrangements depending upon the circumstances. However, as with any arrangements of this sort, care must be taken to ensure that operations do not become too broad-brush and bureaucratic. It is also important that direction is provided by senior management, in the absence of which many issues can become ad hoc and without vision. Criticisms of such arrangements by some interviewees mentioned that although they were meant to be permanent and formal structures, in reality they met only spasmodically and had a tendency to blow hot and cold. Whatever the type of formal structural arrangement agreed upon, it is important that the mechanism concentrates upon systematic review to avoid situations where problems are dealt with on an ad hoc basis as and when they arise. One interviewee explained an example of just such an unfortunate scenario where a large number of TAFE students were due to go through the HE enrolment process in a few days time. The enrolment team discovered at the last moment that several modules that used to comprise part of the Advanced Diploma had been dropped off the program at some stage and this created an urgent dilemma that had to be resolved under much stress at the eleventh hour.

Less formal arrangements at the faculty level could encompass what may be called ‘meet and greet’ sessions between TAFE and HE staff. Such sessions might involve such things as intersectoral forums, affiliations, joint projects, seminars, lunches, opening ceremonies, and so on. They would be aimed at finding opportunities for people to come together and mix in order to start to break down barriers. For example,
one interviewee spoke in great depth about an Information Sharing Day that had recently been conducted in one faculty, which brought together staff from HE and TAFE. The event lasted for seven hours. During this time formal presentations were made by both HE and TAFE personnel about significant issues as they affected their relationships. These were interspersed with less formal icebreakers and group experiential workshops, as well as coffee breaks, lunch, and final drinks. Another interviewee spoke about a TAFE Transition Day held in a faculty which was aimed at attracting articulating TAFE students to attend a conference aimed at explaining the nuances of the educational journey between TAFE and HE. This conference was free of charge, was presented by both TAFE and HE staff, and was aimed at raising awareness of the similarities and differences in the concepts of independent learning, time management, thinking styles, problem solving, and academic standards and assessments.

Even though emphasis can be laid on creating structures and events as above, they will rarely succeed in the absence of goodwill, cooperation, and a willingness to develop the necessary relationships. For example, it was mentioned above about the situation where only at the eleventh hour was it discovered that several modules had been dropped from an Advanced Diploma program. One course of remedy would be to ‘try and blame somebody’ or else to ‘sort somebody out’. However, the interviewee involved explained that his approach was to seek an immediate meeting with the relevant people from TAFE, find out what they had been teaching for the past year, and together work out an arrangement that would solve the problem for when the students turned up expecting their articulation to be trouble free. Although this approach could also be interpreted as ‘putting out spot fires’ it was considered necessary in order to maintain goodwill. The better solution lies in ensuring that this sort of thing does not happen at all, where communication flows both ways, and both TAFE and HE are talking more regularly during the semester. Perhaps it could be argued that the most significant relationship lies at the top of the TAFE and Faculty hierarchies in the form of TAFE heads of school and HE faculty deans. A fraught relationship at this level is likely to be role modelled down the hierarchy adversely impacting the nature of other relationships.

The importance of strong relationships was emphasised by a TAFE teacher who expressed the opinion that what actually cemented arrangements was in fact knowing
the academics in HE and these academics in turn knowing the TAFE teachers and trusting them. This allowed the two sides to ‘do deals’ by facilitating the TAFE teacher to approach the selection officer and ‘push’ their best students. Such students may not necessarily have obtained the best marks but could be considered as emotionally ready for HE. Given the correct relationship, the HE academic would accept this advice as being valid and reliable and as a result the right students would find their way into HE who might otherwise have been excluded. Accordingly, this type of approach could be considered as the ‘underpinning’ of a mature relationship where the best outcomes could be achieved for both TAFE and HE. The concept of ‘doing deals’ between people who had a good relationship with each other was also mentioned by another interviewee, in this case involving TAFE teachers taking first year subjects in HE programs. This occurred because the TAFE personnel possessed expertise that ‘could be sold’ to HE:

He [HE manager] could pay me more than what I would get, I would be paying my staff, so the staff would get the normal time allowances of TAFE and as a department manager I would get a bit more and he would get it cheaper that what he could employ sessional staff, so you both had some opportunities and the staff loved it, there were ways of making it work when it has been about getting on with people, spending the time with the people, and working out what you can do with the people.

In summary, a strategy that aims to marry formal structures with informal relationships would appear to possess the strongest possibility of more lasting success. Personalities change, and people move on to do different things. This can affect the quality of any arrangements that are based only on informal relationships. This is why any system needs an effective structural support.

**Strategies to address high-level communication inadequacies**

The correct attitude displayed by the VC will act to set the climate for the rest of the organisation. Commitment and intervention at the highest level are seen to be vital ingredients. For example, a VC who has just pioneered the development of a former college to university status may be so pre-occupied with maintaining the aura of a university environment that other aspects involving intersectoralism could be downplayed. Thus, commitment in this case is seen as being compromised to other objectives. VCs must be seen to actively embrace intersectoralism, promote the cause
with vigour, and set up relevant structures and systems to enable the vision to become reality. If these actions are not seen to be in place by the rest of the organisation then there is a high likelihood that it will be interpreted as a lack of interest in the issue. Thus, VCs must walk the talk and go beyond the rhetoric if they want to see the organisation enthusiastically take up the cause.

One important measure that can be taken is to appoint a strategic champion in the form of an intersectoral driver. This action might form the early stage of a journey towards an intersectoral mission. Such a driver could be responsible for raising awareness within the institution, identifying and defining significant issues, bringing together key people in common forums, and creating an internal discourse within the institution. A key objective would be to obtain agreement that intersectoral development should be one of the strategic themes within the mission statement of the institution. Once this strategic theme has been embraced the process would then start of building a framework around this theme in the form of structures and systems to facilitate its advancement and maturity. Without these initial mechanisms, the institution is less likely to be well coordinated and hence more likely to flounder.

An important back-up to these initial measures could involve the creation of an overarching intersectoral infrastructure called an Intersectoral Advisory Committee or Intersectoral Forum (or some such name). Such a high-level committee would go a long way towards combating the danger of vagueness or a lack of specificity and direction which could act to undermine strategic direction. The committee would preferably be chaired by the VC or other senior delegate and would provide an ongoing forum for discussion of intersectoral issues amongst senior personnel and make recommendations to the Executive Group. This movement from a strategic champion to a strategic structure is important to send the message that it is all very well to have documents that purport to show that the university is doing various things in the name of intersectoral development but were these ever going to rise above the level of ad hoc, almost whimsical, developments that carry little weight or were not terribly profound? Embedding a formal and permanent structure within the university would go a long way towards sending the correct message, especially if attended by the relevant high-level managers from across the divisions and appropriately funded by the institution. The amount of funding directed towards a certain objective is always a significant indicator
of how seriously this activity is taken. Funding could be used to facilitate significant intersectoral projects such as pathways, retention of students, pedagogical issues, or identifying gaps in articulation pathways between TAFE and HE. It could also be used to establish communication networks at a lower level but which would be connected into the formal framework of the overarching committee. Such a communication network could bring together in a structured way such people as HE senior and middle managers, deans of faculties, heads of departments, and course coordinators with their TAFE counterparts, thus bringing together groups of people who have probably little opportunity to meet with one another during the normal course of events. Specific outcomes are more likely than previously to come from such structured arrangements, for example, the development of associate degrees. It is recognised as important that these arrangements are not used for settling scores or mindlessly promoting a particular self-interest. For example, a senior manager expressed the view that to be of any lasting value they must genuinely explore opportunities for development, and what the blockages might be and how they can be removed.

It is about having opportunities where people can have a forum for discussion that isn’t about ‘what about me I am from HE’ or ‘what about me I am from TAFE’ but actually as colleagues coming to the table looking for a solution, and that is a degree of maturity of an organisation, a learning organisation, it is about creating an opportunity for people to come together.

With increasing maturity, a natural progression in intersectoral development would see the disbanding of such high-level committees or forums in favour of more meaningful integration structures. It has been traditional amongst Victorian dual-sector universities that at a certain stage of maturity a single Academic Senate would be created to take over the functions and roles that were previously carried out by two separate bodies – an Academic Board in HE and a Board of Studies in TAFE. In terms of legislation this has now been mandated by law in Victoria, although most of the dual-sector universities had already anticipated this move and had made the necessary changes beforehand. Such a structural change is also enhanced by simultaneous systemic changes in terms of policy harmonisation. Separation between HE and TAFE has customarily resulted in a panoply of academic policies and procedures with overlaps, gaps, and duplications across sectors. Policy development was a laborious and frustrating task, mainly performed by Academic Policy Committees of existing Boards. However, a more mature academic governance structure makes possible the creation of a single integrated
policy framework with more robust intersectoral quality indicators. Other developments that can be more easily accommodated by such an integrated arrangement is the creation of a guaranteed entry scheme from TAFE diplomas and advanced diplomas to HE undergraduate degrees. Fragmentation and piecemeal developments are avoided by such an arrangement giving greater certainty to the process. However, as with all structural changes, these are not necessarily guaranteed to be a panacea in the absence of sound informal relationships. Despite having equal representation on the united Board, TAFE representatives can still find themselves submerged below the dominance of HE issues which invariably occupy most time on these Boards. Be this as it may, the existence of a common debating forum is almost certain to lead to a greater degree of awareness and understanding of intersectoral issues amongst individual members of the Board.

**Strategies to address structural separation**

Some dual-sector institutions do not physically separate their TAFE and HE staff. They are co-located on the same campus, building, and/or level so that staff can freely communicate with each other from closely located office spaces. However, in practice, this is the exception rather than the rule. When people are structurally or physically separated from one another, this can lead to little or no communication and hence the development of negative feelings towards those ‘outsiders’. Hence, any remedial strategies would be expected to aim at compensating for this lack of closeness through creating other avenues for mutual contact and mixing across the divisions. Such occasions as social functions, seminars, orientation programs, open days and so on provide good opportunities. It would be better if these avenues took the form of structured, formal forums or events where TAFE teachers and HE academics could come together in one place for a dedicated period of time to talk about common problems, issues, and new developments. If these events were organised on a regular or rolling basis in the form of a series of forums then it would greatly enhance the climate of ‘getting to know you’. One interviewee talked about ‘scaling up pockets of excellence’ that already existed. This would entail identifying perhaps a relationship between two or three people that is already working well with identifiable benefits and scaling up that arrangement to a higher level. This might entail ‘saying OK, every third Wednesday of the month we are going to get the HE faculty of whatever and the TAFE school of whoever, and we are going to have them sit around and talk about it’. In order
for this strategy to work it would be necessary to create time and space in people’s
timetables for them to interact throughout the year, to actually sit down with the people
on the ‘other side of the equation’, and for everybody to realise that this can lead to a
win-win situation. It is often too easy for people to claim that they are too busy and that
such events are an unwelcome intrusion on their hectic schedule. Finding time to
accommodate competing demands involves an opportunity cost that some people may
believe is not worth the effort. Therefore, it is necessary to emphasise the good things
that can flow from such ongoing interaction, perhaps in the form of modifying modules
or finding solutions to persistent problems that can be viewed as outweighing the
opportunity cost of setting time aside for additional events. A good example of this is
provided by a faculty dean who attended a leadership course attended by people from
across the institution:

The most valuable part of it for me is that we had people from right across the
university from corporate, HE, TAFE, etc. I met two Heads of School and two senior
people in TAFE that I had not met before. It was terrific. I got to know them, listened to
what their views of the world were and what the challenges were for them, and that is
terrible that it was the first time it had happened to me in all those years because it was
a by-product of a leadership course and not the objective of a specific intersectoral
initiative.

Other avenues for compensating strategies could involve such initiatives as TAFE
teachers acting as sessional academics in university programs, or else assuming the
responsibility for delivering first year undergraduate university subjects or the first year
Graduate Certificate level of a university Masters program. Many degrees and HE
subjects contain some vocational components and it is possible that these could be
taught by TAFE staff. This already happens quite frequently in certain areas, for
example machine shop practice for engineering students. However, other areas could
also be opened up to similar practices, for example, computer literacy for arts degree
students. Cross-fertilisation of staff could also be achieved through a form of industry
release program whereby TAFE teachers spend some time on secondment in a HE
environment, and HE academics also spend time working in a TAFE environment.
TAFE and HE can also work as a team in offering customised training to industry. A
TAFE manager explained ‘we used to be able to go to industry, I would go as TAFE
head of school together with my HE head of department and we would say to industry
what do you want because whatever you want we can give you as a team’. A good
strategy would be to encourage people to think not in terms of ‘separateness’ but rather in terms of ‘bridging’. Creating formal master plans and high level structures such as an Intersectoral Advisory Committee or a combined Academic Senate can be regarded as necessary interventions but are always unlikely to achieve good penetration down the hierarchy unless they can operate in conjunction with the key divisions across the institution. Success in this endeavour, in the words of a senior HE academic and manager involves ‘getting inside the head space of that other person’. This involves everybody trying to see events from the perspective of the other person. By so doing, people are enabled to ‘talk the other person’s language’ and ‘give the benefits using their terminology’. Too often, arguments and debate are conducted between TAFE teachers and HE academics where each participant uses language known to them but not overly appreciated by others. For example, the HE academic will use arguments conducted in arcane terminology about critical reflection, questioning assumptions, and advancing knowledge whilst the TAFE teacher uses other terminology aimed at transmitting skills, building competencies, and training students to be industry ready. Such bi-lingualism provides both conceptual and practical advantages as explained by a HE academic in relation to the issue of obtaining accreditation for a TAFE Graduate Certificate:

I have to explain the whole HE education process to my TAFE colleagues that if you are wanting to get a Grad Cert accredited then these are the people you need to speak to and explain to them how our academic colleagues will be looking at it from their perspective…it is necessary to take the Grad Cert from a TAFE vocational setting and present it in a way that would be recognisable to the academic community but still retain the value to the student [of the vocational aspect]…we actually had to present it in a whole different language.

Getting inside the head space of the other person could also be a strategy for addressing some of the dead-ends in terms of pathways for students between TAFE and HE. An impasse is often reached when no equivalent counterparts exist between the two divisions, so that certain programs (for example, hospitality management) which are offered in TAFE find themselves cut off from progress into HE. Many fruitless meetings can be held between participants from the two divisions trying to find a way forward, but in the absence of a common head space, or an unwillingness to talk the same language, then both sides continue to employ the rhetoric of separateness rather than bridging.
Lack of knowledge and understanding

In chapter 4, the following categories of lack of knowledge and understanding were identified on the part of HE:

- HE regards TAFE as diverse and complex
- HE places low priority on TAFE issues
- HE misunderstands the motives for TAFE articulation
- HE misunderstands the motives for TAFE market expansion
- TAFE misunderstands HE processes and academic workloads

Strategies to address these categories of lack of knowledge and understanding are presented and analysed below.

**Strategies to address diversity, complexity, and low priority**

Low priority results from the HE perception that TAFE merely makes demands on them and is the source of extra work and commitments, rather than being seen as the source of solving problems and aiding them in their objectives. ‘How can you help me?’ is an endemic HE-inspired question to which TAFE needs to be able to provide answers. A willingness on both sides to explore all available opportunities is needed. A TAFE mathematics teacher explained how their staff members meet now and again with the HE mathematics staff on the basis of ‘revolving turf’. Creating win-win joint projects that benefit both HE and TAFE is one possible strategy. A TAFE teacher in robotics offered the example of working with HE to develop collaborative projects that TAFE students could become involved in which were then offered to industry partners or else written up as academic papers and submitted to journals. The TAFE students developed practical competencies whilst the HE academic secured successful research outcomes.

Intersectoralism opportunities externally are always possible if a TAFE component finds no counterpart within its own institution. If TAFE can spread its wings by broadening its appeal to multiple stakeholders this could also act to remedy the aura of
low priority that exists in some quarters. The development of these strategic external relationships acts to further complicate the diversity of dual institutions but can provide exciting extra opportunities. To properly achieve this, each TAFE needs to work out what it is and where it needs to go. This involves making clear its point of difference, with a focus on a specific brand, its actual advantage, the products it offers, and the way it responds to industry and HE developments. This distinctiveness needs to be promoted through an appeal to the breadth of the market.

Low priority could also be related to low respect. It is necessary to develop respect for each others’ roles and cultures, their separate missions, strengths, and weaknesses of both TAFE and HE, what each of them does (and does best), and how they are different from each other but at the same time complementary. It must be remembered that certain elements are somewhat exclusive to each division, so although overlap does exist there are other areas that only exist within the core of each of the separate divisions. These need to be carefully badged because, for example, the promulgation of certain types of activity and success in TAFE might not actually benefit HE. Thus, when a weekend horticultural sale of plants ‘for only $2 each’ was advertised on the main webpage of a certain dual-sector university, some HE members complained bitterly that such triviality adversely affected their reputation as members of a world-class university. According to one TAFE teacher, without this knowledge and understanding ‘you are off to a terrible start, you actually don’t understand what’s in that other sector that might be in some way complementary, you can’t even begin’. In addition, it also helps to be aware of some of the structural and systemic differences between the two divisions, for example, different funding mechanisms, and that each division answers to different masters and has to do things in different ways. According to a HE academic:

I know for a large number of their activities TAFE are driven by State government funding mechanisms and work on contact hours, even though higher education does not – you have to know and understand that because it shapes the thinking and if you are ever going to get any mutual regard you have to understand some of those really fundamental differences in thinking and ethos.

Strategically a lot more could be done to help that understanding instead of largely relying upon a system whereby managers help to develop it accidentally and informally. The development of a strong public discourse could help to raise these issues to higher
prominence. Such a discourse has been taken up by the Victorian government which is keen to promulgate the message that TAFE should not be regarded as a ‘second-rate university’ but instead should be perceived as something that is different but equal. It possesses its own courses, its own skill sets, and its own mission which constitute an equally valid path for people to move into their careers. According to a TAFE manager there still remains a great deal to be done in getting that message across: ‘the message has not been entirely taken up; it is not even believed by our own TAFE staff’.

Diversity and complexity are also exacerbated by the continuing issues surrounding the discrepancies between TAFE and HE pay scales. People are paid what they are paid only through arrangement. Traditionally, payment scales have been predicated on a model that values TAFE skills and education at a lesser rate than HE. But must it always be that way, and are there alternatives? This scenario has only originated through socially constructed discourse rather than any inherent reality that TAFE skills are of a lower order of magnitude than HE. And whatever is created by discourse can also be destroyed by discourse. Strategically it may be necessary to start new conversations around the nature of social justice contributions and what it is that the system needs and how it can evolve. Consequently, new logistic packages can be constructed around that. Contributing to this new social construction a TAFE student officer believes that intersectoralism does not necessarily imply everything should be equal in terms of the allocation of resources. Rather it implies that everything should be ‘responsive’ in terms of the allocation of resources in accord with the dynamic movement of ongoing needs:

I would have to say that if you are looking at moral fairness then HE should be subsidising TAFE. TAFE shouldn’t be subsidising HE. You make judgements about priorities based on needs and I think the decisions about priority are based on status and expectations almost exclusively emerging from the higher education perspective on tertiary education.

**Strategies to combat misunderstandings about TAFE motives for articulation**

The motives for TAFE articulation are frequently misunderstood by HE academics. As suggested in chapter 4, TAFE motives are often interpreted as wishing to articulate as many students as possible into HE whilst securing the maximum number of exemptions. TAFE articulation should not be perceived from a narrow point of view. Rather it
should be broadened out to be regarded as serving a social need. For example, many young people do not mature intellectually or emotionally at a set age. Whilst some students are ready and capable at age 17-18 to make the immediate transition from year 12 to HE, others are not. A variety of reasons can explain this, such as insufficiently developed work ethics or inadequate organisational skills, study skills, or language comprehension. If these students went straight into HE they would not survive. Instead of these students being regarded as having missed the boat it would be more socially equitable to regard them as late maturers who could be capable of entering HE at a later stage. According to one HE manager, there are very good students in TAFE who should have the opportunity to proceed onto a bachelors degree and the evidence is that they do as well as typical year 12 entrants once the maturation issue is taken into account. Aligned with this argument is the issue that an increasing number of students are going straight from school to university when they are not completely ready to do so in terms of possessing the requisite skills and attitude. This adds to the problem of high first year failure rates at university, which could be regarded not only as a waste of human resources but also an unnecessary blow to the self-esteem of such young people who can be unfairly branded as ‘failures’ early in life. This is where the collaborative role of TAFE could be more perceptively regarded. Rather than jumping straight from school to university, TAFE could be regarded as an invaluable venue for preparing young people to take on the challenge of university, thus transforming ‘failed’ resources into ‘successful’ resources. Such a strategy to prevent the deterioration of self-esteem amongst young people would serve as an important social measure.

Another significant strategy to take the emphasis away from a blunt articulation interpretation of TAFE is to assume the analogy of a series of stepping stones in a continuous intellectual journey. Lifelong movement in terms of learning, skills, and intellect should be perceived as a ‘don’t stop here’ continuum of seamless progression with numerous exit points dependent on the interests and contingencies of individual people. Such a perception would aid many sections of the community who might otherwise have been locked out of opportunities for skills and education progression, especially new migrants, late maturers, certain cultural groups, and people from low socio-economic backgrounds. An allied argument to further advance this stepping-stone concept could also involve a strategy aimed at taking away from TAFE the current undue emphasis that is laid on vocational training. According to one interviewee, the
The role of TAFE should be stressed as one that acts as a facilitator of study patterns and not a provider of vocational skills. This role is not marketed at all. This interviewee went into TAFE as an arts graduate and expresses disquiet that TAFE teachers continually paint themselves into a corner by insisting that they provide vocational skills. They are complicit in their own demise. When this TAFE teacher tries to argue in meetings that the strict demarcation between vocational skills and liberal arts education should be gradually abandoned he gets ‘howled down’ by other TAFE teachers who insist on a more restrictive role for TAFE.

In addition, TAFE articulation receives undue prominence because it concentrates only on a one-way movement, namely from TAFE to HE. Therefore, a significant strategy to reverse this perception would entail an emphasis also on the two-way nature of the articulation. Pathways go both ways and should be regarded as mutually beneficial. Examples include a BA graduate following up with a Diploma in Welfare, or a Human Resource Management graduate following up with a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. Such qualifications are excellent combinations. However, another strategy does not envisage these TAFE qualifications as sequential follow-ons but rather as being earned simultaneously with undertaking a HE qualification. Such an arrangement would see an undergraduate student receiving credit for those degree studies towards a TAFE diploma for example. A good instance of this arrangement might see an electrical engineering student at university also picking up an electronics technicians diploma through TAFE during the period of their degree studies. By providing a vocational outcome with a professional qualification this would make the student more immediately employable and give them a boost in their career progression. However, to make such a scenario possible more thought would have to be given to simultaneous collaborative arrangements between TAFE and HE. This would probably involve flexible overload studies and cross-credit arrangements during a four year degree, perhaps involving summer TAFE, evening study, or online delivery. Another arrangement involving simultaneous articulation between TAFE and HE would foresee HE students spending six months in TAFE studying towards an ‘enhancement’ qualification such as a Diploma in Further Education, honing their English comprehension, study skills, and essay writing. According to a TAFE interviewee the need for such a qualification comes from evidence that some HE graduates find themselves handicapped because their theoretical and conceptual education has not
equipped them with some basic skills required for ‘real-life advancement’ – in the sense that they ‘cannot get a job because their communication is woeful, they can’t write a letter, and can’t pass an interview’. In this regard, people working in intersectoral spaces can start to be seen as resource allies rather than as inconvenient nuisances.

**Strategies to combat misunderstandings about TAFE motives for market expansion**

The argument that HE is fearful of the motives of TAFE in seeking market expansion was raised in chapter 4. There exists the apprehension that TAFE is merely interested in conquering parts of the traditional HE territory. A major part of any strategy to combat this perception probably lies in attempting to debunk the inherent belief in a zero-sum scenario. The HE-TAFE environment does not constitute a fixed and unchanging context whereby a ‘gain’ by one side results in a ‘loss’ by the other side. Put in another way: the conundrum exists of how to transform the (negative) perception of a win-lose scenario into a (positive) perception of a win-win scenario? One strategy would be to use intersectoralism as a marketing opportunity to differentiate the dual-sector institution from the G8 brand (the top eight ‘sandstone’ universities). This would involve using TAFE relationships to make the point of ‘why we are special’ and ‘what makes us different’ from the likes of Melbourne, Monash, and Deakin. Thus, TAFE expansion ceases to be regarded as a competitive intrusion into HE territory and more as a branding mechanism for attracting additional students (business) through a ‘unique selling point’.

If cooperation between TAFE and HE is seen as being mutually beneficial then, in the words of a HE academic ‘TAFE is seen as actually feeding us business and not stealing our business’. Under such a paradigm the possibility increases of creating flexible arrangements about how this can best occur. Despite the fact that the two divisions are actually running separate missions they can move towards a situation where they are seen as helping each other by building bridges. A specific area where this new paradigm can be facilitated is where collaboration can assist in meeting the varied needs of a particular organisation. The example of the police force was given by one interviewee:
At the moment we are tendering for the police [contract]. TAFE and HE people are sitting around the table...how do we best pitch it to meet the brief of what the police force wants? The police force is clearly saying it wants a degree. It is also clear that it wants some specific skills like weapons handling. This is more at the VET [TAFE] end of things. So if an institution like ours cannot put together a dual-sector package then who can? So I see that collaboration is definitely there and made easier when we are working to an external client.

In contrast, although such collaboration may potentially work in a smoother manner at the undergraduate level, there are often tensions and difficulties experienced in building mutually beneficial bridges at the postgraduate level. A senior HE manager stated ‘I think we plough different patches, the similarities begin to evaporate a little bit, and our differences become a bit more noticeable and difficult’. He expressed serious doubts about whether the TAFE arm in the dual-sector institution should be allowed to operate in the graduate certificate market when it was in direct competition with the HE division. It is this type of scenario that perpetuates the win-lose perception. However, a win-win scenario could be cultivated if TAFE operated in a different kind of market.

The necessary criteria for this would be where the graduate certificate comprises a discrete package of four subjects; that represents a specialist body of knowledge; that operates as a terminal, end point qualification; and is not in direct competition with any product that is already offered in HE or is likely to be offered in the foreseeable future. In other words, this set of criteria fulfils the objective that it ‘does not pinch business from anywhere else’. Certain graduate certificates offered in the area of management studies would probably fall into this category without too much argument, for example, quality management, project management, hospitality management, and events management. These topics are so specialised that they would not be able to ‘trade up’ as a full set of four subject exemptions from a Masters suite. Several interviewees expressed the view that a certain amount of hostility had existed between the TAFE arm and the Graduate School of Business in HE because of this win-lose stand-off between the two divisions. Graduate certificates from the TAFE arm had not been accepted for articulation into the HE suite of Masters degrees. However, with a different mindset one interviewee suggested that TAFE could have been seen as expanding the overall market (a positive perception) rather than reducing the HE market (a negative perception):

Common sense seems to me would be that if there are 400 TAFE students in our graduate certificate programs they would be a beautiful market for somebody to make money in a Master of Management instead of cutting everyone off at the roots.
So the argument can be advanced that mutually beneficial collaboration can be built even at postgraduate level if programs are developed that create new audiences and do not trespass on existing turf. This was the goal that was front of mind when a new Master of Management course was devised with the aim of being an intersectoral development between TAFE and HE. The graduate certificate level was delivered by TAFE with a vocational emphasis whilst the graduate diploma and masters levels were delivered by HE. The audience was aimed at industry clients who did not come onto the campus. By such a mechanism the degree was designed with a completely new client group in mind and hence did not create the criticism that it was ‘ruining the boundaries of the MBA program’. According to a faculty dean the strategy that needs to be developed and pursued should be one of ‘concentrating on commercial realities by collaborating with different products’:

That way everyone comes out a winner. Commercial nous says we should be collaborating. There is a market out there that we have to meet every single level we can get and quite frankly a bit of pragmatic thinking does not go astray. It does not pay to be too ideologically precious. We have to work out what is commercially real; what can you actually do that has some academic integrity that returns a buck?

Win-win scenarios can also be created if a mindset is adopted of two-way pathways rather than the traditional one-way pathway from TAFE to HE. Viewed from such a paradigm the emphasis could then be laid on how seamless pathways can be employed to expand the overall market to the mutual benefit of both TAFE and HE. One interviewee used the analogy of complex freeways that needed comprehensive signage in order to properly orient all participants:

When I was at [another dual-sector institution] I used to use photographs of really complex freeways and say look a person can come on and off at any time and there are valid outcomes and opportunities wherever they decide to move off and move on and our role is really just to make the whole thing really well signposted.

Another interviewee expanded on this issue through sharing some statistics about relative movements between TAFE and HE and back again. He observed that in 2003, 86000 TAFE students had a HED degree compared to 15500 HE students who had a TAFE qualification. This represents a ratio of almost 6:1. Put another way: ‘a degree is something you do whilst waiting to get into a TAFE course’. Looked at logically, such articulation from HE to TAFE makes sense by improving the employment opportunities
of degree holders, especially when the job market is in a phase of tightening up. Making the pathway easier from HE to TAFE is something that the institution ‘does very badly’ and this represents an area that needs urgent attention: ‘if you look on the website all of the pathways information is about going from TAFE into HE’.

The strategy of creating valid outcomes for students comes down to thinking through the advantage of every educational product that is offered. The outcome must have a tangible advantage in the marketplace whether this be the provision of a specific technical or vocational skill, or professional outcome. Some products arguably do not meet this criterion. For example, if an associate degree is perceived merely as the first two years of an undergraduate degree then this is not a valid outcome and the institution ‘should forget about it’. Similarly, if programs are being run that start offshore and terminate in Australia, what would happen if a student did not come to Australia to finish their qualification? Would this still be regarded as a valid outcome in their home country? If not, then the hallmark of the educational product is being denied. In this respect, the concept of HE building on educational products that have been ‘partly cooked somewhere else’ can be a two-edged sword. Such processes create hybrid products, each part of which must be seen as being a valid outcome in its own right.

**Strategies to combat TAFE misunderstanding of HE processes and workloads**

In chapter 4 it was noted that a significant gap in the knowledge and understanding nexus between TAFE and HE concerns the apparent misunderstanding on the part of TAFE about the rigour of HE processes and the heavy and varied workload placed on HED academics. HE is a less nimble division than TAFE. Its processes are more rigorous and move more slowly, often causing frustration amongst TAFE personnel who are looking for quick decisions and actions. To combat this scenario any of two separate strategies could logically be followed – those aiming to speed up HE processes by making them more efficient and effective, and those that aim to bring TAFE personnel into closer contact with HE procedures and realities.

An example of the first strategy was provided by a HE academic who was asked by her dean to become a liaison officer between TAFE and the faculty in order to soften the strained relationship between the two that had gradually developed over a period of
The role was envisaged as a ‘funnelling process’ to be able to deal with any issues that came up in an expeditious manner. Previously, all manner of different issues and documents between the two participants had been delayed, destroyed, or lost. There was no standardisation of processes beyond one-on-one dealings between individual academics and teachers. Processes were painfully slow and inefficient and frustration was extremely high. The strategy was devised that all communications between TAFE and the faculty would now be routed through this one liaison person.

I said to [TAFE person] give me a list of everything that is currently outstanding from your end and which academic you think has them. I know this is really frustrating but the best thing for us to do now is that I want all the paperwork re-issued and I want it re-issued through me, so that I can then send it off to the academics, and I will then chase it up.

This strategy of liaison and monitoring is one way to improve the speed and efficiency of HE processes. Another is to canvass the views of TAFE in order to receive input into how HE processes can be improved. When this happened in the above example a collaborative solution was able to be worked out between TAFE and the faculty that involved the formation of a committee to deal with every issue that arose between them. The committee normally met at fixed periods of time but could be convened more quickly in pressing circumstances. Time lines for decisions and actions were mutually agreed, including issues where Faculty Academic Committee (FAC) approval was also required. By formalising and standardising processes in this manner it became possible for the committee to ‘keep tabs on all our staff and what is happening in the whole process’.

An example of the second strategy was provided by a HE academic who spoke about bringing TAFE personnel into closer contact with HE procedures and realities by inviting them to participate in a formal process whereby a committee was formed comprised of representatives from both TAFE and HE. Previously if any changes occurred in TAFE courses it only came to the notice of HE through an ad hoc process of informing certain individuals. These individuals then had to initiate the process themselves of moving these changes through the HE machinery. This was a tiresome and time-consuming procedure and because TAFE personnel did not understand the realities once the matter had been passed on they became impatient and frustrated when immediate results were not obtained. This procedure usually involved a certain person
(who was regarded as the ‘usual suspect’ for such matters) ‘putting something on a FAC agenda when he is doing ten million other things’. However, by establishing a formal committee in conjunction with a formal process then TAFE personnel could be brought closer to the action in HE and thus obtain a greater realisation of the myriad intricacies involved in navigating through the maze of structures, systems, and processes.

We have a formal process that goes both ways so that if something is put on the table for approval it is given to this committee that can track it. With the committee behind it, individual academics are far more likely to respond than they would to a person from TAFE saying to them ‘I sent you some documents three weeks ago, can I have you sign off on them?’ I said if you really want this relationship with TAFE to work we actually need to put it on the basis that our academics will only respond to a formal process. I thought that is a better way of handling things. Hopefully that will also be able to put in the quality control aspect of it. At the moment that is lacking. TAFE is a big organisation and HE is a big organisation. You can’t just have people going to individuals.

Allied to this is an associated strategy that works along the lines of attempting to reduce the gung ho tendency of TAFE personnel by using such formal processes to expose them to HE realities. The intention of HE academics is not to slow down the creative aspects of TAFE work but rather to make them realise that ‘things have to be checked thoroughly’. The objective is ‘not to drop the ball as many times’ by ensuring that things are done properly from the beginning. The only way to do this, according to the HE paradigm, is to establish a formal process that is able to move issues two ways according to a proper system, taking into account the necessary checks and balances.

**Discordant attitudes**

In chapter 4, the following categories of discordant attitudes were identified by interviewees:

- HE attitudes towards different status
- HE attitudes towards TAFE – its students, staff, and qualifications
- TAFE attitudes towards the dominance of the HE paradigm
- TAFE attitudes towards the prevalence of lip service
- TAFE attitudes towards homogenising pedagogic traditions
Strategies to address these categories of discordant attitudes are presented and analysed below.

**Strategies aimed at correcting HE attitudes towards different status**

Perhaps the underlying strategy aimed at correcting HE attitudes towards the different status of TAFE is to foster a belief in the concept of the mutual advantages that can flow from the intersectoral advantage. A firm ‘buy-in’ to this concept should be created not only at the highest levels in HE but, perhaps more importantly, at the middle and lower levels also. Only through this achievement could effective development of new programs and pathways be fostered. It is important to also see these improvements across different faculties because of the observation that not all faculties share equally in their attitudes towards TAFE status, contributions, and pathways. For example, a faculty dean pointed to the statistic that 27% of the undergraduate load at the institution came from TAFE. He called this ‘fantastic’ but also drew attention to the fact that this percentage was not shared equally across the organisation. He suspected that his own faculty contributed the lion’s share of the articulation percentage whilst emphasising that another (named) faculty had an articulation rate of virtually zero. His point was that although his own faculty possessed a very progressive attitude towards the status and importance of TAFE, this was a point of improvement that other faculties needed to face up to. This scenario in this case was largely a function of the attitude of previous deans and he was eager to emphasise that the newly-appointed current dean was working to urgently repair the historical damage. This gap can have serious ramifications for operational results in the sense that a faculty enjoying high articulation rates from TAFE would experience fewer problems in filling its recruitment load than a faculty with low articulation rates. In this sense, harbouring an inappropriate attitude towards the status of TAFE can result in negative outcomes at the operational level. Thus, organisational buy-in must occur across all levels – horizontally and vertically.

...because it is our genuine strength, it is what gives us a reason for existence, we have got these terrific pathways for students that come in here, a well marked out way into higher education, it fits with the idea of the entrepreneurial university giving people opportunities from all walks of life, the idea of getting the right social mix [where] people from relatively high social economic backgrounds can mix with students that may not have come from that background via TAFE…it is a genuinely good story.
However, this concept of horizontal and vertical buy-in to the mutual advantages flowing from the intersectoral advantage is not ‘bought’ by all participants. For others, the correct strategy is to aim at achieving a proper balance between a feeder mentality and the importance of stand-alone integrity. One HE interviewee commented: ‘if I thought I was delivering a program simply designed to have students articulate halfway through into a higher ed thing, I would be thinking hang on, I am not here to deliver students to somebody else, I am not a feeder’. The most effective way to get around this mentality is to start to regard the qualification as being worthwhile in its own right as a stand-alone qualification. In other words ‘TAFE courses are good in themselves without articulation’. In essence, this involves trying to argue the case of ‘different ed’, this is, TAFE should not be regarded as ‘lower ed but different ed’, where the aura of TAFE learning and teaching is recognised as ‘proud and passionate’. In the words of one interviewee, TAFE has ‘big notes’.

This debate between a feeder mentality and stand-alone integrity is also influenced by the wider debate concerning structural separation. The argument has been advanced earlier that structural integration can assist in fostering better communication mechanisms between TAFE and HE and hence lead to a reduction in the prevalence of precious attitudes. However, this argument is not universally accepted. A HE academic who has experience working at such an integrated dual-sector university was not sure that the structure worked all that well. Her observation was that there still exists a lot of waring camps and TAFE and HE still saw themselves as separate entities even though they shared the same head of department. Elimination of status issues, in the opinion of this academic, should come from alternative avenues:

It has got to come more from the way the learning programs are structured and the way staff teach into the two learning programs, and the way the learning programs interact at that level and the trust that they have in each other to deliver their respective skill sets to the whole within the context of the university of technology, which has its own strong vocational history.

This issue is one that can only be meaningfully argued when placed firmly within a contextual setting. Although the challenges associated with the way staff teach into learning programs may be large within the context of, say, interaction between a ‘TAFE and Oxford University’ (in the words of one participant) they should in theory be more easily overcome within the context of a ‘TAFE and a technical university’. In the latter
case, there is a common overlap across the spectrum of applied technology, and hence any feeling of status hierarchy is probably engendered less through a sense of relative confidence than a feeling of insecurity.

**Strategies aimed at changing HE attitudes towards TAFE - its students, staff, and qualifications**

HE attitudes towards TAFE students are often clouded by some bad experiences rather than reflecting ongoing problems with the quality of such students. One HE interviewee recalled a situation where the university received a ‘crabby’ group of students who articulated from a local institute and who proved to be clearly not up to the standards required by a rigorous and independent system of HE. This experience adversely affected the attitude of HE academics towards students from that particular local institute. This raises the fear that all TAFE students can be tarred by the same brush in the eyes of some HE academics. A scenario such as this is only capable of being challenged if robust data is collected and analysed comparing the relative success rates of TAFE articulants and standard year 12 school leavers once they enter into the HE context. One interviewee was adamant that such data does exist and all the existing research shows that there is no difference between TAFE articulants and year 12 school leavers. However, other interviewees displayed more confusion. Whether such data actually exists was an unknown factor for interviewees who tended to believe that most people made up their minds about this issue on the basis of anecdotal information. Such information is invariably flawed or biased. However, the perception seems to be that academics make up their minds about the issue based on their own experience – a case of elevating a finding from the local to the global context.

Regardless of the debate about anecdotal versus robust data, a widely supported strategy to combat the prevalence of negative attitudes towards TAFE students revolves around strengthening the argument that many factors can intrude into the life of a student at crucial stages in their learning career which adversely affect them in pursuing a standard year 12 entry into HE. These factors can range from the technical to the personal. For example, choice of subjects can impact on the level of an ‘enter’ score into HE. A student studying a mix of subjects such as Latin, French, Japanese, and advanced mathematics would find that their raw scores for such subjects are scaled upwards
because they are deemed to be relative difficult subjects. This practice of positive scaling can actually turn a moderate to good student into an exceptional student simply by dint of the subjects studied. In contrast, there are other subjects that are scaled down because they are regarded as relatively easy subjects. Thus, an exceptional student can be downgraded to a lower level as a result of this practice of negative scaling. As a result, it could be argued that this quirk of the system that deems certain subjects to be worth more than others is not really a fair representation of the capacity of an individual. There are a number of factors that impinge on the choice of subjects actually studied by a student. For instance, they might represent the genuine interests of that student rather than represent an instrumental choice simply aimed at maximising the number of marks gained by a student; or the student may come from a family that is not as discerning about such matters as other families; or the student’s school may lack the resources of other schools, such as not possessing a school counsellor.

It is also recognised that many students are late maturers. Quite simply they do not peak in year 12. Not everybody is attuned to peak performance at year 12 and to cut such people off from HE simply on this basis is widely recognised to be inequitable. In the words of one interviewee ‘they might have had their parents break up, or they might just have had a bloody awful year where they got an enter score of 60 instead of 85 or 90’. Arguments are sometimes advanced that TAFE students are sometimes ‘just that little bit more motivated’ than standard year 12 entrants because of the more varied pathway they have traversed. They tend to have spent longer in the education system and are more likely to have experienced adverse events than the smooth-sailing year 12 entrants. Many have had the experience of working in the labour force so that they have got that taste of reality that often leads to more motivation generally. This can actually deliver to a HE faculty a very wide diversity of students from across the spectrum, often resulting in a better quality student cohort than could be obtained from a more homogeneous spectrum.

When it comes to trying to change HE attitudes towards TAFE staff there was general agreement from interviewees that superior attitudes are more easily broken down when there is continual communication, interaction, and mixing between the sets of staff. Strategies that can enhance such activities range from structural, to systemic, to personal.
Structural strategies include negotiating a single enterprise agreement. This development was mentioned by several interviewees in relation to another dual-sector university in the same State, for instance ‘[university X] allows their TAFE staff to teach all the way through particularly the dichotomy between research and teaching’.

Even in the absence of such structural arrangements it is still possible to institute systems that encourage movement of people between the two sectors as explained by a long-term HE academic:

I actually worked in the TAFE sector as a sessional when I first came to [the university] in 1970. I joined the mathematics department. The TAFE sector at that time was running certificates in technology and they couldn’t find a mathematician to teach what was needed in a course that was run on a Friday night. To help them out I volunteered to do that for one semester. I enjoyed the experience of doing it and that gave me a sense on what was on the other side basically and defences never existed and that’s probably always helped me.

In other words, for this particular academic, the experience of working ‘on the other side’ has acted as a career-long antidote against any feelings of superiority towards TAFE staff. Preciousness is reduced when staff with some knowledge of TAFE move into other career opportunities in the HE sector. It is also reduced when staff who obtain a degree (or a postgraduate degree) in HE move into the TAFE sector as a teacher and then start to interact with the academics that they knew during their university student career. Actually knowing people as individuals is a great help. Such familiarity can ease the transition and improve communication without any preconceived barriers. Operating as tutors and sessional lecturers across the two sectors can similarly act to reduce such barriers, as can staff secondments for certain periods of time. But perhaps the most effective strategy is one that encourages TAFE and HE staff to genuinely mix together during the delivery of a certain program. Extensively mentioned during interviews was the example of a university masters program where the graduate certificate section of the program was delivered by TAFE staff before handing over the next two levels of graduate diploma and Masters to be taught by HE academics. The graduate certificate section was more vocationally-oriented and ‘hands-on’ whilst the later graduate diploma and Masters levels gradually moved into more conceptual, theoretical, and critical analysis. The melding together of these two different approaches was felt to be a particularly successful example of TAFE-HE collaboration. Such programs can be
taught not only locally but also at overseas venues with partner institutions. Often HE academics are not available to travel overseas to deliver their individual units and it is not unusual to find that replacements are recruited from TAFE staff to take on this responsibility. This flexibility acts to increase the responsiveness of the institution. The ability to respond to any situation and be ready to help out helps to improve the collaboration between TAFE and HE staff and reduce feelings of preciousness.

Such structural and systemic strategies as mentioned above are all well and good, but in the final analysis will be doomed to failure unless they can be translated into the form of a dominant discourse. As emphasised by one interviewee, this discourse must be along the lines of ‘different but equal’ or ‘doing similar things but to a different audience’. The common ground, or superordinate goal, is education. If such a discourse could be created and maintained it would help to alleviate many of the aspects of superiority and contempt that come hand in hand with precious attitudes. In this quest, the role of individual personalities can be crucial. Thus, in the example mentioned above of TAFE and HE staff collaborating together to deliver a masters program it was noticed that the program co-ordinator had originally started his career as a TAFE teacher before moving across to HE after several years. This person proved to be a crucial boundary-spanner, seamlessly working in the space between his TAFE and HE colleagues. As a result, communication was facilitated and misunderstandings avoided. He was able to speak the language of both sectors. When such a scenario can be engineered people can be more confident in talking openly to one another without having to play games. Confidence comes from feeling that other people are open and on the level and that there are no hidden agendas. If an atmosphere of camaraderie can be created then people feel more relaxed to indulge in joint mixing in social or academic events. It would even be possible to arrange workshops, seminars, or conferences on topics that would be equally appealing to both sectors, for example, teaching styles or new developments in certain areas. However, in the absence of such a transparent culture it makes it more difficult to sort out any problems that may arise. People are more cautious because they may feel that underlying agendas are at play. Criticism is more likely to be interpreted negatively as a personal attack. People remain distant from one another thus contributing to the extant culture of superiority.
Strategies aimed at countering the dominance of the HE paradigm

The argument was advanced in chapter 4 that the HE paradigm overshadows all aspects of the culture of a dual-sector institution. Culture, structures, and systems all reflect the hegemony of HE. The evocative plea from TAFE enquiring ‘please can we play’ reveals the extent of frustration that is felt from an entity that perceives itself as having been marginalised. What strategies could assist in reducing the strength of this perception?

Once again the emphasis would appear to lie within the domain of changing the nature of the dominant discourse across the dual-sector institution. Attaining the status of ‘equal but different’ would be a positive step in this direction whereby intersectoralism is seen as feeding off each others’ strengths. One example provided by a TAFE teacher related to the teaching of accountancy within HE. This subject is usually presented in a fairly dry manner over a thirteen week period which, although it may meet the technical and content requirements required by professional accreditation, is often not presented in an appetising manner for students. This could be partially overcome by calling upon the help of a TAFE teacher at some stage during the subject delivery to tell them about how it works in practice. The integration of the conceptual approach of the HE academic and the slightly more applied approach of the TAFE teacher represents a genuine example of intersectoralism where each of the two divisions is able to feed off each others’ strengths.

This emphasis on the respective strengths of TAFE and HE could help attain a new discourse which realises that a student’s knowledge uptake is best served by a variety of pedagogical approaches. Whilst the typical HE academic could be viewed as a ‘research fellow’ it would make sense for the typical TAFE teacher to be called a ‘teaching fellow’. Each complements the other whilst not dominating the other. The TAFE approach depends more on a how-to mentality. As explained by a TAFE teacher, their courses are aimed at a general level of understanding and relevancy. This is not a priority in HE within which ‘a bunch of hypo specialists’ are happy to remain within an advanced research-oriented abstract space but are less comfortable within a more generic space. This was not meant as a criticism by our TAFE interviewee but more of an observation about the respective strengths and interests of the two divisions. There is value in both.
TAFE is not good at creating that type of graduate [abstract, research-oriented, and specialised] but I think TAFE is much better at creating a graduate that has a holistic understanding of the genuine day-to-day requirements of a workplace environment, and I think at least theoretically it should be creating graduates that are able to walk straight into a job and perform it at a reasonably sophisticated level without much induction at all...so they are equal, both sectors are different but equal, and until you get that acknowledgement that there are strong strengths in TAFE and HE [the current paradigm will continue].

However, it is easy to get confused by semantics during this debate. The argument is sometimes advanced that although the two divisions should be regarded as ‘equal’ this does not imply that they should be regarded as ‘equivalent’. Just what is meant by this distinction is unclear. The dictionary definitions of equal and equivalent are often identical to each other: ‘the same size, value, importance, or meaning as something else’ (onelook.com); and can easily encompass one another, for example, the definition of equivalent is stated as ‘equal in amount or value’ (onelook.com). Nevertheless, this confusion was not obvious to a former faculty dean:

The two tiers...are not equivalent but you can have a respectful relationship which both supports and appreciates the others’ roles in the order of things without pretending they are equivalent. The worst thing that can happen is for that to be denied, for some people to pretend that we are all identical.

The former dean gave an example of such a scenario that was ‘causing great damage at the moment’. The corporate marketing department had instituted a policy of ‘one [dual-sector institution]’ which blurred the boundaries between the TAFE and HE sectors. This policy had enabled the TAFE division to mask its identity when marketing its products and qualifications under the guise of one university. It also enabled teachers to omit from their electronic signatures that they were located in the TAFE division, which gave the impression that they were a member of the HE faculty at the university. For the former dean this development ‘was a very bad thing which is causing great antagonism and I think it is fundamentally wrong because it is not transparent’:

There should be no reason why people are not revealing TAFE. I don’t see what the problem is. The key thing is not to deny TAFE and HE. What we are offering is pathways and seamless relationships. That is the big benefit. But what this approach does is to prevent people coming together and talk about the way forward because people get upset about being misled. It shouldn’t happen. It is just wrong and I don’t know why it has been allowed to happen. It can cause great damage. I think it should all
be about recognition. Instead of denying differences it is about recognising differences and affirming it and saying that it is good. We are equal but different, not the same.

**Strategies aimed at countering lip service**

It was shown in chapter 4 that there exists considerable frustration within the TAFE sector that HE pays only lip service towards the concept of intersectoralism. Lip service refers to the perceived tendency of HE to offer expressions of support without backing that up with any real commitment or action. In this respect, strategies aimed at eliminating lip service should concentrate on ensuring that specific actions are forthcoming rather than unsupported agreement. Respondents identified ten strategic actions that could possibly be implemented.

**Action 1:** TAFE staff being allowed to fill part of their role by teaching into HE positions, especially positions where vacancies arise that are often difficult to fill. This would also require a commitment on the part of HE to fund the difference in salary levels between the two divisions for the fraction of the teaching that is affected.

**Action 2:** whereas action 1 refers to sharing staff between the two divisions, action 2 refers to sharing resources. An example was provided by a former Deputy VC who referred to the sharing of machine shop facilities. These facilities are extremely costly and from a budgetary perspective it makes little sense to duplicate the facilities across two divisions. Correspondingly, the HE division had all but shut down its own machine shop and was sharing a common facility with TAFE. Machine shop practice was now conducted under the auspices of TAFE staff, with degree students and engineering technology students jointly using the same facility.

**Action 3** refers to sharing teaching programs between the two divisions. This would assist in the creation of a common cause. A HE academic provided an example of a cooperative offshore arrangement with TAFE to deliver a 2+2 twining program into Asia. Initially TAFE staff delivered the first year of the program and they performed this role so cost effectively that thought was soon given to handing over the entire offshore program to TAFE. There are two dominant factors that have to be considered in such arrangements – cost and quality. In the words of the HE academic ‘as long as
TAFE can maintain the academic standards to provide articulation into a degree back here, then why not?’ Another example was provided by another TAFE teacher who referred to a music program that was initially pioneered by TAFE but quickly picked up by the international arm of the university which saw international possibilities. For these shared teaching programs to succeed there must be a perception of common interests so that both divisions can see a possibility of a win-win scenario. One interviewee saw such a possibility in the development of associate degrees. These could be jointly taught because they are meant to provide a one-for-one level towards an undergraduate degree. Therefore, any teaching in has to be performed at the appropriate level of a degree. Practically, the only way that HE can ensure this happens is by teaching some portion of the associate degree program itself. This can only be achieved by securing reasonable agreement between TAFE and HE. One instance of such agreement had already occurred in an information technology program where the teaching had been split 50/50.

A prime example of a shared teaching program was given by a former faculty dean who explained the background behind an agreement between TAFE and HE to operate a nested and jointly-run graduate certificate in human resource management. This involved an agreement whereby ‘we said you do some of the first bits and we will pick them up and take them on’. It was on this principle that the program was accredited, almost as a practical compromise to a potentially volatile situation that may have seen the same divisions in direct competition with one another.

TAFE was talking about doing a graduate certificate, and we were also talking about doing a graduate certificate at the same time, so the compromise got made which said well why don’t we do the graduate certificate together and then funnel it into a graduate diploma? Otherwise we would have been in direct competition. Somebody would have been losing out badly. In the final analysis it is a collaborative effort. I have not seen it work that way in other courses.

Action 4 refers to TAFE and HE working together to aid delivery to industry and other external partners. A HE academic who had working experience with another dual-sector university gave the example of when the HE division of that institution partnered with a State Government department to provide services into a newly-built dental school. Dental education was jointly provided by both the HE and TAFE divisions. This was described as the two sides working together around the notion of a team and by so doing providing a genuine instance of intersectoral partnership for joint advantage. By
working in harmony to provide services to external partners TAFE and HE find it easier to work to each others’ strengths and hence minimise lip service.

Action 5 refers to TAFE and HE using the inherent flexibility between the two divisions to provide tailor-made solutions to problems experienced by individual students. A faculty dean mentioned the case of an overseas student who possessed the required marks to secure entry into a mechanical engineering degree but did not possess the required funds which would satisfy the regulations to obtain entry into the country. However, he did possess enough money to secure entry into a TAFE Diploma of Engineering. This was a shorter course, which also enabled him to pursue some part-time work in the country simultaneously to pull together the required funding to articulate into the degree program. By working together flexibly in such a manner the dual-sector institution can prove its worth to individual students. Other examples mentioned by interviewees include the flexibility between HE-level biotechnology programs (which can be studied full-time) and TAFE certificate 4 qualifications in forensic science (which can be studied simultaneously part-time).

Action 6 refers to TAFE and HE working together to provide community solutions. A HE academic mentioned the example of providing community assistance to schools in the neighbourhood. Several schools had approached the university over the years seeking assistance with the newly incorporated Victorian Certificate of Education work requirement that they were not adequately equipped to deliver. A school Head of Physics was enamoured of the idea of building a circuit board power supply but did not have the expertise in-house to do it. After contacting the HE division the school struck up an arrangement with the electrical engineering department who worked together with TAFE to develop a kit together with teaching materials that could be downloaded from the web and supplied at cost. 450 of these kits were supplied in the first year.

Action 7 refers to structural integration between TAFE and HE so that two separate divisions cease to exist. This type of integration has been referred to elsewhere and was a popular source of comment amongst interviewees. A student adviser wanted to eliminate the current divisional structure by integrating TAFE and HE in a more holistic way. This interviewee criticised most of the strategic initiatives of the overall institution on the grounds that they disproportionately favoured the HE side. However, the
‘corporate contribution’ was the same which ‘went into a big pool and from that you get things like international campuses which do not respond well to the TAFE mission’. Using this argument, a system had evolved whereby ‘TAFE is subsidising HE’ because a disproportionate percentage of the corporate contribution went to HE. However, structural integration is not seen by everyone as a panacea to the elimination of lip service, as mentioned by one TAFE respondent:

I think that is a recipe for disaster, mostly because TAFE are always the poor cousins. If you look at [university name] the TAFE staff who teach into a department there who sit alongside their higher ed colleagues are treated as the poor cousins. They still have salary differentials. They are still treated as second-class citizens. They have less career opportunities because management are all higher ed. So I think in that sort of integrated structure TAFE loses.

The solution for this interviewee lies in keeping the structure of separate divisions but building onto this a number of improvements such as good relationships between the sectors (especially at management level); encouraging more people to permanently cross over between the divisions; exploring opportunities for more temporary secondments; and working together on clearly identified strategic themes. This interviewee pointed out that three of the current crop of faculty deans had previously studied at TAFE and it is inter-connections of this nature that do more for eradicating lip service than simply encouraging more structural integration. A student adviser argued along the same lines. He criticised the notion of trying to push the sides together ‘into a blancmange’. It would be more productive from the student point of view if a culture evolved whereby students ‘dipped into each of the two core missions’. The result of this would be that they could ‘come out as better people because they have got something from each other’. Another interpretation on the same theme was provided by a TAFE teacher who envisaged a structural formation that encompassed overlapping clusters of excellence. Clusters that were more organically developed would possess more inherent flexibility and would seek out synergies with other clusters wherever benefits might be generated. In such an environment, lip service has less opportunity to become embedded because clusters would seek out benefits not within a paradigm of superiority but on the basis of generating benefits that could be mutually rewarding.

Action 8 refers to amendments to systems and policies that give rewards for actions of an intersectoral nature. Rewards and recognition are widely acknowledged as methods
by which behaviours can be changed and maintained. Thus the promotions policy could explicitly recognise that intersectoral developments are important and credit will be given for them at promotion time. Such achievements are ‘on the KPI list’ of many senior managers and attract bonuses but they rarely seem to figure prominently at the level of individual teachers and academics. A former faculty dean made a plea for a more coherent set of university indicators that would run across each of the key themes at the university level. He highlighted that the key difficulty is understanding how these different themes mesh together. How does one inform the other? How do they spin off one from another? He suggested that these indicators should be sparse in number, simple, well coordinated, and agreed by a group of senior managers. This would encourage familiarity amongst staff members and more likely to result in tightly melded outcomes.

Action 9 refers to actions aimed at strategically positioning the dual-sector university in such a way that lip service is squeezed out of the paradigm. A serving dean posed the issue in the form of a question: ‘can this university harness some of its intersectoral elements to make it somehow more strategic?’ On the assumption that this is possible it would have to determine what the best indicators of such an identity are. This is not a straightforward matter.

Is it course development? Is it niche course development in highly specialised fields that can offer a range of program offerings across divisions? Is it about facilitating the movement of its students cross sectorally from TAFE to HE or the other way round? It is probably all of these and then making sure that the university policy framework is appropriate to facilitate that sort of stuff.

This form of strategic positioning would have as one of its objectives the necessity to drive ‘superiority’ out of the system and create an overall culture whereby it is recognised that TAFE and HE are ‘doing similar things to a different audience’.

Action 10 refers to a more active involvement of the State Government and its bureaucracy. The majority of dual-sector institutions in Australia are situated in Victoria. In addition, the majority of Victoria’s universities are dual-sector. Naturally, the issue has arisen within the State, more so than other States in Australia, of trying to understand what these institutions are offering the educational community at tertiary level that is not available elsewhere in the country. A Deputy VC remarked that the
State Government had become enamoured of ‘trying to work out what they think are the hallmarks of intersectoral organisations in this State’ in the sense of identifying what the special outcomes are that can be attributed to them. According to this interviewee the view of the State Government revolved around the belief that pathways were seen as one of the biggest benefits of dual-sector institutions. Articulation was seen as being flavour of the month and the Government wanted to maximise opportunities stemming from this benefit by better understanding how student flow could be facilitated within these organisations. Once policy on this issue became more firmly embedded then opportunities could start to be realised. One of these opportunities related to simplifying the reporting mechanisms. The extant system involved reporting through two different systems to the State and Federal Government, sometimes in relation to the same cohort of students. This involved double the amount of reporting and double the amount of work. Once articulation became more firmly embedded it was hoped that ‘these sort of annoyances’ could be removed.

However, an undue emphasis only on articulation can also have undesirable consequences in the form of missing other opportunities that could otherwise be available. At the time of interviewing another HE academic it was noted that the government was still working on the issue and had not yet published anything except ‘a draft of a glossy brochure that we thought was atrocious’. The main emphasis in this brochure was on intersectoral educational linkages which dramatically ‘undersold the diverse nature of the institutions’. Several areas were not given the attention that was required, such as research, cooperative endeavours and linkages to industry, and niche markets and programs that could merge into certain specialisations or research institutions. The concept of ‘the world could be your oyster’ was missed.

**Strategies aimed at countering homogenised pedagogic traditions**

It was shown in chapter 4 that the privileging of HE puts pressure on TAFE to ‘do things the HE way’, leading to a homogenising of academic traditions and practices that favour HE hegemony. Interviewees suggested a range of strategies to counter such a situation ranging from the philosophical and conceptual to the practical and specific.
On the philosophical/conceptual level it is suggested that a discourse needs to become prevalent that acknowledges the wider debate about research and knowledge creation. One approach is to realise that the relationship between TAFE and HE is only a small subset of a broader question concerning the process whereby we allow the widespread of research, intelligence gathering, skills acquisition, and knowledge building to be best addressed across the different pockets within education and society. Different people with different needs should be allowed to have access to any combination of these varieties when and where they may need them. This could be regarded as a requirement that best meets the flexible needs of industry and the wider society. With this bigger picture in mind it could be regarded as quite narrow-minded and parochial of any dual-sector institution merely to focus on such bottom-line issues as ‘facilitating effective recruitment into its two major sectors’. Concepts such as synergism, holism, and interactionism are grounded in recognising and embracing how seemingly different values and approaches can be combined in the pursuit of a wider good, namely to meet the nuanced needs of the individual learner and through this to meet the broader needs of the wider community and a globalising society.

There are bigger issues at stake in the debate about intersectoral education on a societal-level basis. The dichotomy between vocational technology (the traditional preserve of TAFE) and intellectual conceptual thinking (the traditional preserve of HE) is a discourse that is being perpetuated by an ‘old generation’ of educationalists. This can only be changed, so the argument goes, by the emergence of a new generation of people who are able to understand and apply a new interplay of competencies and concepts. This would involve recognising the intellectual content in technology and how it can interact with the practical and applied aspects of those who consider themselves to be thinkers, artists, designers, and scientists. Recognising the role of technology in thought production and knowledge development is as important in societal advancement as is the vocationalising of the conceptual outcomes of those who concentrate on basic research and abstract thinking. The interplay between these two aspects was likened to the metaphor of a ‘neuron network’ by one interviewee.

We need to make sure that there is really a lively, almost a network, continuous spiking network, almost like a neuron network, not just in two sectors (as we create through our university structure) but there is a whole interacting and interactive range of nodules of
knowledge, skills, people, tasks, and challenges that need to be able to fire off at each other like a neuronet pattern.

This type of development is extremely relevant for a country like Australia which has traditionally suffered from the tyranny of distance and for long periods of time was protected behind trade barriers. For most of its history it has survived by exporting primary products originating from mining and agriculture and has largely missed out on developing a sound manufacturing foundation based on value-adding products. In a technologically-advanced globalised future within the world economy where is Australia going to fit in? Where is the wealth going to come from? What are we going to offer for trade to the world economy? These questions raised by a variety of interviewees often belie any one specific answer. There appears to be no definite panacea. Responses can best be delivered through concentrating on broader conceptual and philosophical thinking, such as the response by one interviewee who stated that ‘we need a fairly catholic knowledge of the full range of opportunities that technologies, both traditional and new, and creative thought and innovation can spark at their intersection’. This plea for a ‘sparking’ to occur between vocational (technical) aspects and academic (scholarly) thinking revolves around the debate that the two are not mutually exclusive. It could be argued that such a development is already occurring in an organic manner as witnessed by the increasing number of PhD qualified staff employed by TAFE and also the tendency for HE academics to emphasise the practically of their work in an applied sense. One TAFE teacher stressed that this development ‘cannot be stopped…sometimes I think the challenge is not to make something happen but to get out of the way and to let it happen’.

The strategy so far has revolved around how a ‘sparking-through-combining’ approach can be employed conceptually to address the issue of homogenising pedagogical traditions. Moving beyond the philosophical debate to embrace a more practical set of suggestions would involve strategies that encompass finding opportunities to come together, about respecting each other, about having commonality of language, about understanding that there exist incentives for coming together, and being clear about what they are. These strategies encompass much of what has already been analysed so far in this chapter and in some ways complete the circle. Most strategies call for more extensive sharing than has been common in the past and would involve shared tutoring,
shared classes, shared guest speakers, and shared resources. In this new paradigm there would need to be far more evidence of cross-pollination and two-way conduits backwards and forwards between TAFE and HE. One interviewee gave an example of such a sharing paradigm existing in a sequence of courses in the fire industry where TAFE and HE staff would liaise together to develop shared learning resources, learning objects, and material asset management. The paradigm was one of ‘a public domain’ whereby sharing and teaching freely across the area was acknowledged. Other developments that would be needed to facilitate such situations would entail more TAFE teachers upgrading their academic qualifications through Masters and Doctoral degrees. It might also be necessary to ensure that more TAFE qualifications are progressively seen as part of an on-going educational journey and not seen to end up in a dead-end. At present too many TAFE qualifications are perceived as a terminal award due to the absence of a conduit into HE. This accentuates the dichotomy between the two sectors. The creation of a circularity between TAFE and HE awards would do much to dispel the perception of HE homogeneity. Circularity is an ideal that demands attention at the margins rather than the centre of individual entities. Most training and discourse development would have to be concentrated at the intersection of TAFE and HE. This is the gap that would need the most attention.

**Summary**

This chapter has presented the findings of the thesis as they relate to the various strategies for unblocking preciousness as identified from the respondent data. Strategies have been enunciated within three distinct categories, namely strategies to address: inadequate communication, lack of knowledge and understanding, and discordant attitudes. The combined interaction of these three categories of strategies serves the purpose of reducing intersectoral tensions and thus enables the process of transforming blocking into facilitating. Smoother intersectoral collaboration is the expected result.

The next chapter moves the focus of the thesis away from an exposition of the research findings in order to commence the process of comparing the thesis findings with the extant literature in the relevant area. An established literature already exists within the topic area of intergroup relations which is relevant to the scenario faced by TAFE and HE as these two divisions attempt to interact and collaborate across the binary divide.
The next chapter identifies and analyses the relevant themes and findings as they relate to the research studies that are already well established in the area of intergroup relations. The significant themes relate to the nature of bias and conflict that can occur in intergroup situations and the various strategies that can be implemented in an attempt to reduce the severity of this intergroup negativity.
Chapter 6

Intergroup relations: bias, conflict, and strategies

It has been argued in previous chapters that TAFE and HE operate on either side of a binary division. This structure represents the end result of a series of legislative changes and other contextual conditions that have been occurring since the 1960s. The nature of this division has given rise to a two-way process of preciousness which has acted as a blockage to the achievement of intersectoral collaboration. Accordingly, the previous chapter examined a number of potential strategies that could be employed in an attempt to unblock preciousness and thus transform blocking into facilitating.

In this chapter, the thesis examines the extant literature on intergroup relations in an attempt to analyse the underlying theoretical issues that impact upon the nature of the interaction between separate groups (such as TAFE and HE). The chapter is structured into two main sections. First, the literature on bias and conflict in intergroup relations is presented, followed by the literature on strategies for reducing intergroup bias and conflict.

Bias and conflict in intergroup relations

People have formed themselves into groups or tribes for thousands of years. The most practical motivation for this is as a form of security or common shelter to protect themselves from others who may pose a threat or danger to their existence. Competition for existing limited resources can often be interpreted as a zero-sum game in which gains by one group can only be achieved at the expense of losses by another group. Thus, members of an in-group distinguish themselves from members of an out-group on the basis of factors such as different goals, conflict of interests, and common fate. The consequence of this is that different groups will tend to discriminate against one another, even to the point of dislike, hostility, and hate. Turner (1975: 31) refers to these processes as ‘instrumental competition (conflict of interest)’.

However, other avenues into intergroup behaviour began to be opened up from the late 1960s as a result of research carried out at the University of Bristol by academics led by Henri Tajfel. According to Hogg (2006) the emotional drive for this alternative approach was entirely personal:
Tajfel’s experiences as a Polish Jew in Europe during the rise of the Nazis, World War II, the Holocaust, and the postwar relocation of displaced Europeans, fuelled a personal passion to understand prejudice, discrimination, and intergroup conflict. Tajfel did not believe that these large-scale social phenomena could be satisfactorily explained in terms of personality or interpersonal attractions. Instead…he believed that social forces configured individual action…His explicit metatheoretical goal was to develop an explanation that did not reinterpret intergroup phenomena merely as the expression of personality traits, individual differences, and interpersonal processes among a large number of people (Hogg, 2006: 112).

Social categorisation and social identity

Tajfel’s research found that ‘groups compete not just for material resources but for anything that can enhance their self-definition, ie for positive social identity’ (Abrams and Hogg, 1988: 318). Under certain conditions it was discovered that merely categorising people into different groups per se on the basis of ad hoc and fairly trivial criteria was enough to induce group members to discriminate against other groups and to show favouritism to members of their own group (Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, and Flament, 1971). In a series of experiments these authors assessed the effects of social categorisation on intergroup behaviour in a scenario when neither calculations of individual self-interest nor previously existing attitudes of hostility were evident. Two findings are worth emphasising here, namely:

- ‘subjects favoured their own group in the distribution of real rewards and penalties in a situation in which nothing but the variable of fairly irrelevant classification distinguished between the ingroup and the outgroup’
- ‘the clearest effect on the distribution of rewards was due to the subjects’ attempt to achieve a maximum difference between the ingroup and the outgroup even at the price of sacrificing other objective advantages’ (Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, and Flament, 1971: 150).

These behaviours, according to Tajfel, are related to how individuals define themselves in a social context – the notion of social identity (Tajfel, 1974). This development led Turner to argue for recognition of the concept of ‘social competition’ as distinct from ‘instrumental competition’ (Turner, 1975: 31). Bound within this concept are two important notions – social categorisation and social identity. Box 6.1 depicts some significant aspects of these two notions and how they are related to one another.
Some behavioural consequences may be expected to flow from the observations in Box 6.1. The most obvious is that individuals will strive to remain in, or seek membership of, any group which contributes to positive aspects of their social identity, in terms of deriving satisfaction. In the absence of this, an individual will try to leave the group. If this is not possible, the individual may indulge in ‘reinterpretation of the group’s attributes so that its unwelcome features (eg, low status) are either justified or made acceptable or the situation may be accepted for what it is with engagement in social action which will lead to desirable changes in the situation’ (Turner, 1975: 7). We are reminded by Tajfel (1974: 70) that ‘no group lives alone – all groups in society live in the midst of other groups’. This implies that the positive aspects of social identity acquire meaning only in the context of comparison with other groups. The characteristics of one’s own ingroup acquire significance because of their ‘perceived differences from other groups and the value connotations of those differences’ (Tajfel,
Thus, it is the social comparison perspective that links social categorisation with positive social identity:

Membership of a particular group in regard to its function of social identity is related to a positive evaluation of its attributes in comparison with other groups...the important dimensions of intergroup comparison from the standpoint of social identity are those associated with values, most of which will be culturally derived...a social group will therefore be capable of preserving its contribution to those aspects of an individual’s social identity which are positively valued by him only if it manages to keep its positively valued distinctiveness from other groups...social comparisons between groups are focused on the establishment of distinctiveness between one’s own and other groups (Turner, 1975: 8).

By way of summary, ‘the present argument postulates that the reason for behavioural and evaluative intergroup differentiation is to be found in the need of subjects to provide order, meaning, and social identity, and that this need is fulfilled through the creation of intergroup differences when such differences do not in fact exist, or the attribution of value to, and the enhancement of, whatever differences do exist’ (Tajfel, 1974: 75). Groups compete with one another ‘over consensual status and prestige’ in order to be distinctive in evaluatively positive ways (Hogg, 2006: 113). Therefore, this approach to intergroup relations focuses on people’s interactions with each other as members of social groups and not as unique individuals – ‘group membership is a matter of collective self-construal: ‘we’ and ‘us’ versus ‘them’ (Hogg, 2006: 115). This process effectively depersonalises people in the sense that they are seen through the lens of the group characteristics and not as a unique individual. Thus, the need for psychological distinctiveness can be seen, under some conditions, as the outcome of the sequence: social categorisation – social identity – social comparison – psychological distinctiveness. However, although social categorisation is shown here as the first link in the sequence it must be remembered that circumstances can exist where categorisation occurs in response to extant conditions, and so in this scenario categorisation is regarded as an effect of these preliminary conditions (Tajfel, 1974).

According to Hogg (2006: 118) ‘social categorization is the cognitive basis of social identity processes...people cognitively represent a category or group as a prototype – a fuzzy set of attributes (perceptions, attitudes, feelings, and behaviours) that are related to one another in a meaningful way and that simultaneously capture similarities within the group and differences between the group and other groups of people who are not in the group’.
Prototypes describe categories and also evaluate them and prescribe membership-related behaviour. They chart the contours of social groups and tell us not only what characterizes a group but also how that group is different from other groups. Prototypes maximize entitativity (the property of a category that makes it appear to be a cohesive and clearly structured entity that is distinct from other entities) and obey the *metacontrast principle* – their configuration maximizes the ratio of perceived intergroup differences to intragroup differences and thus accentuates similarities within groups and differences between groups (Hogg, 2006: 118).

Thus, Turner (1975) describes instrumental competition and social competition as occupying two distinct poles as shown in Box 6.2

**Box 6.2**

**Instrumental competition and social competition**

Firstly, there is competition which is characterised primarily by the independent desires of various groups for a material reward which can be gained by only one group…The theme of this competition is expressed by the notion of a ‘conflict of interests’. At the other pole [is] social competition, arising from the social comparative aspects of social identity as they interact with shared values…in any intergroup situation where categorization fulfils the function of social identification and is relevant to comparison on a differentially valued dimension, members will attempt intergroup differentiation to provide for themselves a positive self-evaluation…where an intergroup situation allows a positive self-evaluation on some dimension, then the individual confronting this situation will define himself in social terms relevant to that dimension.

Source: Turner (1975: 12, 15)

However, these two poles may not always be mutually exclusive and the possibility for overlap does exist. For instance, one form of overlap may be ‘where a material reward to some extent valued of itself serves as a token or symbol of a value differential associated with a possible social comparison between groups’ (Turner, 1975: 12). One example may be where workers receive small monetary rewards. This might produce a conflict of interest situation or may be regarded as having an effect on social competition. Another example could be where a social competition situation results in a conflict of interest: ‘this might happen where comparison results in a stable and explicit inequity between two groups and thus the desire for positive self-evaluation leads to a directly conflicting group interest with regard to the maintenance of the comparative situation as a whole’ (Turner, 1975: 12). Manheim (1960) showed that groups who were randomly told they possessed high intelligence (on the basis of an IQ test) showed more hostility towards groups who were randomly told they possessed low intelligence than
they did towards groups who were also told they were of high intelligence. In reality, therefore, groups acted on the basis of their perceived status. Thus a stable inequity situation can be a factor in ‘determining the development of social competition into intergroup hostility’ (Turner, 1975: 12).

Compounding such categorisation aspects is the formative role that can be played by language in affecting the evaluative judgements made by people. Perdue, Dovidio, Gurtman, and Tyler (1990) noted that people’s perceptions of the social world are strongly impacted by language and that certain names and labels that are placed on people can affect how others think of them. For example, common collective pronouns (such as *us*, *we*, and *ours*) possess strong cognitive associations towards an ingroup, whereas other collective pronouns (such as *they*, *them*, and *theirs*) can invoke strong cognitive associations towards an outgroup. Thus, the former set of pronouns can be expected to be associated with positive connotations whilst the latter set of pronouns can be expected to be associated with negative connotations. Compelling evidence supporting such processes was found by Perdue et al (1990) who, through a series of experiments, investigated how ingroup and outgroup descriptors could systematically affect the way information is processed and how new evaluative associations are formed. Over time such pronouns provide an example of classical conditioning. The strong evaluative properties of such words give rise to automatic and spontaneous social judgements, in the sense that ‘at times these judgements seem to involve little effort, intention, awareness, or conscious control’ (Perdue et al, 1990: 476).

The implication [of automatic processing] for attitudes is that upon presentation of an attitude object, an individual’s attitude would be activated despite the lack of any reflection whatsoever on his or her part (Fazio, Sanbonmatsu, Powell, and Kardes, 1986: 229)

**Motivational status in social identity and intergroup discrimination**

Tajfel’s original thinking was that people make intergroup comparisons for the motive of enhancing their self-concept or self-image, and that this is achieved by creating a psychologically positive distinction between the ingroup and the outgroup. However, some years later Tajfel and Turner (1979) made explicit reference to *self-esteem* as a motivation behind intergroup behaviour on the grounds that the desire for positive distinctiveness ‘is itself predicated upon a need for positive self-esteem’ (Abrams and

This self-esteem hypothesis subsequently captured the imagination of many researchers. However, as Abrams and Hogg (1988) have reported, these studies came up with mixed results and provided only moderate support for the hypothesis. One of the difficulties that had to be addressed was whether self-esteem can be regarded as an absolute or a relative concept? Another difficulty relates to how researchers can distinguish between two concepts, namely: does successful intergroup discrimination enhance social identity, and hence self-esteem; or does low or threatened self-esteem promote intergroup discrimination because of the need for positive self-esteem?

In other words, self-esteem is both a dependent and an independent variable in relation to intergroup behaviour: it is a product of specific forms of intergroup behaviour, as well as a motivating force for those very behaviours (Abrams and Hogg, 1988: 320).

For example, with regard to the first concept Lemyre and Smith (1985) found that following categorisation, discrimination favouring one’s own ingroup resulted in a relative increase in self-esteem. With regard to the second concept, Wagner, Lampen, and Syllwasschy (1986) conducted a three-group experiment in which one group was high status and the other two low status. The two low status groups displayed more discrimination against each other; however, this discrimination did not raise the subjects’ relative self-esteem compared to their pre-test levels. Additionally, Crocker, Thomson, McGraw, and Ingerman (1987) found that people with high self-esteem, particularly those whose status is threatened or at risk, indulge in discrimination. In order to test both concepts together, Hogg, Turner, Nascimento-Schulze, and Spriggs (1986) conducted an experiment based on the self-esteem hypothesis that predicted that:

- low self-esteem (at pre-test) should promote discrimination, and should rise to a higher level by post-test. High pre-test self-esteem should attenuate or maintain discrimination (thereby maintaining a positive self-image) but need not rise or fall by post-test. In fact, while levels of discrimination did not differ between high and low (pre-test) self-esteem subjects, lows did show a significant rise in self-esteem, whereas highs did not (Abrams and Hogg, 1988: 322).

Abrams and Hogg (1988) state that self-esteem may merely be one of many possible motives for intergroup discrimination. These include the search for meaning and the coherence (integrity) of the self. They also cite Tajfel (1981) that when large, stable, and psychologically legitimate status differences exist between social groups then low status group members may employ a variety of strategies in order to satisfy self-esteem
based motives. These include competing with the high status group, attempting to become assimilated into them, or finding new dimensions along which they compare favourably.

**Social identification in organisations**

Ashforth and Mael (1989) stated that by the late 1980s the evolving academic research on social identification had been generally neglected in organisational research. They defined social identification as ‘the perception of oneness with or belongingness to some human aggregate’ (1989: 21). This approach had the possibility of offering a fresh perspective on organisational issues. Social identification allows a person to answer the question ‘who am I’ by means of relational and comparative processes and it is suggested that a person’s organisation can represent a form of social identification and provide an answer to the ‘who am I’ question (for example, I am employed by the XYZ company). By identifying themselves with the XYZ company (and not the ABC company) the individual can psychologically set up a distinctiveness for themselves which clearly demarcates them from the other companies and thus allows them to vicariously share in the positive elements that the XYZ company bestows upon them. For the purpose of such comparison the individual can choose between several dimensions that they believe exemplifies such valued distinctiveness, such as a caring company, a high-paying company, a company which produces a valued product, and so on. It is this concept of distinctiveness that distinguishes ‘figure from ground’ thus ‘differentiating the [organization] from others and providing a unique identity’ (Ashforth and Mael, 1989: 24). Another factor associated with distinctiveness is that of prestige. Since an ingroup member invariably chooses comparative dimensions that are perceived to possess favourable psychological elements to that particular individual (for example, the dimension that the company produces a high-quality product as opposed to the dimension that the same company may have been prosecuted for polluting the local waterways) then identification with that company along that dimension is invariably associated with perceptions of prestige.

Whilst these arguments do possess an element of veracity, Ashforth and Mael (1989) believe that social identification is more likely to occur at micro levels within an organisation rather than with the organisation as a whole. Such micro elements include work groups, sub units, departments, different work sites, union membership, and so on.
Different groups often have ‘a vested interest in perceiving or even provoking greater differentiation than exists and disparaging the reference group on this basis’ (Ashforth and Mael, 1989: 31). Different work groups within the same organisation are often far more salient to participants than different organisations and because of this greater prominence such participants find it easier to categorise themselves into relevant groups, thus creating noticeable ingroups and outgroups. Antagonism between groups as a result of such identification can be exacerbated by associated factors such as insecurity, threats to their well-being, and competition for resources and territory, all of which add to the tendency for defensive bias.

However, Brown and Williams (1984) found an interesting relationship between organisational identification and group identification as a result of field research amongst workers at a bakery. Those workers who had a strong organisational identity also tended to possess a strong group identity, and were less likely to view other groups negatively. In contrast, those workers who possessed a weak organisational identity and were members of clearly differentiated and bounded groups tended to indulge in biased intergroup comparisons. Ashworth and Mael (1989) noted a number of effects stemming from such biased intergroup comparisons, such as, negative stereotyping and pejorative perceptions of outgroups; deindividuation and depersonalisation of outgroup members; the ingroup deserves its successes but not its failures, whilst the opposite is true for the outgroups; and ingroup members associate criticism of the group as criticism of themselves. However, these effects can be moderated by the relative status of different groups. The identity of low status groups is more likely to be threatened by the existence of high status groups and explains the defensive biases that are often observed. In contrast, high status groups are less likely to feel threatened ‘and thus less in need of positive affirmation [and] may be relatively unconcerned about such comparisons and form no strong impression about the low status group. This indifference of the high status group is, perhaps, the greatest threat to the identity of the low status group because the latter’s identity remains socially unvalidated’ (Ashforth and Mael, 1989: 33). An associated factor in this analysis concerns the nature of the groups that certain groups differentiate themselves against. Tajfel and Turner (1985) state that groups restrict their comparisons to similar, proximate, or salient outgroups. As an example, Ashforth and Mael (1989) state that the purchasing department may have little interest in what goes on in departments such as human resources or shipping.
Building on the research of Brown and Williams (1984) about the relationship between organisational identity and work-group identity, Hennessy and West (1999) conducted research in a team-based community health-care organisation. A number of hypotheses were tested, only two of which proved to be significant, namely:

- A positive relationship between work-group identification and evaluative ingroup favouritism
- A negative relationship between organisational identification and discriminatory ingroup favouritism

Evaluative ingroup favouritism is defined as members rating their own work group more positively than others. Discriminatory ingroup favouritism is defined as members displaying behavioural favouritism by allocating more money to their own group than to others. Albert and Whetten (1985) distinguished between two types of organisation – ideographic and holographic: ‘the former is made up of employees who identify specifically with the subunits in which they work, and the latter is composed of employees who share a common identity across the subunits’ (Hennessy and West, 1999: 364). The organisation in which Hennessy and West (1999) conducted their field research was regarded as strongly ideographic because of its tightly-bound structure based around different teams. Given the nature of this organisation the authors stated that their findings show some support for social identity theory.

**Box 6.3**

**Organisational identification and work-group identification**

Identification with the work group was positively related to evaluative ingroup favouritism but was not related to discriminatory ingroup favouritism…organizational identification was negatively related to discrimination in favour of the ingroup. These results thus provide some support for social identity theory and, for the first time, demonstrate a relationship between work group identification and evaluative ingroup favouritism (positive), and between organizational identification and discriminatory ingroup favouritism (negative).

These results suggest that Allen’s (1996) argument that it is possible to generate dual affective commitment to work group and organization is correct. It is possible to both effectively favour one’s work group, and as a result of having shared commitment to wider organizational goals, to avoid the discriminatory behaviour towards outgroups that would detract from effective organizational functioning.

Source: Hennessy and West (1999: 376)
What was interesting about Hennessy and West’s (1999) findings was that within an ideographic organisation social identity theory would predict a positive relationship between identification with one’s work group and intergroup discrimination, but this relationship was not found in the author’s case study organisation. This raises an interesting question: why did ingroup identification not result in ingroup discrimination? Hennessy and West (1999) suggest that within the organisation they studied there existed a strong common ideology across all day-centres that their clients possessed a right to health care. This common ideology made discrimination between work groups inappropriate. The authors observed that the most fervent advocates of the clients’ right to health care were those most opposed to the concept of competition within the organisation, with comments such as ‘cannot accept the win/lose philosophy, sorry’ (Hennessy and West, 1999: 379). This observation has the potential to contribute to the debate about the motivational status related to social identity and intergroup discrimination. Social identity theory up to this time had postulated that the primary motives for social identity, favouritism, and discrimination were related to self-image and self-esteem. However, Brown (1988) suggested that such factors as ideologies, norms, and values have a strong influence on guiding people’s conduct to the extent they can moderate the relationship between identification and ingroup favouritism and discrimination. The findings of Hennessy and West (1999) with relationship to the team-based health-care organisation would appear to offer support for this contention.

**Progress of social identity theory by 2000**

In a significant critical review of social identity theory, Brown (2000) surveyed the major achievements, problems, and challenges facing the theory at that time at the turn of the century, approximately 25 years after it was first promulgated. Brown (2000) identified the following four major achievements.

- Explaining ingroup bias
- Understanding responses to status inequality
- Stereotyping and perceptions of group homogeneity
- Changing intergroup attitudes through contact

*Explaining ingroup bias:* Group members believe that their own group (and its products) are superior to other groups. They strive to achieve positive distinctiveness which involves a motive of maximising difference in order to feel good about
themselves and their group. Social competition can explain ingroup bias in the absence of instrumental competition and also act as an important supplement to instrumental competition by working in interaction with it.

*Understanding responses to status inequality:* Because social identity theory assumes a need for distinctiveness one would expect low status groups to display more bias than high status groups because of their less positive identity. However, most studies have revealed that high status groups exhibit the most bias. Relative deprivation is seen as an important variable in the form of discrepancies between what a group is entitled to expect and what it actually experiences in terms of social comparisons between groups.

*Stereotyping and perceptions of group homogeneity:* A common finding of social identity theory is that of outgroup homogeneity, whereby members of outgroups are perceived as being more similar to each other than are ingroup members. One explanation of this finding of asymmetry may lie in the concept of differential familiarity, that is, members tend to know their own group better than members of other groups. Another explanation could be associated with the difference between low and high status groups. Low ingroup status can have a negative impact on identity with the result that group members tend to stress the magnitude of ingroup variability so as to mitigate the consequences of being tarred with the same brush (Doosje, Spears, and Koomen, 1995).

*Changing intergroup attitudes through contact:* Not surprisingly, social identity theory has concentrated on some of the more negative aspects of intergroup relations, described by Brown (2000: 751) as a ‘bias towards bias’. However, this has, in turn, spawned a rich literature concerned with methods of overcoming this bias, particularly decategorization theory (Brewer and Miller, 1984) and the common ingroup identity theory (Gaertner, Dovidio, Anastasio, Bachman, and Rust, 1993).

In addition, Brown (2000) identified the following five main issues that had proved problematic.

- Relationship between group identification and ingroup bias
- Self-esteem hypothesis
- Positive-negative asymmetry phenomenon
- Effects of intergroup similarity
• Choice of identity maintenance strategies by low status groups

_Relationship between group identification and ingroup bias_: Social identity theory assumes that favourable intergroup comparisons are associated with positive social identity. An inference that can be drawn from this is the existence of a positive correlation between the strength of group identification and the amount of positive intergroup bias. However, testing this relationship has elicited mixed results and was beset by measurement issues.

_Self-esteem hypothesis_: One of the key assumptions of social identity theory is that intergroup differentiation is motivated by the need for self-esteem, brought about by seeing oneself and one’s group in a positive light when compared with other groups. Abrams and Hogg (1988, cited in Brown, 2000: 755) re-stated this idea in the form of two corollaries:

i. Positive intergroup differentiation results in elevated self-esteem (people feel better about themselves having judged or treated the ingroup more favourably than the outgroup)

ii. People with initially depressed self-esteem (perhaps because the ingroup is not of very high status) should show more differentiation in order to restore it to ‘normal’ levels.

Brown (2000) stated that neither corollary had been unequivocally supported after twenty years of research, although the first was slightly more supported than the second. Methodological arguments loomed large. As a result, the importance of self-esteem as a motivational factor had started to be de-emphasised by some researchers who were suggesting the possibility that a wider range of motives could be associated with social identification.

_Positive-negative asymmetry phenomenon_: Research had started to show a phenomenon of asymmetry in discrimination when positive and negative outcomes are at stake (Mummendey, Simon, Dietzw, Grunert, Haeger, Kessler, Lettgen, and Schaferhoff, 1992) – ‘when the rewards conventionally distributed in the minimal paradigm were replaced with negative outcomes, the very well-replicated phenomenon of discrimination virtually disappeared’ (Brown, 2000: 756).
Effects of intergroup similarity: Brown (2000) notes that social identity theory is essentially a theory of group differentiation, in that group members strive to make their ingroups distinctive and better than other groups. Therefore, groups which are similar to each other should be motivated to show intergroup differentiation. However, this hypothesis has received only equivocal support and contradictory findings from research studies.

Choice of identity maintenance strategies by low status groups: Social identity theory suggests that members of low status groups can employ several strategies to protect their identity. For example, they can leave the group, they can reconstruct or redesign the relevant comparison dimensions of groups, or they can contest the right of the dominant group to claim its superior status. However, Brown (2000) noted that other strategies have been discovered by subsequent research, as below, with the problem for social identity theory lying in predicting which strategy will be used under different contextual conditions.

I. Group members may try to use perceptions of group variability to mitigate some effects of low status (even if we are poor, we are not all poor)
II. Group members may resort to comparisons over time (even if we are poor we are better off than we used to be)
III. Group members may try to reclassify the ingroup so as to belong to a superior group
IV. Group members may try to split the ingroup into sub-categories, one of which is less inferior than the others.

Brown (2000) also identifies a number of future challenges for social identity theory, perhaps the most interesting of which for this thesis is the role played by affective components in intergroup relations. Social identity theory is predicated on the processes of intergroup differentiation. This does not necessarily imply that outgroups are disliked. On the contrary, outgroups may be regarded quite favourably. Intergroup differentiation simply means that the ingroup is treated and evaluated more favourably than outgroups. Brewer (1999) refers to social identity theory as a theory of ingroup love rather than outgroup hate.

However, this is not to deny that outgroups are often treated with negative emotions such as dislike, hate, prejudice, and hostility. Under what conditions can intergroup
differentiation be accompanied by such negative affect? Smith (1993) identifies five major emotions – fear, disgust, contempt, anger, and jealousy – and suggests each may involve different antecedent conditions and consequences, with fear and jealousy typifying lower status groups and disgust and anger typifying higher status groups. Fiske, Xu, Cuddy, and Glick (1999) suggest that most traits can be classified along two dimensions: *competence* (giving rise to respect or disrespect) and *warmth* (giving rise to liking or disliking). Thus, for instance, high status groups are more likely to be seen as competent (and hence respected). Also, positively interdependent groups are more likely to be seen as warm (and hence liked). This implies that high salience is afforded to such variables as status and interdependence. Brewer (1999) also identifies a number of factors which may be more likely to turn ingroup attraction into outgroup antagonism, dislike and hostility. These include: simple societies with few cross-cutting divisions; groups that have developed an ideology of moral superiority; the development of a cooperative endeavour (perhaps through the generation of superordinate goals without a corresponding superordinate identity) which may lead groups to mourn the loss of a subgroup identity; and the generation of common values across different groups which could make mutual claims for group distinctiveness more threatening. Finally, Leyens, Paladino, Rodriguez-Torres, Vaes, Demoulin, Rodriguez-Perez, and Gaunt (2000) distinguish between emotions that are regarded as uniquely human (shame, resentment, love, and hope) and those that are shared with non-humans (anger, pain, pleasure, and excitement). The authors suggest that human emotions are more likely to be associated with ingroups and, in extreme circumstances, could generate dehumanisation of outgroups, hence legitimating maltreatment of its members.

**Social identity motivation…again**

As we have seen, Brown (2000) stated that the importance of self-esteem as a motivational factor had progressively become de-emphasised. Later, Hogg (2006: 120) took this one step further by arguing ‘rather than motivating behaviour, self-esteem is an internal monitor of how well one is satisfying other motivations, such as maintaining rewarding interpersonal relationships’. Instead, Hogg (2006) laid emphasis on three other possible motives for social identity: self-enhancement, uncertainty reduction, and optimal distinctiveness.
**Self-enhancement** as a driving motive is derived from the concept of ethnocentrism (or positive distinctiveness) – a belief that we are better than them. Self-enhancement, according to Hogg (2006: 120) is ‘one of the most basic of human motives [and] groups go to great lengths to protect or promote this belief’ (that we are better than them).

**Uncertainty reduction** as a motive for social identity stems from people’s need to be certain about who they are, how they should behave, and what their place is in the social order. People have a need to belong to a group where prototypes are consensual. The world becomes more predictable and their beliefs, behaviours, and role become validated. Finally, **optimal distinctiveness** as a motive for social identity stems from people’s need to strike a balance between ‘inclusion or sameness (satisfied by group membership) and distinctiveness or uniqueness (satisfied by individuality)’ (Hogg, 2006: 121). Logically, a small group allows too much distinctiveness whilst a large group allows too much inclusiveness. This would seem to suggest that medium sized groups are more likely to satisfy the need for optimal distinctiveness.

**Avenues for future research**

In a review of the literature on social identity and self-categorisation theory, Abrams and Hogg (2010) summarised the major themes and developments in the area as well as suggesting a number of promising avenues for future research. Three topics are prominent in Abrams and Hogg’s analysis: (i) social identity complexity (multiple perspectives), (ii) ingroup identification (low and high identifiers), and (iii) language and communication processes in intergroup relations.

(i) **Social identity complexity**

It has also been proposed that social identity can be characterised by varying degrees of complexity involving structural overlap among self-categorisations, as well as varying numbers of different self-categorisations (Roccas and Brewer, 2002): ‘social identity complexity is greater when a person has a larger number of non-overlapping identities because there are more non-compatible prototypes to contend with (Abrams and Hogg, 2010: 183).

Because [social identity theory] focuses on intergroup differences, the theory highlights that there are always at least two perspectives in any intergroup situation (the ingroup’s and the outgroup’s), as well as the third (those of non-involved groups and observers or analysts). Most research has focused on participant’s perspectives as ingroup members.
There remains a great deal of scope for developing work that considers multiple perspectives in the same situation (Abrams and Hogg, 2010: 188).

Thus, the concept of social identity complexity refers to the observation that individuals can simultaneously possess multiple ingroup identities. When a person is simultaneously a member of several social categories the overlap between these may vary considerably: ‘when ingroups defined by different dimensions of categorisation overlap only partially, the implications for social identification become more complex’ (Roccas and Brewer, 2002: 89). The consequences of this complexity are explored in Box 6.4.

**Box 6.4**

**Consequences of crosscutting ingroup memberships**

Some of those who are fellow ingroup members on one dimension are simultaneously outgroup members of the other. Consider the case of a woman who is a top manager. When the social context emphasizes the professional identity (e.g. a management conference) she is likely to perceive a male colleague as an ingroup member. Nonetheless, she may be aware that in different circumstances (circumstances that emphasize her identity as a woman) that same colleague is an outgroup member. It is these situations of crosscutting group memberships – where the constitution and meaning of different ingroups do not completely converge – that are of interest.

Source: Roccas and Brewer (2002: 89)

How do individuals construct their social identities in relation to multiple, non-convergent ingroup memberships? How can individuals reconcile these competing implications for defining their social identity? Four different types of structures have been identified in the literature – intersection, dominance, merger, and compartmentalization. A female lawyer, for example, is associated with two groups – females and lawyers. One alternative would be to subjectively define her social identity at the point of overlap, that is, she identifies only with females who are lawyers (intersection). On the other hand, she could define her social identity across the entire domain of both groups, that is, she identifies with all females and all lawyers (merger). A third possibility would be for her to adopt only one of the groups to which she identifies and to which the other is subordinated, for example, being a female (domination). Lastly, she may act in a context-specific manner whereby different identifications become primary as and when the context changes, for instance, in the
office she might identify with the legal profession whilst at home her female identity becomes primary (compartmentalisation).

(ii) High and low identification

Spears, Doosje, and Ellemers (1997) found that ‘when an ingroup was under threat, low identifiers distanced themselves from the group (psychologically protecting the individual self), whereas high identifiers closed ranks, emphasising their collective self’ (Abrams and Hogg, 2010: 184). The concept of self-stereotyping was introduced by Turner (1987) and refers to the perception of the self as a prototypical group member. The emphasis in this definition is placed on perceived prototypicality in general terms rather than with reference to any specific trait or attribute. Group members who see themselves as typical or representative of the group are known as high identifiers in the sense that they identify strongly with the group in terms of its general prototypes. In contrast, group members who see themselves as less typical or representative of the group are known as low identifiers in the sense that they do not identify strongly with the group in terms of its general prototypes.

How group members react to threats to social identity is a significant topic of research. Identity threats can come from several sources, such as threats to identity caused by the superior status of a relevant comparison outgroup, and also threats to group distinctiveness caused by the similarity of an outgroup. Spears, Doosje, and Ellemers (1997) carried out four separate studies. They found that a group member’s response to identity threat depends on the strength of their identification with the ingroup. Low identifiers tend to act in a relatively instrumental or self-serving way. Once the identity of the group comes under threat they tend to see themselves as less representative of the group. They are more likely to distance themselves from the group by pursuing individualistic strategies. One such strategy may be to lay increased stress on the concept of group heterogeneity. On the other hand, high identifiers derive their self-concept from their membership of the group and hence any threat to group identity will impact directly on their perception of self-enhancement. High identifiers are particularly susceptible to threats to group identity. Such group members will tend to associate themselves even more with the ingroup once its identity comes under threat by employing group-level strategies to counteract the threat. Thus, high identifiers will call for more solidarity through measures designed to enhance group cohesiveness and
homogeneity. Hence, the authors found that threats to identity lead to ingroup bias only for members with a relatively high degree of group identification.

(iii) Language and communication processes

Abrams and Hogg (2010: 189 argue that ‘communication is a crucial vehicle for social identity dynamics and language, with its strong cultural and historical roots, is one of the most potent symbols of identity (Reid and Giles, 2005). There is ample scope for development of research and theory that integrates self-categorisation and social identity to improve the analysis and interpretation of both person-to-person and mass communication’.

A Special Issue of the journal Group Processes and Intergroup Relations on the topic of ‘intergroup relations: its linguistic and communicative parameters’ was edited by Reid and Giles (2005: 211) who argued that ‘language and communication processes are a core element of the social psychology of intergroup relations; indeed, they are integral constituents of our group identities and what differentiates us from other relevant outgroups’. In reviewing the papers in the Special Issue Reid and Giles (2005: 213) suggested that there existed ‘many available directions for research’. Significant directions included intergroup miscommunication, transmission of stereotypes (described as ‘a hot topic’), and the strategic uses of language for social influence and power. Language is a particularly powerful element because ‘it can be used deliberately and strategically to produce an intended effect on an audience’ (Reid and Giles, 2005: 212). Reid and Giles (2005) quote the research of Wigboldus, Spears, and Semin (2005) who show that a precondition to stereotype transmission is stereotype activation, which is amplified in intergroup social contexts. The research conducted by Maass, Cadinu, Boni, and Borini (2005) is also quoted by Reid and Giles (2005: 212) as showing that ‘people transform concrete behavioural acts into abstract trait representations when those behaviours are consistent with stereotypes. Thus, from a purely social cognitive standpoint, stereotypes are likely to be maintained because people have a natural inclination to transform and remember concrete behaviour in the form of stereotypes’.

Additionally, a fourth avenue for future research can be advanced. So far this chapter has treated instrumental competition (over tangible resources, such as land, wealth and jobs) and social competition (over intangible resources, such as values, status, and positive group distinctiveness) as though they are separate and competing theories.
However, Esses, Jackson, and Bennett-AbuAyyash (2010) suggest that a fertile area for future research lies in devising complementary perspectives by integrating the two approaches, and that this could provide a significant contribution to the literature.

(iv) **Reconciling instrumental competition and social competition between groups**

How could such integration come about? Blumer’s (1958) theory of group position deals with the origin of group competition and conflict: ‘feelings of competition and hostility emerge from historically and collectively developed judgements about the position in the social order that ingroup members should rightfully occupy relative to members of an outgroup’ (Bobo and Hutchings, 1996: 955). Such ingroup members often assume that they are entitled to certain privileges and resources, and therefore tend to see the world from a zero-sum perspective. When they perceive that certain outgroups are making claims on their privileges or resources this can spark intergroup hostility. Closely related to this approach is social dominance theory (Sidanius and Pratto, 1999) which suggests that societies tend to structure themselves along hierarchical lines whereby superior groups lay claim to more privileges and power than other groups. The dominant groups have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo and tend to adopt an ideology that supports the legitimacy of their exalted status in the society. Once again, members of these high status groups display a social dominance orientation whereby belief in zero-sum systems forms a central part of their ideology. Again, this tends to give rise to displays of hostility towards outgroups that are perceived as rivals for their rightful status.

High social-dominance-oriented individuals not only perceive zero-sum competition for resources such as jobs and political power, they also perceive zero-sum competition for value dominance…That is, they see different sets of values as being inherently incompatible and in opposition, and view [outgroups] as competing with members of [ingroups] for determining whose values will dominate in society. Thus, it seems that group dominance is not only a matter of having wealth and power, but of having moral hegemony’ (Esses, Jackson, and Bennett- AbuAyyash, 2010: 229).

Combining the insights from the theory of group position and the theory of social dominance could provide direction for reconciling and integrating the two (separate) approaches of instrumental competition and social competition. Esses, Jackson, and Bennett-AbuAyyash (2010: 236) propose that ‘competition over tangible resources may at times be justified by appealing to value competition, and that competition over values
may at times spill over into competition over tangible resources to ensure that one’s values have representation and status’. Box 6.5 provides more insight.

**Box 6.5**

**Reconciling instrumental competition and social competition between groups**

| Symbolic threat might give rise to material threat, and vice versa...In the context of social change in which the dominance of one’s value system is seen as being threatened, identity may be protected by targeting outgroups as competitors for more tangible resources. Gaining resources may serve the function of allowing one’s group to ensure that its values have representation and status. Alternatively, competition for material resources may generate exaggerated claims of value differences in order to justify the less palatable, material conflict. |

Source: Esses, Jackson, and Bennett-AbuAyyash (2010: 231)

Thus, for example, groups with high social dominance orientation may tend to be extremely sensitive to competition over tangible resources because aspects of power, status, and dominance are at stake. Potential competitors for resources will therefore tend to be discriminated against to ensure that the ingroup continues to possess favoured access to resources. At the same time, however, cultural worldviews are very significant for high social dominance orientation groups because they feel that they are legitimately entitled to certain values and privileges which they perceive in essentialist terms as being ‘real’ and the ‘truth’. For this reason they strive to disprove the veracity of any alternative or competing truths.

Finally, a fifth avenue for future research can be advanced within the broad topic area of attitudes and intergroup relations.

(v) **Attitudes and intergroup relations**

Maio, Haddock, Manstead, and Spears (2010: 261) define attitudes as ‘unfavourable or favourable evaluations of objects in our social world [that] capture our likes and dislikes’. Although there exists plenty of research on attitudes as well as research on intergroup relations, the overlap between the two needs to be explored more fully. These authors observe that when members differentiate the ingroup from salient outgroups they often favour the former and/or derogate the latter as a means of affirming their group’s value. This raises important questions about the relationship between attitudes and values. Do values lead or follow? The authors claim that there is a lack of theory and evidence describing when values will be justifications for prejudice.
or non-prejudice, rather than true antecedents of either attitude: ‘there is little evidence documenting precisely how attitudes express broad values and ideologies. Values may often function as post hoc justifications for attitudes, rather than as their psychological basis’ (Maio, Haddock, Manstead, and Spears, 2010: 270).

**Strategies for reducing intergroup bias and conflict**

This section of the thesis examines the extant literature relating to strategies for reducing intergroup bias and conflict. This literature has been heavily influenced by the notion that bringing people together rather than keeping them apart lies at the base of reducing bias and conflict. This is known as the contact hypothesis.

**Contact hypothesis**

What strategies can promote more positive intergroup attitudes and behaviours and reduce bias? As long as people and groups remain separate from one another, and do not communicate or inter-mingle, then it seems rational to assume that negative attitudes are likely to continue. Contact in one form or another would therefore seem to be a particularly useful strategy to reduce intergroup bias. In this respect, ‘the intergroup contact hypothesis has been among the most enduring theoretical perspectives in the study of intergroup relations’ (Wright, Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe, and Ropp, 1997: 73). The idea that intergroup contact can reduce bias has been prevalent in the literature since the 1930s. For example, Zeligs and Hendrickson (1933) found that children who were more acquainted with children from other races displayed a greater degree of social tolerance. Likewise, during the Second World War those white American soldiers who experienced integration with black soldiers during combat displayed a greater degree of acceptance of blacks than white soldiers who did not share integrated combat experience (Singer, 1948). Similarly, with regard to race relations in the school system Bramfield (1946: 245) observed:

> Where people of various cultures and races freely and genuinely associate, their tensions and difficulties, prejudices and confusions, dissolve; where they do not associate, where they are isolated from one another, their prejudice and conflict grow like a disease

Watson (1947) observed that spreading knowledge is also a useful strategy for reducing bias but suffers from the disadvantage that knowledge is often presented in the form of dull facts and logic. Far better are strategies that are designed to appeal to a person’s
emotions or which ‘stir the heart’ especially if delivered in the form of projects that involve face-to-face contact. Williams (1947: 69) also advocated appropriately structured intergroup contact for reducing bias: ‘lessened hostility will result from arranging intergroup collaboration on the basis of personal association of individuals as functional equals on a common task jointly accepted as worthwhile’.

However, the ‘revised contact hypothesis’ (Allport, 1954; Cook, 1985a) suggests that simple contact between groups is not sufficient per se to reduce intergroup tensions and bias. Certain conditions must also pertain within the contact context for bias to be reduced, such as, equal status between the groups, cooperative intergroup interactions, cooperative interdependence, self-revealing interactions, opportunities for personal acquaintance between members, and supportive egalitarian norms. However, the theoretical process that produces this effect has been subject to much debate.

**Re-categorisation and de-categorisation**

However, other research studies have made advances in addressing this particular conundrum. It has already been noted in this chapter that categorising people into different groups is sufficient to generate intergroup bias. Group members tend to favour their in-group colleagues above members of the out-groups. Sometimes this can also result in derogation of out-group members. These findings would tend to suggest that intergroup bias could be reduced by strategies that are aimed at reducing the salience of intergroup boundaries. Various research studies have shown the usefulness of such strategies as: individuating out-group members by revealing variability in their opinions (Wilder, 1978); encouraging out-group members to respond as individuals rather than as a group (Wilder, 1978); personalising interactions (Brewer and Miller, 1984); and criss-crossing memberships by forming new sub-groups (Commins and Lockwood, 1978).

In addition, Gaertner, Mann, Murrell, and Dovidio (1989) performed a series of experiments that suggested two alternative strategies for reducing intergroup bias – re-categorisation and de-categorisation. The former induces members of different groups to think of themselves as members of one group; whilst the latter induces members of different groups to think of themselves as separate individuals. These two alternative strategies reduce intergroup bias through different processes. Re-categorisation induces group members to think in terms of a single encompassing superordinate boundary that embraces members of previously separate groups. Thus, intergroup bias is reduced by
increasing the attractiveness of former out-group members and hence bringing them closer to the social self. In contrast, de-categorisation induces group members to cognitively abandon the notion of groups entirely so that people are not members of any particular social category. Thus, intergroup bias is reduced by decreasing the attractiveness of former in-group members and hence moving them further away from the social self. In each of these cases, attitudes towards former in-group and out-group members become more equivalent.

Interestingly, Gaertner, Mann, Murrell, and Dovidio (1989) found that subjects’ attraction to all participants was far higher in the case of re-categorisation into one group than in the case of de-categorisation into no groups. In the one-group scenario, subjects rated their personal interactions to be more friendly, close, trusting, and cooperative when compared with the no-group scenario. Thus, Gaertner, Mann, Murrell, and Dovidio (1989: 245) conclude that the different strategies of re-categorisation and de-categorisation for reducing intergroup bias ‘may have different implications for the pattern of behaviour likely to develop among the former in-group and out-group members’ in the sense that ‘a one-group representation would perhaps be more conducive to the development of more intimate, personalized future interactions relative to a separate-individuals representation’.

**Intergroup cooperation and the reduction of bias**

This research was taken further by Gaertner, Mann, Dovidio, Murrell, and Pomare (1990) who looked at the concept of intergroup cooperation. Intergroup cooperation generally takes any or all of three forms – interaction, common goals or problems, and common fate between the memberships (Cook, 1985). Previous research had shown that intergroup cooperation reduces bias (Cook, 1985) but the process that achieves this effect remained unclear. Gaertner, Mann, Dovidio, Murrell, and Pomare (1990: 693) examined the hypothesis that ‘intergroup cooperation reduces bias, at least partially, because [it] reduces the salience of the intergroup boundary. Specifically…intergroup cooperation induces the members to conceive of themselves as one (superordinate) group rather than as two separate groups, thereby transforming their categorised representations from *us* and *them* to a more inclusive *we*. As a result, bias is reduced because the new one-group representation increases the attractiveness of former out-
group members and brings them closer to the social self. Thus, the critical process is one that transforms members’ representations of the aggregate from two groups to one.

To test this hypothesis Gaertner, Mann, Dovidio, Murrell, and Pomare (1990: 693) conducted a series of experiments whereby they ‘created two separate three-person laboratory groups and then brought these groups into contact under circumstances designed to vary (a) the members’ representations of the aggregate as either one group or two groups and (b) the presence or absence of intergroup cooperative interaction’. They varied the presence or absence of all three features of cooperation simultaneously. Overall, the results of the experiments supported their hypothesis that bias is reduced by inducing a transformation in members’ cognitive representations of the aggregate.

To the extent that cooperation reduced bias by transforming members’ representations from two groups to one group, bias was reduced primarily because attitudes toward former out-group members became more positive. With the revised out-group representation induced by cooperation, former out-group members were regarded as generally more likable, cooperative, honest, and similar to the self (Gaertner, Mann, Dovidio, Murrell, and Pomare, 1990: 701).

Common ingroup identity model

Gaertner, Dovidio, Anastasio, Bachman, and Rust (1993) called this model the ‘Common Ingroup Identity Model’ (see also Dovidio, Gaertner, and Kafati, 2000; Gaertner and Dovidio, 2005) and proposed ‘that the causal relation between the conditions of contact and reduced intergroup bias is mediated by changes in members’ perceptions of the aggregate from two groups to one more inclusive group’ (Gaertner, Dovidio, and Bachman, 1996: 273). Box 6.6 explains further.

Box 6.6

Common ingroup identity model

Biases of some people may be driven, at least in part, by an inability to expand their circle of inclusion when considering other people’s ingroup and outgroup status. Therefore, strategies that expand the inclusiveness of one’s group to include people who would otherwise be regarded as outgroup members may have beneficial consequences for promoting more positive intergroup attitudes and behaviours. This is the fundamental idea of the Common Ingroup Identity Model that has been guiding our current research. From this perspective, the reason why the features specified in the Contact Hypothesis reduce intergroup bias and conflict is because, in part, they transform members’ cognitive representations of the memberships from two groups to one group. This change in perception of the memberships is proposed to produce more positive views of outgroup members.

Source: Gaertner, Dovidio, and Bachman (1996:273)
The common ingroup identity model represents a significant breakthrough in the sense that it suggests the theoretical process that can explain the relationship between contact and reduced intergroup bias. The prerequisite features that are stipulated in the contact hypothesis (such as, equal status between the groups, cooperative intergroup interactions, cooperative interdependence, self-revealing interactions, opportunities for personal acquaintance between members, and supportive egalitarian norms) for reducing intergroup bias are postulated by the common ingroup model to possess the effect they do because they help to transform members’ perceptions of memberships from *us* and *them* to *we*.

**Dual identity effect and the mutual intergroup differentiation model**

Gaertner, Dovidio, and Bachman (1996) take this model one step further by suggesting that the development of a common ingroup identity does not necessarily rely on members forsaking their previous sub-group identity. In fact, people can regard themselves as members of two or more groups. This is known as the concept of dual identity.

It is proposed that if members of different groups merely regarded themselves as though they were members of different groups but all playing in the same team, that the intergroup consequences of this dual identity would be more positive than if members regarded themselves as only separate groups, perhaps playing in different teams (Gaertner, Dovidio, and Bachman, 1996:274-275).

The authors use the example of two groups (for example, parents and children) as operating independently within the context of a superordinate (family) entity. However, it is not difficult to think of many more examples of dual identity operating within a broader superordinate identity, for example, different departments within the same company, or different ethnic populations within a common nation state. These units often perceive themselves as separate sub-groups ‘playing in the same team’ in the sense that they are committed to pursuing the ideals of a superordinate group and share a common social identity in this respect. This approach is called the ‘mutual intergroup differentiation model’ and takes its inspiration from the concept of *sub-categorisation* (or the ‘distinct social identity model’) based on the work of Hewstone and Brown (1986), which suggests that the need for positive social identity should be taken into account in the intergroup contact situation. In other words, sub-group identities remain salient during the contact scenario. In this approach, sub-group members retain distinct but complementary roles in the contact situation which contribute towards achieving
common goals. Thus, groups retain ‘positive distinctiveness within a cooperative framework’ (Brewer, 1996: 295)

**Optimal distinctiveness theory**

Brewer (1991) proposed the ‘optimal distinctiveness theory’ which posits that social identity derives from two opposing motivational systems – the need for *belonging/assimilation/inclusion* with others and the need for *differentiation* from others. Social categorisation activates both needs. People can be categorised according to varying levels of inclusiveness. At one extreme is the level of the unique individual and at the other extreme is the level of entire humankind. As inclusiveness increases, the need for differentiation is activated; and as differentiation increases, the need for inclusion is activated – ‘the consequence is that individuals are anxious and dissatisfied with either too much distinctiveness (uniqueness) or too much inclusiveness’ (Brewer, 1996: 296). A state of equilibrium needs to occur between the two opposing motivational systems: ‘this is achieved by social categorisation at an optimal level of inclusiveness in which the need for assimilation is met within the social group and the need for differentiation is met by intergroup distinctions (ie, by the difference between the ingroup and others)’ (Brewer, 1996: 296).

Based on the optimal distinctiveness model, social identification will be maximised when social category boundaries are clearly defined enough to insure both inclusion and exclusion. Only distinctive social categorizations, where ingroup membership is secure and differentiation from outgroups is unambiguous, can achieve the necessary balance between opposing social motives and engage intense group loyalty and attachment (Brewer, 1996: 297).

**Extended contact hypothesis**

Another extension of the contact hypothesis was suggested by Wright, Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe, and Ropp (1997: 74) in the form of the *extended contact hypothesis*, which proposes that ‘knowledge that an in-group member has a close relationship with an out-group member can lead to more positive intergroup attitudes’. This extension to traditional theory was given added veracity by research at the time that was suggesting the importance of cross-group friendships, the role of interpersonal intimacy (Herek and Capitanio, 1996), and the notion that ‘any friend of my friend is also my friend’. A number of mechanisms could provide the theoretical basis for such a process. Park and Judd (1990) lay emphasis on the notion of perceptions of group variability. They show that in-group members tend to perceive their own group to be
fairly heterogeneous whereas they perceive the out-group(s) to be relatively homogeneous. Therefore, any in-group member interacting harmoniously with an out-group member and displaying friendly intentions can spread these positive effects about out-group members throughout the in-group. The result is that both anxiety and ignorance about out-group members can be reduced. Another mechanism is suggested by the research of Aron, Aron, and Smollan (1992) who have shown that in the case of close relationships ‘other is included in self’, in the sense that ‘individuals spontaneously ascribe self-other overlap with close others and that the extent to which they do so is strongly associated with other measures of intimacy and density of social interaction’ (Wright, Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe, and Ropp, 1997:76). Further elaboration is provided in Box 6.7.

**Box 6.7**

**Including other in the self**

Ordinarily, in self’s conception of the world, the in-group is part of self and the out-group is not. Thus, self spontaneously treats in-group members, to some extent, like self, including feeling empathy with their troubles, taking pride in their successes, generously sharing resources with them, and so forth. However, out-group members, because they are not part of the self, receive none of these advantages. Literally, self could not care less about them…We argue, however, that this changes when someone who is part of the in-group, and thus part of self, is known to have an out-group person as part of their self. In this case, the out-group friend – and hence to some extent the out-group itself – becomes part of self. The effect is that, to some extent, self begins to see members of that group as part of self. This means that self’s response to members of that particular group is likely to be more positive, more like the way self would treat self. The result is that self’s in-group – out-group distinctions are directly undermined.


**Status and intergroup bias**

What is the effect of equal status contact on intergroup bias? Ellemers, Doosje, van Knippenberg, and Wilke (1992) found that members of a high status group identified more strongly with their own group (and displayed greater attraction) than members of a low status group. Mullen, Brown, and Smith (1992) also found that high status groups generally display more intergroup bias than low status groups. This research was extended by Dovidio, Gaertner, and Validzic (1998) who investigated the factors that moderate the relationship between equal status contact and the reduction of intergroup
bias. Equal status interventions into intergroup contact might, under some circumstances, increase bias, for example, when there is a threat to the integrity of the identities of the separate groups so that the groups are unable to maintain their group distinctiveness (Brown and Wade, 1987). Hence, Hewstone (1996) suggested that equal status interaction reduces intergroup bias when the original group identities are not threatened by contact. This could occur, for example, when the groups can be differentiated by their roles or by their areas of experience or expertise that they bring to any particular situation. In such a scenario, positive social identity is not unduly threatened: groups are encouraged ‘to recognise mutual superiorities and inferiorities and to accord equal values to dimensions favoring each group’ (Hewstone, 1996: 334). Similar findings were made by Brown and Wade (1987) that intergroup cooperation permitting each group to work separately, but to have equally important but different roles toward achieving a superordinate goal, can reduce intergroup bias.

Dovidio, Gaertner, and Validzic (1998) found that equal status contact between two groups who had been working on the same task (equal status – same dimension) produced high levels of intergroup bias, whereas bias was eliminated when the groups’ areas of experience were distinct and equally valued (same status – different dimension). The critical element was found to be equal relative status rather than absolute status: ‘only when both groups are equal in status but share different experiences or expertise can both groups readily respect and value the other’s unique contribution and believe that each group could benefit from the presence of the other’ (Dovidio, Gaertner, and Validzic, 1998: 117). The authors suggested that a relevant field for further research should examine the potential roles of threat to social identity and respect on the basis of an appreciation for the other group’s contribution. The authors also suggested an interesting notion that the role of superordinate goals may be valuable in generating mutual respect and more positive attitudes when the groups are of unequal status: ‘when the members of each group perceive that the other group’s contributions are necessary for their own success, members may develop the respect of the other group (whether or not its status is equivalent to one’s own) and the inclusive group representations that can produce more positive intergroup attitudes’ (Dovidio, Gaertner, and Validzic, 1998: 118, italics in original).
Intergroup cooperation and the reduction of bias…again

It has previously been seen that intergroup cooperation can take any of three forms – interaction, common goals or problems, and common fate (Cook, 1985) and that intergroup cooperation is observed to reduce intergroup bias. Cooperation between groups involves ‘sharing both the labor and the fruits of the labor’ (Worchel, Wong, and Scheltema, 1989: 213). In terms of this definition, ‘sharing the labor’ refers to the process of interaction between the groups, whereas ‘sharing the fruits of the labor’ refers to the outcome of common fate. The literature had generally suggested that the most important element in reducing intergroup bias was interaction between groups in the sense that such interaction was vital for communicating, sharing information, working together, compromising, reaching agreement, swapping values, and gaining interpersonal information. However, Gaertner, Dovidio, Rust, Nier, Banker, Ward, Mottola, and Houlette, 1999) examined whether these two elements of cooperation (interaction and common fate) are potentially separable and may independently be sufficient to reduce bias. Their findings revealed that interaction and common fate are separable components of intergroup cooperation and also that both components can reduce intergroup bias. However, the authors did add a nuance to their findings in the sense that ‘whereas we have direct evidence that interaction…can reduce bias independently of common fate, the data about whether common fate similarly reduces bias independent of intergroup interaction are less clear’ (Gaertnet et al, 1999: 397). In addition, the authors found that over-riding these findings was the potential importance of group members perceiving themselves to be members of a common superordinate entity and the effect that this perception had on the reduction of intergroup bias. This supported the earlier findings of Gaertner, Mann, Dovidio, Murrell, and Pomare (1990) in relation to the veracity of the common in-group identity model.

Reformulation of intergroup contact theory

Pettigrew (1998) critically analysed the contact hypothesis and raised a number of significant issues and problems. He noted how Allport’s (1954) original formulation listed four conditions for the positive effects of intergroup contact to occur – equal group status within the situation, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and supportive laws and norms. However, subsequent research studies had substantially added to the number of these conditions, to such an extent that the literature was beginning to look
like a grocery list. This development threatened to undermine the veracity of the theory. Pettigrew (1998) considered that researchers had confused essential conditions with facilitating conditions in their constant quest to extend the list of conditions. He was of the opinion that only one additional condition needed to be added to Allport’s (1954) original list of four, namely, ‘the contact situation must provide the participants with the opportunity to become friends’ (Pettigrew, 1998: 76). In addition, he criticised the essentially static nature of the contact hypothesis which ignored the dynamic consideration of time, and the possibility of changes unfolding in a sequence of stages.

The original hypothesis says nothing about the processes by which contact changes attitudes and behaviour. It predicts only when contact will lead to positive change, not how and why the change occurs. A broader theory of intergroup contact requires an explicit specification of the processes involved (Pettigrew, 1998: 70, italics in original).

To combat these deficiencies Pettigrew (1998) postulated a reformulated contact theory which took into account the dynamic nature of the theory. Figure 6.1 shows this reformulated theory.

**Figure 6.1**

Reformulated contact theory

![Diagram](Source: derived from Pettigrew (1998: 77)]

The reformulated contact theory foresees that in the initial intergroup contact situation a number of situational and contextual factors (essential and facilitating factors plus the experiences and characteristics of participants) can come together in a positive way so that the initial anxiety of a participant can be disarmed to the extent that s/he likes a
member of another group as an individual without this liking spreading to encompass all members of that group. This is the stage of ‘decategorisation’. The next step in the process foresees that this development progresses to the stage of established contact where the boundary dividing the groups becomes salient and the positive atmosphere between the respective members generates a generalised scenario of reduced prejudice. This is the stage of ‘salient categorisation’ (also equivalent to the mutual intergroup differentiation model). Finally, the different group members come to regard themselves as being members of one unified group to the extent where there occurs the maximum reduction in prejudice. This is the stage of ‘recategorisation’.

Gaertner, Dovidio, Banker, Houlette, Johnson, and McGlynn (2000) confirmed the veracity of Pettigrew’s (1998) reformulation of the contact hypothesis by comparing it with the results from the Robbers’ Cave study (Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood, and Sherif, 1961). The Robbers’ Cave study constituted a rich and detailed qualitative analysis of the intergroup behaviour of twenty two 12-year-old boys who attended a three-week summer camp in the Robbers’ Cave State Park in Oklahoma. Because the boys’ behaviour evolved over a three-week period it provided a unique opportunity to study the dynamic nature of conflictual and cooperative group behaviour as it unfolded through a series of stages over the study period. Gaertner, Dovidio, Banker, Houlette, Johnson, and McGlynn (2000: 98) confirmed that their analysis of the description of events at Robbers’ Cave supported Pettigrew’s (1998) proposal that ‘when viewed over time, decategorization, recategorization, and mutual intergroup differentiation processes each can contribute to the reduction of intergroup bias and conflict [and] these categorization-based approaches not only can reduce bias individually but also can facilitate each other reciprocally’. This sequential and reciprocal relationship between decategorisation, recategorisation, and mutual intergroup differentiation, helped to provide a potential solution to the conceptual puzzle that arose when these three strategies were viewed as separate, individual strategies for reducing intergroup bias.

These [three] strategies for reducing intergroup bias have received empirical support. However, a puzzle remains as to how we should conceptualise these alternatives that seem so very different, even opposite to one another. Are they incompatible competitors? Are they independent processes that reduce bias through different pathways? Alternatively, are they different but complementary processes that reciprocally facilitate each other? (Gaertner, Dovidio, Banker, Houlette, Johnson, and McGlynn, 2000: 99)
Gaertner, Dovidio, Banker, Houlette, Johnson, and McGlynn (2000) provide a handy description of the main characteristics that mark the occurrence of each of the three category-based processes, as shown in Box 6.8

**Box 6.8**

**Characteristics of decategorisation, recategorisation, and mutual intergroup differentiation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Decategorisation</strong></th>
<th><strong>Recategorisation</strong></th>
<th><strong>Mutual intergroup differentiation</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friendly interactions in which people relate to one another in terms of their personal interests and abilities rather than interests that are important to their respective groups</td>
<td>Use of pronouns ‘us’, ‘we’, and ‘ours’ whose meaning is inclusive of the membership of both groups</td>
<td>Maintenance of original boundaries in the use of space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-other comparisons that replace group-on-group comparisons</td>
<td>Arrangements of the memberships in space that reduces the salience of separate group boundaries (e.g., a seating pattern)</td>
<td>More respectful appreciation of differences between the groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-revealing interactions</td>
<td>Activities that celebrate common superordinate groups to which the members actually belong (e.g., songs)</td>
<td>Solutions to collective problems that respectfully recognise the group boundaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of uniformity among in-group members in their views about how outgroup members should be treated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Pettigrew’s (1998) reformulation of the contact hypothesis suggested that bias reduces over time through an unfolding sequence of strategies that commences with decategorisation, followed in turn by mutual intergroup differentiation and then recategorisation. However, Gaertner, Dovidio, Banker, Houlette, Johnson, and McGlynn (2000: 108) suggest that ‘the order in which these category-based processes unfold probably depends on specific features of the contact situation’. Such features may include: structural features of the contact situation; the nature of intergroup relations; and intragroup processes. *Structural features* might relate to whether contact is group-on-group or among individuals. *Intergroup relations* might encompass whether conflict and bias is overt or less direct. High intergroup conflict might suggest that the
best initial strategy is decategorisation in order to promote gradual friendly relations one-on-one between individuals rather than risking initial group-on-group contact. In contrast, low intergroup conflict and less overt bias might suggest recategorisation as the best initial strategy. Finally, with regard to *intragroup processes* the degree to which people identify with their group must be borne in mind. When group identities are strong the best initial strategy might be mutual intergroup differentiation whereby members’ social identities are not threatened. A dual-identity approach to recategorisation might also be useful which stresses the simultaneous salience of both a sub-group identity and a superordinate identity.

**Do emotions determine willingness to engage in intergroup contact?**

The research literature (for example, Breckler, 1984) perceives attitudes as consisting of three components: cognitive (thoughts or beliefs about the attitude object), affective (feelings and emotions associated with the attitude object), and behavioural (past or intended actions towards the attitude object). However, attitudes do not necessarily have all three components, and can be formed on the basis of any one of the three types of components (Eagly and Chaiken, 1998). The relative importance of these different components of attitudes depends on the type of behaviour being considered. Millar and Tesser (1986) have shown that attitudes based on the cognitive component strongly predict instrumental behaviour (goal-driven) whilst attitudes based on the affective component predict behaviours engaged in for their own sake.

Esses and Dovidio (2002) explored the differential roles of emotions and cognitions in determining willingness to engage in intergroup contact behaviour (in this case, the willingness of whites to engage in contact with blacks). White student participants were asked to view a video about discrimination against blacks. Participants were asked to concentrate either on their feelings and emotional responses (affective) or on what they were thinking (cognitive). The findings were that those who watched the video while focusing on their emotions reported more willingness to engage in future contact with blacks than did those who focused on their thoughts. This supported the hypothesis that affect is an important causal factor in willingness to engage in future intergroup contact. Esses and Dovidio (2002) suggested that either of two reasons could underlie this finding – either empathic concern is generated or that moral indignation is generated because of feelings of injustice and violation of egalitarian standards. The conclusion of
the authors from this research was that feelings of moral indignation outweighed feelings of empathic concern.

**Parasocial contact and intergroup bias**

The concept of *parasocial interaction* was introduced by Horton and Wohl (1956). It refers to interpersonal relationships where one party knows a great deal about the other, but the other does not. Thus, the relationship is one-sided in nature. A common form of parasocial interaction is through the medium of the mass media in the form of newspapers, internet, television, radio and so on. Through these channels people can become familiar with such personalities as sports stars, politicians, film actors, and celebrities and in so doing can form relationships with them in similar fashion as could be developed through interpersonal contact. Schiappa, Gregg, and Hewes (2005: 93) explored whether the ‘socially beneficial functions of intergroup contact have an analogue in parasocial contact’. They called this the *parasocial contact hypothesis*.

In a media-rich environment, people may come to ‘know’ more people parasocially than directly through interpersonal contact. Few people have direct contact with the President of the United States, but virtually everyone in the world has strong opinions about the person holding that office. Most media users form attitudes and beliefs about many politicians, athletes, journalists, and entertainers with whom their contact has been exclusively through the mass media (Schiappa, Gregg, and Hewes, 2005: 95).

When people have a parasocial exposure to a televised character they develop cognitive and affective responses to that contact in the form of impressions, attitudes, judgements, and beliefs about that character. Schiappa, Gregg, and Hewes (2005) argue that parasocial contact can reduce bias towards minority group members especially when such members are depicted in a positive and likable manner. To test this, the authors conducted three studies whereby they examined the level of prejudice displayed by majority group members towards two clearly identified minority groups, namely gay men and male transvestites. Parasocial contact was initiated by showing majority group members successive episodes of three popular television programs – *Six Feet Under*, *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, and *Dressed to Kill*. In all three programs, minority group members are depicted in likable and positive terms, and in all three studies, parasocial contact was associated with lower levels of prejudice.
**Intergroup threat and intergroup bias**

Riek, Mania, Gaertner, McDonald, and Lamoreaux (2010) noted that intergroup threat is regarded as a cause of intergroup bias and negative intergroup attitudes, yet little research had been performed to examine ways of reducing intergroup threat. Stephan and Stephan (2000) classified intergroup threat into four categories which they called the integrated threat theory. The definition of each of these four different types of threat is shown in table 6.1.

### Table 6.1

**Integrated threat theory**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forms of intergroup threat</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Realistic</td>
<td>Conflict or competition over goals, resources, or power involving threats to physical and/or economic well-being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbolic</td>
<td>Conflict over values, norms or beliefs between groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intergroup anxiety</td>
<td>Feelings of uneasiness and awkwardness in the presence of out-group members because of uncertainty about how to behave towards them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative stereotypes</td>
<td>Negative expectations concerning the behaviour of out-group members (arrogant, unintelligent, untrustworthy) often eliciting negative emotions (fear, anger)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Derived from Stephan and Stephan (2000); and Riek, Mania, Gaertner, McDonald, and Lamoreaux (2010)

Riek, Mania, Gaertner, McDonald, and Lamoreaux (2010) advanced the hypothesis that the development of a common ingroup identity, by generating an overarching superordinate identity, can reduce these different types of intergroup threat.

Common ingroup identity elicits greater trust of the former outgroup members and consequently less reason to perceive them as threatening. Thus we propose that perceived threat will mediate the relationship between common identity and intergroup attitudes, such that a superordinate identity improves outgroup attitudes, at least in part, by reducing perceived intergroup threat (Riek, Mania, Gaertner, McDonald, and Lamoreaux 2010: 405).

The generation of a superordinate identity can reduce each of the four different types of threat as shown in table 6.2.
Table 6.2
Reducing intergroup threat by generating a superordinate identity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Threat</th>
<th>How the threat is reduced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Realistic</td>
<td>Creates an impression of cooperation and shared fate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbolic</td>
<td>Shifts members’ focus from different values to shared values, thus emphasising similarities rather than differences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intergroup anxiety</td>
<td>Former out-group members are now regarded as in-group members, thus eliciting less anxiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative stereotypes</td>
<td>Negative out-group stereotypes now reflect badly on one’s own self-image because this reflects poorly on the superordinate group as a whole</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Derived from Riek, Mania, Gaertner, McDonald, and Lamoreaux (2010: 405-406)

The researchers tested their hypothesis on two separate groups of white and black students who were undergraduate students in Psychology at the University of Delaware. In their experiment the researchers employed the superordinate identity of ‘being American’. Their findings revealed that two hypotheses were supported: stronger perceptions of a common identity were related to lower levels of threat, and intergroup threat mediated the relationship between perceptions of a common identity and outgroup attitudes.

Vicarious and imagined intergroup contact

By the late 1990s and early 2000s the literature was beginning to make a firm distinction between direct and indirect forms of intergroup contact. Direct contact involves actual face-to-face contact between members of clearly defined groups. As has been shown so far in this chapter, many research studies have shown evidence of the veracity of direct contact in reducing intergroup bias. In a major research study encompassing hundreds of published studies, Pettigrew and Tropp (2006: 766) conducted a meta-analytic test which ‘clearly indicated that intergroup contact typically reduces intergroup prejudice’. However, the various forms of indirect intergroup contact were omitted from this study. Indirect contact involves such forms as:

- Extended contact: learning that an ingroup member is friends with an outgroup member
- Parasocial contact: being exposed to members of the ingroup and outgroup interacting in fictitious media portrayals
• **Vicarious contact**: observing an ingroup member interact with an outgroup member

• **Imagined contact**: imagining oneself interacting with an outgroup member.

The first two of these forms of contact (extended and parasocial) have already been discussed earlier in this chapter. However, the second two (vicarious and imagined) need attention. Dovidio, Eller, and Hewstone (2011) edited a Special Issue of the journal *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations*, specifically dedicated to these forms of indirect intergroup contact. They noted that ‘despite their enormous practical and theoretical potential, studies of indirect forms of contact are still surprisingly rare’ (2011: 149). Vicarious contact is defined as *viewing*, rather than simply knowing about, a positive interaction between an ingroup and an outgroup member. Thus:

> Observing the actions of another person, particularly someone with whom one identifies, can influence perceptions of how one should perform and/or expand one’s personal knowledge and repertoire about how one can behave. It can inhibit or disinhibit existing inclinations to help people acquire new knowledge, understanding and skill (Dovidio, Eller, and Hewstone, 2011: 153).

Positive vicarious contact can result in the acquisition of more trusting attitudes and a lessening of the sense of threat from outgroup members. In contrast, imagined contact is an activity that involves the self directly in a mental simulation of a social interaction. When this interaction is perceived in positive terms it can eliminate stereotype threat, reduce anxiety, promote tolerance, and result in more positive attitudes towards outgroup members. In one experiment, Crisp and Husnu (2011) reported that participants who mentally simulated a positive intergroup encounter showed greater intentions to engage in future contact.

**The concept of ‘we’ in high-power and low-power groups**

Dovidio, Gaertner, and Saguy (2007: 303) note that ‘the experience of being a member of a majority or minority group relates fundamentally to the ways that people perceive and experience intergroup relations’. The difference between a majority and minority group is usually defined in terms of *power*, but differences in size and status can also be salient. Members of these different groups often display different perceptions about the degree of threat to their group values (distinctiveness) and their motivations for changes to the status quo.
**Threats to group distinctiveness:** Gonzalez and Brown (2006) found that members of majority groups are more likely to favour re-categorisation into one superordinate group because they believe that their dominant values will prevail in the new super group. Hence, threats to their identity are minimal. In contrast, members of minority groups and more likely to expect that their identity and values will be threatened and submerged in such a superordinate group. Hence, they are more likely to favour a scenario involving dual identity within a shared social framework. Thus, group distinctiveness and perceived threat are the important variables at play in this analysis: ‘whereas majority group members favour the assimilation of minority groups into one single culture – the dominant culture – minority group members often tend to want to retain their cultural identity’ (Dovidio, Gaertner, and Saguy, 2007: 306).

**Changes to the status quo:** Members of majority groups are more likely to perceive the status quo as being fair and hence are unlikely to support demands for major changes. In contrast, members of minority groups are more likely to perceive injustices in the social order and hence have a greater tendency to support changes in the status quo. Hence, Dovidio, Gaertner, and Saguy (2007: 312) state that ‘from this perspective, the preferred representations of majority group members for a one-group identity and of minority group members for a dual identity may have strategic consequences’. In particular, dual identity fosters the salience of separate group identities and is more likely to recognise and expose any inequities or injustices in the system than is a one-group scenario. Stemming from such exposure, collective actions can then be directed towards changing the social system through appeals to principles of fairness and justice and generating empathy amongst majority group members: ‘one way that minority groups can promote social change that would improve their group position is to manoeuvre the nature of discourse to bring injustice and inequality into people’s conscious awareness’ (Dovidio, Gaertner, and Saguy, 2007: 315). Members of majority groups are likely to want to stress commonalities and draw attention away from group-based power inequalities. However, members of minority groups might also want to stress commonalities whilst simultaneously drawing attention towards endemic group differences. This is the essence of the dual identity scenario as shown in Box 6.9.
Positive intergroup contact and social reform

This chapter has provided ample evidence that positive intergroup contact can reduce tension and bias between groups. The common ingroup identity model (Gaertner, Dovidio, Anastasio, Bachman, and Rust, 1993) leads group members to conceive of themselves as one superordinate group by focusing on commonalities rather than differences. However, Saguy, Tausch, Dovidio, and Pratto (2009) have drawn attention to how positive intergroup contact can have the side effect that it can undermine disadvantaged-group members’ support for social change aimed at promoting equality. Positive intergroup contact improves attitudes and blurs group differences. This can lead to members of disadvantaged groups paying less attention to group inequality and thus undermining the necessary conditions for collective action to occur. For example, Dixon, Durrheim, and Tredoux (2007) found that black South Africans who experienced more contact with whites displayed a tendency to offer decreased support for social policies that could promote racial equality. In like manner, Saguy, Tausch, Dovidio, and Pratto (2009) conducted a naturalistic study amongst Israeli Arabs (who they described as a disadvantaged minority). They found that those Arabs who reported more positive intergroup contact with Jews were more likely to perceive of Jews as fair, and that, in turn, this predicted decreased support for social change. According to these authors ‘recognizing that intergroup inequality exists and that one’s group is disadvantaged within the social system is key in mobilizing members of oppressed groups to act for social change’ (Saguy, Tausch, Dovidio, and Pratto, 2009:114). If positive intergroup contact dulls such recognition then members of disadvantaged
groups may fail to perceive structural inequality and their position in it, thus delaying or abandoning necessary social reform.

**Negative intergroup contact and category salience**

Pettigrew, Tropp, Wagner, and Christ (2011: 277) noted that ‘not all intergroup contact reduces prejudice. Some situations engender enhanced prejudice’. Paolini, Harwood, and Rubin (2010) noted that the literature is extremely short on studies that examine the effects of negative intergroup contact. They observed that in many naturalistic settings the nature of intergroup contact has a high possibility of being negative, especially in situations which are unstructured and unsupervised. The authors advanced the hypothesis that negative contact would make individuals more aware of their respective group memberships (high category salience) whereas positive contact causes low category salience (as would be the case with the common ingroup identity model). The authors call this the *valence-salience effect*. In their research, the authors ‘manipulated contact valence experimentally in the context of face-to-face inter-ethnic contact and measured ethnicity salience using an unobtrusive open-ended measure’ (Paolini, Harwood, and Rubin, 2010: 1726). A sample of white Australians were brought into face-to-face contact with an obviously ethnic confederate partner. When the partner displayed negative non-verbal behaviour the white Australians made more frequent and earlier reference to ethnicity when describing their ethnic contact partner than when the partner displayed positive non-verbal behaviour.

In a review of the literature Pettigrew, Tropp, Wagner, and Christ (2011: 277) commented ‘negative contact typically involves situations where the participants feel threatened and did not choose to have the contact (Pettigrew and Tropp, 2011). These situations frequently occur in work environments where intergroup competition exists as well as in situations involving intergroup conflict’. To illustrate their point the authors put forward the following scenario for consideration:

Consider a tense checkpoint on the Palestinian West Bank. Neither the Israeli soldiers nor the Palestinian civilians passing through have chosen to be in this situation. And both parties are understandably threatened. The soldiers fear the possibility of a suicide bomber or other attacks upon them. The Palestinians fear humiliation and violence from the gun-toting soldiers. No intergroup contact theorist has ever thought such stressful contact would do anything but worsen intergroup relations (Pettigrew, Tropp, Wagner, and Christ, 2011: 277)
The key variable in this scenario is the magnitude of threat. When contact is voluntary and freely entered into the effects of negative contact are far smaller than when involuntary contact occurs (Pettigrew and Tropp, 2011).

**Directions for future research**

Recent research and reviews by a range of authors (Tausch and Hewstone, 2010; Al Ramiah, Hewstone, and Schmid, 2011; Gaertner, Dovidio, and Houlette, 2010; Pettigrew, 2008; Dovidio, Gaertner, and Kawakami, 2003) have revealed a number of areas where further research needs to be conducted with relation to the impact of intergroup contact on reducing prejudice. For the purpose of this chapter, four major areas of concern have arisen from the literature:

- Intergroup contact and behaviour towards outgroups
- Intergroup contact and group inequality
- Specifying the processes of intergroup contact
- Negative effects of intergroup contact

**(i) Intergroup contact and behaviour towards outgroups**

Tausch and Hewstone (2010: 555) state that despite all the research about the benefits of intergroup contact there still exists very sparse evidence that ‘contact affects actual behaviour towards outgroup members’. They call for additional research to be conducted on this topic as shown in Box 6.10.

**Box 6.10**

**Intergroup contact and behaviour towards outgroups**

Behaviors are constrained by habits, social norms, and given social structures. Thus, whilst contact may change someone’s attitudes towards an outgroup, other pressures that determine behavior, such as ingroup norms that prescribe antagonistic behavior towards outgroup members, may have even stronger effects. Hence, a major challenge for future research is to examine the effects of contact on behavior, and to establish the conditions that need to be created to achieve more positive intergroup behavior that is sustained beyond the immediate intervention.

Source: Tausch and Hewstone (2010: 555)
(ii) Intergroup contact and group inequality

Despite the popularity of the common ingroup identity model and the pursuit of a superordinate overarching identity as a strategy for reducing intergroup bias, Al Ramiah, Hewstone, and Schmid (2011) point out the differential effects for members of majority or minority groups. Thus, members of majority groups tend to favour a common ingroup identity, whilst members of minority groups tend to favour dual identity group representation. This tension between the preferences of different group members leads Al Ramiah, Hewstone, and Schmid (2011: 50) to suggest the following direction for future research:

It seems expedient to focus our attentions on how to balance the needs of the many with those of the few in a way that is mutually enriching, instead of cancelling one another out. Rather than being a Panglossian ideal, we believe that our super-diverse world makes this a necessary preoccupation of researchers working in the area of social identity and intergroup conflict.

Tausch and Hewstone (2010: 555) also suggest this issue as a topic for further research in the sense that ‘positive intergroup contact achieved through concentrating on commonalities may weaken the motivation of members of disadvantaged groups to engage in collective action to reduce inequalities’. Hence, they suggest that addressing the needs of members of disadvantaged groups is perhaps the greatest challenge for future research on intergroup contact.

Future research… could identify the conditions under which contact promotes positive intergroup attitudes without compromising the realization of group-based goals. Emphasizing commonalities, while at the same time addressing unjust group inequalities during contact, may result in greater prejudice reduction for members of disadvantaged groups, without diverting attention away from group inequality, and promote necessary changes in advantaged group members’ ideological beliefs regarding group inequality (Tausch and Hewstone, 2010: 555-556).

Gaertner, Dovidio, and Houlette (2010: 536) pursue an associated theme that has emerged from the literature in that although one-group representations invariably reduce bias between groups, this is not always the case with dual-identity representations: ‘thus, a challenge for future research is to identify the factors that moderate the utility of the one-group and dual identity forms of re-categorization’. The authors drew attention to the finding that dual identity seems more effective for reducing bias when different groups possess distinctive and complementary identities than when they have similar identities which can generate intergroup threats.
(iii) Specifying the processes of intergroup contact

Various authors have suggested that more research is required on specifying the processes of intergroup contact (Pettigrew, 2008; Dovidio, Gaertner, and Kawakami, 2003), including the role and impact of various moderating and mediating variables such as empathy, intergroup threats, perspective-taking, and knowledge. Pettigrew (2008) states that early theorists laid considerable emphasis on the belief that intergroup contact led to learning about the outgroup and this new knowledge in turn reduced prejudice. However, his conclusion from a review of the literature is that knowledge mediation does exist ‘but is of minor importance’ (Pettigrew, 2008: 189).

The necessity for further research on process issues has also occupied the attention of other researchers such as Gaertner, Dovidio, and Houlette (2010). These authors suggested that although decategorisation, recategorisation, and mutual intergroup differentiation can be regarded as competing perspectives, an avenue for future research is to recognise their convergent and complementary themes. For example, can they work together in sequence to reduce intergroup bias? The veracity of such an approach may depend upon the initial nature of the intergroup relationships, such as whether intense conflict, suspicion, or hostility within a threatening environment already permeates the extant relationship. In this scenario a decategorisation approach may be the most useful initial strategy. However, when the groups have compatible identities then mutual intergroup differentiation seems to offer the best initial step because it reduces the impact of threat whilst allowing cooperation between groups in the pursuit of a superordinate goal.

(iv) Negative effects of intergroup contact

Intergroup contact does not always lead to positive effects, such as reduced prejudice. In some circumstances intergroup contact can lead to negative effects such as increased prejudice, distrust, hostility, and conflict. Pettigrew (2008) calls for further research to be conducted in this area.

Summary

This chapter has examined the extant literature on intergroup relations in an attempt to analyse the underlying theoretical issues that impact upon the nature of the interaction between separate groups (such as TAFE and HE). The chapter is structured into two
main sections. First, the literature on bias and conflict in intergroup relations has been presented, followed by the literature on strategies for reducing intergroup bias and conflict. It has been noted that the literature lays considerable emphasis on social categorisation and social identity as sources of potential bias and conflict between different groups. Various avenues for future research have also been suggested. In addition, the literature also advances a rich array of possible strategies that can be employed in order to reduce bias and conflict between groups. This literature is strongly focused on the nature of the contact hypothesis and its subsequent variants as laying the basis for more conducive intergroup relations. The essence of individual strategies to be potentially employed depends on the contextual nuances of the situation. Significant variables to be taken into consideration include relative status, emotions, and the degree of threat. Various avenues for future research have again been suggested.

The following chapter represents the conclusion to the thesis. In this chapter I examine some of the limitations of the thesis, analyse the appropriateness of the research findings in terms of the criteria for assessing the validity of qualitative research, and analyse the contributions to knowledge made by the research findings of the thesis.
Chapter 7

Conclusion

This chapter concludes the thesis. It is comprised of four sections: contribution of the thesis to the literature; implications of the thesis; criteria for evaluation of the thesis; and limitations of the thesis.

Contribution of the thesis to the literature

Chapter 6 was devoted to an analysis of the literature on intergroup relations. It was segmented into two major sections, first the nature of bias and conflict in intergroup relations, and second, the strategies which can be employed to reduce the amount of bias and conflict in intergroup relations. Analysis was also undertaken of some of the issues that still require clarification or elaboration in these topic areas and hence could be the subject of further research. It is the contention of this thesis that a significant contribution to the literature has been made in several areas identified in chapter 6. These contributions are analysed in the following section under two headings: intergroup bias and conflict, and strategies for reducing intergroup bias and conflict.

Intergroup bias and conflict

The thesis makes three major contributions to the literature on intergroup bias and conflict:

- Motivation for social identity and social categorisation
- Reconciling instrumental and social competition
- Emotions, stereotypes, and language in intergroup relations

Each of these contributions is now discussed in turn.

(i) Motivation for social identity and social categorisation

It has been argued in chapter 6 that social categorisation impacts upon social identity. In turn the social comparisons that such identity engenders impacts strongly upon satisfying people’s need for psychological distinctiveness. People start to compare themselves based upon prototypes (fuzzy sets of attributes) that in some meaningful way capture the similarities and differences between the comparison groups. The motivation for such behaviour has been subject to much debate in the literature. Tajfel
and Turner (1979) suggested that such motivation was due to a person’s desire to maintain or enhance their self-esteem, in other words the desire for positive distinctiveness is itself predicated upon a need for positive self-esteem. Abrams and Hogg (1988) later suggested other possible motives such as the search for meaning and coherence (integrity) of the self. Later still, Hogg (2006) suggested that self-esteem is merely an internal monitor of how well one is satisfying other motivations, for example, maintaining rewarding interpersonal relationships. He advanced three other possible motives, namely: self-enhancement (we are better than them), uncertainty reduction (the need to be certain about who one is and one’s place in the social order), and optimal distinctiveness (the need to strike a balance between sameness and uniqueness).

As argued in this thesis, the concept of preciousness has been identified as the core category in the model that has emerged from a grounded theory analysis of the research question ‘what are the main issues in making intersectoral education effective?’ Preciousness has been identified as a major blockage in the HE-TAFE relationship, mainly perpetuated on the HE side but not entirely absent from the TAFE side. As shown in chapter 3, preciousness is defined as:

> Associated with something that is highly treasured, loved, esteemed, or cherished. It carries connotations of something that is excessively elegant or refined. Accordingly, it tends to possess great value, sometimes to the extent of being beyond value. People who might be accused (often disparagingly) of acting preciously are usually assumed to be affectedly (emotionally) concerned with style, manners, or language. By paying too much attention to such details they are often perceived to be behaving in a very formal and almost unnatural way (OneLook.com).

In the case of intersectoral relations between TAFE and HE, the two divisions harbour different interpretations of what they regard as treasured or cherished. For HE, the style of education they cherish is associated with a noble concept of higher education based on critical and conceptual analysis, research-based investigation, the pursuit of new knowledge, and a criteria of student attainment based on graded assignments and examinations. For TAFE, the emphasis lies in practical vocational training which equips students for the world of work and is based on a criteria of student attainment based on competency to perform the skills and tasks. When different groups are precious about the maintenance of a certain concept it is almost akin to a situation where they believe the social lifeworld would be a poorer place if such traditions and approaches were abandoned. Such a scenario becomes inconceivable for them, in the sense that what they believe in does not amount simply to a value but rather as something that is beyond
value. As noted in chapter 3, preciousness also carries connotations of such concepts as superiority, elitism, arrogance, and prestige, but goes beyond these concepts both in isolation and collectively because of its connection to the notion of being beyond value, to such an extent that the social lifeworld could not properly function in the absence of the element in question. Such an absence would be intolerable and could not be countenanced.

Thus it is contended that the thesis has made a contribution to the extant literature by suggesting an additional concept (preciousness) as the motivation for bias and conflict between different groups in the specific context of HE-TAFE relations. The literature has suggested such motives as self-esteem, search for meaning, coherence of the self, maintaining rewarding interpersonal relationships, self-enhancement, uncertainty reduction, and optimal distinctiveness. However, preciousness lays emphasis on an ideological attachment to a concept that is so beyond value that its loss would be so problematic as to threaten the integrity of the social lifeworld.

(ii) **Reconciling instrumental and social competition**

Another avenue for further research identified in chapter 6 refers to attempts to reconcile instrumental competition and social competition between groups. It is argued that the concept of preciousness emerging from this thesis provides a possible reconciliation between these two forms of competition. Instrumental competition refers to competition between groups for control of power, privileges, or resources. The world is regarded as a zero-sum game wherein gains made by one group can only be achieved at the expense of losses by another group. However, social competition refers to competition between groups on the basis of social identity that is ascribed to an individual on the basis of membership of certain groups. Different groups choose different prototypes as the basis for their social comparisons. However, the concept of preciousness provides a useful perspective for integrating the two approaches.

High identifiers within HE invariably assume that they are entitled to certain privileges and resources and hence tend to see the world from a zero-sum point of view. Correspondingly, when TAFE is perceived to be making demands on their resources and traditional markets there exists a high probability that intergroup hostility will be sparked. As has been argued, preciousness results from an ideological attachment to a concept that is perceived as beyond value. Hence, adherents to this worldview feel they
are legitimately entitled to receive certain resources and privileges because the concept is viewed in essentialist terms as being real and the truth. Its specialness cannot be contested. Thus, competition over tangible resources such as funding, student markets, and qualifications (instrumental competition) is seen as putting power, dominance, and status at stake. The dominance of a value system is also threatened and with it the position of one’s social identity. As stated in chapter 6:

High social-dominance-oriented individuals not only perceive zero-sum competition for resources such as jobs and political power, they also perceive zero-sum competition for value dominance…That is, they see different sets of values as being inherently incompatible and in opposition, and view [outgroups] as competing with members of [ingroups] for determining whose values will dominate in society. Thus, it seems that group dominance is not only a matter of having wealth and power, but of having moral hegemony (Esses, Jackson, and Bennett- AbuAyyash, 2010: 229)

Hence, symbolic threat gives rise to material threat and vice versa. Traditionally, HE has seen itself as dominating the social hierarchy. Its inputs and outputs have both enjoyed hegemonic status. Competition over ideological positions can thus spill over into competition over tangible resources to ensure continued hegemony of status and representation. This argument contributes to the extant literature from the viewpoint that it foresees that the concept of preciousness can be employed to integrate the two separate approaches of instrumental and social competition in the sense that moral hegemony becomes indistinguishable from resource hegemony. Thus, in the presence of preciousness as a motivator of social identity and social categorisation, the two separate forms of threat as identified by Stephan and Stephan (2000) – realistic and symbolic – become indistinguishable from one another

(iii) Emotions, stereotypes, and language in intergroup relations

In chapter 6 the argument was also raised that a future challenge for social identity theory is the role played by affective components in intergroup relations (Brown, 2000). Social identity theory is predicated on the processes of intergroup differentiation, but this does not necessarily imply that outgroups are disliked. This raises the interesting research question: under what conditions can intergroup differentiation be accompanied by such negative emotions as dislike, hate, prejudice, and hostility? Smith (1993) identifies five major emotions – fear, disgust, contempt, anger, and jealousy – and suggests each may involve different antecedent conditions and consequences, with fear and jealousy typifying lower status groups and disgust and anger typifying higher status
groups. Fiske, Xu, Cuddy, and Glick (1999) also suggest that most traits can be classified along two dimensions: competence (giving rise to respect or disrespect) and warmth (giving rise to liking or disliking). Thus, for instance, high status groups are more likely to be seen as competent (and hence respected).

In the analysis of preciousness in chapter 4, this thesis has identified a number of issues that bear upon this debate. Discordant attitudes and emotions were found to bear strongly on intergroup relations between HE and TAFE. First, HE regarded TAFE as operating on a lower status. TAFE offered a lesser product, clearly inferior and secondary. Its status was that of a poor cousin - lower ed and second eleven. HE staff were perceived as acting with contempt, looking down their noses, showing arrogance, acting totally superior, exhibiting a fundamental lack of respect, acting rudely, coming over quite officiously, and believing they are above it. TAFE students and qualifications were seen as hopeless, dumbing down the university, and failing in their preparatory role for achieving excellence. Finally, TAFE staff were perceived as morons teaching the lobotomised, unintelligent, failed academics, sub-human, and two-headed. On the opposite side of the equation, TAFE staff were found to display either of two affective reactions. Some became despondent, displaying apathetic and withdrawal attitudes. Others were belligerent, showing aggression, anger, and high emotionality. These latter respondents described HE staff as bullies, fools, and arrogant prats.

It is important to analyse these findings within the appropriate context. Thus, many HE academics argued from a standpoint where they saw TAFE as a threat to their personal self-interests. They assumed that TAFE is obsessed with expanding its market and seeking more and more avenues to find a way into different university faculties in terms of the articulation of their programs. On the other hand, TAFE perceived HE as harbouring a gatekeeper mentality and attempting to deny TAFE its rightful place in the higher education market. The stereotypical perceptions which the two divisions have of each other find their source within this context. Thus the HE stereotype of HE towards TAFE is one of derision, whilst the TAFE stereotype of HE is one of arrogance. This finding is significant in the sense that Reid and Giles (2005) identified several directions for further research including intergroup miscommunication, transmission of stereotypes (a hot topic), and the strategic use of language for social influence and power. Language is a particularly powerful element because ‘it can be used deliberately and strategically to produce an intended effect on an audience’ (Reid and Giles, 2005:
We can see how the evocative and provocative use of language on both sides is meant to produce an intended effect on an audience. The derisory use of HE language conveys the impression that TAFE does not possess the competence to be allowed to enter the conventional portals of the Academy. In contrast, the TAFE rhetoric of HE arrogance conveys the impression that HE lacks the partnership and equity capabilities that would ensure a more collaborative future.

This finding would appear to concur with the extant research in regard to competence versus warmth (Fiske, Xu, Cuddy, and Glick, 1999) in that the HE trait dimension of ‘competence’ is associated with a lack of respect for TAFE, whilst the TAFE trait dimension of ‘warmth’ is associated with a lack of liking for HE. However, the thesis findings do not necessarily accord with the research of Smith (1993) who argues that emotions of fear and jealousy typify lower status groups, whereas disgust and anger typify higher status groups. TAFE respondents were polarised in their affective reactions between despondency (apathy, withdrawal, resignation) and belligerence (anger, aggression). It is a matter of hypothesising whether the degree of identification can explain this difference in affective reactions, with the former TAFE sub-group being associated with low identification, and the latter sub-group associated with high identification. Also, HE respondents displayed a range of emotions which only partially align with the findings of Smith (1993) with their focus on disgust and anger. Some HE respondents definitely displayed anger (combined with frustration), especially those who saw TAFE making inroads into HE traditional qualifications and markets. This was also associated with a related emotion of fear that such a trend was likely to increase in intensity, especially as cost considerations became more significant under a corporate model of institutional governance. Other sub-groups of HE respondents tended to display emotions which centred around derision and contempt, but without associated emotions of fear, frustration, and anger. Whether the degree of association (high or low) can be hypothesised as an antecedent discriminant of such emotions is a matter for conjecture and further research, but certainly the findings of the thesis suggest that the issue of emotional reactions is more nuanced than theorised by Smith (1993).

Finally, the findings of the thesis tend to support the research of Brewer (1999) that intergroup antagonism is more likely to develop in an atmosphere where an ideology of moral superiority has been developed. When combined with the perception of threat (and subsequent defensive behaviour) it is possible to understand the roles that language
and stereotyping play in social identity dynamics: ‘language…processes are a core element of the social psychology of intergroup relations; indeed, they are integral constituents of our group identities and what differentiates us from other relevant outgroups’ (Reid and Giles, 2005: 211). Before stereotypes can be transmitted in intergroup social contexts they must first be activated (Wigboldus, Spears, and Semin, 2005). When behaviours are observed to be consistent with stereotypes, then people tend to transform those behaviours into abstract trait representations. An example from the thesis findings relates to the observed behaviour exhibited by a HE academic who lifted up his chair and turned his back on a TAFE teacher at a conference when informed of the status of the person he was conversing with. This acted to confirm the stereotype that HE academics exhibit haughty and derisory behaviour towards TAFE teachers. From a cognitive point of view this transformation process is important because it tends to ensure the maintenance of stereotypes and their absorption into the current social discourse (Maass, Cadinu, Boni, and Borini, 2005).

**Strategies for reducing intergroup bias and conflict**

The thesis makes five major contributions to the literature on strategies for reducing intergroup bias and conflict:

- Behavioural change induced by contact
- Contextualising the nature of contact
- Contextualising the conditions for the revised contact hypothesis
- Contextualising the common ingroup strategy
- Status, threat, and preciousness

Each of these contributions is now discussed in turn.

(i) **Behavioural change induced by contact**

In chapter 6 this thesis presented the findings of research by Tausch and Hewstone (2010) who stated that despite all the research that had been carried out about the benefits of intergroup contact there still existed only sparse evidence that such contact affects actual behaviour towards outgroup members. The authors called for additional research to be conducted on this topic. In response, the findings of this thesis can make some contribution on this topic. Chapter 5 has shown that three major categories of strategies comprise the approach to ‘unblocking preciousness’ – addressing inadequate
communication, addressing lack of knowledge and understanding, and addressing discordant attitudes. In turn, each of these categories contains a series of sub-categories. In chapter 5 a number of examples are provided of situations where contact between members of different groups has resulted in a change of behaviour between group members. However, it must be borne in mind that these examples do not prove that a change in actual behaviour has occurred. Because this thesis employs a qualitative methodology such examples merely serve the purpose of providing illustrations of changed behaviour, and, therefore, place the illustrations in the form of hypotheses that require further testing before proof can be established. At this stage it is worthwhile to provide some of these examples as already noted in chapter 5 and reproduced below:

Low level communication inadequacies

An example is provided by the TAFE teacher who claims a lot of success in developing intersectoral interaction by getting to know as many people as possible on a personal face-to-face level. He identifies relevant academics on the institution’s website and either telephones or knocks on doors to introduce himself and request a personal meeting to identify opportunities. Inevitably this personal approach generates goodwill and has rarely failed.

Faculty level communication inadequacies

Interactive sessions involving TAFE and HE staff can bring people together in order to mix and this can help to break down existing barriers. Such interactions can occur at events such as intersectoral forums, leadership seminars, information-sharing days, joint projects, lunches, opening ceremonies, and so on.

Structural separation

TAFE and HE working as a team to develop and offer customised training to industry. In such a scenario, personnel such as a HED Head of Department and a TAFE Head of School can jointly approach industry customers to offer solutions by working as a team. Thus, the two divisions start to develop trust in the respective expertise of each other resulting in more cooperative behaviour.
Low priority placed on TAFE by HE

A TAFE teacher in robotics worked with HE academics to develop collaborative projects involving TAFE students that were subsequently offered to industry partners or written up as academic papers and submitted to journals. Hence, HE academics can begin to change their behaviour of placing low priority on TAFE if they can see that such contact can assist them in achieving academic success.

Misunderstandings about TAFE market expansion

TAFE and HE can work together to expand the overall market rather than competing over the same market. Hence, TAFE and HE worked together on developing a joint project to win a contract for the police force. TAFE concentrated on vocational aspects (such as weapons handling) whilst HE handled more conceptual aspects of the program. Neither division could have won the contract by acting individually, so behaviour is changed when both sides realise that contact between them can facilitate expansion into new markets (feeding business) rather than involving competition for existing resources and markets (stealing business).

TAFE misunderstanding about HE processes and workloads

TAFE personnel were invited to form part of the membership of a HE faculty committee charged with the responsibility of examining on-going issues of common interest. This brought TAFE personnel into closer contact with HE procedures and realities. Accordingly, TAFE personnel could obtain a greater realisation of the myriad intricacies involved in navigating through the maze of HE structures, systems, and processes. This enhanced appreciation contributes to a greater sense of patience and tolerance by the TAFE members.

Discordant attitudes towards the other side

Teachers and academics who possess experience working across the divisions generally display less precious behaviour towards the other side, mainly because of a feeling of greater familiarity. This includes tutors, sessional lecturers, staff contract secondments, and personnel who have permanently crossed over from one division to the other. A prime example included a HE academic who had served many years as a TAFE teacher and was now the postgraduate coordinator for a HE Masters program. This person acted
as a crucial boundary-spanner, working in the space between HE and TAFE colleagues. He was widely regarded as bi-lingual in the sense of facilitating communication across the division and being able to avoid misunderstandings.

Lip service

Lip service is avoided when words are translated into actions. For example, this occurred when a HE department entered into a joint project with a TAFE school to collaboratively design and deliver a Masters level program. The graduate certificate was delivered by TAFE staff (stressing the vocational aspects of the program) whilst the graduate diploma and Masters levels were delivered by HE academics (stressing conceptual, critical, and research-based material). This program was coordinated by the academic staff member mentioned previously, and has proved to be a role model for further collaborations within the institution.

These separate illustrations of behaviour change induced from contact exhibit the veracity of eight different scenarios, namely: personal goodwill initiatives, interactive meetings, customised industry training, collaborative projects, bidding for external contracts, joint committee membership, personnel working across divisions, and jointly designed and delivered academic programs. It is argued that these initiatives induce behaviour change because they contribute to enhanced communication, an increase in knowledge and understanding, and the reduction of discordant attitudes – in short, an unblocking of preciousness.

(ii) Contextualising the nature of contact

The extant literature has been dominated by the contact hypothesis and its subsequent variants which states that intergroup bias and conflict can be reduced by intergroup contact. As shown in chapter 6 the veracity of this hypothesis has been confirmed across a range of different scenarios. This thesis (with its emphasis on relations between TAFE and HE in a dual-sector university) suggests that a paradigm of preciousness acts as a blockage to intersectoral collaboration and that an overall strategy of unblocking preciousness would be efficacious in reducing intersectoral tensions by facilitating more cooperative interaction between TAFE and HE. Unblocking preciousness consists of an interactive, processual set of relations between three main variables: unblocking inadequate communication, unblocking a lack of knowledge and understanding, and
unblocking discordant attitudes. This model suggests that strategies aimed at addressing inadequate communication and a lack of knowledge and understanding would tend to reduce intersectoral tensions, which, in turn, would tend to combat discordant attitudes. For the sake of the current argument, it is strategies aimed at inadequate communication and a lack of knowledge and understanding that bear most correlation with the literature’s emphasis on ‘improved contact’. As shown in chapter 5, it is the discordant attitudes held within both TAFE and HE that are a reflection of intersectoral tensions but the model previously depicted in figure 5.1 suggests a set of strategies for easing such tensions, namely:

- **Strategies to address inadequate communication**
  - Low-level communication inadequacies
  - Faculty-level communication inadequacies
  - High-level communication inadequacies
  - Structural separation

- **Strategies to address lack of knowledge and understanding**
  - Diversity, complexity, and low priority
  - Misunderstandings about TAFE motives for articulation
  - Misunderstandings about TAFE motives for market expansion
  - TAFE misunderstandings of HE processes and workloads.

Thus, in regard to relations between TAFE and HE, this thesis suggests a more complex enunciation of ‘contact’ than has been depicted in the extant literature, paying particular attention to the contextual nuances within which contact occurs.

(iii) **Contextualising the conditions for the revised contact hypothesis**

It was noted in chapter 6 that simple contact between groups is not sufficient *per se* to reduce intergroup tensions and bias. The revised contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954; Cook, 1985a) suggests that certain conditions must pertain within the contact context for bias to be reduced, such as, equal status between groups, cooperative intergroup interactions, cooperative interdependence, self-revealing interactions, opportunities for personal acquaintance between members, and supportive egalitarian norms. Under normal circumstances, as shown in chapter 4, the data revealed that such conditions were not usually attained within the specific context of the TAFE-HE environment. However, the strategies advanced in chapter 5 to address such deficiencies contain
numerous examples which correlate with the necessary additional conditions stated in
the revised contact hypothesis. For example, equal status between TAFE and HE can be
achieved through attempts to change the dominant discourse to one of ‘different but
equal’; cooperative intergroup interactions can be achieved by TAFE and HE
combining their separate distinct skills to conduct joint projects; personal acquaintance
between members can be achieved by shifting personnel between TAFE and HE roles;
and supportive egalitarian norms can be achieved by senior management attempts to
integrate the two divisions, for instance, through a ‘one institution policy’.

(iv) Contextualising the common ingroup strategy

Gaertner, Dovidio, Anastasio, Bachman, and Rust (1993) promulgated the ‘common
ingroup identity model’ whereby group members are induced to re-think their
perception of group membership from separate groups into one more inclusive group.
By so doing, members can reduce the salience of intergroup boundaries by
recategorising themselves as one superordinate group. This recategorisation transforms
their representations from us and them to a more inclusive we. Accordingly, bias is
reduced because the new one-group representation increases the attractiveness of former
out-group members and brings them closer to the social self. As members of one group
the members are more likely to perceive themselves as sharing a common fate. They
possess common goals and problems and hence will cooperate and interact together
more readily. With regard to relations between TAFE and HE, a strategy for attaining a
common ingroup model is suggested by the suggestion that the two divisions think less
in terms of their separate mission and histories and more in terms of those aspects of
their relationship that bind them together in terms of a common goal. This would
require the two divisions re-conceiving themselves as operating under the umbrella of a
wider superordinate goal, such as education. A vehicle for this could be a single vision
and mission statement for the one-institution concept, which simultaneously embraces
the ideals of both vocational and higher education.

(v) Status, threat, and preciousness

An important contextual argument cannot be ignored when considering strategies for
intergroup harmony between TAFE and HE. This argument contains two separate
prongs, first, the difference status levels enjoyed by the two divisions and second the
degree of threat that each division perceives from the other. Within the concept of
preciousness, the role played by ‘status’ is a crucial one. The general perception is that HE occupies a high status level whilst TAFE occupies a low status level. When high status groups also occupy a majority group role, the literature reveals that they tend to favour a common ingroup identity strategy on the grounds that such assimilation will more likely ensure the dominance of their own norms and practices in the superordinate group. In contrast, low status minority groups will tend to favour dual identity models where they retain their own separate identity instead of being dominated by the majority group. Within this scenario the moderating role played by ‘threat’ needs to be examined. The concept of preciousness indicates that both TAFE and HE fear certain elements of threat in their relations with each other. Thus, HE fears the threat that standards will be degraded and their traditional markets will be eroded. In contrast, TAFE fears the threat that HE does not want them to expand and is pre-occupied with adopting a blocking and gate-keeping stance. Hence, in the face of a dual threat on each side, neither HE or TAFE would favour a common ingroup superordinate identity – TAFE because it fears such an identity would be dominated by the HE paradigm and perpetuated by further displays of lip-service, and HE because it fears such an identity would erode standards and markets with further emphasis on competence assessments and vocational teaching. Accordingly, the findings of this thesis do not support the contention that high status majority groups will necessarily favour assimilative strategies. The exception is where the low status groups pose a perceived threat to their moral hegemony of the high status group.

The contextual circumstances surrounding the concept of preciousness in the dual-sector institution under study paired two groups of perceived unequal status in competition over a perceived static market. This scenario of competition in a zero-sum game accordingly tends to give rise to joint mistrust and hostility within a win-lose environment. Dovidio, Gaertner, and Validzic (1998: 117) state ‘only when both groups are equal in status but share different experiences or expertise can both groups readily respect and value the other’s unique contribution and believe that each group could benefit from the presence of the other’. The authors suggested that a relevant field for further study should examine the potential roles of threat to social identity and respect on the basis of an appreciation for the other group’s contribution. Correspondingly, this thesis can make a contribution to the call for extra research as suggested by Dovidio, Gaertner, and Validzic (1998). The findings of the thesis suggest that the concept of
‘different but equal’ could be applied across the HE-TAFE relationship as a strategy for breaking the dominant discourse of preciousness. Even so, this new concept can suffer from the complexity of definitional nuances, especially around the definitions of ‘equal or equivalent’, and ‘separate or different’. However, abstracting from this complication, the thesis findings suggest that TAFE and HE should be regarded as enjoying equal status on the basis of their individual contributions to joint projects. These contributions would bring together levels of expertise and experience not readily possessed by the other division – TAFE, vocational and real-world, and HE, critical, conceptual, and research-based. These contributions should be applied in a manner that expands the market, not in a manner that is perceived as competing over an existing market. When distinctive skills are employed in a cooperative and complementary manner within a win-win environment, then mistrust and hostility are less likely to arise when compared with a situation where groups are seen as competing within a win-lose environment. Thus, when two groups both perceive a threat from a common identity, then strategy would suggest that the concept of a dual identity should be employed so that each group can retain its own distinct sub-identity. However, the groups are united under a common superordinate goal, but are seen as playing on the same team rather than as playing for different teams. Thus, the contact scenario involves cooperation under the banner of joint projects in which the sub-group identities remain salient but complementary.

On an associated note, Riek, Mania, Gaertner, McDonald, and Lamoreaux (2010) have argued that the perception of intergroup threat can be reduced through the creation of a common ingroup identity. By generating an overarching superordinate identity, former outgroup members are now perceived as less threatening because they are seen in a new light of greater trust. Thus, for example, realistic threat (conflict over resources) is reduced through a new impression of cooperation and shared fate, and symbolic threat (conflict over values) is reduced through a shift in focus to shared values emphasising similarities rather than differences.

However, the findings of the thesis would argue that a common ingroup superordinate identity would not act to reduce the perception of threat within a paradigm of endemic preciousness. As previously argued, in the presence of preciousness then the difference between realistic and symbolic threat is dissolved. Moral hegemony cannot be distinguished from resource hegemony. The concept of preciousness indicates that an extant element cannot be shared because it encompasses aspects that are beyond value.
Precious values are incapable of being shared or compromised without running the risk that sharing is perceived as akin to losing and hence viewed as a threat. Thus, the thesis argues that dual identity strategies (mutual intergroup differentiation) would tend to be more acceptable strategies for improving the effectiveness of intersectoral education within the particular (precious) context of the HE-TAFE relationship.

**Implications of the thesis**

The findings of this thesis possess both practical and theoretical implications. The theoretical implications have been covered in the previous section under the heading ‘contributions to the literature’ and so this current section will concentrate on the practical implications of the thesis. Two important implications will be discussed below:

- Implications flowing from the significance of psychological, social, and cultural aspects
- Implications flowing from the significance of dual-identity

The research question posed by this thesis is ‘what are the main issues in making intersectoral education effective’? The core category emerging from the grounded theory analysis conducted in this thesis is *preciousness*, and conveys the implication that the major issue involved in making intersectoral education effective is to *unblock preciousness* employing the various strategies presented in chapter 5. Preciousness is a core category that stresses the significance of psychological, social, and cultural elements in making intersectoral education more effective. These aspects have generally been given far less importance over the years than macro developments focusing on government reports, legislation, structures, systems, and regulations. Whilst these aspects are of vital significance in themselves they are ultimately less effective if employed in the absence of other aspects (psychological, social, and cultural) that are crucial in making intersectoral education effective.

As shown in chapter 1, a series of important reports have been published since 1961 that have progressively impacted on the relations between TAFE and HE – Martin Report, 1961; Kangan Report, 1974; Kirby Report, 1985; Dawkins Report, 1987; Finn Report, 1991; and Bradley Report, 2008. The Martin Report (1961) created a binary system in tertiary education and cemented a status hierarchy within the system with universities at
the top and technical colleges at the bottom. The moral hegemony seemingly enjoyed by HE as a result of this demarcation acted to reinforce the already-existing impression that HE academics had of themselves as the aristocrats of the education structure. Commencing with the Kangan Report (1974), the TAFE system was given a recognised place within the tertiary (post-secondary) education system and started to receive increased support and direction. The Kirby Report (1985) heralded the start of a coherent framework for government intervention in the labour market in pursuit of the Government’s agenda of structural reform of the economy. The Dawkins Report (1987) built on this development by abolishing the extant binary division between universities and CAEs but in its place created a new binary division between HE and TAFE. The new emphasis of the Australian government on internationalisation, efficiency, and competitiveness in global markets saw education occupying a central role in aiding these reforms. The Finn Report (1991) reinforced this direction and stressed the notion that in the transition to a post-industrial era the role of schooling and the curriculum should be made more relevant to the needs of industry. Thus, the main purpose of education (following Dawkins, 1987) is perceived to be the economic preparation of young people with employment competencies. Finally, the Bradley Report (2008) made a series of recommendations advocating the introduction of a demand-driven, student-entitlement system.

The conclusion to be drawn from this series of chronological developments is the observation of a progressive movement towards the endorsement of practical, industry-relevant skills, within a system of student massification, corporate-style governance structures and systems, and the design and delivery of education outputs which represent those of commodified products. It is easy to see how these developments have progressively challenged the moral hegemony of HE which has subsequently acted to defend itself behind a barrier of preciousness, variously displaying emotional reactions ranging between derision, fear, and anger. At the same time, it is also easy to see how the increased formal support given to the role of TAFE has bred a feeling of importance within this sector to the extent that a feeling of preciousness has also developed on its part that it is entitled to receive the power, resources, and value appreciation that such official support deserves. When such entitlement has seemingly been rebuffed by HE personnel, the emotional reactions displayed by TAFE personnel have ranged between apathy and belligerence. This sense of emotional imbalance between TAFE and HE, as
suggested in this thesis, can best be treated through strategies aimed at unblocking preciousness, in order to complement other strategies over the years that have aimed at structural and systemic reform through legislation.

A second significant implication of the thesis derives from one of the major findings that, given the endemic paradigm of preciousness, the reform aspect that would bring the most probable chance of success lies in the acceptance and application of the dual-identity model. As argued, any attempt to force the two sectors together in a more harmonious lifeworld should recognise the importance attached to their separate identity by the two divisions. Competition within a perceived zero-sum environment is bound to be counter-productive as both divisions play out old battle lines based around the fight for the division of extant resources, qualifications, and markets. A dual-identity model recognises the significance of celebrating the importance of the two sub-identities within a paradigm of ‘different but equal’. TAFE and HE bring different skills to the table which can be harnessed in a spirit of win-win to use these skills in a complementary manner on diverse projects that act to expand the overall size of the market. Many markets are out of reach of the system when TAFE and HE insist on acting as separate agents. By judicious combination of vocational and conceptual elements, new markets can accordingly be brought into the ambit of success as mutually benefitting both divisions. An implication of this thesis is that educational managers, teachers, academics, and administrators across the TAFE-HE divide would find that such an emphasis would pay dividends in terms of making intersectoral education more effective.

Criteria for evaluation of the thesis

Strauss and Corbin (1998: 265) pose the question: ‘once the researcher has completed the investigation, how does he or she and others judge the merit of that work?’ The authors believe that the usual canons or standards by which quantitative studies are judged (such as replicability, generalisability, and verification) are inappropriate for qualitative studies, and that in the case of grounded theory should be redefined ‘to fit the realities of qualitative research and the complexities of social phenomena that we seek to understand’ (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 250). Box 7.1 depicts the nature of the evaluative criteria in relation to the overall research process.
Box 7.1

Evaluative criteria and the research process in grounded theory

In a grounded theory publication, the reader should be able to make judgements about some of the components of the research process that led to the publication. However, even in a monograph – which after all consists primarily of theoretical formulations and analyzed data – there may be no way that readers can accurately judge how the researcher carried out the analysis. They are not actually present during the actual analytic sessions, and the monograph does not necessarily help them imagine these sessions or their sequence. To remedy this, it would be useful for readers to be given certain levels of information bearing on the criteria given below. The detail need not be great even in a monograph, but enough to give some reasonably good grounds for judging the adequacy of the research process as such. The kinds of needed information are presented below in question form, their answers indicating how they might serve as evaluative criteria.

Source: Strauss and Corbin (1990: 252-253)

There are seven evaluative criteria that Strauss and Corbin (1990) refer to in Box 7.1. These are shown below together with a discussion of how these criteria have been applied in the thesis. It is worth repeating at this stage that chapter 3 (methodology, data collection, and analysis) has been written in a manner showing a detailed audit trail of the collection and analysis of the data. Thus, chapter 3 anticipates the seven criteria of Strauss and Corbin (1990) shown below. Nevertheless, the seven criteria will be responded to at this stage, if necessary repeating some of the text already shown in chapter 3.

Criterion 1: How was the original sample selected? What grounds?

The original sample was chosen in a concentration site, that is, a unit where the area of interest goes on in concentration. The case study institution is a dual-sector institution which exemplifies the nature of the research question (‘what are the main issues in making intersectoral education effective?’). Four interviewees were specifically selected to be the first scoping interviews because of the wide-ranging nature of their experience and their ability to emerge the initial categories of interest across the HE-TAFE divide.
Criterion 2: What major categories emerged?

The coding from the first four interviews is shown in tables 3.4 – 3.7. From these codes, five emergent categories were discussed in chapter 3, namely: attitudes, knowledge, communication, context, and strategies.

Criterion 3: What were some of the events, incidents, actions, and so on (as indicators) that pointed to some of these major categories?

It is important to be aware that one incident does not make a pattern, and during data collection and analysis it was a preoccupation of mine to ensure that the five emergent categories in question were confirmed on more than one occasion (preferably on several occasions). For example:

Attitudes: (interview 2 [status hierarchies] and interview 3 [lack of respect])

Knowledge: (interview 1 [strategic architecture] and interview 2 [TAFE capabilities not understood])

Communication: (interview 1 [formal committees and processes] and interview 4 [managers not formally educated about TAFE])

Context: (interview 2 [different masters] and interview 3 [under-resourcing of TAFE])

Strategies: (interview 2 [removing dead-end TAFE qualifications] and interview 4 [collaborate, don’t compete])

Criterion 4: On the basis of what categories did theoretical sampling proceed? After the theoretical sampling was done, how representative did these categories prove to be?

Theoretical sampling proceeded on the basis of all five of these emergent categories. In the spirit of theoretical sampling the question was asked: ‘where do I now need to go to obtain additional information about these five categories?’ During subsequent interviewing these categories were not treated as sacrosanct, or as all-exclusive. In other words, subsequent interviews had to confirm the robustness of these initial categories, and also be on the look-out for additional categories. These categories proved to be extremely representative as evidenced by subsequent data collection, although the manner in which they interacted was subject to modification as the study progressed.
Criterion 5: What were some of the hypotheses pertaining to conceptual relations (that is, among categories) and on what grounds were these formulated and tested?

The first attempt at conceiving conceptual relations between the categories in hypothesis form occurred at the finalisation of data collection and coding from interview seven. At this stage a rough draft was sketched out showing embryonic relations between the main categories and the sub-categories that had emerged from the data in the first seven interviews. It was hypothesised that the contextual circumstances that frame and constrain the operations of TAFE and HE have a series of consequences that act to block the achievement of effective intersectoral education. These blockages include discordant attitudes, poor communication, and a lack of knowledge and understanding. It is then hypothesised that various types of strategies can be employed to eliminate these blockages in order to facilitate more effective intersectoral seamlessness. This sequence of hypothesised relations is shown in figure 3.3.

Criterion 6: Were there instances when hypotheses did not hold up against what was actually seen? How were these discrepancies accounted for? How did they affect the hypotheses?

In the light of more emerging data I was ready either to abandon some categories or hypotheses, or to add to them, amend them, merge or split them, or discover new categories and hypotheses according to what the data was telling me. Hence, it is not so much a case of hypotheses not holding up, but rather one of hypotheses being densified and nuanced as they are constantly compared with new data. Thus, discrepancies do not discredit a hypothesis or category, but rather add to it in terms of variety and richness. For example, I was keen to add to the main categories of ‘blockages’ and strategies’, and by so doing flesh out additional themes within the categories of ‘discordant attitudes’, ‘poor communication’ and ‘lack of knowledge and understanding’. In particular, it became clearer that poor communication occurred across separate levels – higher level, faculty level, and individual level. Also, lack of knowledge and understanding was evident within HE in regard to a number of issues, namely: the motives for TAFE articulation; the motives for TAFE market expansion; and a failure to grasp the diversity and complexity of TAFE. Finally, discordant attitudes towards TAFE were expressed across a number of aspects, including its status, students, staff, and qualifications.
**Criterion 7: How and why was the core category selected? Was this sudden or gradual, difficult or easy? On what grounds were the final analytic decisions made?**

During interviews 8-13, I had progressively given more thought to the nature of the core category. I had written a number of personal memos to myself around the theme of ‘what is really going on here?’ In searching for the core category I was struck by the frequency of references to the different statuses occupied by TAFE and HE. The word ‘preciousness’ first emerged in interview 4 and was repeated by other respondents thereafter. But I realised that ‘preciousness’ is not just a word. Rather it is a process.

I wrote a memo that there appeared to be a processual flow relationship between the three sub-categories – ‘inadequate communication’, ‘lack of knowledge and understanding’, and ‘discordant attitudes’. This was causing intersectoral tensions. My musing was that humans tend to harbour discordant attitudes against groups or units for which they possess insufficient knowledge and understanding and that, in turn, such lack of knowledge and understanding is the result of poor communication. Each variable influences the other in a continual circular flow, and is exacerbated by the tensions that are inherent within such a system. Thus, if external contextual circumstances generate a structure of inadequate communication between TAFE and HE, then one could argue that this scenario results in inadequate knowledge and understanding of each other within the sectors, causing tensions that fuel discordant attitudes. Once such attitudes have become entrenched the two sectors become even less willing to communicate with one another thus generating further rounds of tensions and ‘vicious’ behaviour. This relationship is shown in figure 3.4.

**Limitations of the thesis**

The lack of a comparator study may be regarded as a limitation of the thesis. Analysis has been undertaken on one case study organisation only. The case study represents one of the five dual-sector universities operational in Australia at the time of the study. These five institutions are not all identical and differ across several dimensions, including governance and history. As such, the findings of the thesis cannot be generalised outside the substantive confines of the context within which they are generated. It could be the case that by considering additional institutions it may have been possible to arrive at different findings. Although the veracity of this observation cannot be denied, it must be remembered that grounded theory studies are never fully
complete, by the very nature of their inherent structure. Grounded theory studies are only operational as far as they go, and remain open to subsequent modification through additional data. In this regard, the core category of preciousness remains open to subsequent modification and densification by additional research. Further research in this area might want to include additional comparator dual-sector institutions that possess different histories and governance structures.

A second limitation to the thesis is provided by the boundaries provided by the time period during which the collection and analysis of data occurred (2004-2011). Whilst the thesis was in the process of write-up a major external contextual variable was significantly amended by the State Government in which the institution is located. This impacted on the amount of funding available to the TAFE division and created a crisis situation within the case study institution. The reaction to this crisis could affect the nature of TAFE-HE relations in the institution in the future. This scenario has not been captured within the data analysis in this thesis. In many ways this is always going to be a feature of any research study which by its very nature can only capture relationships and events occurring within a demarcated time period. However, the impact of the TAFE funding crisis could be regarded as yet another event that would act to modify the nature of the core category, and emphasise the point made earlier that grounded theory studies can never be regarded as wrong or deficient. Rather, they remain implicitly incomplete and continuously modifiable in the face of subsequent confrontation with additional data.

**Summary**

This chapter concludes the thesis. It has been structured into four sections. In the first instance, the chapter has examined the contributions made by the thesis to the extant literature. Three major contributions to the literature on intergroup bias and conflict have been examined, together with five major contributions to the literature on strategies for reducing intergroup bias and conflict. In the second instance, the chapter has examined the implications of the thesis. Two important implications have been argued – the significance of psychological, social, and cultural aspects, and implications that flow from the significance of dual-identity theory. In the third instance, the thesis has been evaluated in terms of the seven criteria advanced by Strauss and Corbin (1990) so that others are able to judge the merit of the research. Finally, in the fourth instance,
two limitations of the thesis have been examined – the limitation of employing only one case study institution as the data source for the research, and the possible limitation imposed by being unable to take into account a recent external contextual change that could possibly impact on the thesis findings. However, the point is made that all grounded theory studies are impacted by the limitation of their substantive boundaries (in terms of location and time) and for this reason they remain inherently incomplete and always subject to modification when confronted by additional data.
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1 April, 2004

Professor Robert Jones
School of Business
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Dear Bob

The School of Business Ethics Sub-Committee has now approved your amended Ethics Application 2004/004 entitled: 'In search of management in Intersectoral Education: An ethnographic study.'

We wish you well with your research project.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

Dr Michela Betta
Chair
School of Business Ethics Sub-Committee