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Adult Literacy as Technique and Technology of Governmentality

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Peter Thomas Isaacs
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Abstract

This thesis examines the policy for adult literacy in New Zealand, in particular developments since the International Adult Literacy Survey of 1996. It was the findings of the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) that led to the problematising of adult literacy in terms of the needs of New Zealand society and economy and the greater engagement of government, businesses and tertiary education providers.

Foucault's (1991a) notion of governmentality provides a lens through which to view adult literacy policy and to analyse a number of policy documents, in particular *More than Words*, the adult literacy strategy, *Te Kāwai Ora*, and the subsequent *Tertiary Education Strategies 2002-2007*, *2007-2012*, and *2010-2015*.

The thesis argues that, in the policy formulation, adult literacy is concerned with the techniques and technologies through which the literacy needs of the population are constructed and controlled. The concerns of policy are how to bring people to a state of literacy so that they can be usefully involved in society, as employable workers. The mainstream discourse of adult literacy defines it as a set of skills without reference to context or culture, that can be applied in a range of contexts. The policy approaches tend to marginalise or silence other discourses, for example literacies for Māori, literacies as social practices, critical literacies and literacies used in a range of settings.

The thesis traces adult literacy in New Zealand from pre-European contact and the subsequent developments as part of the colonisation processes. The 1970s to the present saw the development of community responses to adult literacy.

The thesis discusses the subsequent tertiary education reforms and the subsuming of adult literacy into the tertiary education sector with increased emphasis on audit and monitoring practices developed by the Tertiary Education Commission and NZQA with implications for the identities and self-government of learners and providers.

Finally, the thesis concludes with a discussion of ways for considering the development of a wider policy focus for adult literacy that addresses such issues as culture, context and the needs as identified by learners. This is followed by some recommendations and questions for future research.

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1 Introduction.....	1
Chapter Review	4
Chapter 2 Foucault and Governmentality	8
Governmentality.....	9
Power/Knowledge, Discourse and Governmentality	11
Relations of Power.....	12
Governmentality and the Concern for the Population.....	13
Practices of Governmentality.....	14
Care of the Self, Autonomy and Identity	16
The Analytics of Governmentality	18
Problematism	19
Explanations.....	21
Technologies.....	21
Authorities	22
Subjectivities	23
Strategies	24
Chapter 3 Policy and Discourse	26
Discourse and Exclusion	27
Discourse Theory Analysis and Issues.....	27
Basic Concepts and Logics	32
Articulation	32
Nodal Points.....	33
Empty Signifiers	33
The Primacy of Politics.....	33
Logics of Equivalence and Difference.....	34
Subject Positions, Dislocation and Political Subjectivity	34
Hegemony, Myths and Imaginaries.....	35
Chapter 4 Adult Literacy Development in New Zealand	37
The Development of Adult Education	40
Understandings of Adult Literacy.....	43
Understandings of Literacies	44
Māori and Indigenous Literacies.....	44

Approaches to Literacies in English.....	45
The Functional Skills Based Approach	45
The Liberal Tradition of Literacy.....	46
Critical Literacy.....	46
Measurement of Outcomes	47
Literacy as Social Practice.....	48
Chapter 5 The Impact of the International Adult Literacy Surveys 1996 and 2006	51
Is the Survey Representational?.....	55
Chapter 6 Adult Literacy Policy in New Zealand following the IALS.....	58
The Construction of the Adult Literacy Crisis.....	59
The Urgency of the Issue of Adult Literacy.....	60
More than Words: The Adult Literacy Strategy.....	62
Te Kāwai Ora.....	66
Understanding of Literacy for Māori.....	69
Chapter 7 Tertiary Education Reform and Adult Literacy	73
The Tertiary Education Strategy 2007-2012.....	75
Self Regulation	77
Monitoring and Assessment	79
Embedded Literacy.....	80
Progressions and Assessment Tool	80
Chapter 8 Some Final Comments and Suggestions and Questions for Future Research	82
Future Research Questions.....	86
References	88

Chapter 1

Introduction

Under a heading 'Minister blasts poor Kiwi literacy rates', Stuff.co.nz reported the Minister of Tertiary Education as saying:

We have this worrying statistic ... that there are more than a million Kiwi adults lacking the essential literacy and numeracy that they need.

It's holding them back from the contribution they could otherwise make.

We cannot afford to take our eye off the ball in this respect, we've got to keep this momentum going and I can assure you as the minister that that's something I'm going to be very focused on. (Robinson, 2010)

Literacy has become a major issue for policy in education at both the compulsory education level with the present government introducing National Standards for literacy in primary schools, and in the tertiary education sector with the development and implementation of the adult literacy strategy and action plans.

The comments by the Minister and the policy for adult literacy in New Zealand draws on the analysis of the 1996 OECD International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) and the more recent 2006 Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey (ALLS). These surveys are said to demonstrate that there are over one million New Zealanders who do not have the literacy required to participate fully in New Zealand society. The OECD (2005) report refers to this number as being at levels 1 and 2. The Learning a Living report says that this claim is based on conclusions made by experts who are not cited (OECD, 2005:31) whilst an annex to the report does list a series of writers for this report there is no direct link to them. The findings are treated as fact in policy development and little discussion of the basis on which the surveys were conducted, nor the limitations of such surveys. The statement by the Minister provides an example of the processes of governmentality, the creation of discourses to achieve the specific ends. In this case, the discourse is that literacy is required to meet the employment requirement of the economy and implications for the labour market, economic growth and education systems and services (Ministry of Education, 2006 b).

Adult literacy is portrayed as a set of skills that individuals need to participate fully in society. The Tertiary Education Commission argues that:

There are strong social and economic benefits in ensuring that adults have good literacy and numeracy skills. Higher levels of these skills contribute to the personal wellbeing and social development of individuals, whanau and communities. They are associated with higher earnings and increased chances of being in stable employment. Literacy and numeracy skills enhance access to higher-level qualifications and workplace skills. They are also associated with better health, better parenting and greater levels of engagement and participation in family and social life. By contrast, it appears that low levels of literacy and numeracy are associated with social exclusion and poverty. There also appears to be a strong intergenerational component to low levels of literacy and numeracy, which perpetuates such disadvantage. (Tertiary Education Commission, 2010, p. 5)

There is reference to the wider consideration of literacy including the wellbeing of the citizens, social inclusion and participation in family and social life. However, the report devotes most of its discussion and analysis to literacy in the workplace. The quotation above seems to imply that these gains are dependent upon and caused by people having literacy and numeracy skills. On the other hand, the gains are only considered to be associated with social wellbeing.

Before developing these ideas further it is important to give some background of the writer of this thesis. The writer has been involved in providing policy advice, governance, training, the delivery of adult literacy programmes and research for a national community organisation with 45 member providers. The perspective on adult literacy has been shaped by these experiences. Whilst skills are important for employment, the different literacy approaches discussed in this thesis are significant and require consideration if the goal of inclusive provision is to be achieved. Particularly important are those approaches that address issues of cultural literacy and social practice.

The writer also draws on the work of Foucault and the subsequent literature on governmentality and the practices of what is referred to as neo-liberalism. In addition he draws on the ideas developed with regard to the array of discourses and their function in the construction and implementation of adult literacy policy. The policy direction focuses on literacy as functional skills that are decontextualised, can be measured, are objective, have established competencies, and provide universalising outcomes to supply comparative statistics for funding decisions.

The focus is on the needs of the work force in a competitive economic environment. The New Zealand reports note that the 1996 International Adult Literacy Survey and the 2006 Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey sampled the population aged 16-65. (Ministry of Education, 2001 a). The surveys did not provide information for adults who were above 65. There is considerable interest in the skills of older New Zealanders, especially as there are questions about the sustainability of superannuation and a possible lifting of the age for receiving superannuation.

These policy directions are discussed and analysed in terms of what Foucault (1991a, 1991b) refers to as the conduct of conduct or governmentality. The approach taken in this thesis is that the techniques and technologies of government are dependent upon the neo-liberal assumptions of free economic rational individuals acting competitively as entrepreneurs (Burchell, 1996).

The thesis will further address the various discourse trajectories that have come together to provide a rationale for the current policy initiatives of governmentality with regard to adult literacy. Governmentality addresses the discourses that are sedimented norms of behaviour, as discussed by Burchell (1996, pp. 25-26):

Insofar as these varied techniques are viewed from the point of view of a general liberal problematic, we can also see how they might interweave and link up with each other in mutually reinforcing series. In particular they frequently require and integrate within them ways in which the individuals conduct themselves. That is to say, they involve governed individuals adopting practical relations to themselves in the exercise of their freedom in appropriate ways: the promotion in the governed population of specific techniques of the self around such questions as, for example, saving and providentialism, the acquisition of ways of performing roles like father, mother, the development of habits of cleanliness, sobriety, self-improvement, responsibility and so on.

So the prudent, responsible provider of adult literacy services will adjust their programmes to meet the funding requirements of the Tertiary Education Commission (Ministry of Education, 2010) that arise from the policy implementation including addressing the needs of the identified sub-populations in appropriate ways. However, a tension arises because the outcomes sought are based on Western worldviews that struggle to address the needs as identified by those populations. Audit and monitoring

practices are put in place to provide evidence of compliance. These practices are constructed by the TEC and so intrude into the professional realm of practice.

Policy initiatives will be addressed in this thesis, in particular those concerned with audit, monitoring and evaluation, the professionalisation and formalising of adult literacy. The impact of these initiatives on other ways of identifying literacy needs and meeting them will be considered along with the social practices involved.

The argument made in this thesis is that the policy initiatives, although seeking to address diversity and literacy for all, draw on definitions based on Western worldviews and models and therefore do not address the needs of populations that have been problematised. In particular, the narrow functional skills approach that is constructed to fit within the Neo liberal agenda to establish particular identities around economy, employment and national identity and objectives, ignores and marginalises the literacies by which those populations make meaning of their world.

The thesis also addresses a broader history of the way that people have attempted to address the issues of adult literacy in New Zealand. It includes an analysis of the critiques of the adult literacy strategy, *More than Words*, by *Te Kāwai Ora* report (Māori Adult Literacy Working Party, 2001). The analysis refers to those literacies that have been ignored, trivialised or marginalised which Hamilton (2001) refers to as vernacular literacies.

Finally, the thesis provides some suggested ways forward taking into account the issues related to the positioning of the hegemonic discourse around adult literacy.

There are debates about the processes and programmes for adult literacy and the need to focus funding to maximise results. As Luke and Gilbert (1993) note, there are also wider concerns that consider the shifting ground and procedures for the construction of knowledge, power and capital, text and identity that are associated with the reconfiguration of late liberal societies.

Chapter Review

The thesis is concerned with the development of adult literacy policy in New Zealand and the current policy initiatives, with its focus on the development of skills to meet the demand of the market and the economy. The thesis will interrogate the (im)possibility of these policies to achieve such outcomes as diversity, employability, the literacy practices of people's everyday lives and raising the levels of literacy in the New

Zealand population. Governmentality is a central component of the thesis as a means of analysing and critiquing adult literacy policy formation. The notion of governmentality is explored in Chapter 2. Governmentality is concerned with the practices, procedures, discourses, techniques and technologies of government that Foucault refers to as the 'conduct of conduct' or governmentality (Foucault, 1991a, 1991b). The analysis also draws on subsequent developments in the literature (Burchell, Gordon, & Miller, 1991; Dean, 1999, 2007; Dean & Hindess, 1998; Foucault, 1991a, 2007, 2008; Gordon, 1991; Lemke, 2000; Miller & Rose, 1997, 2008; Rose, 1999; Rose, O'Malley, & Valverde, 2006).

Panopticism is also a key term in the discussion. The relevance of Panopticism is that it provides an understanding of being observed at a distance, which is practiced through the audit technologies in education (Ashcroft & Nairn, 2004; Foucault, 1995). Foucault examined the way various applications of knowledge and power led to the subjectification of people and how they become objects of discourses and practices (Ashcroft & Nairn, 2004; Dean, 1999; Foucault, 1991a, 2007; Rose, 1999; Rose et al., 2006).

The analysis of governmentality is concerned with the ways that we govern ourselves and other issues of the exercise of power. Foucault argues that the exercise of power implies freedom to do otherwise. The way that power is exercised is through the discourses of normality and truths by which the conduct of the population is shaped and formed. The construction of hierarchies that are part of these processes leads to contestation and resistance.

These practices are particularly associated with what are termed liberal forms of government, and based on a Western worldview and philosophy. Hindess (2009) argues that Foucault, in *The Order of Things*, refers to liberalism as being Eurocentric and establishes its practices as the norm for all societies around the world. Hindess (2009) goes on to add that this is often expressed as superiority imposed on others and is part of ongoing colonial practices.

Chapter 3 examines the ways that the dominant discourses define what adult literacy is and how it functions in people's lives. The techniques and technologies of governmentality draw on complex arrangements of discourses in the governing of the population. The analysis of these processes requires an analysis of discourse and the various understandings of it. The discussion in this chapter will draw on the work of various authors (Foucault, 1971; Howarth, 2000, 2005; Howarth, Norval, &

Stravrakakis, 2000; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985; Torfing, 2005). The discussion is concerned with the logics of discourse; in particular that of liberalism in its later forms. There will also be discussion of policy as discourse and the uses of discourse analysis in the context of adult literacy in New Zealand that draws on the work of Bacchi (2000, 2009).

Chapter 4 provides discussion about the developments of adult literacy in New Zealand. This chapter is significant because it provides evidence that adult literacy in New Zealand has a long history that predates the findings of the 1996 International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS). The focus of the chapter includes consideration of literacy for Māori prior to contact with Europeans and their embracing forms of literacy in English in the mid 1800's, and the developments in community education provision from the 1970s. It includes a section that discusses the different understandings of adult literacy.

Having developed the framework for analysing the policy development for adult literacy, Chapter 5 provides an analysis and critique of the 1996 International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) and the 2006 Adult Literacy and Language Survey (ALLS) and their use in the establishment of the norm and level of literacy required of people to be able to participate in everyday life of New Zealand, an objective of the Adult Literacy Strategy (2001).

Chapter 6 analyses and interrogates the adult literacy strategy, *More than Words* (Ministry of Education, 2001b), and the construction of the adult literacy crisis and the terminology used to describe the norm that people need to attain in order to participate fully in New Zealand society.

Chapter 7 is linked to the previous chapter and introduces an analysis of *Te Kāwai Ora* as the Māori response to and critique of *More than Words*. In this chapter the ability of the policy based on *More than Words* to meet its objectives for Māori are put into question. There is also an analysis of the development of the tertiary education strategies that follow the adult literacy strategy. The chapter provides an overview of the processes, practices and technologies that have been introduced that institutionalise and professionalise the adult literacy sector. It also considers the role of the audit and monitoring systems established through the development of competency-based progressions and the development of an assessment tool.

Chapter 8 brings together the discussion and moves to consider ways forward given that, as Barton (2005) notes, what do we do when the magic wears thin? It then provides some indications for further research.

Chapter 2

Foucault and Governmentality

The previous chapter introduced the issue of adult literacy provision and referred to it as a practice of governmentality. Governmentality was a notion introduced by Foucault in his lectures at the College de France between 1977 and 1984 (Foucault, 1991a, 2007, 2008). This chapter develops an understanding of the notion of governmentality as a lens with which to analyse the policy development for adult literacy in New Zealand.

But, first any discussion of the writing of Foucault needs to recognise that adult literacy operates within a framework of thought that is derived from Western philosophical traditions. Although a country such as New Zealand is distant from the European contexts, its colonial history shows that it has drawn heavily on the traditions and discourses of British, European and American thought and these are significant in the construction of the dominant political discourses within New Zealand Society (Belich, 1996, 2001). These influences are also present in the current policy development for adult literacy in New Zealand.

Governmentality is used in a broad sense of government that is concerned with how we govern others and ourselves. In that sense, it addresses self-government, as well as political activities by national governments, and the interplay of discourses that leads to claims to truth. Foucault refers to such truths as the mentalities that underpin government.

Besides drawing on the work of Foucault, this thesis also draws on considerable literature that has developed his ideas further. These studies are from the United States (Cruikshank, 1996; Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982), the United Kingdom (Barry, Osborne, & Rose, 1996; Burchell, 1996; Burchell et al., 1991; Miller & Rose, 1997, 2008), Australia (Dean, 1994, 1999, 2007; Dean & Hindess, 1998; Hindess, 1996; O'Farrell, 2005; O'Malley, Weir, & Shearing, 1997), and New Zealand (Marshall, 1996; Olssen, 2006; Olssen, Codd, & O'Neill, 2006; Walshaw, 2007). There is evidence that Foucault's work is being utilised more also in Germany (Lemke, 2000; Masschelein, Simons, Brockling, & Pongratz, 2007).

This chapter begins a discussion of a number of concepts from Foucault that have been brought to the analysis of the present study, and draws upon in his development of governmentality.

Governmentality

As mentioned earlier, governmentality is considered to be a later development in Foucault's life and emerged with his lectures at the College de France. His earlier work developed the ideas of archaeology and genealogy and these are brought to bear on his analysis of liberal practices of government that he refers to as the 'conduct of conduct' or 'governmentality'.

Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982) argue that after *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality*, genealogy takes precedence over archaeology in the writing of Foucault. The genealogist is concerned with the focus on knowledge about the body of the population and the relations of power that characterise modern forms of society.

Foucault's analyses of power involve the establishment of binaries between opposites where one pole is privileged and the other excluded. This is based on the idea that the opposites are discrete. However, as Derrida (1978) pointed out, one cannot make sense of one part of the binary without knowledge of the other. Both poles are contaminated by the other.

Kendall and Wickham (1999) note that archaeology and genealogy are complementary and are distinguished on the basis of the differing emphasis on the 'historical slice' or historical process. Archaeology provides a snapshot, a slice through what Foucault refers to as the discursive nexus, and genealogy is concerned with the processes of the web of discourses and the construction of identity (Foucault, 1980).

Where the concern is with the production of knowledge of discursive formations then archaeology is considered the method. On the other hand, from a critical and strategic perspective genealogy is the key to linking the empirical analyses to concerns with particular contemporary struggles (Dean, 1994).

A useful starting point for the consideration of the approaches to archaeology and genealogy is to be found in the two lectures by Foucault (1980). In those two lectures Foucault highlights forms of criticism that he refers to as local in character. These criticisms point to an autonomous, non-centralised kind of theoretical production whose validity is not dependent on established regimes of thought. Hamilton (2001) refers to

'vernacular literacies' that originate in the practices of everyday life. These occur within informal networks and communities, which are not recognised by educational institutions and are involved in the binary formal/informal education where formal education is privileged. Like the subjugated knowledges referred to by Foucault (1980), they are disqualified by the dominant discourses as inadequate, or insufficiently argued or developed. They are regarded as naïve knowledges that are low down on the hierarchy, not meeting the required level of 'cognition or scientificity'. For adult literacy this means that they are not defined, codified and standardised to meet specific purpose of an institution, the wider economy, the workplace community. On the other hand they are numerous and moreover have shifting purposes that meet the everyday requirements of individuals and their communities. Dominant discourses define what adult literacy 'is' and how it functions in people's lives. These discourses privilege the perspectives and assessment requirements that are based on positivist and so-called scientific theories. They are used to construct norms and close off other ways of understanding adult literacy. Boundaries are constructed around an understanding of how programmes are developed and how success is determined. Consequently other approaches to adult literacy are considered to be insufficiently robust to determine successful outcomes. A recent report by the Tertiary Education Commission refers to the requirement to use the Literacy and Numeracy for Adults Assessment Tool and the Learning progressions for Adult Literacy that it has developed. The Literacy and Numeracy for Adults Assessment tool is said to provide:

... for the first time robust comparative information on learners' literacy levels and evidence of their progress. (Tertiary Education Commission, 2010, p. 2)

There is little reference to its limitations to guide practitioners who may not have access to the detail of the scale on which the Literacy and Numeracy for Adults Assessment Tool is based. Foucault (1980) argued that his approach of archaeology could provide a space for these marginalised knowledges. On the other hand, what are termed 'the order of functionalist or systematising thought' (Foucault, 1980) or hegemonic discourses (Howarth, 2005; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985) are designed to mask the effects of the conflict and struggles that those subjugated knowledges bring up. These knowledges remain hidden and marginalised by claims that they lack robust argument and outcomes (Foucault, 1980). The dominant or hegemonic discourses make claims to 'the truth' and the consequent analysis, critique and research are foregrounded by these truths and therefore shape and determine what can be said, what

constitutes evidence and who is recognised as having authority to speak. Since 1996 policy consideration of adult literacy practices has privileged a focus on skills that are measurable and objective.

Power/Knowledge, Discourse and Governmentality

Central to the discussion of governmentality is the notion of the exercise of power. Foucault (1980) claims that he is not offering a theory or a methodology. His approach is not concerned with what power is but how it is exercised and its effect. Traditionally, the study of power has located power as something held by a person, institutions, elites, and people with vested interests. This has led to a focus on questions of the legitimisation of power and institutional models such as the state.

Foucault (1982) claimed that his concerns referred to a technique, a form of power, which is concerned with everyday occurrences, which categorises the individual, attaches an identity, and imposes a law of truth on the person, which the individual and others are to recognise. He sums this up with the comment that it is a form of power, which makes individuals subjects (Foucault, 1982).

The use of the term 'subject' has two connotations for Foucault. The first is being subject to another by control and dependence. The second meaning is being tied to ones own identity by conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power that subjugates the individual and makes them subject to another (Foucault, 1982).

Davies (2006), drawing on the work of Judith Butler, argues that the act of becoming a subject simultaneously involves mastery and subjugation. This idea links to Foucault's discussion of the practice of care of the self and the practices of pastoral care, and is a feature of assessment processes. An example is the Literacy and Numeracy for Adults Assessment Tool recently developed by the Tertiary Education Commission (2009). The learner is given a test, which comprises a set of exercises that are claimed to be decontextualised. The purpose is for the prospective learner to reveal his or her failure to complete the task, a confessional practice. Having failed the test the tutor/teacher can then determine the course necessary for the learner.

Relations of Power

The 'how' of the exercise of the relations of power is concerned with the means by which it is exercised and what happens when individuals exercise power over others.

Power relations, relationships of communication and objective capacities are not distinct but overlap and use each other as means to an end. The process is not uniform and repeatable as the same. Power forms 'blocks', by which Foucault (1982) means that these different components come together in differing levels to create regulated and concerted systems. The notion of 'blocks' involves the operationalising of technical capacity, communication processes and relations of power that are put together according to a determined formula, a mentality, and a rationality. Foucault (1982) refers to these disciplines as being historically grounded. He concludes by saying that power relations can be grasped in the diversity of their logical sequence, their abilities, and their relationships.

For adult literacy there are particular ways in which literacy is defined, which in turn determines the purposes of such programmes, how they will be put together, how they are assembled, how people are expected to participate, how they are assessed, how adult literacy can be spoken about, who has the right to speak, individual self care and responsibility for their literacy, the relationship to work and employment, and the needs of the economy. There are also issues of responsibility, obedience, choice of programme, processes of assessment, and evaluation that determine the identities of both the learner and the provider.

The processes lead to the formation of the identities of providers, tutors, managers, and learners' programmes. Defined roles are assigned in the process of developing policy strategies through communication. The strategies include activities such as submissions and lobbying. Power relations that are based on the discourses of adult literacy and adult education construct truths and relationships between the actors. The purpose is to achieve the final outcomes and the identities of students as being obedient, successful, enterprising, resistant, literate, and productive workers. The *Tertiary Education Strategy 2010-2015* (Ministry of Education, 2010) explicitly identifies the roles that the various institutions and organisations are expected to play. These are then to be judged by performance with consequences for future funding.

Governmentality and the Concern for the Population

The notion of government is considered to be heterogeneous and pervasive, that is, it enters all aspects of life. It does not come from a central point located in the state but is part and parcel of the practice of everyday life (Foucault, 1991a).

Foucault (1991a) describes governmentality as the 'conduct of conduct' which is a play on words and involves two aspects. The first notion of conducting is that of acting upon someone, and the second is that of one's own conduct or form of behaviour. Therefore the conduct of conduct refers to how individuals, groups and organisations are managed and how they manage their own behaviour (Dean & Hindess, 1998).

Miller and Rose (1995) argue that central to modern forms of government are the associations between what are termed political entities and their plans, projects, and practices, which are identified in economic, legal, spiritual and technical fields. This exercise of power over the lives of others is based on the development of forms of knowledge about what is considered to be good, healthy, normal, virtuous, efficient or profitable. The tertiary education strategies (Ministry of Education, 2002, 2006, 2010) refer to the need for literacy and numeracy to meet the needs of the economy and society. The policies draw on statistical information about the population, provided by IALS and ALLS, so as to construct the norm for participation in society. The data can be analysed and subgroups constructed and compared with others, in terms of what is considered the norm. The groups identified by adult literacy policies are those under 25, Māori and Pacific peoples. This knowledge is at the very core of the activities of government. Government in this understanding is about 'calculation, experimentation and evaluation' (Miller & Rose, 1995). It is carried out by the administration of a wide range and variety of aspects of conduct. The practice is calculated, drawing on education, persuasion, inducement, management, incitement motivation and encouragement.

In the case of adult literacy, the processes, technologies and techniques of government are concerned with the adult population and their levels of literacy and the requirements for people to participate in a knowledge society/economy. In so doing it seeks to structure the field to produce outcomes that enhance international competitiveness. The point here is that these statistics are used as facts that have universal application (Hamilton, 2001). Hindess (2009) argues that such statistics are a function of the theoretical concerns that they are used to address. There is a particularity that applies to the given theoretical project, as it occurs, in a given place

and time. Consequently the use of statistics for scientific purpose cannot be taken as fact but are conditioned by their conceptual basis. The analysis of these practices involves identifying the categories that were established and on what basis, the instructions given in carrying out the investigation, and how they are to be applied. These are necessary if the statistics are to be of use in terms of 'consistency' and 'validity'.

Practices of Governmentality

A significant aspect of power exercised through what has come to be referred to as neo-liberalism in Western societies is that it is achieved by linking together individualisation techniques and totalising procedures, which Foucault (1982) argues were based on the notion of pastoral power practised in Christian institutions. Whilst the impact of the Christian church has declined, the function of pastoral care has spread over a range of secular practices and techniques. In the exercise of this power, neo-liberalism, as a form of governmentality, assumes that it is superior, and provides the techniques, technology and practices for all forms of government and makes strong claims to democracy. In this way it attempts to marginalise other cultural practices and suppresses them, such marginalisation is a significant aspect of colonisation in New Zealand and in other parts of the Pacific and the world (Hindess, 2009).

Pastoral care is focused on the development of knowledge of human beings through concern for the population. The knowledge is presented as totalising through surveys such as the International Adult Literacy Survey and the Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey and other information gathering processes that are quantitative, individualised and analytical and concerned with the production of truth.

Neo-liberalism is concerned with health, wellbeing (wealth and standard of living), security and protection. It is exercised in a number of ways involving institutions of the state, educational organisations, community organisations, private groups and organisations, welfare societies, benefactors and philanthropists.

Neo-liberal discourse emphasises freedom and autonomy. Such approaches are associated with resistance where the exercise of power occurs and where the individual person is free to act otherwise (Foucault, 1982).

From the neo-liberal perspective, then, centralised government is reduced so as to minimise its impact on the people. This form of government emphasises individual

liberty as an important aspect of the conduct of conduct. This liberty is both an end in itself to be achieved, but it is also necessary for economic and other social processes to function. Alongside this limitation of government, there is the separation of government from society, giving the binaries of state and civil society or the public/private domains. Government as conceived by Foucault (1991a), on the other hand, is a broad concept and includes central government and the state on the one hand and the various self regulating organisations, groups and individuals on the other.

Neo-liberal forms of government are also concerned with security and law and order that are considered necessary for the efficient and proper working of society and presupposes individual liberty that gives rise to the possibility of doing things otherwise. The approach is based on abstract and theoretical bases for policies. Rose (1990, 1996) argues that these bases rely in part on techniques derived from the social, behavioural and human sciences. Government achieves its ends through acting on the relatively autonomous domains of social interaction, which implies an autonomous, free individual with the ability to make free choices. However, these free choices are to be made within the constraints of appropriate behaviour related to one's position, station in society, the influence one has, and the property rights of others. This opens up spaces for resistance and for doing things otherwise.

Cruikshank (1994, 1996) identifies technologies of citizens that involve various techniques of self-esteem, empowerment, consultation and negotiation used in community action and development programmes, and social and environmental impact studies, health promotion, community policy and the contesting of various forms of dependency. These outcomes have featured as being significant by learners of adult literacy programmes (Isaacs, 2010).

Technologies of citizenship are concerned with the creation of a sense of agency of individuals and groups based on notions of autonomy and freedom. Individuals are considered to be free to choose to engage in the process, to take responsibility, resist or conform. These notions are important for the consideration of the issues of national identity. Marshall (1996) takes issue with the notion of the autonomous individual. Such an approach down plays the influences of childhood as a member of a family, the role of the school in disciplining and the various experiences and messages that people receive in their everyday life and how these impact on an individual's ability to respond in a given situation. Marshall (1996), cited by Devine and Irwin (2006), argued that the word autonomous in its Greek origins refers to self-knowledge, law, rules and standards. Since these are socially constructed phenomena, the 'nomos' cannot be

considered to be totally individualistic and freely constructed by an individual. Devine and Irwin (2006, p. 13) concluded:

The self can only exist in the context of the knowledge of its own society, and can therefore never be autonomous – or indeed free, since it will always reflect the bounds and conventions of its own history. This philological argument confirms an important critique that Marshall directs against common conceptions in the social sciences and education; that the individual is ontologically separate, and has separate interests from society. It is not a question of agency versus structure, but that the way they integrate and mutually inform on another.

Other technologies include audit, which is concerned with monitoring, comparing and evaluating the performance of those that have actively engaged in the process. These practices also involve and rely on the self-conduct of the various actors, learners, tutors, and providers of services. Dean and Hindess (1998) suggest that it is possible then to talk of ‘technologies of performance’ which include such techniques as performance indicators, benchmarks, devolution of responsibility to budget units, cost centres, operation of quality audits and other indirect means of linking moral and political requirements for the shaping of conduct into the optimisation of performance.

Care of the Self, Autonomy and Identity

Government of conduct deals with the ways in which authorities and agencies attempt to shape, mould and direct the conduct of free individuals and groups and the way that they govern themselves. Consequently, government is concerned with the formation and shaping of identities, capacities and status of members of the population through attempts to shape aspirations and desires and provide members with capacities, statuses, rights and obligations (Dean 1999; Miller & Rose, 1997, 2008). The various strategies and policy documents relating to adult literacy and the tertiary education sector focus their attention of the development of workers to meet the needs of a competitive society, and individuals playing their part in contributing to the national identity. It also implies that it is the responsibility of the individual to contribute and actively engage.

Reference to the self government of citizens is found in adult literacy policy statements, the media, and provider promotional material, that are linked to and resonate with the

expectation that people will be self responsible and seek out services, to play their part, to seek ways to be employed irrespective of the type of work.

The practices of the self are drawn up as instruments in the pursuit of political, social and economic goals, but they also develop a means of resistance to other forms of government. The way that power is exercised in these practices is heterogeneous, in some places and times concentrated and hierarchical and in others socially dispersed. Conduct is not shaped by single all-powerful external entities such as governments and educational institutions, it also occurs in relationships within more or less open fields of possibility – between individuals, groups and their members, and institutions and their associates. Olssen (2006) suggests that Foucault was interested in seeing what happens when individuals use power over others within different relationships. What happens is that governable subjects are created through various techniques developed to control, normalise and shape people's conduct. According to Usher, Bryant, and Johnstone (1997), this cannot be considered to be unusual as governmentality is present in all routine activities. Governmentality has two aspects – it leads to attempts to govern others and to govern oneself to meet the expectations within relationships. Foucault is also clear that the exercise of power over others assumes freedom. With freedom comes the ability to act in ways other than what is considered to be the norm. Hindess (1996) notes that without the possibility of resistance there can be no power. The consequence of resistance gives rise to problematisation in the form of the cost of such resistance to the whole population. It leads to the possibility of refinement and modification of the various techniques, technologies and processes of the exercise of power. However, these responses give rise to new forms of resistance. This process applies not only to the institution but also to the individuals involved in any population that is to be governed in some way.

Foucault's notion that the exercise of power is reversible and opens up space for resistance. The conduct of conduct assumes that the one to be governed is an actor who is rational and enjoys freedom. Here is the distinction between rationality, the soul, the spirit and the body. It is expected that rationality be exercised in accordance with a relatively stable set of beliefs and desires, which tend to be self-interested (Hindess, 1988). Government is therefore an activity that shapes the field of action and thus in this sense attempts to shape freedom, but it is not constitutive of freedom (Foucault, 1982). Liberal forms of government work through the freedoms and capabilities of those governed and use them as technical means of securing the ends of government. Liberal mentalities of rule generally attempt to define the nature, source, effects and

possible utility of the capacities of acting and thinking (Dean, 1999; Miller & Rose, 1997). . So adult literacy is defined as a means of achieving the skills needed for the economic growth and international competitiveness.

The Analytics of Governmentality

The analytics of government concerns how the conduct of conduct occurs, by whom, and the authorities through which the various discourses are articulated. Governmentality is concerned with basic underlying concepts, how some ideas acquire the status of 'truth' and others do not. The analytics of Governmentality provides a language and framework that links questions appropriate for government, authority and politics with those of identity, the self, the person and how individuals come to see themselves (Dean & Hindess, 1998; Rose, 1999).

Both Dean (1999) and Rose (1999) refer to the analysis as the analytics of government. Their approach is to ask questions such as, what authorities of various kinds wanted this to happen? In relation to what defined problems? In the pursuit of what objectives? Through what strategies and techniques? (Rose, 1999). The focus is on a particular part of history, the way it is brought about through invention, contestation, operationalisation and transformation of schemes, programmes, techniques and devices that are more or less derived rationally and which seek to shape the conduct of the population to achieve specific ends.

The governmentality perspective recognises the complexity of the activity of government and cannot be regarded as the expression or achievement of economic or political theories (Dean & Hindess, 1998). Government is referred to as inventive in the way that strategic assemblages are brought together specifically to meet governmental objectives and goals. The assemblages to which they refer take the form of mundane activities and practices that involve practical knowledge that tend to be overlooked in analysis that focuses on political institutions or thought (Dean & Hindess, 1998).

There are four aspects to this view of governmentality. The first aspect is ontology, by which is meant 'what' we seek to act upon. These are the governed, for example the flesh, pleasure, the soul, the body of learners, the body of citizens who do not have the determined level of literacy to meet the established norm. The second aspect is ascetics, or 'how' we govern, the governing or the ethical work, which includes such things as spiritual exercises, procedures of management, surveillance, assessment and normalisation. Deontology is a third aspect, which is concerned with the formation

of identity and is concerned with binaries such as the learner as being literate or not, successful or a failure, employable or unemployable citizens. It has as its concern 'who' we are when we are governed in a particular manner, the mode of subjectivity and the governable or ethical subject, for example, the literacy learner, who is a concern of this thesis. Telos, the 'why' we are governed or govern, is the fourth aspect. There is a concern with the ends or goals sought, what we hope to become and the world it is hoped to create (Dean, 1999). This would include the growth of the economy, social identity, a flexible workforce, and productivity.

When dealing with particular theories as they are argued for in policy development, there are a range of questions that can be put. In the first instance, what part of the theory was selected? Under what authority? What was the basis upon which it was incorporated within a particular programme of reform? What administrative techniques, rationalities and forms of calculation does it draw on? How did the processes of this theory impact on the desired objective? (Dean & Hindess, 1998).

Making the taken for granted character of the practices of government explicit opens up the ground to ask questions about how it could be different. Bacchi (2009) also raises questions around how the policy problem is identified, and how this shapes how the issue is addressed. She also asks the question of how the problematisation is presented and what is identified as lacking in the population, individuals or groups.

Governmentality is therefore concerned with the practices that try to set boundaries and so shape and work through the choices, desires, aspirations, needs, wants and lifestyles of individuals and groups.

Rose (1996) and Dean (1999) refer to six dimensions along which to analyse the practices of government. They are problematisation, explanations, technologies, authorities, subjectivities and strategies.

Problematisation

The conduct of the moral, political, the economic, the military, and education are areas that give rise to problems for government. These problems are concerned with certain practices or institutions that include schools, courts and armies, where authorities may call into question certain phenomena. An example of these is the 1987 Treasury briefing to the incoming Minister of Education (The Treasury, 1987). In this situation the issue is unusual. It occurs in a particular locale at a given time and place and located within specific institutions and organisation. Its concern is with the rationality of the

market, value for money, and economic analysis designed to address the common good of the population.

The problematisations referred to above are present in particular social, institutional or professional locales, which may be regarded as having a place and time. They are therefore partial responses to given situations and have difficulty as overarching constructs or solutions. Various government policy strategies reflect a response to the needs at a particular time in particular locations, which is followed by attempts to operationalise these over the whole nation. An example is the way the results of the IALS survey are used in the development of policy. The survey draws on a sample of people and is claimed to be robust but providing little discussion of the limitations of surveys, or margins of error. Hindess (1973), in his book *The Use of Official Statistics in Sociology*, notes that such statistics are constructions that reflect the individualising purposes for which they were constructed. The Annex A to the OECD *Learning a Living* report notes the following:

In 1992, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (OECD, 1992) concluded that low literacy levels were a serious threat to economic performance and social cohesion on an international level. But a broader understanding of literacy problems across industrialised nations – and consequent lessons for policy makers – was hindered due to a lack of comparable international data. (OECD, 2005, p. 277)

This quote demonstrates two problematisations. The first is the conclusion taken from an earlier report on the negative impact of poor literacy on economic performance and social cohesion which are assumed to be of high importance for industrialised countries and to policy makers. The second is a need for comparable statistical data, not only within countries but also between countries. Such approaches set norms both nationally and internationally.

However, the analysis of policy requires making explicit the problem to be addressed. So when a policy sets out to achieve something or change it, then the focus is on that which needs to be changed. Bacchi (2009) argues that problems are created 'within' and policy gives shape to the problems but does not address them. By this is meant that policies are developed within a particular frame of thinking within which the problem is developed and created. Bacchi (2009) suggests that the process determines what can be said about the problem and the ways in which it will be

addressed, by whom, and on what authority. The *Tertiary Education Strategy 2010-2015* (Ministry of Education, 2010) also determines the roles and responsibilities of the different tertiary organisations and institutions.

Explanations

The concern here is with the underlying concept, norms and values, how they work and are interrelated, the language and grammar of explanatory systems, what counts as evidence, and the criteria required as proof or acceptability to confer notions of “visibility, remarkability, and calculability” (Rose, 1996, p. xi). The concerns are with ‘how’ questions, how we govern and how we are governed. The adult literacy strategies raise questions of the impact of adult literacy on the economy, the lack of common language, and the need for greater accountability to ensure that there is value for money.

They address the presuppositions or assumptions that underpin the representation of the problem. They are concerned with the conceptual logics that are involved in the way the problem is represented. Thus they are concerned with how things come to be, how they are shaped and how this informs how they happen. The presuppositions with regard to adult literacy are that there is a link between literacy gain and employment, increased wages and greater engagement in workplace activities. There are also assumptions about pedagogy that they will produce the outcomes required in the policy strategies.

Technologies

Technologies are concerned with the technical ways in which judgements are made, for example, the examination, assessment, and their associated values, norms and techniques that lead to reform and the means by which such changes are to occur. The effectiveness of adult literacy programmes are to be determined by outcomes which include being work ready, successfully gaining employment or going on to further education and qualifications.

These practices are composed of heterogeneous elements with diverse historical trajectories that are constantly changing in their internal and external relations and bearing upon multiple and wide ranging problems and issues.

Here the concern is with how the problem has come about. It is about how the analysis is structured and is concerned with categories of people that are developed using data taken from censuses and surveys such as IALS and ALLS.

To govern requires that one knows about the population. The 1996 International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) and the 2006 Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey (ALLS) created knowledge of the 16-65 year old body of the population of New Zealand. The purpose of the surveys is to provide information about the levels of literacy for that population and of the various subgroups identified within it. They were built on a particular worldview and drew on scientific method that assumed that the surveys provided independent evidence about the population and were considered to be context free. They therefore constructed knowledge that enabled comparisons, both nationally and internationally, to be made, that established norms that determined outcomes for individuals (OECD, 2005). This leads to questions about how this form of survey was used rather than others.

Authorities

As we will see later in the discussion of the 1996 International Adult Literacy Survey and the 2006 Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey, the claim that they are international surveys draws on the skills of a range of experts from within the OECD and the participating countries. It is argued that they draw on reliable research methods that have been developed by 'experts' over a period of time. These methods are referred to as though they are objective and outside of the discourses that construct them. This requires the establishment of people and institutions as authorities, specialists, advisers and experts, and the emergence of expertise as a form of authority that includes researchers, teachers, tutors, social workers, and psychotherapists. The *Learning a Living* report states:

A highly diverse group of countries and experts drawn from around the world participated in the validation of the instruments. (OECD, 2005, p. 15)

But later in the report in a note to readers, it acknowledges that:

Multiple sources of uncertainty and error are a fact of life in social science research. Given the comparative nature of the ALL study, those responsible for the design of the study and its implementation went to great lengths to establish the validity, reliability, comparability and interpretability of estimates, and to control and quantify errors that might interfere with or bias interpretation ...

The data values presented in this volume are estimated from representative but complex samples of adults from each country. Consequently there is a degree of sampling error that must be taken into account. Additionally there

is a degree of error associated with the measurement of skills because they are estimated on the basis of responses to samples of test items. (OECD, 2005, p. 21)

The *Learning a Living* report provides a range of caveats but the reports on its application at the national level in New Zealand tends to ignore them and rely on 'expert authority' to make statements of fact with regard to the population.

This, then, addresses the question of Bacchi (2009) of how the representation of the problem is disseminated and defended. The analysis identifies the processes used to acquire and maintain authority, including alliances and conflicts between the different claims to speak and act authoritatively. There is concern with what forms of knowledge, expertise, strategies, means of calculation, or rationality are employed in practices of governing. How does thought seek to transform these practices? How do the practices give rise to certain forms of truth? In this form of questioning, then, there are questions about how the presentation of the problem can be put into question, disrupted and possibly replaced.

Subjectivities

The concern here is with the effects produced by the problems, for example, identified through the IALS and ALLS surveys, with regard to the situation of adult literacy in New Zealand. Three effects can be identified. The first is discursive effects, which can be identified from the limits, horizons and political boundaries imposed on what can be thought and said and by whom. This leads to the exclusion of others whose voices are submerged, ignored and marginalised. Second, also identified, is the way that subjects and subjectification are constituted in a particular discourse. What is of concern here is that discourses make certain subject positions available which are assumed by the individual as he or she makes sense of their world from that standpoint. Foucault (1982) refers to a dividing practice, by which he meant the identification of groups within the population who are then measured against a norm. The consequence is the establishment of a binary that privileges one pole on the basis of meeting a particular norm. An example is the distinction in IALS between those who meet the literacy requirements for participation in the knowledge economy and those that do not. These are then further analysed on the basis of ethnicity, age, and gender. The practices of government are concerned with the forms of identity of individuals and collectives through which it operates, and which specific practices and programmes it tries to form and the kinds of transformation they intend to achieve. What statuses, capacities, attributes and orientations are assumed of those who exercise authority and those who

are governed? What are the forms of conduct expected of them? What rights and duties do they have? How are their attributes and capacities to be fostered? How are these duties enforced and rights ensured? How are certain aspects of conduct problematised? How are they reformed? How are certain individuals and populations made to identify with certain groups, to become virtuous and active?

The analytics of government identifies assumptions such as government is necessary and possible, and that it is effective and can achieve desired ends. There are assumptions about human beings, how they can be formed and reformed in order to be effective. In addition, there are other assumptions to be considered that include access to forms of knowledge that are secure knowledges of the world and human beings in the world. There is then the assumption that these forms of knowledge can be applied so as to make things better and improve how we do things (OECD, 2005). Finally, there is the presumption of the possibility of achieving a particular type of person, community, organisation, society or even the world.

Strategies

Strategies refer to what governments aspire to achieve. In many cases examples could be the reduction in government expenditure, competitiveness of the market, flexibility of the labour market, or national identity and cohesion. Associations and alliances are formed with particular political or other programmes of reform and those that focus on the role of practitioners, for example educationalists, in the complex arrangements of government. An example of this is the Literacy Alliance. Its website refers to the organisation as being formed “to engage about workforce literacy, language and numeracy provision and management” (Literacy Alliance, 2010).

The regimes of practice draw on various forms or bodies of knowledge and expertise such as economics, sociology, education, psychology and medicine that are based on scientific methods of explanation and enquiry. These disciplines define areas of knowing and practice and provide bases for policy development and implementation. They are not static and are constantly evolving. Research is used to continually ‘improve’ knowledge about practices and techniques. The issue here is how particular forms of research become influential where others do not, at any given time.

The concern is also about what is taken as unproblematic, for example, the distinction between what is regarded as the public and private lives of literate citizens. The discourses about the state of adult literacy in New Zealand are usually those concerned with the acquisition of literacy skills, usually for the workplace. The everyday

practices in peoples' lives are in the private domain and of lesser importance to government. The discourses also emphasise the issue of the over-representation of Māori and Pacific Peoples below level three in the IALS survey. The focus is on providing services that are relevant and appropriate for Māori and ignores other factors such as economic deprivation, attitudes, and issues relevant to the Treaty of Waitangi, health, social inequalities and access to services.

To summarise, the analytics of government raises questions of power and authority and the discourses used by the regimes of the practices of government. Discourses of government are an integral part of the workings of government rather than simply means of legitimation. Discourses are performative and government is accomplished through a variety of actors and agencies rather than a centralised set of state apparatuses. For adult literacy, this is achieved through various providers, agencies, government departments, businesses, and trade unions. The questions raised in this chapter are taken up in the analysis and discussion in following chapters. The next chapter considers the notion of discourse and the ways in which it can be analysed.

The rationalities that underpin the conduct of conduct are founded on Western philosophy. Rationality requires forms of thinking characterised as relatively clear, systematic and explicit about 'external' or 'internal' existence, which are normative with their concerns with how things are or how they ought to be. This includes the need for a competitive economy, higher incomes, employability of citizens and increased productivity. Within this system of thought are multiplicities of rationalities, of different ways of thinking in a fairly systematic manner, of making calculations, of defining purposes and employing knowledge. There are certain social practices that underpin codes of behaviour relating to one's home, as a parent, a partner, husband, wife, or at work that involve norms of policies and procedures and codes of practice. Because the range of these norms, policies and procedures is wide and in many ways competing, diverse and unpredictable outcomes are possible (Dean, 1999; Miller & Rose, 1997, 2008). It will be seen in later chapters that adult literacy is not a unitary term and how it is understood is derived from a range of norms and values. The techniques and technologies draw on certain norms and values and responsibilities, in particular relating to the economy and social identity. These are the basis upon which the conduct of the conduct of the identified adult population is carried out.

Chapter 3

Policy and Discourse

In the previous chapter governmentality was outlined. Part of the discussion about Governmentality concerned the role of discourse in developing the underlying mentalities for governing. Also part of the argument of this thesis is that policy development is about drawing on and constructing discourses that provide the basis for achieving **government** for the good of the population. Consequently discourse analysis provides a way of understanding the development of policies and in this case those around Adult Literacy.

This chapter considers the notion of discourse and examines the different understandings and approaches to discourse and draws on the work of a number of theorists (Foucault, 1971, 1991b; Gee, 2008; Howarth, 2000, 2005; Howarth & Stavrakakis, 2000; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985; Torfing, 2005). Further discussion about policy as discourse also draws on the work of Bacchi (2000, 2009).

Whilst Foucault provides the initial understanding of discourse, the work of David Howarth, in particular, is useful for his development of a methodology that addresses the logics of political discourses. Bacchi also provides a useful approach that identifies problematisation as a critical component of the analysis of policy development.

In his lecture "Orders of Discourse", Foucault begins by putting to question the desire to stand outside of discourse and consider its features. This is impossible because we are born into a world of discourse. He then provides the following context to his analysis:

I am supposing that in every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organised and redistributed according to a certain number of procedures, whose role is to avert its powers and its dangers, to cope with chance events, to avoid its ponderous, awesome materiality. In a society such as our own we all know the rules of exclusion. The most obvious and familiar of these concerns what is prohibited. We know perfectly well that we are not free to say just anything, that we cannot simply speak of anything, when we like or where we like; not just anyone, finally, may speak of just anything. (Foucault, 1971, p. 8)

Discourse and Exclusion

It is possible to identify three forms of exclusion as a concern with objects, matters of ritual within a context, and the privileging of the right to speak about a particular subject matter. These exclusions are interrelated, both complementing and reinforcing each other. Although they form a complex web they are also constantly subject to change and thus instability (Foucault, 1971). These exclusions are related to notions of normality, authority and orthodoxy and are concerned with what Foucault terms the 'will to truth', which has been a feature of Western European history from the time of the Greeks (Foucault, 1971). As will be seen later in this thesis, the construction of policy around adult literacy in New Zealand draws on models from the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada as well as the OECD and UNESCO.

Discourse Theory Analysis and Issues

Discourse refers to systems of meaningful practices that form the identities of subjects and objects. Foucault (1972) refers to discourses as practices that are systematic in the way that they construct the objects that they articulate. Discourse can be referred to as concrete systems of social relations and practices. Its actions are political and involve establishing political frontiers. Discourses are contested, so their establishment involves the exercise of power and resistance. They involve the exclusion of other possibilities and the development of relations between social agents that create hierarchies. They are contingent historical constructions and vulnerable to the antagonisms of the political forces that were excluded through their production and by the effects of events beyond their control.

The term discursive refers to what Howarth and Stavrakakis (2000) name as a theoretical horizon within which the being or object is constituted, where their meaning is socially constructed according to a system of rules and significant differences. In response to the claim that this reduces everything to discourse and implies a rejection of the real world, it is argued that human beings are born into and inhabit a world of meaningful discourses and cannot think of objects outside of it. This does not mean that human beings are therefore conditioned to particular dominant discourses.

Torring (2005) notes that discourse theory offers a new analytical perspective that focuses on the rules and meaning that conditions the construction of social, political and cultural identity. These analytical tools, for example concepts, arguments and

ideas, were developed through specific empirical and theoretical contexts and based on post-structuralist and postmodern insights.

Torring (2005) suggests that there are three different generations and traditions of discourse. He says the first defines discourse in a narrow linguistic sense of a textual unit that focuses on the semantic aspects of the spoken or written text. The focus is on the individual speaker's use of language, that includes sociolinguistic analysis, content analysis, conversation analysis and discourse psychology. This approach assumes that speakers change the frame and style of the dialogue because they wish to achieve something through their speech acts. Some of the analysis of adult literacy as social practice draws on sociolinguistics (Barton & Hamilton, 1998, 2005; Gee, 2008).

Torring (2005) argues that sociolinguistics, content analysis and conversation analysis do not link the analysis of discourse with the analysis of politics and power struggles.

The second generation moves beyond written and spoken language to a wider set of social practices. Critical discourse theory as developed by Fairclough (1989, 1995) and Gee (2005) draws on the work of Foucault's analysis of discursive practices that form subjects and objects. Discourse in this formulation is defined as "an empirical collection of practices that qualify as discursive in so far as they contain a semiotic element" (Torring, 2005, p. 7). This approach leaves discourse as a subset of social practices, which include linguistically mediated practices of social actors in their production of interpretation and meaning.

For this perspective then, discursive practices are regarded as ideological in that they contribute to the naturalisation of contingently constructed meaning. In this way ideological discourse contributes to the reproduction and transformation of the social and political order and reflects the power effects of discourse.

Referring to Foucault, Torring (2005) suggests that he is not concerned with the form and content of linguistic statements and semiotic practices but with the rules governing the production of such statements and practices. The concern is more with the discursive conditions of possibility with an emphasis on the 'rules of formation' that regulate what can be said, how it can be said, who can speak and in which name, and the kind of strategies that are possible at the level of discourse.

All practices are discursive as they are shaped by discursive rules of formation that vary in time and space (Foucault, 1994). The focus is on the power struggles that

shape and reshape particular discursive formations, as discourse and power are mutually constitutive.

Discursive power is about the 'conduct of conduct' where discourse shapes the identities and relations of subordination of the social actors through the regulation of their actions.

Drawing on the work of Derrida (1976, 1978, 1982) and Laclau and Mouffe (1985), Torfing (2005) says that the third formulation of discourse extends this notion of discourse. In this approach discourse includes all social phenomena, which are discursive because their meaning depends upon a decentred system of rules and differences. Therefore, social meaning becomes partially fixed in and through discourse. This approach draws on deconstruction that puts into question notions of structure as closed and a centred totality. Discourse is broadly understood as relational systems of signifying practices that produce contingent horizons, through historical and political interventions, in the construction of meaningful objects.

The approach taken in this thesis follows Torfing (2005) and Laclau and Mouffe (1985), who agree with Foucault on the internal relationship between power and discourse. They understand discourse in terms of the historically variable conditions of possibility of what we say, think, imagine and do.

Discourse theory assumes that all objects and actions have meaning; meaning is conferred by systems of rules that are specific in terms of time and place. Further there are established systems of relations between objects and actions. Finally discourses provide subject positions that agents can identify with.

Discourse theory addresses the way that the various articulations of social practices may contest the dominant discourses that construct social reality. These contestations arise because systems of meaning are contingent and can never exhaust the field of meaning (Howarth & Stavrakakis, 2000). Consequently there is a space for contestation or struggle over meaning.

These socially produced forms of knowledge set limits upon what it is possible to think, write or speak about a given social object or practice, and, as Foucault (1971) points out, involves the will to truth and the will to knowledge. The way that adult literacy has become part of mainstream thinking in the tertiary education sector in New Zealand, its meaning and the ways in which it is spoken about in policy documents, press statements, articles and reports, gives authority and constructs forms of social

knowledge and truth. These forms of social knowledge and truth become sedimented and regarded as normal over time. Later chapters in this thesis draw attention to how such processes for adult literacy include articles, presentations, media commentaries, submissions that begin by referring to IALS (1996) and ALLS (2006). There are difficulties to think or to speak outside the terms of reference that are established through the conceptualising of the identities of people and social relations. The discourse establishes the boundaries, or the rules that constrain and enable what can be said. Some of the discourses found in current political debates are relevant to the discussion of adult literacy, including objectivity, national identity, the economy, the market, and employment. These draw on notions of 'lifelong learning', 'human capital', and 'globalisation'. We will return to these issues in the next chapter.

The 'knowledges' produced and reinforced by discourses exist through the statements and signs that constitute them. Therefore to call something a 'discourse' means to put into question its claim to truth. As Foucault (1971, p. 11) noted, "every educational system is a political means of maintaining or modifying the appropriation of discourse, with the knowledge and powers it carries".

There are questions of truth and how we can make judgements. Foucault and other post-structuralist writers argue that the 'truth' is internal to the rules and structures that are constructed and therefore contingent, raising further questions as to how we are in a position to make any comment, as there will always be views that contest our assumptions and values. Consequently it is important that the argument is persuasive as it enters into political engagement.

Some discourses enjoy greater status than others and tend to be institutionally sanctioned and reinforce established economic, legal, familial, religious and educational norms. This draws attention to the institutional mechanisms that ensure some knowledges become dominant in the 'struggle for control of discourses'. For example, adult literacy policy development around multiple literacies and literacy as social practice have difficulty in gaining credibility because they confront the 'rules of objectivity and relevance' in the notion of literacy as a set of skills. Put in other words, there exist hierarchical networks of discursive relations which affect one's discursive positioning, the discursive power one can exercise in particular contexts, and which fix specific meanings of, say, adult literacy.

Because discourses do not fix meaning, they open up spaces for resistance and for seeing things as otherwise. This arises because there are partial fixations, which make

the flow of differences possible. Meaning is required for the possibility to differ, to subvert a given meaning. Given that the social does not manage to fix itself in the intelligible and instituted forms of society, it only exists to construct an impossible object. Discourses attempt to dominate the field of diversity, to arrest the flow of differences, to construct a centre (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). However, through the exercise of power, particular discourses become dominant and hegemonise the domain (Howarth, 2005; Howarth & Stavrakakis, 2000; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985; Torfing, 2005).

Discourse approaches are frequently challenged on the basis that they deny the real world. Laclau and Mouffe (1985) argue that because an object is the object of discourse has nothing to do with whether there is a real world that is external to thought. They use the examples of an earthquake or a falling brick, which, they say, happens independently of a person's will. But how meaning is constructed may be that an event is a natural occurrence or the wrath of a divine being depending on how the discursive field is structured. They argue that their approach denies that the different ways of expressing the object are able to constitute themselves independently of their discursive conditions. Bacchi (2009) notes that discursive practices, then, can be understood as multiple, ongoing and contested means through which some statements are rendered credible and consequential whilst others are excluded.

All of this means that there can be no assumption that we can know, outside the specifics of particular, historically situated times and places. Instead we need to inquire into the on-the-ground political deliberations and practices that give and reform a specific meaning in selected sites.

The third generation of discourse analysis examines empirical materials and information as discursive forms. This includes a wide range of linguistic and non-linguistic data, including speeches, reports, strategies, news media both written and spoken, manifestos, historical events, interviews, policies and ideas, and includes organisations and institutions. They are viewed as sets of signifying practices that constitute a discourse and its reality. The discourses are viewed as providing the conditions that shape how subjects experience their world of objects, words and practices. The third generation of discourse theorists draw on deconstruction as introduced by Derrida (1978), archaeology and genealogy from Foucault, the theory of rhetoric and tropes, Saussure's distinction between the paradigmatic and syntagmatic poles of language, the Jakobsonian concepts of metaphor and metonymy especially as reformulated by Lacan and Laclau and Mouffe, and logics of equivalence and

difference (Howarth, 2005). The approach requires a theoretical framework and logic that is 'open' and flexible and allows the analysis to be adapted, reformed and transformed in the process of application.

Basic Concepts and Logics

Discourse theory stresses the contingency of social identities, which results in partial fixation of meaning. This section provides an outline of the basic concepts of discourse formation and contestation and provides a discussion of the basic concepts of the approach, drawing on the work of Howarth (2000, 2005), Howarth, and Stravrakakis (2005) Laclau and Mouffe (1985). The basic concepts discussed, are articulation, nodal points, empty signifiers, the primacy of the political and the logics of equivalence and difference.

Articulation

Discourse is a structured totality that results from an articulatory practice for example policy formulation, and implementation. The process involves the articulation of differential positions that are referred to as elements within a discourse and subsequently become moments. Laclau and Mouffe (1985) argue that elements are not discursively articulated but arise in periods of problematisation and dislocation of the dominant discourses. There are many attempts to establish meaning and the elements take on a floating character. Following on from the publication of the 1996 International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) in New Zealand, the field of adult literacy is problematised as being fragmented, having no common language, and having no definition that is agreed by all. However the language and findings of IALS is promulgated as providing the various countries with the information to develop coherent policies (OECD, 2005).

Nodal Points

As a consequence of the contingency of all social forms the transition from elements to moments is never complete which gives rise to the issue of how identity and social formation is possible. Laclau and Mouffe (1985) address the paradox by introducing the notion of the nodal point. Nodal points are the privileged signifiers or reference points that bind the system of meaning or chain of signification. The identification of adult literacy as a major factor in attaining increased productivity in the workforce, increasing competitiveness of the economy and increased employment leads to the privileging of literacy as skills for work and as such can be said to become a nodal point.

Empty Signifiers

The social field can never be closed, and political practices seek to fill the lack of closure. To address this issue Laclau and Mouffe (1985) introduced the notion of the empty signifier. Howarth (2005, pp. 8-9) notes the following: “although the fullness and universality of society is unachievable, its need does not disappear”.

For Laclau and Mouffe (1985), political discourse occurs around the empty signifier that functions as the nodal point. It becomes the privileged pole of the binary that is contaminated by the other pole it rejects but constantly seeks because it derives its meaning in relation to the other (Derrida, 1994). Emptiness is essential for a nodal point and is the condition of possibility for its hegemonic success. For the notion of problematisation in the conduct of conduct, the empty signifier would be that which is seen as lacking in the situation (Dean, 1999; Rose, 1999). Strategies are developed by the protagonists to provide meaning that closes off the debate. The emptiness of the signifier gives rise to various political strategies that provide different meanings and connotations to the empty signifier.

The Primacy of Politics

Discourses and identities are inherently political entities that involve the development of antagonisms and the exercise of power. Social systems are political entities and so are vulnerable to the counter discourse of those excluded (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). So, for example, in the dominant discourses around adult literacy the focus is on literacy as skills for the workplace. Where this approach is accompanied by audit and monitoring requirements for funding the consequence is that other approaches are marginalised. Such approaches are concerned with how literacy is used by the individual learner: social practice, critical literacy, and cultural and indigenous literacies.

For Laclau and Mouffe (1985), social antagonisms occur because social agents are unable to fully attain their identity. The construction of antagonisms and the institutions of political frontiers between agents are partly constitutive of identities and of social objectivity itself. An antagonism is seen to occur when the presence of (an)Other prevents someone from being wholly himself or herself. The task of the discourse analyst is to explore the different attempts to attain a full identity. This includes identifying the political boundaries that are created and the mechanisms by which social agents create and problematise the blocked identity. An example is how adult literacy is problematised, how it is articulated is then dealt with, There is the establishment of authorities whose views are preferred to others thereby creating barriers and exclusion. In the process then certain voices are privileged with the

consequence that others are marginalised. The discourses also establish the rules under which discussion can take place, how solutions are determined and actions occur. Antagonisms exist where employers who consider that education is the responsibility of Government are prevented from achieving their identities as successful business people and employers because their workers do not have the literacy required for technological advances. These antagonisms arise where policy and practices of adult literacy do not address the employers concerns or place the responsibility back on them. Literacy providers find their identities blocked when the funding body becomes involved in their sphere through the development of resources where practitioners see themselves excluded from the process,

Logics of Equivalence and Difference

Howarth and Stavrakakis (2000) argue that to account for the construction of social antagonisms requires ways for understanding how antagonistic relations threaten discursive systems. This is theorised as an identity that cannot fit within the existing systems of differences. Laclau and Mouffe (1985) provide an example in which people with different interests can become identified in their opposition to another group, for example, by identifying as 'oppressed' or 'marginalised' (Howarth et al., 2000). Howarth and Stavrakakis (2000, p. 11) make the argument that if this "logic of equivalence functions by splitting a system of differences and instituting a political frontier between two opposed camps the logic of difference is the opposite." It consists in expanding a given system of differences by dissolving existing chains of equivalence. This results in elements no longer being articulated which creates spaces for them to be taken up into different discourses and creating an expanding order that attempts to address the deficiencies identified in the status quo. The dominant discourse tends to focus on the similarities, what we have in common, and build on those. Differences are then pushed to the margins as not important and for adult literacy, would include vernacular literacies (Hamilton, 2001).

Subject Positions, Dislocation and Political Subjectivity

Laclau and Mouffe (1985) distinguish between what they term subject positions and political subjectivity. This captures the positioning of subjects within a discursive structure, on the one hand, and accounts for the agency of subjects on the other. The subject position designates the positioning of subjects within a discursive structure and recognises that a concrete subject can have a number of different subject positions. Political subjectivities refer to the different ways that social actors act because of the

contingency of those discursive structures through which the subject obtains its identity.

The political subject is forced to take decisions or identify with certain political projects and the discourses they articulate, where social identities are in crisis and structures need to be created. The political subject may be an individual, a group, an organisation, an institution, and a coalition of groups, government departments, and the media.

Hegemony, Myths and Imaginaries

The notion of hegemony is central to discourse theory and any discussion of governmentality. Hegemonic practices are a form of political activity that involve the bringing together of different identities and subjectivities to engage in a common project. Hegemonic formations are the outcomes of those projects' endeavours as they seek to create new forms of social order involving dispersed or dislocated elements. Such formations involve successfully privileging partial discourses and subjects. The notion of hegemony draws on the work of Gramsci (1971), for whom the term is not simply an instrumental political strategy, but a general political logic involving the construction of a new common sense.

Discourse is constructed in and through hegemonic struggles and aims to establish a political and moral-intellectual leadership by determining meaning and identity that are the result of political decisions. The articulation of the Adult Literacy Strategy identifies the Ministry of Education as playing a leadership role. These decisions are not derived from a central governmental agency but involve a myriad of de facto decisions taken by political agents that include politicians, Government Officials business leaders, education providers and institutions that seek to influence the formation of a hegemonic discourse. It is those articulations that manage to establish a credible principle on which to read past, present and future events, and capture people's hearts and minds so as to become hegemonic.

For Laclau and Mouffe (1985), the theory of discourse is predicated on the idea of the impossibility of societal closure, a condition that makes articulatory practice and political agency possible. Hegemonic practices require two conditions. They are antagonistic forces and the instability of the frontiers that divide them. Hegemonic practices presuppose a social field criss-crossed by antagonisms and the presence of elements that can be articulated by opposed political projects. An example is the struggle over the definitions of adult literacy as skills, as social practices, as indigenous

literacy, and critical literacy. The major aim of hegemonic projects is to construct and stabilise social orders by attempting to address as many issues as possible.

Myths emerge because of a structural dislocation and are important because they construct new spaces of representation and attempt to suture the dislocated space in question. Their effectiveness is essentially hegemonic that privileges particular approaches, worldviews, practices and solutions.

Chapter 4

Adult Literacy Development in New Zealand

This chapter turns to the development of discourses of adult literacy in New Zealand from pre 1840 to the present. It also draws attention to these discourses as subjugated knowledges (Foucault, 1980). They are built around problematising the hegemonic discourses but were unable to successfully challenge those discourses until adult literacy became problematised in terms of the demands of the market for adaptable, enterprising workers who could respond to technological changes and management practices that came to the fore in the 1980s in New Zealand.

The chapter also has a concern for the different approaches to adult literacy and provides indications of the antagonisms that are inherent in the political process of establishing policy frameworks that privilege particular approaches. These other approaches become marginalised and so give rise to antagonisms and the problematising of the dominant discourses. These approaches also include what Hamilton (2001) refers to as vernacular literacies.

In this thesis literacy as social practice is considered to provide an understanding of adult literacy that recognises more fully its uses in the everyday lives of people and in particular learners. However for this examination of Adult literacy Policy in New Zealand such an approach is not intended to close off discussion of the uses of other approaches and the ways in which they contribute to the provision of programmes for learners.

Recent policy documents begin with reference to the 1996 International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) and the 2006 Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey (ALLS). Such beginnings tend to suggest that concern for adult literacy began in 1996. However, there is a broader development of adult literacy than the policy initiatives since 1996. Before 1840, Te Reo Māori, in a number of dialects, was the oral language of New Zealand. However there were also many other symbolic forms of expression in the tukutuku panels in wharehenui, rakau whakapapa and various carvings that expressed the various genealogies of a particular whānau and hapu that are part of indigenous literacies.

In 1815 Thomas Kendall, the first resident missionary, published *A Korao no New Zealand, or The New Zealander's First Book*. The problem identified was to provide

instruction for Māori. The book is regarded as the first published attempt to record Māori speech in an alphabetic form. He believed that it was difficult to teach reading and writing in Māori without an accepted system of writing. In 1820 *A Grammar and Vocabulary of the Language of New Zealand* was produced and printed. There is an assumption that to improve the wellbeing of Māori they should fit into this frame of reference. Having established the problem, the explanation was the required system of writing, and the technology was the production of the book and its use. The authority was the philosophical and educational assumption made and the assumption of Kendall's worldview being superior and implied the inferiority of a Māori worldview and consequently subjugated their practices. This represents a sedimented discourse, by citing a practice that appears to be common sense and normal. The discourse involved the cooption of Māori in the production of the written text and by so doing, gave authority to it.

According to Jackson (2003), there is also considerable evidence that shows "extensive, deliberate and influential use of literacy by the Māori from the late 1820s especially in the Far North of New Zealand" (Jackson, 2003, p. 28).

Rawiri (2005) reported on the indigenous literacies associated with the people of the Whanganui River. They were concerned with the everyday practices of the people of the land, their relationship with the river and practices adopted in their responsibilities as kaitiaki. The river and the health of the river are intimately tied to the health and wellbeing of the different communities along the river. Rawiri (2005) argues that the dominant discourses of what constitutes literacy stifle the indigenous practices and removes them as a form of practice.

In 1840 The Treaty of Waitangi was signed. At this time, Te Reo was the dominant language in New Zealand's social, commercial and political life, as well as the language of education.

Many European settlers had low literacy. On the other hand in the early nineteenth century, Māori were prodigious readers and writers in te reo Māori and English (Te Kawai Ora (2001:2). From 1842 through to the early 20th century newspapers in Te Reo Māori were produced and keenly sought after by Māori (Paterson, 2006). Paterson (2006) goes on to argue the importance of the papers and their contents show that they provide information concerning their role in informing and influencing their readers, which could take place because of the effectiveness of literacy within Māori society.

In the early years after the Treaty, newspapers in English played a significant role in the formulation of opinions and norms and values, which served to promote and construct the dominant discourses of the day (Paterson, 2006).

In 1858 the government, drawing on the colonial discourses around education and the construct of the civilised person, directed that English be the language of instruction in the ordinary subjects of primary English education. Here the colonial imperative was to reproduce in the indigenous people the language and therefore the values and practices of the coloniser, which then put literacy in English as the dominant discourse. The *Native Schools Act 1867* established a national system of day schools for Māori children, where the teaching of English was its central task. In 1901, with the passing of the *School Attendance Act*, all Māori and Pākehā children had to attend formal education. Here Te Reo Māori was problematised as hindering the progress toward civilisation for Māori and was systematically excluded. The discourse related to preparing people to participate in a particular form of society, to be citizens of a particular kind, that is being law abiding and civilised. The Māori language was banned both in classrooms and in the playground. This was in keeping with the colonial discourse that identified success for Māori in terms of their being more like Pākehā (Paterson, 2006). This is what Hindess (2008) refers to as the superiority of the knowledge and ways of civilisation that the settler believed they had. The policy formation for adult literacy in New Zealand has continued to privilege literacy in English. The approach is for Māori to improve their literacy in English despite reference to literacy in Te Reo Māori in *More than Words*, the adult literacy strategy (Ministry of Education, 2001b).

Adult literacy programmes in New Zealand were initially developed in the early 1970s, by Rosalie Somerville (Hill, 1990). The work of Rosalie Somerville led to the establishment of many community groups throughout the country. The adult literacy programmes were based around responding to the needs constructed and identified in the community. There was little funding from the government as this form of adult learning was marginalised. The groups relied mainly on funding from Community trusts, Community Organisations Grants Scheme (COGS), the Lotteries Commission and a range of fundraising activities. Other developments around this time were the establishment of Te Ataarangi to teach the Māori language to individuals and families. This was a response to the discourses around the decline of Te Reo and the distinct possibility of the language becoming extinct. At the same time the thirteen Rural Education Activity Programmes (REAPs) were beginning. However these did not

receive immediate funding support from the government. Prior to the IALS (1996) there was little government attention to adult literacy. The discourse focused on compulsory education to prepare children for citizenship and to participate in the economy.

The discourses of adult literacy were principally related to learner centredness in the context of the learner's life as well as seeking social justice. These concepts and signifiers are contested terms. The notion of learner centredness, used in this approach, involved the learner as part of the development of the programme. This required an initial assessment process that focused on the learner's goals and the development of strategies and a programme to meet those goals. There are a number of assumptions made about the learner as being independent and in a position to make choices. On the other hand, other discourses and practices of tertiary institutions tend to predetermine the goals of the student and then put them into a pre-designed course or programme. In the process there is the construction of the learner as good, motivated, successful, a failure, and marginalised.

In the early 1980s the first Kohanga Reo were established, a development of literacy in Māori, for Māori by Māori. According to Smith (1999) it was a response from a community concern about the loss of language. The initiative was not funded by the state and relied on contributions made by whānau. In the 1980s government funded employment training schemes included basic literacy skills in their programmes.

In 1982 the adult literacy community groups formed themselves into a federation known as the Adult Reading and Learning Assistance Federation (ARLA) that became Literacy Aotearoa. This federation was the only organisation in New Zealand whose primary focus and objective was literacy tuition for adults. There was little government funding in relation to the numbers of learners that were reported as receiving assistance. The groups mainly relied on funding from local trusts and funding bodies and some received funding through polytechnics. In the late 1980s there was funding for the employment of a national executive officer, training officers and regional advisors for the ARLA Federation. These were largely part-time positions. In addition the government also provided the ARLA Federation with some funding for Māori literacy services and workplace literacy support and provision.

The Development of Adult Education

Adult education in New Zealand is a Pākehā construct that drew on similar developments in England at the beginning of the 20th Century. Dakin (1988), drawing

on the work of Thompson (1945) provides a tentative understanding of adult education that refers to deliberate acts by individuals to acquire the knowledge that they require as citizens of society and provide them with the opportunities for express themselves publicly.

There are a number of aspects to the discourse about adult education. First the uses of the terms 'men and women' are considered independent learners who act to gain knowledge. This implies a problem, namely a lack of the knowledge that will prepare them to be active citizens. Norms are established and with them certain responsibilities. It is then argued that this form of education will address this issue. Immediately this closes off discussion of other forms of addressing the problem. The notion of citizenship is increasingly used to mean taking responsibility for a family, being employed and not dependent on the state and contributing to the success of the economy.

The understanding, referred to above, highlights some significant themes that will emerge and re-emerge in the thinking about adult literacy language and numeracy. The first is that it is a purposeful activity; participants seek knowledge for a range of purposes. These purposes are linked to their roles in everyday life and are motivated by a desire to more fully participate in that activity, for example reading to ones children or writing letters. There are links to notions of self improvement and care of the self (Foucault, 2008) so that the individual can engage in various roles, as a participant in a family, work or a community.

The development of adult literacy in English drew on the discourses around adult and community education. Culligan (2005) cites Simon (1969) and Green, Preston, and Sabates (2003) who argue that the discourse of education, in the 19th century, focussed on social order. There were other perspectives that focused on outcomes such as critical awareness, consciousness raising, and the development of solidarity between groups. All of these have assumptions about the independence of the subject that is part of the liberal education project. In the current climate the discourses are around community renewal and social inclusion, which refer to access to education so that the learner is able to engage in employment and contribute to the economy. Discourses around access to education contrast with discourses of social cohesion and solidarity. This discussion highlights ways in which education reinforces the development of norms and discipline, as well as the construction and reinforcement of the dominant discourses that are regarded as necessary and taken for granted and apply to a particular form of society. These factors are significant in the processes of

governmentality identified by Foucault (1991a) who was concerned with how the rules of formation and the production inform such practices. He argues that they redefine the idea of the social order in terms of responsibilities as citizens, contributing to the national identity and the economy by gainful employment.

This direction has put a focus on what is referred to as lifelong learning. As governments have decreased their responsibilities for social welfare, health, education, old age and unemployment, then the responsibilities pass to individuals, families and communities who are then exposed to new forms of life stress. The *Tertiary Education Strategy 2007-2012* (Ministry of Education, 2006) stressed the importance of lifelong learning, which it presented in the form of retraining for work and so meeting changes in the work environment as well as supporting families and communities. In the process this notion sees lifelong learning as constituting a subject that is independent, self-producing and self-regulating so as to meet the requirements of the market. Under the heading of success for all New Zealanders through life long learning, the *Tertiary Education Strategy 2007-2012* states:

When New Zealanders succeed in tertiary education, they can contribute fully to our economy and society. The kinds of knowledge, skills and competences that enable people to succeed in a knowledge-based economy are increasingly similar to those that enable people to enjoy and contribute positively to their families and communities. (Ministry of Education, 2006, p. 21)

This is further reinforced in the *Tertiary Education Strategy 2010-2015* (Ministry of Education, 2010).

There is a normative aspect with notions of having responsibilities that are tied into implied shared norms and values. It also refers to relationships with others and often implies one of mutual dependence. Finally, there is the notion of change and improvement of the individual for which they are responsible. But, importantly, there is the problematising of the individual as in some way lacking or having a deficit, implying some state that the successful learner is expected to achieve.

Knowledge is not something out there that can be acquired. The learner brings their life experiences to the process. Where the learner's experience of education is negative, their approach to learning will be affected by the self-image the person has of himself or herself as a learner. Bringing this to adult literacy then, the implications for learners and teachers or tutors are that literacy does not involve a state of being. On the

contrary, the argument advanced here is that the discourse around adult literacy constructs the learner as literate within particular domains of their life, as a school child, a parent, a worker, a partner, a friend, a consumer, as a participant in community activities. On the other hand, the dominant discourse constrains the development towards particular ends, namely, the development or acquisition of skills required for productive work.

Māori literacy practices were related to their everyday lives on the marae and their kaitiaki role with regard to the rivers, land, and the sea. As Rawiri (2005) points out, indigenous literacies are concerned with identity as a people as opposed to that of the individual. The concerns of indigenous people also resonate with the notions of social practices in adult education and adult literacy.

Understandings of Adult Literacy

Only that which has no history is definable. (Nietzsche, 1967)

This quotation from Nietzsche suggests wariness about definitions in terms of what they claim to provide. Definitions are constructed to address a lack or a problem, namely to create a common understanding and meaning. It is, to use Laclau & Mouffe's (1985) concept, a nodal point that attempts to suture the flow of differences that contest meaning for the empty signifier that emerges through the lack or determined problem. In the process boundaries and antagonisms are constructed arising from the debates and arguments about the appropriateness of their meanings.

Definitions attain their importance by shaping the policies that are developed and the teaching and learning practices that they underpin (Lonsdale & McCurry, 2004). They represent the basis upon which the discourses lay claim to truth, and in the process establish boundaries of inclusion and exclusion that lead to resistance.

History is about context, location in time and place, the singular and the individuality of that which is being defined. It is this that marks this event from others, which may have similarities but it is never the same.

The application of the definition to any particular situation does not fully fit; there is always something more than the definition. This forms the basis for problematising the definition and the resistance to its application. Governmentality functions on the basis that particular discourses become established as scientific expressions of truth based on technical and theoretical assumptions and definitions, for example those provided

by OECD and UNESCO. These theories or discourses with their definitions determine what is thinkable, how things are thinkable about adult literacy and in what ways they are thinkable, and consequently how individuals, groups and organisations act in accordance with these understandings. They begin to establish identities in given contexts. How these become established is in part through education including adult literacy, and research that constructs and reconstructs discourses.

Understandings of Literacies

As has been said above, definitions are part of the foundation of discourses. To provide definitions of adult literacy is therefore no simple task and could be described as dangerous. Although the terms 'literacy' and 'adult literacy' are used frequently in the media, in government statements, business promotions or understandings, statements of objectives of literacy providers or courses of training for educators, definitions are contested and become what Demetrian (2005) describes as competing paradigms. They are therefore the subjects of the exercise of power in a multitude of intersecting dimensions. The words and expressions used are regarded as overarching and having general application. However, we need to consider issues about what it is that the discourses are about. In New Zealand there is little public discussion about different literacies. Rather the discourses refer to 'literacy', which acts as an empty signifier. The meaning is contested (Howarth, 2005; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985; Torfing, 2005). The hegemonic discourse assumes that everyone understands what is being discussed. The policy discourse, in New Zealand, concerns literacy in English and closes off discussion and debate about literacy in Te Reo Māori. Policy statements raise issues concerning the situation of Māori in relation to the norm. The solutions provided are that Māori improve their literacy achievement in English, and establishes Māori as a problem to be addressed. The effect, as will be seen below, marginalises kaupapa Māori practices.

Māori and Indigenous Literacies

Te Kāwai Ora (Māori Adult Literacy Working Party, 2001) identifies a number of parameters to the definition of literacy in New Zealand. These include sustainable survival, Te Wheke and the laws of literacy, clashing worldviews: colonisation, and adaptability: whānau, hapu and iwi literacy. The major themes are:

- Māori to identify as Māori, knowing oneself as Māori,

- The importance of Te Reo for the sustainability of the culture and ways of expressing what it means to be Māori, and
- The importance of whānau, hapu and iwi in determining their literacies, the requirements of members, as well as their role in the development and provision of literacy programmes.

These terms provide a broad basis for the understanding of Māori in the context of New Zealand in the present. The word Māori is not a unitary term and needs to be understood in terms of groupings of different peoples, iwi, and hapu whānau.

Te Kāwai Ora provides the following understanding of literacy for Māori:

Literacy is a lifelong journey of building the capacity to read and shape Māori and other worlds. (Māori Adult Literacy Working Party, 2001, p. 11)

Rawiri (2005), citing Penetito (2001), notes that for indigenous peoples literacy functions in a more fundamental and critical way. Literacy is the means by which to express, understand, provide for, and make sense of, oneself and one's whole richness in its widest cultural, spiritual and physical sense. She goes on to say that for indigenous peoples to define literacies is an inherently social and political act in that it defines what is valid and valued in society (Rawiri, 2005).

This approach contests the mainstream approach that literacy is understood as a universal term. This will be further discussed in Chapter 7.

Approaches to Literacies in English

Papen (2005) and Demetrian (2005) identify three adult literacy traditions in English: functional, critical and traditional liberal. Functional literacy is referred to as the set of skills required in a broad range of activities associated with participation in society. Programmes are designed to meet the skills required of individuals by society as well as the reading and writing that serves the individuals needs and purposes.

The Functional Skills Based Approach

Papen (2005) notes that functional literacy refers to literacy as skills required to meet a broad range of activities and so participate in society. By this is meant both skills for work and for everyday living. Increasingly, in the policy frameworks, the emphasis has become focused on preparing people for work. Functional literacy put emphasis on the deficits that people have which are seen as underlying problems (Papen, 2005). In

terms of practice then, functional literacy provision focuses on discrete sets of skills that are considered to be universal and transferable in a range of settings where written language use is necessary. This approach maintains that a person having developed the set of skills is able to transfer between various contexts, including jobs, with ease and is therefore more employable. It also assumes that these skills are utilised in the same way in differing circumstances. On the other hand, writing is different in the production of reports in the workplace, writing a text message or writing a letter to a friend. They are different ways of using language and often there can be a different vocabulary especially in relation to ones occupation.

This approach ignores or marginalises outcomes such as self-esteem, confidence, self-awareness or family support that are possible outcomes for engagement in literacy learning. These are not seen as robust and scientific as they do not provide means of comparison and are difficult to generalise across the population. These outcomes are not universals but are related to time and place and are therefore different. The functionalist approach puts emphasis on outside information to obtain skills, to attain a state of being.

The Liberal Tradition of Literacy

This approach places emphasis on discourses about personal development, individual goals and the right of all citizens to education. Thus the approach goes beyond the work situation and functional skills in the narrow sense discussed earlier. There is also an emphasis on leisure-oriented uses of reading and writing and includes such practices as creative writing and access to literature.

There is concern with the production of identities of citizenship and emphasis is placed on individual attainment as a measure of success. The liberal tradition assumes that the subject is independent, but does not begin to address issues related to social groupings, for example, extended families or whānau, or smaller communities that are relevant for other cultural practices.

Critical Literacy

Critical literacy is associated with the work of Paulo Freire. Literacy is identified as variable and is linked to a transformative power (Papen, 2005). The problem identified here is that of oppression and social justice and how the processes, techniques and technologies of education either liberate or further oppress people. Through this approach the learner has the opportunity to reflect on their social environment and their own involvement and acquiescence in it. The purpose is to provide the learner with an

understanding of social relations and existing power relations between groups. Such a process would involve examining the way that power is exercised in the processes of their literacy tuition. Critical literacy looks to a consideration of issues such as democratic citizenship and the role that education plays in supporting and conditioning people's participation in society and is concerned with how identities are constructed and subjectification takes place and therefore maintains the status quo. Literacy is considered transformative, but as Rawiri (2005) argues, it can continue and reinforce the oppression of those who are marginalised.

Critical literacy brings about change by relating language to local cultural, social, and political contexts and so may contest governmental technologies. Like Rawiri (2005), for Freire education is a political activity.

The notion of change that is entailed in critical literacy suggests that there is something lacking, that there is a deficit, that there is something better. It problematises the hegemonic discourses and provides a basis for resistance. It also makes the assumption of the learner being independent. A major issue here is who determines what is needed, what the individual lacks and how success is to be determined. Knobel and Healey (1998), cited by Mills (2005), advise advocates of critical literacy to reflect critically on and articulate their values and socio-political agendas. These have the potential to manipulate and suppress differing points of view and worldviews in a literacy programme.

Critical literacy also makes reference to oppression and the oppressor holding power. The focus of this thesis is concerned with how, in a range of situations, contexts, institutions and relationships, power is exercised. In the 'conduct of conduct' (Foucault, 1991b), teachers, tutors and students are implicated in their own subjugation and construct identities as student, good students, failures, parents, workers, autonomous beings that construct normalisation in contrast to the deviant, the failure, the illiterate (Bacchi, 2009; Davies, 2006).

Measurement of Outcomes

The functionalist approach focuses on skills and is concerned with the identification of skill components or competencies and derives standards against which attainment can be measured. These measures are usually referred to as hard outcomes and outcomes such as confidence, self-esteem or conscientisation are associated with critical literacy and are referred to as soft outcomes because they are regarded as hard

to measure. Of interest here is the language used in these descriptions and how they position the discourse to be readily acceptable. The language includes such words as robust, reliable and can be generalised (Tertiary Education Commission, 2009). On the other hand, the use of words such as assessment of 'soft outcomes' can imply that they are not robust and therefore less reliable. There are assumptions related to the determination of outcomes, that measurement provides reliable results and at the same time hides issues relating to how the measures are developed and constructed. Yorke (2010), in a discussion about summative assessment, suggests that an impression is given of even-handedness. However, the article goes on to note that the evidence suggests that assessment is "an exercise in interpretation and judgement (an activity based in social science) rather than as the exercise of scientific measurement" (Yorke, 2010, p. 3).

Literacy as Social Practice

Literacy as social practice considers literacies as more than a set of skills and is better understood in terms of discourse about the cultural ways of using written language, which people draw on in their daily lives. This understanding highlights the way that reading and writing are shaped by the contexts in which they take place (Barton & Hamilton, 2005; Barton & Tusting, 2005; Gee, 2008; Gee, Hull, & Lankshear, 1996) and has a concern for local and vernacular literacies. However, the situation is more complex as the contexts are not given as something static and distant but are constantly changing and reforming as situations are lived out.

The New London Group (1996), a group of ten academics including James Gee and Alan Luke come from the perspective that the human mind is embodied, situated and social, and therefore human knowledge is initially developed not as 'general and abstract', but as embedded in social, cultural, and material contexts. The ability to read and write is in accord with a particular set of rules. They are acquired in a 'fluent' or natural way, embedded in a particular social practice. Consequently, people not only read texts in certain ways, they speak about them, hold certain attitudes and values about them and socially interact in certain ways (Gee et al., 1996). They also cite Garton and Pratt (1989), Heath (1983), John-Steiner, Panofsky, and Smith (1994), Scollon and Scollon (1981), and Lave and Wenger (1991). Gee et al. (1996, p. 3) argue that:

Texts are part of lived, talked, enacted, value laden practices carried out at specific times. Think of legal texts, comic books, recipes ... basal readers, graffiti, traffic tickets, lab notebooks.

Mills (2005) refers to the notion of multiliteracies. Literacy is then about what people do, how they interact and the power relations established in that process. It is not just what skills they acquire; there is not just one literacy but many. It is argued that each person is constructed within a cluster of literacies by which they relate to their world. Being literate is not stable; it is about being creative with a set of social practices that vary according to the context, text and purpose. Language skills include reading and writing, speaking and listening with thinking and meaning. It is a political process that empowers people, where people engage is the exercise of power, which is then inextricably linked to the way that they live their lives.

In the literacy as social practice frame of reference, then, 'literacy' refers to much more than the printed word and involves discourse of whole language, a social construct that is influenced by culture and experiences. Literacies are about having the resources to construct one's own discourses, giving meaning to various situations, constructing truths and understandings. They are also about constructing shared understandings and meanings within particular communities, which, potentially, can become hegemonic.

Proponents of the skills approach argue that there are different ways in which texts are used, including coding and decoding, and that the other abilities are a variant of these skills. The social practice and multiliteracies approach acknowledges the skills and different practices but add that there are different meanings and purposes to activities of literacies that depend on the technologies available and the contexts in which they occur.

Barton and Hamilton (2005) note that to understand literacies, including skills, there is a need to focus on the social practices of which they are part. The texts have meaning as embedded within the social practice. Without the context of the social practices, literacy does not exist and does not mean anything. Where the literacies are made context- and social practice-neutral they then acquire a different meaning from that which existed in the lived social practice and different constructed identities. For example, reading a novel is a different activity from reading the label on packaging in a supermarket. Writing a text message is different from writing a letter to a friend. There are different purposes and different meanings to these activities and the ways they can

be spoken about. Anyone examining reading and writing practices needs to look closely at its context and identify the detail as closely as possible (Papen, 2005).

Finally, literacies are embedded in some social, cultural or institutional context. This idea has some resonance with the notions articulated by Rawiri (2005) concerning Māori and indigenous practices. It is in this way that literacy is about the development of particular ways of seeing the world and creating ones identity in relation to that. Much of the development in policy arises from the clash of discourses in the exercise of power and claims to truth.

Hamilton (2001) makes a distinction between dominant and vernacular literacies. The dominant literacies are associated with activities in formal learning with its institutions and practice, whereas vernacular literacies are self-generated literacies that are informal learning in everyday contexts. She notes that it is these literacies that are marginalised and silenced by the dominant discourses in their claim to truth that become sedimented and taken for granted.

The social practice approach refers to the context within which the literacy takes place. Some of the discussion appears to take context as a given that is outside of the discourses, whereas as van Dijk (2009) argues, that context is also a mental construct and is limited to the properties of the communicative situation. This applies to speakers, listeners, readers and authors.

This chapter began by looking at the various literacies that have developed in New Zealand including those of Māori that preceded European contact. There was consideration of the various understandings of adult literacy as they have been constructed over time and the discourses, norms and values that underpin them. The next chapter extends this discussion to a consideration of the International Adult Literacy Survey and the Adult Literacy and Life Skills survey and the discourse that constructs the norms for literate people and problematises those that do not meet them with regard to the economy and the wellbeing of the population.

Chapter 5

The Impact of the International Adult Literacy Surveys 1996 and 2006

The 1996 International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) and the 2006 Adult Literacy and Language Survey (ALLS) were part of an OECD and Statistics Canada project to develop an internationally comparative survey of adult literacy skills. New Zealand was part of this project and the Ministry of Education oversaw the surveys and the National Research Bureau conducted them. The Ministry of Education produced several reports about the findings (Ministry of Education, 2001 a, 2006 b 2007). Over 7,000 people in New Zealand took part in the surveys and the results are said to provide robust statistical data about the population in relation to their literacy and numeracy. According to Hamilton (2001), the claim to be robust is a discourse that is part of a sedimentation and internalisation of truth. This is achieved through the use of standardised assessment and testing designed for the organisation of knowledge concerning literacy. There is a reliance on specific definitions of literacy as skills and the focus is on economic and workplace achievement rather than the practices of people in their everyday lives.

Both the ALLS and IALS are designed to measure the distribution of particular abilities throughout the adult population. In this context, 'adult' means any person between the ages of 16 and 65 living in a private household. It also sets the limits of discussion and application to the working age and makes assumptions about the working age for the future. As the names indicate, the ALLS and IALS are intended to measure literacy and life skills. In particular, they measure proficiency in the following four domains:

- Prose literacy, which is concerned with continuous text – such as the type found in books and newspaper articles.
- Document literacy, which deals with discontinuous text – such as graphs, charts and tables.
- Numeracy addresses mathematical and numerical information.
- Problem solving involves analytical thinking, reasoning and logic.

The IALS contained a domain referred to as quantitative literacy, which included numerical information embedded in a text and so this is not comparable with the

numeracy domain in the ALLS. The problem solving domain was introduced for the first time in the ALLS.

The surveys provide two types of information. The first type concerns background demographic data and includes gender, ethnicity, labour force status, employment status. The statement by the Ministry of Education (2001a) about the ALLS notes that the “type of information potentially allows investigation of the distribution of adult literacy and life skills through subpopulations (an example of a subpopulation is Māori women between the ages of 20 and 30 who have university degrees)”.

The stated purpose of the IALS and ALLS is to devise measures to determine the levels of literacy at both the international level and in New Zealand. It is organised through the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in conjunction with Statistics Canada and forms part of a set of indicators that are to be used internationally by policy makers. The Ministry of Education makes the claim that there is strong international evidence that full participation in society and the labour market, such as that of New Zealand, is linked to the capacity of individuals to accumulate knowledge and to develop and maintain a broad range of skills (Ministry of Education, 2007).

However, in the introduction to the report *Learning a Living* (OECD, 2005), the definition of literacy is in terms of skills which are considered as a continuum of proficiency where the purpose is to ‘denote’ how well adults use the information to function in society and the economy (OECD, 2005, p. 15). The language indicates an evaluative and normative process. It sets out to determine ‘how well’ the skills are used. The survey data is divided into five levels of proficiency and refers to a continuum where level three is where a person has the necessary skills to participate in society. There is no evidence provided as to how this was reached other than to say that experts considered that to be the case (OECD, 2005:16). There have been a number of papers written and presentations made at conferences and forums and these have been brought together for making these judgements. This focus is on a particular view of literacy, in English, as a set of skills that a person has and can acquire and excludes Te Reo Māori and other approaches to adult literacies from the analysis.

The second type of information concerns the proficiency of the respondent in one or two of the domains described. The respondents provided their answers through a sequence of written answers. Whilst the respondent’s ability to write, as part of literacy

abilities, is not considered by these surveys, it is assumed that all respondents will be able to write their answers. This could well be a factor in the underperformance of individuals but is glossed over.

As referred to above, the needs of subpopulations in particular Māori and Pasifika are not addressed in terms of their own needs. Instead they are expected to achieve a standard that they may be below and the problem identified is their need to improve their literacy to be on a par with others. The use of terms such as subpopulation whilst a technical term, in the public domain it could carry with it negative connotations. It can imply 'below' and in terms of metaphors in the English language is inferior. In so doing, the survey reinforces cultural practices that meet the standard as superior and marks other cultural practices as lacking and possibly deviant. Such an approach has difficulty in recognising difference as an important component of the way that people live their lives and develop literacies that provide them with meaning and identity.

Having two surveys, ten years apart, is said to provide the opportunity for comparisons. The purpose of the comparisons between results is to determine what changes are judged to have occurred between the two surveys. However there are some differences between the two surveys. The Ministry of Education, on its website, recognises the differences between the two surveys and the limits these differences place on the extent of those comparisons:

The IALS survey was similar in content and purpose to the ALL survey. It was administered in New Zealand in 1996. In order to use these two studies to measure any changes in skill levels since 1996, the nature of their similarities (and differences) is important.

The prose literacy and document literacy domains of the two studies are directly comparable. So we can, for example, measure the change in a subpopulation's average prose literacy between 1996 and 2006.

However, the quantitative literacy domain of the IALS survey is not comparable with the numeracy domain of the ALL survey, and the problem-solving domain of the ALL survey is entirely new. (Ministry of Education, 2001a)

Hamilton (2001, citing Darville, 1999) and Barton and Hamilton (2005) argue that the IALS, to which can be added the ALLS as it builds on the former survey, fit what is termed "the globalising project of new capitalism" (Gee et al., 1996). What this involves

is the redefinition of literacy to fit in with an ideal citizen who is responsive to multiple contexts for literacy use (Hamilton, 2001).

The construction of the surveys is normative in that it determines what literacy should be while silencing the literacies as part of the lived experiences of individuals. These surveys convey an institutionalised view of literacy that has little in common with the support for people to use and control literacy for their own purposes (Hamilton, 2001).

Twenty countries were involved with these surveys, each of which conducted its own survey. The documents about the survey frequently make comparisons between New Zealand, Canada, Australia and the USA and reinforce the colonial discourses of superiority of Western civilising practices (Hindess, 2009). The indigenous peoples are defined as problems that need to be addressed for the good of the whole. As noted in the previous chapter and addressed more fully in Chapters 6 and 7, English is considered the norm required to be a civilised, responsible and participating citizen.

Hamilton (2001) points out that the IALS, and it applies to the ALLS, lays claim to being of wide scope and scale because the countries involved are said to represent more than fifty percent of the world's gross domestic product, which is regarded as a measure of wealth. What this claim does not recognise is that there are in excess of another 200 countries not represented and so skews the analysis in favour of the wealthiest nations, which these surveys suggest have significance because of their wealth. However, it ignores other measures in terms of access to food, shelter, wellbeing, health, and cooperation. These are the issues that are taken up by those who construct adult literacies as social practices. However, the OECD (2005) document *Learning a Living* notes that the education attainment of parents has a significant effect on the literacy scores of participants in the surveys. The higher the education level of the parents in general, it states, the greater the association with higher literacy attainment of participants. The report also notes that there is a link between the uses of literacy practices in the home that impact significantly on literacy scores (OECD, 2005, p. 228). Such a finding suggests that the discourses around literacy as social skills and intergenerational implications for literacy need to play a significant part of the development of programmes in New Zealand. Following *More than Words: the Adult Literacy Strategy* (2001) some funding became available for whanau/family literacy programmes. But subsequent funding developments moved the focus more towards workplace initiatives.

Is the Survey Representational?

The outcomes from the IALS and ALLS in New Zealand are identified as providing information about how the skill levels of the population are relevant to the labour market, economic growth, and education systems and services (Ministry of Education, 2006). The problems being identified here are related to the needs of the economy and the labour market. The implied problem is that the people with the required skills are not available to maintain and grow economic performance and so contribute to the national good.

The surveys have been used to define the literacy needs of the population in terms of work and the economy and skills. In these surveys, then, the skills are those relevant to the economy and employment. Literacy is embedded in work practices in the different contexts but the findings of these surveys cannot recognise the difference.

There are further claims that the results of these surveys will provide information about the “role of skills in creating social equity and inequity” in economic outcomes, particularly for groups functioning, below the level of competence (Ministry of Education, 2001a).

The Ministry of Education (2001a) statement refers to skills as though they exist independently of the individuals who are considered to have them. For the word skills to have meaning requires knowledge about the person, the context and the person’s ability to use those skills. The skills that individuals were identified as having, in this survey, refer to those that they were able or not able to apply in the particular context of completing the survey. The conduct of the survey is considered unproblematic in that it does not consider the perspective of the participant, with regard to the context. Issues faced by participants could have included a reluctance to be involved, the activity occurring at a difficult time, or whether the survey activity was considered to be a test. The survey set out to establish the ability to read but required answers in writing. This could have provided a further barrier to success in the test. These factors could have influenced how the participant responded and could negatively impact on their performance. As Hamilton (2001, p. 185) suggests, the survey tests “defines and scripts an ideal performance for literacy, 100% success on the test item. She goes on to argue that refusing to take part, performing poorly, or denying that one has a literacy problem, all become deviant behaviour.

The results of the surveys were then generalised and treated as facts and truths, despite the survey occurring at a specific time and place and comprising a sample of the population with all the issues around sampling techniques and processes. There is the possibility that people may have responded differently at another time and place, or that different people would have responded differently. Therefore, at best this provides a snapshot at a particular time and place, which then puts into question the unconditional application of the results in policy terms. A report on ALLs by the Ministry of Education draws attention to issues of the limitations of sampling (Ministry of Education, 2007). However there is frequently no acknowledgement, in publications about the surveys, of either the limitation of the survey results nor the limitations of the sampling process.

Binkley and Pignal (1998, cited by Hamilton, 2001) argue that what are termed minority languages – indigenous languages and those of sub cultures within regions – are invisible in IALS. The same applies to the ALLS. In New Zealand, Te Reo Māori is hidden in both the IALS and ALLS, although as we will see in the next chapter, the adult literacy strategy *More than Words* did include access to literacy in Te Reo Māori as well as English. This commitment has been further eroded in subsequent tertiary education strategies.

The way that the findings are presented in these Government documents establishes identities of people who are at different levels that have been constructed as part of the survey structure. Thus participants are identified as being employable, unemployed, employed, highly skilled, or low skilled. The way that the statistics are given meaning focuses on the level at which it is considered that people can participate fully in New Zealand society. With this established as a norm, anyone below this is considered as in some way lacking and in need of action to remedy the situation. However the word 'society' masks what policy development attributes to it, namely, the needs of the economy that are promoted as leading to the social wellbeing of those affected.

Governmentality, as argued by Foucault (1991a), has a concern for the wellbeing of the population. However, adult literacy policy development in New Zealand engages tertiary organisations in New Zealand to provide literacy services that follow the direction set by the Tertiary Education Commission. The focus is on the outcomes for productivity and a competitive market, which are presented as providing the ability of the nation to care for the needs of the population. There is an emphasis on the freedom of the individual to make choices. However, freedom and choice are based on economic models that emphasise maximising behaviour on the part of individuals. To

do this there is the expectation, following ALLS and IALS, that individuals need certain levels of literacy. The rational choice analysis activity extends the economic approach to other areas of human behaviour where the market is pivotal in providing for the wellbeing of a society that enhances liberty and freedom (Hindess, 1988; Marginson, 1993).

There is a concern in IALS and ALLS with what meaning is attributed to adult literacy, what are the audit, assessment and evaluation techniques and technologies that can be put in place, and what identities are constructed for the learner, the tutor/teacher and the provider. These matters will be further developed in the next chapter that considers *More than Words*, the adult literacy strategy, and *Te Kawai Ora*, and the following chapter that looks at the developments for literacy within the *Tertiary Education Strategies 2007-2012* and *2010-2015*.

Chapter 6

Adult Literacy Policy in New Zealand following the IALS

This chapter outlines the initial adult literacy strategy, *More than Words* (Ministry of Education, 2001b), and considers some of the assumptions made, the techniques and technologies used, and how identities are created in the pursuit of a response to the needs of the economy, which is required to be competitive on the international scene. This is followed by a discussion of *Te Kāwai Ora* (Māori Adult Literacy Working Party, 2001), which addresses literacy for Māori and provides a counter commentary to *More than Words*.

The Tertiary Education Commission website provides the focus for funding of Adult Literacy under a heading 'Essential components in the Minister's determinations'. It states the following:

The specialised funds for literacy and numeracy aim to:

- a. provide a way for Government to increase opportunities for adults to engage in literacy, language and numeracy learning, particularly those in low skilled employment;
- b. raise adults' literacy, language and numeracy skills;
- c. improve the quality and relevance of provision, including the ability to identify learner need and learner gain;
- d. build an effective literacy, language and numeracy teaching workforce; and
- e. contribute to workplace productivity through the provision and evaluation of literacy, language and numeracy learning programmes in a workplace context. (Tertiary Education Commission, 2010.)

It further notes that the activities that are to be funded by the specialised funds for literacy, language and numeracy need to meet the following criteria:

- a. contribute to the priorities set out in the TES;
- b. cater to New Zealand citizens and permanent residents;
- c. seek to link literacy, language and numeracy provision to the authentic demands that adult learners face in their lives; and

- d. represent high quality, value for money provision, and be effective in assisting learners to improve their literacy, language and numeracy skills. (Tertiary Education Commission, 2010)

Since 1996 with the publication of the IALS, adult literacy has become an increasingly prominent feature in government policy around tertiary education in terms of the roles of universities, polytechnics, private training establishments, industry training organisations, other tertiary education providers, adult and community education providers, and workplaces. Describing adult literacy development from that point in time marginalises the work and engagement by Māori and community organisations over many years. The development from 1996 begins by problematising the lack of a 'common language', the lack of robust assessment, access and the provision of more programmes and quality assurance. This becomes part of the professionalisation of the sector. This ignores or silences indigenous literacy that predates 1840. Since then Māori have sought to maintain their literacy despite the oppressive colonisation processes. It is often represented in the media by commentators that that was the past and we should move into the future.

The findings of the international surveys expressed the problem as over one million adult New Zealanders not having the literacy skills required to fully participate in New Zealand society. As discussed in the previous chapter, this statement makes a judgement based on a norm, which is referred to as 'essential skills' in the Foreword to *More than Words*: "Too many New Zealanders lack the essential reading and writing skills to succeed in modern life and work" (Ministry of Education, 2001b, p. 2).

The Construction of the Adult Literacy Crisis

In 1992 the OECD identified adult literacy as a major concern for economic performance and social cohesion (OECD, 2005). However, to discuss the issue as adult literacy glosses over the fact that what is being described is a population of people whose literacy skills do not meet the standard determined through the IALS and ALLS. The situation of adult literacy has been spoken of as a 'crisis' in New Zealand because it is argued that a large majority of those who are identified as having low literacy are already in the workforce, which is identified as restricting the growth and competitiveness of the economy. This led to the presentation of the problem as the need to improve adult literacy among workers. The approach draws on the discourses

that literacy improvement will lead to increased productivity, improved wages and better job prospects (OECD, 2005).

The link between these two components is based on statistical analyses that show that people with high literacy have the better jobs and higher wages. The discourses address the problem, in terms of what the tertiary education sector has to do, by recommending an increase in the levels of literacy among those below level 3, the 'essential level', which will lead to people acquiring the skills necessary to meet the challenges of the global economy. Paul Dalziel (2010), in an address to the Industry Training Federation, questioned this development on the basis that the development of skills alone is not sufficient. There are three other factors to be considered, namely the individual's ability, their willingness to invest time and resources in gaining qualifications, and the availability of employment opportunities.

The use of 'skills' in their social practices is where literacy has meaning (Barton & Hamilton, 1998). As Marginson (1993) argues, education including adult literacy cannot address the issues of inequalities in society on their own. Policy frameworks have to address the range of policies that entrench inequality, which include those concerning housing, employment opportunities, income inequality, gender issues, working conditions, racial inequalities, breaches of Treaty of Waitangi, land confiscations and colonisation, to name a few.

The Urgency of the Issue of Adult Literacy

The first point made in the Foreword to *More than Words* is a play on the word 'essential' that links this to the 'essential skills' at level 3, identified in the IALS and ALLS. The word essential implies that people cannot function in society unless they attain that norm. But this ignores those below level 3 who work, are involved with their families, are engaged in learning, and are involved with their community activities. Whilst their ability to participate may be limited, what is being constructed is that non-involvement in society is the result of not meeting the norm for literacy that is set at level 3. The claim is that increasing literacy skill is essential in the development of a learning society that leads to success. However, the construct of a learning society does not exist outside of the discourse. This discourse determines how success is decided according to specific rules concerning market behaviour. There is no further development of the notion of success, but the foreword and subsequent discussion in the *More than Words* document indicates that success is measured in terms of the

construct of economic advantage. To do this, the learners who do not have the 'essential skills' will need to become 'successful learners', which is their responsibility as citizens. What is being determined is that those below level 3 need to become like those at level 3 and above. Boundaries are established between those who are included and those excluded, which at the same time reinforce the normality of those people above level 3. The problem presented, then, is that there are insufficient numbers of people in the population who have the 'essential skills' required for the workplace and the economy. There is created a binary of differing identities of those who are successful learners and those who are not. The individuals are considered to be independent and responsive enough to rectify their lack of skills and ties in with the government's concern with national identity. The document is also about creating identities for people in our society – those individuals who are targeted in this document are considered to lack some or all of those skills.

From the perspective of literacies as social practices, individuals react to the context as it changes. They appropriate text for their own purposes and alter its meaning. This suggests a possibility of a disconnection between government policy and what happens in the everyday lives of individuals in their families, communities and workplaces and can give rise to resistance.

There is no context stressed although it can be argued that the context is the need to grow the economy. In this case the economy is not something given and permanent but it is constructed and changing. The discourse assumes that for the economy to grow at the required speed, workers are required who are equipped to function in the context of the increased demand for knowledge, the knowledge around information technology and the knowledge highway (Internet), and the fact that the speed of the change of knowledge will require constant change and the need to develop new skills. The notion of lifelong learning, in later strategies (Ministry of Education, 2002, 2006), is appropriated and reconstructed in terms of training and acquiring skills for employment. This discourse seeks to justify the development of programmes and courses that meet the needs as constructed through consultation with businesses. The purpose is to ensure that the educational needs for business are met. On the other hand, people with low levels of adult literacy are regarded as a serious impediment to the development of a skilled workforce (Robinson, 2010). Those whose identity is often expressed in the media in terms of not making an effort are considered to be deviant, lazy, a drain on the state or taxpayers, not meeting their responsibilities as a citizen, nor engaged in working towards national identity and emphasises the link between

adult literacy attainment and employability. Whilst this claim is made, as a statement of fact, a report by Vorhaus (2005) found that the impact of improvement in literacy is subject to a time lag in achieving improved levels of income which suggests that other factors may be involved.

More than Words: The Adult Literacy Strategy

In 1999 the new Labour Government had as its focus the development of a learning society/learning economy with the objective of increasing the level of GDP growth to raise the country's position to the top half of the OECD table. The findings of the IALS were used to make the claim that over a million people did not have the 'essential' literacy that this required and that a significant majority of those individuals were in the workforce. The problem was presented as creating significant difficulties for improving the productivity of the workforce and therefore impeding New Zealand's performance in international markets.

The government had another agenda relating to the discourse of national identity. This was constructed around the notions of creativity, flexibility and innovation with the purpose of meeting the requirements of economic competitiveness, whilst promoting it in terms of openness, diversity and tolerance (Skilling, 2010). However, the use of the notion of identity suggests sameness, which is at odds with the notion of diversity reflected in the differing identities, interests and values of a country. Citing Turner (2005), Skilling (2010) argues that the new government's purpose was to manage the internal differences for the sake of 'the nation'. The position adopted meant that the focus on shared vision and interests whilst ignoring inequalities meant that those who took a different stance on issues were identified as divisive, destructive and opposed to shared national values. The then Prime Minister labelled the people who protested at the Seabed and Foreshore Bill as "haters and wreckers", eloquently demonstrating this point.

Skilling (2010) also argues that individuals were coopted into identities of 'role performers' and so treated as the means to a prescribed national end. The point argued here is that part of the discourse around adult literacy is to be seen in such a context. As we will see later when dealing with the various strategies, it is expected that learners will be responsible, respond, and in the words of the current Minister of Education, will respect the use of public funds invested in their education. However the

notion of national identity as a unifying single purpose subjugates and marginalises the different identities and aspirations within diverse communities.

In the Foreword to *More than Words*, the then Minister of Education Trevor Mallard and the Associate Minister of Education (Adult and Community Education) Marian Hobbes introduced the strategy with:

The future well-being of our country depends on this situation [the high number of New Zealanders with high literacy needs being improved].
(Ministry of Education, 2001b, p. 2)

This statement constructs a problem derived from identifying a number of people, in New Zealand, who do not meet the norm that was established by IALS and latterly ALLS. The discourse links the level of literacy to the wellbeing of the country as a whole but it does not identify how the wellbeing will be achieved other than it requires people acquiring skills that are determined as necessary for the economy. This discourse further determines that this leads to increased employability, so that employers can take advantage of changes in technology and so increase productivity. What is also emerging but not stated in the adult literacy strategy is that the population is aging and that by 2050 the aging Pākehā population will be dependent upon a young workforce that will comprise significant numbers of Māori and Pacific peoples.

The Foreword draws on the discourse that brings adult literacy to the centre of the wellbeing of the nation, which suggests the responsibility of educators and learners to respond to the 'crisis'. Both the Minister of Education and the Associate Minister of Education (Adult and Community Education) signed the document. However the then Associate Minister Minister for Education with responsibility for Tertiary Education was not included. This could suggest that adult literacy is considered as remaining as part of adult and community education where it had been located since the mid 1970s. With the establishment of the Tertiary Education Commission, adult literacy provision became firmly established as a responsibility of the tertiary education sector. The Foreword to the strategy seems to foreshadow future events when it says, "the strategy will involve many learning opportunities. These will be available through workplaces, community based education providers, and tertiary institutions" (Ministry of Education, 2001b, p. 2). At the time of the publication of *More than Words*, the adult and community education sector had not been officially included in the broader tertiary education policy constructs, but it was regarded as part of a suite of strategies that included the adult literacy and the adult and community sector strategies.

The introductory comments of the document are firmly based in a liberal discourse with a focus on the individual. The 'wellbeing' of the country is portrayed as being dependent on improving the literacy and numeracy needs of individuals engaged in the economy. Thus the strategy says "High-levels of literacy and numeracy are ... needed for participating in our high-tech, knowledge society" (Ministry of Education, 2001b, p. 2). This statement is also about positioning adult literacy to be part of the development of the national identity where government, providers and students are expected to contribute and play their part as responsible citizens. Such a position would imply agreement on the understanding of adult literacy. The strategy provides a definition as its starting point with an emphasis on skills:

A complex web of reading, writing, speaking, listening, problem solving, creative thinking and numeracy skills. (Ministry of Education, 2001b, p. 4)

This understanding of literacy acknowledges its complexity but omits and thus marginalises the context in which literacy occurs, the impact of culture, and the practices in the lives of the citizens. The strategy refers to literacy in the singular, thus constructing what Hamilton (2001) refers to as an institutional form. The effect is to hide, dismiss and marginalise what she refers to as the vernacular literacies that involve the social practices of everyday lives of people.

The Foreword to the strategy includes social concerns, saying "Strong communication skills are also the foundation for families, from whom the next generation of successful learners come" (Ministry of Education, 2001b, p. 2). The language here is significant as it uses the metonyms 'skills' and 'strong communication' when referring to 'people with skills' and 'people with strong communication skills.' This use of language impersonalises and reifies the word 'skills' and 'strong communication' as though they exist outside of people. It also suggests a hierarchy, where the economy is privileged over the needs of families and individuals. The importance of the family is then linked to the production of successful learners in the future. There is no detail provided but having already made the link between education and the production of human capital, the economy and the labour market, this concern is for the continued competitiveness of the economy.

Finally, *More than Words* states that:

Over the long-term, all New Zealanders should enjoy a level of literacy which enables them to participate fully in all aspects of life – including work,

family, and the community – and the opportunity to achieve literacy in English and Te Reo Māori. (Ministry of Education, 2001b, p. 6)

This statement is a normative statement that is about setting the goals to be achieved. The statement assumes that everyone will accept this as a requirement and therefore act. Having determined the problem, the strategy then provides three key elements. They are the issue of capacity, the professionalisation of the workforce, and the creation of the identities of workers in the sector. The first element is that the Ministry will ensure that there is quality service that comes from a “highly skilled workforce” (Ministry of Education, 2001b, p. 3). This involves the creation of subjectivities and identities. The need to ensure that literacy providers provide quality suggests a lack of quality provision and this is because there is not a highly skilled workforce. At the time it was claimed that there was no nationally recognised qualification, by which was meant one developed by the New Zealand Qualification Authority (NZQA) and available to all. However, the national community provider, Literacy Aotearoa, had a qualification that was recognised by NZQA for local course approval, which its tutors were required to complete before working with students. There was, therefore, a further problem of a lack of opportunity for teachers and tutors to gain qualifications, which the strategy links to having a quality workforce.

The second element highlights the need for quality systems, which are seen as a requirement to ensure that programmes are world class. This involves the institution of various technologies of monitoring and audit. It assumes that the reader knows the criteria for what constitutes a world-class literacy programme for New Zealand. There are no criteria provided as to how this will be decided. It is presented as a fact, some kind of measure that exists. On the other hand, the term is contested depending on the understanding of literacy. The development of quality audit systems are a feature of governmentality. Foucault (2007, p. 108) says that governmentality is “that ensemble formed by institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, calculations and tactics.” These processes, techniques and technologies work through the human subjects who present themselves as appropriate and appropriated subjects (Bansel, Davies, Gannon, & Linnell, 2008).

The third element is concerned with access to literacy programmes and identifies the sites where this will occur, which are in workplaces, communities and tertiary institutions. This approach is consistent with what Hamilton (2001) refers to as defining adult literacy in terms of institutional practices that exclude other literacies, be they the social practices of communities or the cultural literacies of Māori (Rawiri, 2005). This

seems to be at odds with the idea that there would be opportunities to achieve literacy in Te Reo Māori. However the term 'community' is a Pākehā construct and usually refers to the activities of formal or semi-formal groups working within a local area or region to address identified needs.

More than Words developed a number of principles that bring the policy development into the realm of practice. First, it is concerned with the urgency to make significant literacy gains for learners but at the same time requires programmes to be suitable for the needs of learners in terms of content and pace. This last comment seeks to recognise that literacy learners will have their individual needs met and so programmes should address that. The third principle refers to the development of research, which is designed to inform practice. The term 'best practice' is used here and frequently in the documents implementing the strategies and is used as a unitary term suggesting a hierarchy of practices and establishes a norm. What is identified as best practice in its application excludes other ways of doing and being. It is suggestive of the notion of sameness and therefore the homogenising of literacy, its programmes and the identities that are created.

More than Words defined the role of government as working through the Ministry of Education. This signals greater involvement of the Ministry of Education into the practice domain with implications for the professionalisation of literacy programmes. The Ministry is to provide direction and planning by coordinating the development of standards by which providers will be required to operate. The standards are again about establishing a norm that determines boundaries and those decisions lead to hierarchies. Thus the role and identity of the providers will then be determined in accordance with the way they comply with what are referred to as 'best practice models'. Providers will have the responsibility to ensure that the standards are met, which carries through to what is permissible at the classroom level and in approaches to learners. There is imposed a regime of self-regulation that is driven by contestable funding.

Te Kāwai Ora

This section analyses *Te Kāwai Ora*, that was produced by a working group of Māori academics and practitioners to address the issues of literacy for Māori and what that meant for adult literacy provision for Māori.

The then Associate Minister of Māori Affairs, Tariana Turia (Māori Adult Literacy Working Party, 2001) links the developments to those for preschool and compulsory schooling. This approach meant that the emphasis was firmly on formal education and so marginalised much of the work carried out in the adult and community education sector and that which takes place in everyday social relationships in homes, whānau, hapu iwi and communities and is included under the ideas of literacy as social practice. The subsequent tertiary education strategies include adult and community education and adult literacy, so co-opted those approaches and programmes into the government agenda of economic transformation, the promotion of social and cultural development, and meeting the changing demands of the internal and international labour markets (Youn, 2002).

Yates (1996, p. 95), discussing issues related to tino rangatiratanga and Māori literacy provision, makes the following comments:

As educationalists, we may understand the relevance of information and education as a way of accessing opportunity, achievement and power. We may also be aware that in determining what is relevant to whom, without critical reflection as to who benefits by the form and scope of information and education provided, we can condone restrictions to access and the perpetuation of structural inequalities that act to the detriment of particular sectors of society within Aotearoa.

In response to *More than Words* (Ministry of Education, 2001b), a working group of Māori academics and practitioners was established to address the issues of literacy for Māori and what that meant for adult literacy provision for Māori.

In the Foreword to *Te Kāwai Ora*, Tariana Turia, the then Associate Minister of Māori Affairs, began by noting that early in the 19th century “Māori were prodigious readers and writers in Te Reo Māori and English” (Māori Adult Literacy Working Party, 2001, p. 2; see Jackson, 2003). Turia says that Māori communities see literacy as an urgent issue for them to address. She puts the issue of literacy into the context of the discourses around whānau hapu, which she says is a “social, political and economic necessity” (Māori Adult Literacy Working Party, 2001, p. 2) and leads to self-esteem and whānau development. With literacy, she argues, people are able to exercise power as citizens by being critically literate in their history and in the world. However, the focus on the role of whānau, hapu and iwi has resonance with ideas and concepts of literacy as social practice.

The Foreword therefore sets the direction for the report as it states that literacy is a political project that is concerned with issues of the history of Māori in New Zealand as distinct from the concept of literacy as being unproblematic and concerned with the employment demands of the market economy. The history as described by Māori is one of oppression, of land alienation, and confining Māori to lower socio-economic status within society. As was identified earlier, this thesis examines the processes of governmentality and draws on discourses that regard liberal forms of government as superior, or based on white supremacy (Scheurich, 1994), or as Hindess (2009) refers to it, Eurocentrism. Such attitudes formed the basis for techniques and technologies by which Māori were to become 'civilised'. Whilst *More than Words* (Ministry of Education, 2001b) provides for literacy in English and Te Reo Māori, there is no strategic development for the latter and the concentration is on the development of English to further what is referred to as economic competitiveness and growth.

As Scheurich (1994) notes, there are processes of constructing the 'problem group' that are developed and formed in accordance with certain rules that are embodied through the liberal social order. These are like preconceived ways of seeing or lenses through which social realities are conceived, labelled and socially defined. The practices outlined in the above discussion about *More than Words* contrast with the worldviews and discourses as presented in *Te Kāwai Ora*, which takes as its source the experiences of the struggles of Māori communities.

Yates argues for Māori control over how literacy for Māori is understood and consequently over the way that programmes are delivered:

It is with ... understanding of the concepts embodied within the term tino rangatiratanga that we work within a wider context of Māori movements whose goal; is to achieve a quality of life and power for ourselves that restores our cultural, social, political and economic wholeness by working with and re-establishing our methods, practices, processes and beliefs.
(Yates, 1996, p. 97)

The discourses reference Māori communities and how they define the issues of literacy for Māori. It is a point that is made by Hamilton (2001) and Rawiri (2005), who argue that the OECD literacy surveys were used, initially, to support and defend the problematisation of adult literacy and to privilege hegemonic discourses around literacy and numeracy. The surveys helped to establish 'normalcy', and the groups that are considered to fall outside of it are considered problems that need to be addressed. *Te*

Kāwai Ora is concerned about the negative way that Māori are positioned, identified and subjugated as Māori. The use of IALS and latterly ALLS marginalise and hide what Rawiri (2005) refers to as indigenous literacies of Māori and treats them as secondary and therefore insignificant. This is a concern when addressing the disparities between Māori and non-Māori.

Te Kāwai Ora (Māori Adult Literacy Working Party, 2001, p. 5) refers to literacy as “a pivotal component of nation building”, with issues linked to questions of citizenship and the creation of a just and equitable society where there is a lived reality of social and economic inclusion.

Te Kāwai Ora looks to whānau, hapu and iwi to construct their own meaning in their communities and for their purposes. This, like other approaches to literacy, poses difficulties where the structures, strategies, techniques and technologies are concerned to bring the population to a particular end for the good of the population as a whole (Rose, 1999). What *Te Kāwai Ora* is highlighting is the need to keep open the discourse in a way that does not privilege one view over another, a view shared by other indigenous discourses. On the other hand, the dominant discourses are legitimised by stressing that in any given situation a decision has to be made that is more or less rational (Rose, 1999), where some perspectives are preferred over others. The rationale takes the form that a minority of the population is negatively affected, for example the language of the international community is English.

Understanding of Literacy for Māori

Te Kāwai Ora asks the question: “How do we define a literate Māori?” There were a range of factors to be considered that include biliteracy, by which is meant literacy in English and Te Reo Māori, the historical, structural institutional/programme, and personal barriers to Māori literacy. One of the members of the working party provided a way of looking at literacy for Māori as follows:

Literacy in Māori terms should include the ability to read and write in both Māori and English, i.e. biliteracy and be able to use that ability competently, i.e. to be functionally biliterate in Māori and English. Being literate in Māori should also include having the capacity to ‘read’ the geography of the land, i.e. to be able to name the main land features of one’s environment (the mountains, rivers, lakes, creeks, bluffs, valleys etc.), being able to recite one’s tribal/hapū boundaries and be able to point them out on a map if not

in actuality as well as the key features of adjacent tribal/hapū boundaries and being able to 'read' Māori symbols such as carvings, tukutuku, kōwhaiwhai and their context within the wharehau (poupou, heke etc.) and the marae (ātea, ārongo etc.). I'm not sure but even the ability to 'read' body language (paralinguistics) should not be outside the scope of a definition of 'literacy' in Māori terms. This is the sort of work that 'the politics of everyday life' structured in the nature of relationships has much to say about.

This might be taking a definition of literacy too far but then again perhaps the definition that has been imposed has been far too limiting ... which might account for the fact that many people know how to read but don't do it very much because it is such an anti-social activity (Wally Penetito, 2001). (Māori Adult Literacy Working Party, 2001, pp. 7-8)

This way of understanding describes not only literacies but is also a commentary on ways in which literacies are used in peoples' everyday lives. The argument in *Te Kāwai Ora* is that 'being Māori' is informed by diverse Māori realities. Consequently literacy programmes for Māori are expected to respond in many differing ways, as there is no single 'Māori worldview', there is no single literacy. This is in contrast to the construction of Māori as a homogenous identity in the various policy documents around adult literacy. A further argument is that this diversity requires literacy programmes to be based in whānau, hapu, iwi and Māori knowledge. These should inform the development of methodologies authentic to Māori and these are reflected in the literacy programmes (Māori Adult Literacy Working Party, 2001).

Te Reo Māori and 'mātauranga whānau, hapu, iwi and Māori' would sit alongside the English language and Pākehā culture, equal in status, in any framework developed for use in this field. The quality of programmes has the parameters set by the biliteracy strategy. Consequently it will not be possible to address both the capability of providers and the development of effective tools for the measurement of learning gains (Māori Adult Literacy Working Party, 2001) in monolingual or monocultural terms.

Literacy for Māori is about outcomes that show that people have increased cultural and political knowledge. As well as knowing how to speak Te Reo Māori this includes knowledge about whakapapa, knowledge about who you are and where you come from and be able to read the Māori worldview. Te Reo Māori, then, is a major theme of this discourse. The reason is clear: "it is language that gives expression to culture"

(Māori Adult Literacy Working Party, 2001, p. 9), and that the Māori worldview can only be expressed through the Māori language.

Consequently the retention, maintenance and revitalisation of the Māori language are seen as critical issues for the survivability of whānau, hapu, iwi Māori. Without Te Reo Māori, the ability to define what is 'Māori' about 'being Māori' in terms which are authentic to Māori in New Zealand is lost (Māori Adult Literacy Working Party, 2001).

Being literate in a global community needs to be defined from within cultures, rather than being externally imposed. On the other hand, *Te Kāwai Ora* notes that there is still a view in sections of the wider society that Māori need to conform to someone else's view of how their identity is recognised and celebrated. These are issues of the exercise of power and how that power comes to be exercised and by whom. Struggles with the practices of colonisation are still present in policy frameworks that impose particular definitions of literacy and associated practices on the field. Understanding and being aware of the struggles is considered a vital component of literacy and is articulated as a political activity. This approach leads to difficulties for the discourses of literacy as skills because it does not conform to the grid of regularities (Scheurich, 1994) and becomes the voice of the other (Derrida, 1978) that cannot be understood or given meaning within such frameworks and so becomes marginalised and rejected by the privileged worldview.

The discourse outlined in *Te Kāwai Ora* builds on the notion of the need for whānau, hapu and iwi to determine what Māori understand by adult literacy, how it is addressed and the ways in which success should be determined. The focus of the document is on biliteracy that is reflected in the partnership arrangements envisaged in Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Also reflected here are the differences between Māori and the Crown relating to the intent of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. The discourse of the Crown is that Māori ceded sovereignty. On the other hand for Māori, Te Tiriti o Waitangi is the articulation of discourses about sharing of power in partnership to address the needs of the country. This leads to *Te Kāwai Ora* rejecting *More than Words* and arguing that it should be rewritten to address biliteracy and the Treaty relationship. *More than Words* is seen as reflecting the colonial discourse where Māori, as a subgroup of the population, is regarded as a problem because a large proportion of that group does not meet the norm. On the other hand, in *Te Kāwai Ora* literacy is established, norms and values are derived and programmes are developed, delivered and evaluated by whānau, hapu and iwi. The report concludes that literacy is tribally located and that whānau, hapu and iwi were literacy providers. It is argued that the development of the field of literacy

in New Zealand must be undertaken with Māori, as tangata whenua, in partnership with the Crown.

Chapter 7

Tertiary Education Reform and Adult Literacy

At the same time as the adult literacy strategy was developed there were other major reforms of the tertiary education sector that had been problematised by the new Labour Government, as fragmented, due to the market model used in the 1990s.

This chapter will then look at the changes brought about through the recommendations to the government by the Tertiary Education Advisory Commission (TEAC), which brought all post compulsory education within the domain of tertiary education. This meant that the policy relating to adult literacy was brought into the tertiary education strategies with an increased focus on work and employability. Consequently adult literacy is subsumed into a range of other tertiary programmes by the requirement to embed adult literacy learning.

A number of reviews of education since the 1970s have stressed the importance of the changes required to expand economic growth, for New Zealand to be competitive in a global marketplace. These claims appear in policy documents, statements in the media, by business leaders, education programmes and the like, usually unsubstantiated and presented as fact. The Kirk Labour Government maintained that education was the way forward to meet the changes in the world economy. In 1989 Phil Goff commented on the importance of raising skills levels, in particular for young people, which involved longer school participation and focused on lifelong learning enabling people to adjust to the requirements of the needs of the economy. Roberts (2006) argues that in 1999 the incoming Labour Government distanced itself from the so-called neo-liberal policies of the previous government and drew on the ideas of the 'Third Way' espoused by the UK Labour Government.

The Labour Government established a number of working parties directly focusing on a range of adult education areas. These include the Adult Literacy Working Party, and the four Tertiary Education Advisory Committee reports, which form the basis for the establishment of the Tertiary Education Commission and problematised the quality and competitiveness of the tertiary education sector both nationally and globally (Ashcroft & Nairn, 2004). The *Tertiary Education Strategies 2002-2007* and *2007-2012* followed the establishment of the Tertiary Education Commission, the tertiary education reforms, the Adult and Community Education Working Party Report, *Te Kāwai Ora*, and numerous other reports and a range of workplace education strategies.

As mentioned earlier in this thesis, a dominant theme in these reviews and strategies was the need to ensure that the tertiary education system contributes to the development of the knowledge economy and society. Drawing on the neo-liberal notion of the market, the need for competitiveness and the development of the link between education and the development of progress and international competitiveness, Ashcroft and Nairn (2004) note that techniques and strategies were developed that include systems of monitoring, inspection and review, and linked to the Treasury brief in 1987. These techniques and technologies draw on the rationalities of managerial monetarist theories of the economy and public choice theory.

Ashcroft and Nairn (2004, p. 43) comment as follows:

Within the contemporary New Zealand context, NPM systems and strategies advocate that an educated society is an essential human resource that promotes nation state status and participation within an implied 'homogenous' global knowledge society.

The knowledge economy and lifelong learning themes were taken up by the Labour Party in Opposition. On becoming the Government it embarked on a review of the Tertiary Education Sector.

In 2001 several reports from the Tertiary Education Advisory Commission (TEAC) were published. They problematised the state of the tertiary education sector, arguing that it had become fragmented due to the application of a market model that focused on student demand (Yourn, 2002). The Associate Minister of Education (Tertiary), in his address launching the draft tertiary education strategy, noted that the system would focus on producing the skills, knowledge and innovation required for the transformation of the economy, the promotion of social and cultural development, and meeting the changing demands of the internal and international labour markets (Yourn, 2002). Subsequently adult literacy was brought into the *Tertiary Education Strategy 2002-2007*, utilising the terminology 'foundation learning' (Ministry of Education, 2002).

As referred to earlier in this thesis, the tertiary education strategies provide the government goals that are to be achieved through participation in adult literacy provision and so provides rationale, techniques and technologies of governmentality, ways of conducting the conduct of others. In this case we are referring to the government activities within departments, between government departments and service providers, and between providers and stakeholders, providers and communities, providers and students or learners. Whilst there is tension, debate and

negotiation, the outcome is to construct relationships and identities that seek to meet the objectives and priorities set by government and articulated in various policy documents. Business leaders, unions, industry training organisations and tertiary education providers take up these practices as the basis for programme development that articulate the created identities and in the process reinforce them.

The Tertiary Education Strategy 2007-2012

The first goal of the *Tertiary Education Strategy 2007-2012* (Ministry of Education, 2006) is the transformation of the economy so that it becomes increasingly competitive in a globalised world through the production of lifelong learners to train and retrain to meet the requirements of the new enterprise society. The technology of lifelong learning draws on Western philosophical, political and economic traditions of social formation and is influenced by research and reports of the OECD, the World Bank and UNESCO. Statements from commentators, be they business, government ministers, representatives of government departments, or media, champion increased economic performance as a major goal and objective using OECD data. The Labour Government set as a goal that the economy be ranked in the top half of the OCED. This self governing draws on forms of statistical comparisons between New Zealand and other OECD countries in a range of disciplines, the GDP, education achievement, literacy and foundation skills for the society, the employment levels. The documents rely on reports such as IALS and ALLS to provide 'facts'. These begin to inform the process of governmentality, in determining the problem and the current state of affairs in a particular area. This can occur through regular OECD reports on how countries are performing. They are forms of audit whereby countries can be compared and ranked. Policy makers and policy implementers use these country reports and the research reports on a range of educational topics from OECD and UNESCO, to develop strategies, techniques and technologies to govern the conduct of the tertiary education sector.

These developments have seen the construction of a government agenda that focuses on three major priorities expressed in the *Tertiary Education Strategy 2007-2012*:

1. The transformation of the economy,
2. Families young and old, and
3. National identity.

These goals are linked to the retraining of the workforce through lifelong learning with wider aspects of society and national identity. The practices build on the discourse to conduct the conduct of people as part of the grand design for national identity. 'Families Young and Old' are to play support roles for the transformation of the economy. The discourses around Families Young and Old are about having a workforce that is trained and prepared to retrain to produce benefits for all.

Learning for work and success in work has been embedded as part of liberal education discourses since the beginning of the 20th century and the construction of people as contributing to and being successful in the workforce. The discourses identify workers as necessary for society, the population as a whole, and for the individual's own wellbeing:

Production is problematised at the junction of "the social" and a concern with the government of "the self". On the other hand, work is connected to the territory upon which all manner of "social" troubles are located and managed – crime, delinquency, indigence, drunkenness, prostitution, and the like – construed as threats to good order and social tranquillity. And, on the other hand, work is given a crucial role in the formation and maintenance of the forms of responsible selfhood upon which a free society is held to depend – regularity of habits, cleanliness, punctuality, diligence, persistence, responsibility to kin, and the like. (Miller & Rose, 1995, p. 436)

These approaches involve the development of techniques and technologies to move people into the workforce: those who are unemployed, whose identities are constructed in the media and government statements as being dependent, needing a hand up, irresponsible, inferior, lacking, not helping themselves, and poorly motivated. They are identified as not contributing to the common purpose. The messages embedded are that they are in some way helpless, and need someone else to assist them to make progress as determined by somebody else. Through engagement in the Tertiary Education Commission processes and strategies, providers of programmes and services are drawn into these constructions. Whilst there is contestation of the policy direction, participants are also active in their subjugation through their processes of self-regulation, teaching practices and management practices (Davies, 2006).

Self Regulation

The Minister's Foreword to the *Tertiary Education Strategy 2007-2012* emphasises the consultation process. There are statistics about the extent and range of stakeholder involvement in the production of the strategy. This provides forms of legitimation for the direction of strategies including the direction for adult literacy and numeracy. Simultaneously, there is the acceptance of the values, the techniques and technologies outlined in the strategy document and the identities constructed through the definition of roles for the various tertiary education organisations. The impression is created that a wide range of people within the sector are working collaboratively to reach an agreed vision and objective. The statements are affirmative and encourage engagement and involvement. On the other hand, it also raises issues for voicing opposition, or resistance, which are dismissed as out of touch or not in tune with the wide range of individuals, organisations and groups who have given it support. Opposing responses are regarded as disruptive or over-critical. The result is the marginalisation of opposition and any expression of alternatives and so reinforces the normalised identities of those who are considered to agree with and put into practice the policy. As Scheurich (1994) argues, these responses involve the exercise of power according to the rules that exist along a grid of regularities, or as Foucault (1995) refers to them, sociocultural networks and social relations.

There is a focus on quality, relevant education and research that supports the realisation of the goals of New Zealanders and the development of the nation. The *Tertiary Education Strategy 2007-2012* also recognises that learning takes place in a variety of contexts including the family, communities and workplace, which are outside of tertiary institutions. Whilst acknowledging these, there is little discussion of their value to civil society, families and individuals; rather it privileges the role of the state as promoting economic competitiveness in global markets. In that context, any discourse around civil society, social justice, and the goals of individuals and families is marginal to the dominant discourses of neo-liberalism where the emphasis is on the expansion of the economy, and through this the wellbeing of the population is to be achieved.

Finally, the tertiary education reforms refer to social inclusion, which is expressed in terms of meeting the needs and aspirations of Māori and Pacific peoples and expressed in meeting the outcomes and gains in terms of the dominant discourses outlined above. The tertiary education strategies argue that to achieve this, all tertiary organisations are required to work with Māori to support the skills development and knowledge that Māori require to manage their cultural and economic assets. Thus the

outcome in terms of adult literacy is that tuition is based on the view that focuses on the constructed demands of the economy and is directed towards the contribution to the national identity (Skilling, 2010). The *Tertiary Education Strategy 2010-2015* (Ministry of Education, 2010) recognises that a key aspiration is that Māori knowledge, Māori ways of doing and knowing things, in essence Māori ways of being, are important for Māori learners to gain success. This places emphasis on providers improving their pastoral and academic support and learning environments, and adopting practices that are culturally appropriate for Māori. On the other hand, *Te Kāwai Ora* (Māori Adult Literacy Working Party, 2001) argues that the approach should begin with whānau, hapu and iwi. However, the suggested ways forward, provided by the *Tertiary Education Strategy 2010-2015*, are referenced to the need to provide Te Reo Māori training for teachers:

We also want to strengthen the delivery of high quality Te Reo Māori. Improving the quality of Te Reo Māori in initial teacher education programmes will be important in helping Māori to achieve success throughout the education system. (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 12)

Emphasis is placed on the current teaching body to improve their capability in Te Reo Māori and change their systems of working. In contrast, *Te Kāwai Ora* opens up the possibility of attracting increased numbers of Māori to become involved at the local level.

A recent document, *Getting Results in Literacy and Numeracy* (Tertiary Education Commission, 2010), reviews the work carried out in the tertiary education sector for adult literacy and numeracy. This document reinforces the approach of the *Tertiary Education Strategy 2010-2015*. But it does note the following:

In response to this priority [literacy for Māori] a dialogue has commenced on how to improve the literacy and numeracy skills of Māori learners. Of particular note is the increased interest and discussion across the sector to define more clearly the concept of Māori literacy, and indigenous literacy in relation to the current literacy and numeracy work programme. There is a role for Māori to lead and facilitate initiatives that will contribute to improvements in literacy and numeracy for Māori learners. (Tertiary Education Commission, 2010, p. 14)

The remarks in the document suggest a problematisation that Māori are not taking a lead in developing initiatives to improve the literacy and numeracy of Māori learners.

However, the issue is that those cultural issues in *Te Kāwai Ora* are not addressed in these documents. There are other issues here: that the concept of literacy for Māori is unclear and the suggestion that there is one definition that is applied in all contexts and is independent of them. Again the term 'literacy' is assumed to be a unitary word that ignores the difference in meaning depending on the context. *Te Kāwai Ora* has argued for the engagement of whānau, hapu and iwi in determining what being a literate Māori means, but there is no reference to it in this latest Tertiary Education Commission report.

Monitoring and Assessment

The monitoring of the sector is a major component of the policy development. The developments here have included the development of ways of conceptualising adult literacy as a set of skills that are decontextualised. In the early stages of the implementation of *More than Words*, the Ministry of Education engaged in a series of professional development projects referred to as the Foundation Learning projects. The purpose of these projects was to build capacity:

Policy is ... associated with intrusion into the domain of educational practice, via assessment regimes that teachers and academics often consider over rigid normalisations of student performance or capabilities. National governments increasingly impose higher and more stringent kinds of accountability for the outcomes of literacy programmes. (Bianco, 2001, p. 212)

The Ministry of Education's Learning for Living exploratory projects focused on providing evidence of the best ways for teaching literacy, numeracy and language to adults by looking at the operations of a diverse range of tertiary education providers. They were funded and provided by the Ministry of Education rather than providing funding for the providers to develop their own professional development. As discussed earlier, the language that is used is significant because it refers to the 'best ways', which raises questions about who will judge and on what basis. The process involved people who were described as developers, and researchers who conducted the evaluations. The discussion seems to imply that by examining a diverse set of practices the 'best' practice can be determined. However, there is no indication of the basis upon which decisions will be made and whose norms and values will inform the research.

Embedded Literacy

One of the problems noted by *More than Words* was the need to quickly increase the number of providers in the field as a means of improving access to adult literacy and numeracy. The Tertiary Education Commission has placed considerable focus on delivery of literacy and numeracy through embedding the tuition in some other educational programmes. The cost of providing for a wide range of specialist literacy providers would be significant and outside of the budget. Therefore embedding literacy within other vocational programmes provides a cheaper approach in that the vocational tutors are then required to include the adult literacy and numeracy in the vocational programme. In this way, those teachers and tutors are constituted as literacy tutors and teachers. But as was found in research that I was involved with (Leach, Zepke, Haworth and Isaacs, 2010), this approach can give rise to tensions between the need to meet the outcomes of the vocational courses and the literacy needs of the learner.

Learning progressions for Adult Literacy and the Adult Literacy and Numeracy for Adults Assessment Tool

The Learning Progressions for Adult Literacy are 'resources' developed by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) to address 'the problem' of how to identify success in the population of literacy learners. These were presented to the field as a response to the problem of a lack of resources and a means of providing standardised measurement of literacy gain. With the development of the Adult Literacy Assessment Tool (Tertiary Education Commission, 2009), The Learning Progressions for Adult Literacy have become the basis of wider monitoring of the performance of both learners and providers. The Adult Literacy Assessment Tool provides forms of measurement of the progress of both the learner and the provider in terms of achievement against The Learning Progressions for Adult Literacy. The development took place after consultation with a range of providers and trials over a range of learning contexts and presented as a resource that tutors and teachers could use as part of their practice. The assessment is conducted online so the data are available to TEC who can monitor the progress of the learner and can determine successful providers. From 2011, the use of The Adult Literacy and Numeracy for Adults Assessment Tool will be a requirement for reporting progress for learners engaged in embedded, intensive literacy programmes and workplace literacy programmes. This is monitoring at a distance where the provider is under surveillance and develops techniques and technologies to ensure that the reports meet the standards. The teachers and tutors

are therefore engaged in considerably more administrative work. This leads to the development of new identities.

Ashcroft and Nairn (2004) referred to this process as 'managerial Panopticism', whereby beneath the gaze of the TEC, a range of practices of auditing, accounting and funding is focused on individual achievement rather than the performance of the institution. The results of these auditing processes are then published as comparisons between institutions that reinforce discourses of choice for the learners and stakeholders.

Where various tertiary organisations are compared together, there is an assumption that the various organisations are comparable and therefore equal. It also assumes that the student body is comparable and equal. All this is related to the technologies of self-conduct. This system then works within the institution that develops practices, techniques and technologies to monitor the performance of the staff and the learners.

This is further evidence of monitoring the tertiary education organisations that are required to self-monitor and regulate. This involves ensuring that their tutors and teachers are qualified, use The Learning Progressions for Adult Literacy, gather the required information and record it, analyse data, and monitor progress in reports.

Chapter 8

Some Final Comments and Suggestions and Questions for Future Research

The focus of this thesis has been the formation and reformation of adult literacy in New Zealand. It has been argued that the history of literacy preceded contact between Māori and Europeans. Māori were literate in their own language, Te Reo Māori and English (Te Kawai Ora, 2001). In the years immediately after the signing of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Te Reo Māori was the language used in New Zealand. However, as part of the colonising process, English has become the dominant language that is supported by the colonial discourses of superiority, civilising technologies, and the language of economic and trade activities. These practices and technologies are identified as those of governmentality or the conduct of conduct (Foucault, 1991a, 1991b):

... an activity that undertakes to conduct individuals throughout their lives by placing them under the authority of a guide responsible for what they do and for what happens to them. (Foucault 1997, p. 68, cited in Rose et al., 2006)

The dominant policy discourses around literacy, until 1996, placed emphasis on schooling of children, preparing them for further education or work, and their role as active citizens. There were community attempts to address local demand for adult literacy but the discourses were unable to challenge or successfully problematise the dominant discourse.

From the 1970s there were growing concerns about the needs for greater economic growth and greater productivity of workers. These concerns arose from the discourses that stressed the importance of meeting the demands of the global economy. However, it was not until the publication of the results of IALS, in 1996, that concerns about adult literacy became acute. The survey presented the problem in the form of over a million New Zealanders not having the literacy levels required to participate fully in society. It was also found that a considerable number of these people were currently in the workforce.

This thesis has argued that the IALS and the ALLS were constructed in such a way that drew on discourses to produce a particular form of literacy, as a unitary term, that focused on skills. IALS and ALLS (IALS 2005: 16, 25) set norms as the necessary

skills that enabled people to participate in New Zealand society. This had the effect of determining boundaries between those who met the norm and those who did not. Those who did not meet the norm were the bodies to be addressed as a problem for the New Zealand economy to take its place among those countries in the top half of the OECD countries. The groups within the population were identified as those under 24, Māori and Pasifika (Ministry of Education, 2010).

The policy documents do mention literacy for social wellbeing but little space is devoted to it and increasingly the emphasis is on outcomes for employment. This dominant, hegemonic discourse and the outcomes required by funding strategies have come to determine what counts as literacy, what can be said about it and how tuition should be implemented. Indeed, the discourses determine the way that addressing the problem of 'poor literacy' is to proceed. This development included the requirement to use the Tertiary Education Commission's The Literacy and Numeracy for Adults Assessment Tool and The Learning Progressions for Adult Literacy to determine successful outcomes for most adult literacy funding streams. Whilst the Adult Literacy and Numeracy for Adults Assessment Tool and the Adult Literacy Progressions for Adult Literacy were promoted as resources for the field, they have become audit and monitoring techniques and technologies devised by the Tertiary Education Commission and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) to report on the uses of government funding. The practices of audit and evaluation technologies require institutions and other providers to be responsible for the assessment of learners in accordance with the hegemonic discourses of literacy, and so determine who are successful learners. The thesis also argued that the policy discourses established norms and boundaries that lead to the formation of particular identities for learners in terms of success, enterprising, failure, employment, employability, and as participatory citizenship. On the other hand, for tertiary organisations the audit and evaluation technologies begin to determine success in terms of meeting the outcomes identified in the Learning Progressions for Adult Literacy and linked to providing value for money.

Other literacy theories and understandings, such as critical literacy, social practices and indigenous literacies are marginalised and subordinated to the discourses that focus on skills for the workplace. This latter approach to literacy is more narrowly focused and as was argued above, the understandings and discourses do not totally fix the meaning of literacy. Other perspectives are provided by Māori literacies, cultural literacies and literacy as social practice, which need to be brought into the mix if social inclusion and coherence are to be achieved. This means that a space needs to be

provided for these understandings to recognise the added value of difference rather than suppressing it as the current policy technologies and technologies do.

The policy development has constructed the professionalisation, formalisation and institutionalisation of adult literacy provision. An insider-outsider binary is created by the global hegemonic discourses of globalisation and the colonial discourses of the superiority of the Western practices.

At the same time, Māori are identified by this hegemonic discourse as a major concern for the literacy levels of the population. The argument of this thesis has shown that *Te Kāwai Ora*, whilst acknowledging the importance of literacy, provides a different approach to understanding adult literacy and the development of programmes for Māori. There is little reference or consideration of the findings and proposals of *Te Kāwai Ora* leading to the development of political frontiers and resistance that hinder the stated objective of social inclusion. Consequently the current policy direction is likely to have difficulty in enabling Māori to achieve success as Māori (Ministry of Education, 2010).

There is little mention or consideration of what learners are looking for, their goals and aspirations. The assumption is made that attendance in adult literacy programmes by learners is a marketing issue where highly professional and structured programmes are promoted. Learners are positioned as consumers who need choice so that the market can determine the successful providers. This pits providers against one another in a competitive environment whilst at the same time the tertiary education strategies have stressed the importance of sector collaboration.

Several reports and reviews carried out by Tertiary Education Commission and the Ministry of Education suggest that there has been considerable progress. The report *Getting Results in Literacy and Numeracy* makes the following claim:

There is evidence of progress towards the vision of a more literate New Zealand. Many more TEOs are now able to include literacy and numeracy in their entry-level programmes. In 2007, 15,000 adults participated in programmes that included literacy and numeracy. In 2010, 35,000 adults will participate. The system is now in place to reach 100,000 learners by 2013. (Tertiary Education Commission, 2010, p. 21)

However, the report also makes it clear that this will be achieved through the embedding of literacy into vocational courses provided by universities, polytechnics,

private training establishments and workplaces. The statement raises the question of who are the learners that will participate. If learners have the confidence and ability to pursue courses, in most of these tertiary education organisations, then they are more likely to be at level 2 and above in the IALS and ALLS (OECD, 2005:16). This could mean that those at level 1 will be more likely to be left behind unless there is some specific service provided. It could be argued that this is the role of the adult and community education providers. However, there is the danger that with the emphasis on skills for work the funding will tend to be increasingly located with workplace literacy.

This puts into question the claim in *More than Words* that:

Our long terms goal is to ensure that all New Zealanders have the literacy skills to take part fully in all aspects of life – work, family and community.
(Ministry of Education, 2001b, p. 2)

As Rose et al. (2006) argue neo-liberal forms of government focus on strengthening the state and its power through means that seek to intervene and manage the habits and activities of subjects to achieve this end. It is also seen to be responding to the identified needs of the population in dominant cultural ways, where the Pākehā population, as the settler people, is privileged. A sense of belonging is also being sought, which Turner (2007) argues can only be achieved through negotiation with the indigenous people and cannot be violently imposed by the state. This thesis has argued that the policy initiatives, especially since 1996, seek to manage adult literacy provision to meet the objectives of the market and business spheres and so further marginalise approaches such as literacy as social practice, critical literacy, cultural literacy and indigenous literacies. The tertiary education strategies (Ministry of Education, 2002, 2006, 2010) also look to engage the stakeholders and their expectations and have an impact on the process.

Alternatively discourses around literacy as social skills and the intergenerational implications for literacy need to be recognised as valid components for the development of adult literacy programmes if it is to achieve the intention from the *More than Words* quoted above.

To achieve the recognition requires keeping open the discourse around adult literacy so as not to privilege one view over others. Such an approach could also include adult literacy programmes based in whanau, hapu, iwi and Maori knowledge alongside

English language and Pakeha culture – a bi-literacy strategy as put forward in *Te Kawai ora* (2001).

Such developments would usefully occur within broader policy frameworks that address issues of entrenched inequality that include, poverty, housing, land confiscations, and increased employment.

Future Research Questions

Arising from the analysis in this thesis there is a series of research questions raised by such reports as *Te Kāwai Ora* (Māori Adult Literacy Working Party, 2001) about alternative responses to questions such as why the identified groups should be governed. How should they be governed? To what ends should they be governed? Further research could explore the reasons and needs that learners identify as important for their lives, how people use their literacies in their everyday lives, and what that means for the policy and practice of adult literacy programmes. There is a second set of questions to be asked about who governs what. According to what logics? With what technologies? Towards what ends? How are the vernacular literacies to become relevant to policy makers? Research could focus on issues of care of the self and the self-determination of learners with regard to what they expect from adult literacy programmes. Further, the research could examine the extent to which the claims that improvements in adult literacy lead to increased levels of income and employment and actually meet the expectations of learners.

There is also the question of how providers, teachers and researchers are in a position to problematise the policy position and provide credible alternatives. Not only will that require evidence that can be seen as reliable but also will need the support of stakeholders including learners to form a bloc that develops alternative discourses. In this scenario there could be research that addresses how learners and their communities would be involved in determining their different needs, as argued in *Te Kāwai Ora* and by proponents of the literacies as social practices. Such an approach could lead to policies that recognise an horizon of possibility where the differences within New Zealand are seen as positive, and add value, not denigrate it. Such an approach requires policies that are creative and reflective of different cultures and identities that make up New Zealand society that could stand alongside the policies and discourses that promote skills.

Further research could usefully consider how embedded literacy is conducted in the vocational programmes and their success from the perspective of the learner. This is important for, as Casey et al. (2006) note, you would not expect a maths teacher to teach plastering, which leads to the question so why ask a plasterer or any other trades person might teach literacy, given that the current dominant discourses recognise that adult literacy tutors and teachers are specialists and require training to be effective?

Finally, there is the question of the future of funding for adult literacy provision and how it may change. The current funding that was developed to implement the Adult Literacy Action Plan 2008-2012 finishes in 2012. Providers will do well to consider the comments of Barton (2005) who asks the question: what do we do when the magic wears thin? He argues that policy moves on and it is clear that this has also happened in New Zealand since *More than Words* (Ministry of Education, 2001b). He comments that across the world adult literacy has been taken up by governments and ends in disappointment. The problem is that 'when it is taken up it is treated like magic'. This is because the view of literacy is overly simplistic and spoken about as being able to solve all social ills. Policy statements and those in the media suggested that successful literacy outcomes enable people to get a job, buy or rent a house, and become successful. It also reinforces colonial discourses of those who are different being integrated into the social practices in society as equals, not as different but the same. In this way the discourses fail to address and support the difference in a way that enables people to determine their own literacy needs, programmes and outcomes differently.

But literacy is not magic. As Barton (2005) concludes, robust sustainable provision does not yet exist for adults, but the policy has great potential for establishing a system of lifelong learning and looking beyond the blight of short term funding. Such provision needs to be put in place and supported; accepting that literacy learning for today's world is not easy. Therefore in New Zealand we cannot expect a quick fix; it is a long hard slog and it needs continuous support in this rapidly changing world.

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