

Why we interview now—reflexivity and perspective in a longitudinal study

JULIE McLEOD

(Received 9 September 2002; accepted 3 March 2003)

This paper discusses a longitudinal, interview-based study of Australian secondary school students that explores the interaction between school ethos and forms of subjectivity. The study was designed to enable prospective and retrospective understandings of identity over time. It is suggested that this methodology encourages a reflexive self-positioning for both participants and researchers and, in the accumulation of an archive of perspectives, responds to poststructuralist critiques of contingency and construction in research interviews. Second, it is argued that the richness of longitudinal research invites more than one kind of analysis, and that working with and across conventionally divergent theoretical approaches can be fruitful. This is discussed with reference to Bourdieu's account of social field and habitus, and Hollway and Jefferson's notion of the 'defended subject'.

Recent debates about qualitative methodology, particularly among feminist and poststructuralist researchers, are widely understood to have undermined the possibility of interviews as simple forms of 'data gathering', in which participants speak directly and the interviewer apprehends some self-evident truths and reports them (Richardson 1997, Fine and Weis 1998, St Pierre and Pillow 2000). Scheurich (1995) argues that: 'In an interview there is no stable "reality" or "meaning" . . . The indeterminate totality of the interview always exceeds and transgresses our attempts to capture and categorize' (1995: 249). Many of us who work with interviews do not enter the interaction with a naïve or 'modernist' expectation of the interview as an unmediated 'confession': acknowledging the construction and partiality of truth and power relations in interviews is now essential. But admitting researcher reflexivity and the contingency of the interview does not negate the possibility that interviews can generate meaningful insights (McLeod and Yates 1997, Fine and Weis 1998, McLeod 2000a). The methodological issue is not whether interviews are irredeemably problematic, but how to design and conduct interviews so that they provoke understandings that do more than reiterate the interview's essential indeterminacy.

The following discussion takes two main directions. First, it considers the design, purposes and theoretical concerns of a qualitative, longitudinal

Julie McLeod is a Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Education, Deakin University, Melbourne 3125, Australia; e-mail: jemcleod@deakin.edu.au. Her research and publications are in the areas of the sociology and history of gender and education, youth studies, and poststructuralist and feminist perspectives on schooling and identity.

study (the 12 to 18 Project),¹ which studied young people's gendered subjectivity and processes of identity formation over time. This project was designed to enable prospective and retrospective understandings of identity—both the participants' and the researchers'—and to provide an opportunity to compare and move across and between the two: this is discussed below with reference to one young woman in the study. This approach also encourages a kind of reflexive self-positioning for both the participants and the researchers and offers a way of reading interviews that tries to respond to the problems of indeterminacy and endless contingency. This process was not so much a form of 'triangulation' as an archive of perspectives from different periods of time and vantage-points, one that provides a rich and comparative basis for understanding patterns of continuity and change in identity.

Second, the scope of longitudinal interviews means that they resist any easy assimilation to one theoretical framework; which is not to say that biographies and phenomena 'speak for themselves' or should not be sullied by abstract theorizing. Rather, interpreting longitudinal qualitative 'data' requires multiple theoretical lenses, and the usual way of presenting theoretical arguments in a binary logic—either this approach or the other—seems inadequate and reductive. This is discussed in relation to the conventional opposition between sociological and psychological frameworks for understanding identities (Bourdieu 1999, Hollway and Jefferson 2000, Walkerdine *et al.* 2001). The different paradigms need to be read against each other, their differences, and the tensions between them, enabling new insights.

Researching youth identities in longitudinal perspective

Over 8 years (1993–2000), Lyn Yates and I interviewed and videotaped 26 young Australians from diverse social backgrounds, who attended four different types of school. We followed them from the beginning of secondary school through to when they completed or left school and into their first year of life after school. Twice each year, we listened to them talk about their sense of self, their values and attitudes to the future, and their experience of school. The comparative and longitudinal design was intended to cut through over-simple and essentialized stories about gender, class or ethnicity. A particular focus has been the interaction of institutional and social contexts and the conditions of possibility these set up (or close down) and the biographical projects and histories of individuals. We have examined homologies between school ethos and students' orientations, dispositions, and sense of place in the world (McLeod 2000b, Yates and McLeod 2000).

There are parallels here with Bourdieu's theorization of social field and habitus (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992), which offers an important analysis of the effects of different forms of schooling on subjectivity and the shape of individual and group biographies. A key dimension of this theorization is recognition of both the structure and effects of 'systems of durable, transposable dispositions' (Bourdieu 1977: 72) and the capacity for

individual inventiveness within these parameters. In emphasizing a relation of ‘ontological complicity’ between ‘habitus . . . and the world that determines it’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 20), it addresses the inescapable insinuation of the social in the subjective. Bourdieu argues that the past is in the present, and that habitus ‘is history turned into nature’ (1977: 78). In his earlier work particularly, there is a strong sense of the fixity and permanence of habitus—a consequence of the structuralist concern with establishing rules and principles governing the relation between field and habitus (Bourdieu 1977). In later work, however (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, Bourdieu *et al.* 1999), there is a clearer sense of the potential for improvisation: habitus does not institute strict codes of conduct; rather it is ‘creative, inventive with the limits of its structures’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 19). The focus on inventiveness calls for more historical explorations of habitus, ones that examine how ‘improvisations’ take place within certain parameters, within particular periods of time, and how habitus, although a ‘system of durable, transposable dispositions’, is also a system of relations and orientations that accumulate and shift over time. Following this reasoning, longitudinal studies offer insight into the enactment of ‘ontological complicity’ and the formation of habitus over time.

In the social sciences, there has been increasing attention to theorizing subjectivity and researching identities. There are debates about how subjectivity is ‘constructed’ and whether identity norms are destabilizing—or re- or de- traditionalizing (Adkins 2000, Kenway and Kelly 2000). There is much attention to the self as a reflexive, biographical project (Giddens 1991), regulated through therapeutic forms of subjectification (Rose 1999), and continuing discussions about the impact of feminisms on young people’s imagined futures. The 12 to 18 Project developed in dialogue with this range of work, attempting to explore these ideas theoretically and empirically.

Interviews have become a popular approach to researching identities (Hatch and Wisniewski 1995, Kvale 1996). Life history, narrative enquiry, discourse analysis, all offer the promise of capturing and analysing identity, currently the object of both cultural and academic fascination. But identities do not simply reveal themselves in interviews, particularly when there are only one or two interviews. However, and importantly, nor are identities necessarily more directly apprehended simply by having a larger number of interviews over a period of time. In other words, while longitudinal interviews do provide a substantial archive, simply having many interviews does not solve methodological questions of interpretation and design. How, then, did we structure interviews so that they might generate insight into subjectivity, at both a conceptual and individual/embodied level? What theoretical resources did we draw upon?

We have explored both the emotional and psychological dimensions of biographies and the ‘pathways’ and sociological patterns and effects of school, not as separate domains, but as fundamentally interlinked (Yates and McLeod 2000, McLeod and Yates 2003). The need for research on young people which bridges these two domains has been noted by others (McRobbie 1996, Cohen and Ainley 2000). Although our intellectual

orientations were more grounded in sociological and historical traditions, studying biographies in formation demanded acknowledgement of the desires, investments and psychological processes that animate individual lives. Another motivation, then, was to explore debates about subjectivity from within both sociological and psychological traditions and to consider the different insights offered by these usually incompatible paradigms. These are not uncommon issues facing researchers exploring ‘identity’ (Nielsen 1996). Hollway and Jefferson (2000) and Walkerdine *et al.* (2001), for example, address them through the concept of a psycho-social subject. But we do not come from a psychological/psychoanalytic background, and we have not resolved the issue in quite the same way.

We have also been wary of deploying a primarily sociological framework and gratuitously gesturing to ‘desire’ as a way of accommodating the ‘non-sociological’, a tendency that we saw as increasingly common and problematic in feminist and poststructuralist work, particularly in education. This can produce a kind of ‘add psychoanalysis and mix’ approach, which Donald (1991: 4) has referred to as ‘the polyfilla’ model of subjectivity. Psychoanalysis ‘fills the gap’ in cultural studies or sociology, by offering the possibility of a fuller, more complete ‘Theory of the Subject’ (Donald 1991: 4). But Donald argues:

Any such attempt to merge the two bodies of theory [psychoanalysis and sociology] blunts their specific insights and ignores their incompatibilities and contradictions. What seems potentially more fruitful is the dialogue in which although the two discourses remain distinct—they are always in some sense talking past each other—the questions untranslatably specific to each can provoke new thinking and insights in the other. (Donald 1991: 3)

This is not to dispute that embodied subjects are ‘simultaneously psychic and social’ (Hollway and Jefferson 2000: 14), but rather to suggest another way of theorizing change and development in longitudinal studies. The richness of a longitudinal archive is not exhausted by any one explanation, and compressing everything into one ‘synthesized account’ is not always satisfactory because it can submerge distinct insights.

Building reflexivity into interviews

A series of interview narratives from young people offered the chance to see identity ‘in formation’. Working with secondary school students allowed us to see identities developing during a period—adolescence—typically represented as one of transformation and rupture as the shift is made from child to adult. In comparison to many longitudinal studies, interviews were quite frequent—twice a year—and conducted each year over 7–8 years (about 14 interviews for most students). This regular engagement meant that we could see continuities as well as change and upheaval in a relatively ‘close-up’ way over an extended period of time.

One main focus of the interviews was participants’ present, prospective and retrospective sense of self and of what kind of person they were. In each round the participants were asked to describe themselves, as well as imagine themselves in the future, or recollect themselves when younger. Responses

to more general questions about friends, school, or family life offered insight into how they saw and imagined themselves in the world. We employed a range of different approaches to elicit narratives, as well as having a fairly standard format and range of questions on self, school and future. These questions or prompts were then developed and extended according to individual responses. We occasionally used hypothetical questions, 'What if . . .?', or asked them to reflect on ethical dilemmas. At age 15 (Year 10), we asked them to make a tape recording about themselves for us, giving very few other guidelines. On another occasion, students brought in a photograph that was significant to them and talked about it. After they had left school, each student was given a compilation video of excerpts from each of their interviews. They watched it at home, and then spoke to us about their reactions.

This last activity highlights how presuming and inciting a certain mode of reflexivity became a central part of an approach to researching identities: how do you see yourself now? How do you recall yourself at the start of secondary school (at age 12)? Tell us about how you see your self in the future; what was it like watching the video of you when younger? What kind of picture of you does your video capture? This recursive, comparative movement between past, present and future gave insight into the histories, aspirations and orientations of individuals.

One of the specific strengths of longitudinal interviews is the accumulation of responses that could be read against each other. A picture could be built up of orientations and beliefs across different times, ages and moods. Times when they felt good or bad about themselves, were interested in or indifferent to school, were having trouble at home or with friends, feeling on top and in control of things, or when they did or did not feel like saying much to us, and so on. This offers a more substantial and complex basis for writing about identity than does one or two interviews alone. Such approaches to 'researching subjectivity' tend to produce a flat, static sense of identity, and also highlight the risks of contingency and indeterminacy. Issues of contingency and construction are significant and should not be ignored, but asking prospective and retrospective questions over time about 'the self' means that a body of 'evidence' from different perspectives is accumulated, and that responses can be 'checked', read and compared against each other. Of course, longitudinal interviews do not tell us the full truth about someone, but a prospective/retrospective focus and the structuring of reflexive questions allows patterns, themes and orientations to emerge.

I want to make two points about the length of this study. First, some changes happen over a short period of time, especially during the 'teenage years', when things can shift quickly, and a 7–8 year period is not essential for grasping this. Interviews conducted over a shorter period of time, and in quick succession, can capture elements of change and still allow for degrees of reflexivity: they might also offer a more immediate and 'as-it-is-happening' sense of change and development. However, the time frame we adopted allowed participants to experience some emotional distance from earlier events and recollections, and to have a sense of themselves in a long view. This was important in generating more deliberate reflections on the

self, and in encouraging reflexivity. Second, the length of the study was suggested by the length of secondary school (6 years in Australia and we added interviews in the final year of primary school and the first year after leaving school). This design reflected our concern with the effects of different kinds of schooling on subjectivity, and the accumulating effects of that relation (McLeod 2000b, Yates and McLeod 2000).

Focusing on prospective/retrospective accounts works against reproducing strictly linear conceptions of identity formation and individual development because it illustrates the recursive, shifting and uneven ways in which identities ‘take shape’, and in which we come to recognize and represent ourselves as certain kinds of people. Harriet Bjerrum Nielsen (1996) writes of the self as a ‘magic writing pad’, a kind of palimpsest, which ‘all the time receives new inscriptions upon it without having the old ones erased’ (Nielsen 1996: 7). Trying to capture the accumulating versions of the self can also illuminate some of the improvisations within habitus.

It could be argued that our attention to reflexivity is symptomatic of living in late modernity (Giddens 1991, Beck *et al.* 1994), and, we would add, a characteristic of our (the researchers’) class location and the kind of work we do. We are accustomed to talking in this way, of experiencing the self as a biographical project and expecting others to be equally interested in this mode of reflection. This did not work for all students, which raises questions about macro social theories of modernity and subjectivity and their insensitivity to social differentiation. It is not possible to develop this point here, but it was an approach that worked particularly well with middle-class girls, but did not work very well with working-class boys and with one of the boys from an ethnic minority background. Middle-class girls’ capacity for reflexivity is double-edged, signalling both a heightened self-awareness and a form of self-scrutiny, producing a relentless desire to please and reinvent oneself: this is discussed by Yates (in this issue).

What is involved then in working with retrospective accounts of the self and inciting reflexivity? I have space here to provide a snapshot of only one of the participants, Leonie, who lived in a regional Australian city and attended a traditional high school with a reputation for valuing sport, discipline, school uniform and academic performance. The school takes in students from a mix of class backgrounds, but is generally perceived as a high-status government school, one that is constantly and favourably compared with local prominent private schools and other government schools. It takes on many of the outward attributes of a private school—uniform, sport, music—with students frequently telling us that it ‘is as good as the private schools’ and that they are getting a good education and have a lot of opportunities.

Perspectives on work and ambition

A recurring theme in Leonie’s interviews is the importance of hard work, of getting work done, of planning to make things happen. She is busy, takes several dance classes, plays basketball, and from age 15 has had a part-time job, and a boyfriend she sees regularly during the week. She seems to be

happy and to be taking on the attributes of the kind of successful student valued at this school—hard working, respectful of authority, interested in sport, engaged in future planning and proud of her school and its achievements. When she imagines the future, it is usually in terms of working to achieve a goal. At 15 she reflects:

right now I think this is where you start to find yourself and who you are and what you're going to be and you start to wake up a bit to real life and it's not just an easy road with people paying your way. You've got to make it, you know, you've got to make a future.

In her first year at university (studying nursing) she continues to be enterprising—making plans for postgraduate study, working out at the gym. Her choice of nursing at a local university appears conventional for a country girl. Leonie's decisions, however, were quite pragmatic and belie the appearance of traditional or re-traditionalizing gender. She did not get the results needed for another course, it was proving complicated to move to another country town to do nursing, and she has plans for how she will work her way into other areas. She has decided to apply for a scholarship with the airforce to complete her nursing, and working in this field has great appeal for her. 'Yeah, I've always wanted to do something with a huge rush and then something that's sort of good for everyone else' (first year at university).

Towards the end of primary school, her family had moved because her father was sacked from his respectable job in a bank, due to a charge of workplace misconduct. In the new town (where we meet her) the family live in a middle-class and comfortable area, her father takes up unskilled nightshift work, and her mother works as a hairdresser. Throughout her interviews, Leonie refers briefly to her family's move, to her father not being happy and his belief in hard work and the importance of education. But it is only when she is 16 (Year 11) that she talks at length about her father and the family story of dislocation. This knowledge offers us another perspective on her determination and hard work. Her extended response is prompted by a question from us asking her to reflect on some of the important things that have happened to her since we started doing the interviews, when she was 12. She answers: 'There's a lot of bad things that have happened. There's a lot of bad things that are going around now still with my family'.

Our question came after she had showed us photographs of her 'doing the deb',² which she had voluntarily brought to show us—it was not something we had planned for this interview. In the photographs she is very beautiful and her family look on proudly. The idealized 'happy family' image in these photographs, and of her as the optimistic 'girl most likely to succeed' cut across the story she tells of her father's disappointment and the family's unhappiness. We learn that her older brother 'dropped out' of school when he was 15, has been living at home, not working, smoking a lot of dope, fighting with her parents and making life miserable for her. Leonie's father regards her brother, as she does, as aimless and not working hard enough. Her busy extracurricular life offers distraction.³ Looking back on that time she says, 'I think I

tended to do a lot of things because I didn't have to think home so I guess I, in a way, I really did use those things as an escape . . . I used a lot of it to not be there' (first year university). Of the final 2 years of school, when she seemed in interviews to be happier and more in charge of her life, she subsequently reflects that: 'It's kind of strange because, um, I felt so stressed at those times. I don't really remember a lot of those years. When I think about them, like I remember just like, um, either really hating me at home or something like that, but I don't remember a lot of happy times' (first year university).

One possible analysis is that Leonie takes on the responsibility of work, of trying to make her father happy and of compensating for her family's social and class dislocation. It is a gendered story too, of women taking responsibility for the emotional well being of others. Leonie's ambitions and hard work could also be motivated by a determination not to become like her father and brother, and to ensure that she has work that she finds purposeful. Hollway and Jefferson (2000) employ the concept of the 'defended subject', which is 'simultaneously psychic and social' (2000: 24) to understand the dynamic and narratives produced in interviews. It is 'a product of a unique biography of anxiety-provoking life-events' and of how 'they have been unconsciously defended against' (2000: 24).

The notion of the 'defended subject' was not one that informed our initial thinking about the project. But in reviewing Leonie's transcripts, and after the final round of interviews in which participants saw 'their video' and we asked many retrospective questions, themes of 'hard work' and her relationship with her father came through strongly. These themes were noted in earlier interviews, but positing a link between them was a more incremental understanding, a result of accumulating perspectives, as well as some serendipity in reading about the 'defended subject' at a time when I was immersed in the transcripts. Thinking about Leonie as a 'defended subject' helps us to understand her busyness and struggles to succeed, and to see her hard work to overcome difficulties, to please her father, and to defend herself against failure and unhappiness.

There are dimensions to Leonie's orientation to work and the future, however, that are not necessarily made evident in analysing her as a 'defended subject'. Asking questions from within a more sociological framework generates other insights. The school she attends espouses a strong meritocratic ethic, values self-discipline and self-reliance and encourages enterprising behaviour. All except one⁴ of the students we interviewed there shared Leonie's 'can do', optimistic and strategic approach to the future. They were all conscious of the reputation of the school and the good education they were receiving. None of the students got their first preference for a tertiary course, but all were undertaking or intending to begin further training and had a series of plans to achieve their clearly articulated future goals. Leonie's story is also partly an account of how the ethos of that school shaped students' orientations and cultivated particular dispositions—the relation between field and habitus. Particular biographies can amplify or mute these effects, as is evident in Leonie's case.

Reflecting on interviews conducted for *The Weight of the World* (Bourdieu *et al.* 1999) Bourdieu argues that:

Contrary to what might be believed from a naively personalist view of the uniqueness of the social persons, it is the uncovering of immanent structures contained in the contingent statements of a discrete interaction that alone allows one to grasp the essential of each girls' *idiosyncrasy* and all the singular complexity of her actions and reactions. (Bourdieu *et al.* 1999: 618)

Reading interviews in this way underlines the constitutive effects of social processes and historical locations, but it risks flattening out the emotional and psychological dimensions of subjectivity. The interpretive challenge is actively and methodically to listen for both 'immanent structures' and emotional investments, to play them back against each other.

The Weight of the World is a powerful account of how 'ordinary people' are negotiating lives in a time of major social, cultural and economic upheaval. The many interviews and the structure of the book present the perspectives of different groups of people who are affected by a common experience—for example, life on a housing estate. Bourdieu describes this as a necessary 'perspectivism'. 'We must work', he argues, 'with the multiple perspectives that correspond to the multiplicity of coexisting, and sometimes directly competing, points of view' (Bourdieu *et al.* 1999: 3–4). I have tried to show how a version of 'perspectivism' has been a central feature of our longitudinal study. This perspectivism comes from comparing retrospective and prospective accounts of the self, from inciting degrees of reflexivity, and from self-consciously employing different analytical perspectives.

While acknowledging the relevance of methodological cautions about the limitations of interviews, I have argued that eliciting prospective and retrospective reflections over time offers one way of living with contingency. Such a focus promotes reflexive and comparative analysis, and recognizes that understandings, for both the researcher and the researched, are incremental and recursive. There are many stories to be told, and while this is a caveat that can apply to other kinds of qualitative research, it is exaggerated in longitudinal studies. To say that there are 'multiple stories' might appear to be a kind of lazy postmodernism, but this is not a call for 'anything goes' or for the reiteration of indeterminacy. Rather, each account needs to work with its 'evidence', to show how one story is possible, how it might be more convincing than another, and to work reflexively with 'perspectivism'. Finally, it is fruitful to read across and against dominant interpretive modes, and rather than aiming for synthesis, to work with their distinctive insights and silences in order to try to capture the complexity of subjectivity in longitudinal and historical perspective.

Notes

1. The 12 to 18 Project is jointly conducted by Lyn Yates and Julie McLeod and was funded by the Australian Research Council, 1994–1995, 1996–1998, 2000–2001, with additional funds from La Trobe University, Deakin University and University of Technology Sydney.
2. 'Doing the deb' refers to participating in a debutante ball, a tradition that is currently undergoing some revival in Australia.

3. The 'hyper-busyness' of middle-class girls today has been analysed as a consequence of feminism and as an anxiety to secure class position (Wyn 2000, Walkerdine *et al.* 2001; also see Yates in this issue).
4. This student left Year 10, as soon as he reached the compulsory age of 15: this outcome was predicted by the student welfare coordinator at the school at the beginning of the project. This student was from a single parent working-class family, his older siblings had similarly left school, and he did not embody the kind of characteristics and dispositions most valued and cultivated by the school.

References

- Adkins, L. (2000) Objects of innovation: post-occupational reflexivity and re-traditionalisations of gender. In S. Ahmed, J. Kilby, C. Lury, M. McNeil and B. Skeggs (eds) *Transformations: Thinking Through Feminism* (London: Routledge).
- Beck, U., Giddens, A. and Lash, S. (1994) *Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order* (Stanford: Stanford University Press).
- Bourdieu, P. (1977) *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Bourdieu, P. and Wacquant, L.J.D. (1992) *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Chicago: Chicago University Press).
- Bourdieu, P. *et al.* (1999) *The Weight of the World: Social Suffering in Contemporary Society* (Cambridge: Polity Press in association with Blackwell).
- Cohen, P. and Ainley, P. (2000). 'In the country of the blind?' Youth studies and cultural studies on Britain. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 3, 75–95.
- Donald, J. (1991) On the threshold: psychoanalysis and cultural studies. In J. Donald (ed.) *Psychoanalysis and Cultural Theory: Thresholds* (London: Macmillan).
- Fine, M. and Weis, L. (1998) *The Unknown City: The Lives of Poor and Working-Class Young Adults* (Boston: Beacon Press).
- Giddens, A. (1991) *Modernity and Self-identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Cambridge: Polity Press).
- Hatch, A.J. and Wisniewski, R. (1995) Life history and narrative: questions, issues and exemplary works. In A.J. Hatch and R. Wisniewski (eds) *Life History and Narrative* (London: Falmer Press).
- Hollway, W. and Jefferson, T. (2000) *Doing Qualitative Research Differently: Free Association, Narrative and the Interview Method* (London: Sage).
- Kenway, J. and Kelly, P. (2000) Local/global markets and the restructuring of gender, schooling and work. In N. Stromquist and K. Monkman (eds) *Globalisation and Education* (Lanham, MD: Rowan and Littlefield).
- Kvale, S. (1996) *Interviews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing* (London: Sage).
- McLeod, J. (2000a) Metaphors of the self: searching for young people's identities in interviews. In J. McLeod and K. Malone (eds) *Researching Youth* (Hobart, Tas, Australia: Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies).
- McLeod, J. (2000b) Subjectivity and schooling in a longitudinal study of secondary students. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 21, 502–521.
- McLeod, J. and Yates, L. (1997) 'Can we find out about girls and boys today or must we settle for just talking about ourselves?' Dilemmas of a feminist, qualitative, longitudinal research project. *Australian Educational Researcher*, 24, 23–42.
- McLeod, J. and Yates, L. (2003) Who is 'us'? Students negotiating discourses of racism and national identification in Australia. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 6(1), 29–49.
- McRobbie, A. (1996) Different, youthful, subjectivities. In I. Chambers and L. Curtis (eds) *The Post-Colonial Question: Common Skies, Divided Horizons* (New York: Routledge).
- Nielsen, H.B. (1996) 'The magic writing pad'—on gender and identity. *Young: Journal of Nordic Youth Studies*, 4(3), 2–18.
- Richardson, L. (1997) *Fields of Play: Constructing an Academic Life* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press).
- Rose, N. (1999) *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Scheurich, J.J. (1995) A postmodernist critique of research interviewing. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 8(3), 239–352.

- St Pierre, E.A. and Pillow, W. (eds) (2000) *Working the Ruins: Feminist Poststructural Theory and Methods in Education* (New York: Routledge).
- Walkerdine, V., Lucey, H. and Melody, J. (2001) *Growing Up Girl: Psychosocial Explorations of Gender and Class* (London: Palgrave).
- Wyn, J. (2000) The postmodern girl: education, 'success' and the construction of girls' identities. In J. McLeod and K. Malone (eds) *Researching Youth* (Hobart, Tas, Australia: Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies).
- Yates, L. and McLeod, J. (2000) Social justice and the middle. *Australian Educational Researcher*, 27(3), 59–77.

