Justice Pedagogy: The Possibilities and Challenges for 'Thick' Citizenship Education amongst Australian School Students

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Certificate of original authorship

I, Keith Heggart, declare that this thesis, is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Technology Sydney.

This thesis is wholly my own work unless otherwise reference or acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

This document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

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Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE THESIS 1

1.1 INTRODUCTION 1
1.2 OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH SITE 8
1.3 AIMS OF THE STUDY 9
1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY 10
1.5 THE RESEARCH QUESTION 12
1.6 PRELIMINARY COMMENTS ABOUT MY POSITIONALITY 15
1.7 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY 15
1.7.1 Chapter 1: Introduction 15
1.7.2 Chapter 2: Methodology 15
1.7.3 Chapter 3: The Historical and Philosophical Arguments about Civics and Citizenship 15
1.7.4 Chapter 4: The Current Climate for Civics and Citizenship 16
1.7.5 Chapter 5: Alternative Forms of Civics and Citizenship Education 16
1.7.6 Chapter 6: Contesting Theories of Civics and Citizenship Education 16
1.7.7 Chapter 7: Engaging and Empowering Students 16
1.7.8 Chapter 8: Changing Times, Changing Literacies 16
1.7.9 Chapter 9: A Rich Description of the Justice Citizens *Project 17*
1.7.10 Chapter 10: Thinking and Talking about Citizenship in Western Sydney 17
1.7.11 Chapter 11: Prevailing Narratives about Citizenship Education 17
1.7.12 Chapter 12: Student and Teacher Experiences of Citizenship Education 17
1.7.13 Chapter 13: Developing Justice-Oriented Citizens 17
1.7.14 Chapter 14: Conclusion: Justice Pedagogy 17

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY 19

2.1 INTRODUCTION 19
2.2 METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK 20
2.2.1 A history of realist and positivist research about citizenship education in Australia 20
2.2.2 An Interpretive and Critical Approach 26
2.2.3 The Advantages of Qualitative Research 28
2.2.4 Critical Ethnography and an Activist Commitment 31
2.3 RESEARCH DESIGN 35
2.3.1 Summary Overview of Research Design 35
2.4 RESEARCH METHODS 39
2.4.1 Participant Observation 39
2.4.2 The Challenges of Acting as a Teacher Researcher 43
2.4.3 The Influence of My Authority as a Teacher 45
2.4.4 Interviews 45
2.5 DATA ANALYSIS 51
2.5.1 Interpreting the Data 51
2.5.2 Research Portraiture 55
2.6 RESEARCH PROTOCOLS 56
2.6.1 Ethics 56
2.6.2 Validities in Qualitative Research 61
2.7 RESEARCH CONTEXT 64
2.7.1 Greater Western Sydney 64

CHAPTER 3: THE HISTORICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL ARGUMENTS ABOUT CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP 68

3.1 INTRODUCTION 68
3.2 AN EVER-EXPANDING CONCEPT OF CITIZENSHIP 68
3.3 CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION: A LONG HISTORY 69
3.3.1 Democracy in Ancient Times 69
3.3.2 Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the Active Citizen 72
3.3.3 John Stuart Mill and Political Education 73
3.3.4 John Dewey and the Progressive Movement 74
3.3.5 Criticisms of Dewey 79
3.3.6 Civics and Citizenship Education: An Integrated Subject or a Stand Alone Approach 80
3.4 CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA 82
3.4.1Introduction 82
3.4.2 Indigenous Australian Notions of Civics and Citizenship 82
3.4.3 Citizenship Education in the 20th Century: Discrete or Embedded? 84

CHAPTER 4: THE CURRENT CLIMATE FOR CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP . 88

4.1 DEFINING THE CIVICS DEFICIT 88
4.1.1 Education for Active Citizenship 88
4.1.2 The Civics Expert Group 90
4.1.3 The Civics Deficit 91
4.1.4 Criticisms of the Civics Deficit 92
4.2 DISCOVERING DEMOCRACY 93
4.2.1 Criticisms of Discovering Democracy *94*
4.2.2 Official assessment of Discovering Democracy *98*
4.2.3 Findings from Discovering Democracy *99*
4.3 VALUES EDUCATION 100
4.4 THE CURRENT CLIMATE OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA 101
4.4.1 Civics and Citizenship Education in the Australian Curriculum 101
4.4.2 The Review of the Australian Curriculum 102

CHAPTER 5: ALTERNATIVE AND NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATION FORMS OF CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION 107

5.1 INTRODUCTION 107
5.2 SOME EXAMPLES OF SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS DOING ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION 108
5.3 EXAMPLES OF PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH PROJECTS DOING CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION 110
5.4 HOW *JUSTICE CITIZENS* IS EXTENDING PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH 115
5.5 SOCIAL JUSTICE EDUCATION 116
5.5.1 The Global Citizen 118
5.6 RECONCILIATION EDUCATION 121
5.6.1 The Torch Project 122
5.6.2 Relevance to Justice Citizens *123*
5.7 SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS AND CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION 124
5.7.1 Aussie Democrazy 126

CHAPTER 6: CONTESTING DEFINITIONS OF CITIZENSHIP AND COMPETING THEORIES OF CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION . 129

6.1 A CONTESTED FIELD 129
6.2 WHAT IS A CITIZEN? 130
6.3 CONTESTING VIEWS ABOUT WHAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION CURRICULUM 132
6.3.1 Education for public versus private citizenship 132
6.3.2 Activist citizenship education: encouraging dissent or obedience? 133
6.3.3 Should Citizenship be taught discretely or embedded across the curriculum? 134
6.4 MCLAUGHLIN'S CONTINUUM OF MAXIMAL AND MINIMAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION 135
6.5 MORRIS AND COGAN'S MULTI-DIMENSIONAL MODELS OF CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION 140
6.6 MURRAY PRINT'S TYPOLOGY: CIVICS FOR SURVIVAL, FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE AND TO EXERCISE LEADERSHIP 144
6.7 KERRY KENNEDY AND FLUID DEFINITIONS OF ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP: THE PATRIOTIC, SELF-REGULATED ENTREPRENEURIAL AND EMPOWERED MODELS 147
6.8 WESTHEIMER AND KAHNE'S THREEFOLD TAXONOMY: THE PERSONALLY RESPONSIBLE, THE PARTICIPATORY AND JUSTICE ORIENTED CITIZENS 148

CHAPTER 7: REVIEWING TRADITIONS OF CRITICAL PEDAGOGY TO INFORM AND DISTINGUISH WHAT I LABEL AS JUSTICE PEDAGOGY 151

7.1 INTRODUCTION 151
7.2 TRADITIONS OF POPULAR EDUCATION 151
7.3 KEY FEATURES OF CRITICAL PEDAGOGY 152
7.3.1 The Centrality of a Pedagogy of Love 153
7.3.2 The Development of Critical Consciousness 154
7.3.3 The Relationship between Power and Conscientisation 154
7.3.4 Problem-Posing Education: Dialogue and Praxis 157
7.3.5 Schools as Sites of Struggle 161
7.4 HENRY GIROUX AND EDUCATION FOR CRITICAL DEMOCRACY: MOVING BEYOND MARXIST THEORIES OF REPRODUCTION 162
7.5 BROADENING CRITICAL PEDAGOGY: CONSIDERING FEMINISM AND RACE 165
7.6 SECOND AND THIRD GENERATION CRITICAL PEDAGOGUES: NEW AVENUES FOR RESEARCH 169
7.7 INFORMING JUSTICE PEDAGOGY 171

CHAPTER 8: CHANGING TIMES, CHANGING LITERACIES 172

8.1 INTRODUCTION 172
8.2 NEW AND OLD MEANINGS OF LITERACY 172
8.3 BEYOND ACADEMIC LITERACY: RECOGNISING POPULAR CULTURE 175
8.4 MEDIA LITERACY FOR EMPLOYABILITY AND ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP 177
8.5 DIGITAL LITERACY 180
8.6 COMBINING DIGITAL AND MEDIA LITERACY 182
8.7 CIVIC ACTORS AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE: BECOMING LITERATE IN THIS SPACE 183
8.8 RELEVANCE OF THESE TERMS TO *JUSTICE CITIZENS* AND JUSTICE PEDAGOGY 188

CHAPTER 9: A RICH DESCRIPTION OF THE JUSTICE CITIZENS PROJECT 191

9.1 INTRODUCTION 191
9.2 OPENING CREDITS 191
9.3. THEME SONG 194
9.4 AN EXCITING OPENING 198
9.5 THE MONTAGE 200
9.6 FIRST STEPS 203
9.7 INTERVIEW WITH TALENT – PART 1 205
9.8 INTERVIEW WITH TALENT – PART 2 208
9.9 WORKING WITH EXPERTS 209
9.10 THE PREMIERE 211
9.11 CRITICAL RECEPTION 214

CHAPTER 10: THINKING AND TALKING ABOUT CITIZENSHIP IN WESTERN SYDNEY 218

10.1 INTRODUCTION 218
10.2 HOW STUDENTS DO - OR DO NOT - THINK OF CITIZENSHIP 219
10.3. STUDENT AND STAFF NARRATIVES ABOUT ACTIVE AND GLOBAL CITIZENS 223

CHAPTER 11: PREVAILING NARRATIVES ABOUT CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION 229

11.1 DEFINITIONS OF CITIZENSHIP: TOP-DOWN VS YOUTH-LED 229
11.2 TENTATIVE UNDERSTANDINGS OF ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP 229
11.3 ADULT ACCOUNTS OF ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP 233
11.4 STUDENT ACCOUNTS OF ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP 236

CHAPTER 12: STUDENT AND TEACHER EXPERIENCES OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION 242

12.1 THE CLASSROOM REALITY OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION BEING DELIVERED THROUGH FORMAL CURRICULUM AND EXPLICIT INSTRUCTION 242
12.2 IMPLEMENTING CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION THROUGH INFORMAL CURRICULUM STRATEGIES AND IMPLICIT INSTRUCTION 243
12.3 THE CONTRADICTION BETWEEN TEACHING ABOUT DEMOCRACY AND THE AUTHORITARIAN ENVIRONMENT OF A SCHOOL 246
12.4 THE CHALLENGES OF DOING CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION WITH THE INTENSIFICATION OF STANDARDISED TESTING 248
12.5 STUDENT EXPERIENCES OF LEARNING ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP 250
12.6 EVEN EXPLICIT CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IS NOT FOREGROUNDED 251
12.7 DESPITE THIS, SOME STUDENTS ARE CONCERNED AND ACTIVE CITIZENS 252

CHAPTER 13: APPRAISING JUSTICE CITIZENS 258

13.1 INTRODUCTION 258
13.2 STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TO *JUSTICE CITIZENS* 258
13.3. PROBLEMS WITH *JUSTICE CITIZENS* (BACKHANDED COMPLIMENTS) 263
13.4 MAKING CREATIVE DECISIONS 267
13.5 BECOMING ACTIVE CITIZENS 273
13.6 CONCLUSION 274

CHAPTER 14: CONCLUSION – JUSTICE PEDAGOGY..... 275

14.1 INTRODUCTION 275
14.2 FEATURES OF JUSTICE CITIZENS 275
14.2.1 Experiential Education 276
14.2.2 Student-led Learning 278
14.2.3 Action Oriented 279
14.2.4 School-Community Partnerships 281
14.2.5 Critical Literacy and Participation in the Public Sphere 282
14.2.6 Advocacy for Systemic Change 283
14.3 JUSTICE PEDAGOGY – A NEW TERM FOR CRITICAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION 284
14.3.1 Moving From the Linear to the Organic 285
14.3.2 Distributed Decision-Making and Non-Linearity 286
14.3.3 Self Organising Systems 288
14.3.4 Emergent Learning 289
14.4 CONCLUSION 290

REFERENCES 293

APPENDICES 312

List of Figures

FIGURE 1: SUMMARY OF RESEARCH DESIGN 35
FIGURE 2: PRE-PROJECT STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS 36
FIGURE 3: PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION 37
FIGURE 4: STUDENT INTERVIEWS 38
FIGURE 5: AN EXAMPLE OF CODING LEVELS 53
FIGURE 6: A MAP OF GREATER SYDNEY WITH PENRITH INDICATED 64
FIGURE 7: MCLAUGHLIN'S CITIZENSHIP CONTINUUM 136
FIGURE 8: MINIMAL VS MAXIMAL APPROACHES TO CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION 138
FIGURE 9: COGAN AND MORRIS' CONCEPTION OF MAXIMAL VS MINIMAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION 139
FIGURE 10: MORRIS AND COGAN'S MULTI-DIMENSIONAL CITIZENSHIP MODEL 142
FIGURE 11: THE VENN DIAGRAM 203
FIGURE 12: FILMS SHOWN AT THE FILM FESTIVAL 212
FIGURE 13: FEATURES OF JUSTICE CITIZENS 276
FIGURE 14: CONNECTING CRITICAL PEDAGOGY AND COMPLEXITY THEORY 286
FIGURE 15: JUSTICE PEDAGOGY 291

ABSTRACT

Civics and citizenship education remains a topical and highly contested field in Australia and around the world. In this thesis the focus is on education seeking to build the capacity of citizens to actively participate in and strengthen democracies as opposed to citizenship that is aligned only to an existing ruling regime and nation-state. The latter is predicated on 'thin' citizenship; that is, on the mechanics and institutions of existing government sanctioned authority, rather than focusing on the issues and ideas that matter to ordinary young people. This thesis explores an alternative and 'thick' approach to civics and citizenship education. In *Justice Citizens,* Australian year 9 students from western Sydney were challenged to investigate a topic in their communities related to the theme of justice. Students researched, planned, shot and edited films related to their chosen topics, which including themes like refugees, bullying, domestic violence and teen pregnancy. These films were exhibited at a film festival, and also published on social media.

Through this process, I engaged in a critical ethnography to identify how this alternative program assisted in the development of active or justice-oriented citizens. In order to formulate these thoughts, I developed a series of research portraits that depicted telling moments from the program, as well as conducting interviews with the students involved and other stakeholders. Based on this data, I developed a framework for critical citizenship education that I have called Justice Pedagogy. Justice pedagogy describes an approach to civics and citizenship education that draws on critical pedagogy in order to encourage the development of justice-oriented citizenship. Justice pedagogy identifies six key features: experiential education, student-led, and action oriented learning, the role of school-community partnerships, the development of critical literacy and advocacy for systemic change. In order to navigate the challenges facing critical pedagogical approaches, justice pedagogy has also drawn on concepts from complexity theory (emergent learning, self-organising systems and distributed decision making).

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE THESIS

I have a long history of working with marginalised youth, both as a teacher and a community worker. I have worked with students from indigenous backgrounds, students who are affected by substance abuse and students from low socio-economic communities. I have become incensed at how much of the education system is failing to meet their needs, and is instead developing a learned helplessness amongst these students. Education serves to act against these students' own interests by limiting their opportunities, rather than being a tool for empowerment to allow them to change their lives for the better. In this thesis I actively seek to draw together the ideas of citizenship, empowerment and education to identify the ways these concepts influence each other in a formal educational context. This chapter begins with an introduction to my study. I then briefly outline its aims and significance, as well as my positionality as a researcher. The final section of the chapter describes the organisation of my thesis, including a brief overview of the remaining chapters.

1.1 Introduction

Liberal democratic states have always placed a high value on civic engagement. In the years leading to 2000, Australia, Canada, Singapore and the United Kingdom, amongst other countries, were reviewing the provision of civics and citizenship education in schools and in the community. However, while these different states might agree on the importance of such education, their reasons for encouraging active citizenship and including a civics curriculum in formal education have differed greatly, ranging from the importance of engagement in preserving democracy to arguments about the need to develop a sense of national identity. For an example of the importance of engagement, one might consider the words of the former Lord Chancellor of the UK, Derry Irvine, who said in 1998,

> We should not, must not, dare not, be complacent about the health and future of British democracy. Unless we become a nation of engaged citizens, our democracy is not

> secure. (Department for Education and Employment/Qualifications and Curriculum Authority 1999, p. 8)

The Crick Report (DfEE/QCA 1999) required that Civics was to be taught in all schools in England. While the report does briefly comment upon the importance of developing a sense of national identity, it is rather more focused on activist notions of civics and citizenship. In describing the future Civics education program, the report argues that

> It is obvious that all formal preparation for citizenship in adult life can be helped or hindered by the ethos and organisation of a school, whether pupils are given opportunities for exercising responsibilities and initiatives or not; and also whether they are consulted realistically on matters where their opinions can prove relevant both to the efficient running of a school and to their general motivation for learning (DfEE/QCA 1999, p. 25).

In respect to developing a sense of national identity more broadly, Canadian human rights scholar Marshall Conley (1989) has argued that the most important role of public education is to 'train citizens' (p. 137). Keith McLeod (1989), writing of the Canadian education system, outlines how citizenship education has been placed at the heart of the education system as a tool to create a national identity and 'a feeling of being one people different from all other people' (p. 6). Singapore currently attempts to straddle both goals – seeking to equip students with both an understanding of the importance of Singapore as a nation, but also to equip them with the skills and values required for success in a rapidly globalising world. Wing On Lee (2014) writes 'citizenship education not only serves as a means for nation-building but also as the country's active response to the challenges of globalization' (p. 97).

The reason for the great importance placed upon civic engagement in Australia, as described by governments through policy documents and ministerial statements, is related to the assumption (as proposed by the Australian Government, in *The Melbourne Declaration,* 2008) that, for a democratic nation to be successful, it is important for every citizen to take an active interest in the affairs of the state, develop an informed point of view, and then guide the governance of that state; that is, to become 'active and informed citizens' (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs [MCEETYA] 2008, p. 11). This view has prevailed, even as modern forms of representative democracy supplant participatory democracies, and has emphasised the importance of an active and informed citizenry for the effective

functioning of democracy and a maximal approach (that is, one that is activist, student-centred and focused on practice) to civics and citizenship education (McLaughlin 1992). It provided the rationale used to establish Citizenship as a separate subject in the national curriculum in the UK (DfEE/QCA 1998) and to develop *Discovering Democracy*, an Australian program set up shortly after (Curriculum Corporation 1998). Despite these lofty ideals, in Australia, where I situated my project, this rhetoric about activism was not often matched by classroom practices, with the result that civics and citizenship education became a teacher-centred, didactic affair that failed to meet its goals (MCEECDYA, 2006). I discuss these failures and the reasons for them in Chapter 4.

It should be noted that the state is not the only participant in the discussions about citizenship education. Other organisations, in particular charities and non-government organisations, have long histories of engaging in public education about civics and citizenship. For example, Amnesty International has sought to teach civics and citizenship through the prism of human rights education via the *Right Here, Right Now* program (Ministry of Justice 2009), the United Nations Environmental Program has been heavily involved in the development of global environmental citizenship (Barcena 1998), and the Brookings Institution is seeking to measure the effectiveness of global citizenship education as well as provide a set of tools to deliver it effectively (Anderson & Bhattacharya 2017).

For the state, the primary method for the transmission of civics and citizenship knowledge has been its formal education systems. Thomas Jefferson (1999), for example, argued that public education was vital in democratic society if constitutional abuses were to be avoided. For a number of possible reasons, including what David Kerr (1999, p. 2) has called the 'millennium effect', the perceived importance of civic engagement has been increasing. In the decade leading up to 2000, more than 25 countries, including Australia, the United Kingdom, South Korea and the United States, were involved in a systematic review (Kerr 1999) of how their educational institutions developed civic engagement and understanding. Governments from these countries deployed a range of educational strategies that were purportedly aimed at educating their citizens about their rights and responsibilities, and outlining

why it is important for citizens to be active in the state's democracy (Kerr 1999, p. 3).

For reasons of utility and cost effectiveness, much state-sponsored civics and citizenship education has taken place within the confines of formal schooling. Governments recognise that schooling provides a window of opportunity for the inculcation of the knowledge, values and attitudes they deem important for students at particular times. The countries listed above have always had an element of civics and citizenship education in their formal schooling (for more on international comparisons, see Kerr 1999 or Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Losito & Agrusti 2016), although its content, purpose and nature varied over time. The reasons for this variance are simple to explain, but considerably harder to address: while governments might agree on the importance of education in the development of democratically minded citizens, there is little agreement amongst educators, scholars and policy-makers about how this should happen. A further complication is the wide variety of non-governmental organisations, social movements and advocacy groups that undertake informal civics and citizenship education on a broader scale. An example is WorldVision Australia's *Get Connected* campaign (2015), which includes television advertisements describing the plight of some of the world's poorest communities and the range of resources that teachers might incorporate into their classrooms.

A brief study of the history of civics and citizenship education in Australia illustrates a variety of approaches. In New South Wales, for example, shortly after the establishment of Federation in 1901, civics education was delivered through what was called Moral Education, a subject taught to all primary school students. Through to the end of World War II, this subject placed a great deal of emphasis on patriotism, military service and obedience, all of which were designed to foster the close links to Britain, the 'mother country', that were deemed vital to Australia's survival in the first half of the 20th century (Krinks, 1999).

During the 1950s and 1960s, with attitudes changing in response to Australia's increasing ethnic mix, civics education emphasised the importance of diversity, assimilation and harmony. The White Australia Policy remained in place until 1972, but as Kalantzis (1989) writes:

> Although the original official intention of Australia's post-war immigration programme had been cultural and linguistic homogeneity, the end result has been extraordinary diversity. (p. 2)

Education systems had an important role to play in creating the conditions that allowed this diversity to be seen as positive. Regarding the role of education and its use by the state as a means of social construction, Kalantzis (1989) writes:

> In fact, at each stage in the development of Australian policy, the state has always seen education this way: as one of the most important places where the real work of assimilation, or integration, or multiculturalism – whatever the policy at the time happened to be – took place. (p. 4)

By the 1970s, civics education as a separate subject had almost completely disappeared from the school curriculum and its content was subsumed by the social studies model as increasing numbers of migrants came to Australia, and multiculturalism was established as a national policy by the Whitlam government in 1972 (Print & Grey 2000).

The 1990s brought about a renewed interest in civics and citizenship education. Prime Minister Paul Keating was seeking to build support for an Australian republic, and his government recognised the need to encourage support for a referendum on this matter through the schooling system. Keating commissioned two Senate reports that identified a widespread ignorance of civic and citizenship issues among Australians, particularly young people (Senate Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training 1989, 1991). This discovery led to the formation of the Civics Expert Group and the instituting of *Discovering Democracy*, a national curriculum for students in Years 3 to 10 that was aimed at correcting what became known as the 'civics deficit'. *Discovering Democracy* ran from 1997 until approximately 2007, when it was replaced by *Values Education*. By every measure, *Discovering Democracy* was a failure. In its final report on the matter, the Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) (2006) concluded that *Discovering Democracy* had failed to make an impact at the classroom level; just over half of the students surveyed had reached the minimum standard in Year 5, and the results for Year 10 were even lower.

There has been considerable debate about why *Discovering Democracy* was a failure. Kerry Kennedy (1997) pointed to an insufficient focus on the things that were important to young people. Other academics (for example,

O'Loughlin, 1997) argued that the content matter – the history of Australian democracy and its political institutions – was not the best way to engage young people in the process of becoming active citizens or, indeed, activists. David Zyngier (2003) suggested that it did not appeal to students because, for the most part, the delivery of *Discovering Democracy* was didactic and minimalist. According to these critics, a more maximal approach to the teaching of civics and citizenship would have yielded better results (Heggart 2012).

Regardless of the reasons for the failure of *Discovering Democracy*, civics and citizenship education remains important to state and federal governments in Australia. As part of the *Melbourne Declaration*, the 'development of active and informed citizens' (MCEETYA 2008, p. 8) was touted as one of the two main goals of the Australian education system. In addition, civics and citizenship education has an important place in the Australian Curriculum (The Australian Curriculum v 7.4, 2015), which has been implemented in schools in Australia since 2014.

Given the perceived importance of civics and citizenship education for politicians, policy makers, educators and students, in this thesis I address questions such as:

- What are the elements of active citizenship, and what pedagogical strategies best develop these elements?
- What are the links between developing active citizenship and pedagogical approaches that emphasise student voice and democratic education?
- What parts should Australian schools play in the development of an active and informed citizenry?
- How can schools embrace the pedagogical approaches needed to develop active citizenship?
- What is the relationship between active citizenship and justice oriented citizenship?

My research is theoretically positioned among the new wave of Australian civics and citizenship educators who are researching young peoples' experiences of citizenship and developing innovative ways to encourage it. These scholars include James Arvanitakis (2008), Rosalyn Black (2010), Eckersley, Cahill, Wierenga and Wyn (2007), Johanna Wyn and Anita Harris (2004), David Zyngier (2007) all of whom have begun to explore the questions outlined above – and many more – from the perspective of students. Eckersley

et al (2007), for example, identified that the characterisation of young people as 'ignorant' and 'apathetic' was problematic. I agree with this point of view that young people are a heterogeneous group with a wide variety of engagement and knowledge levels. Furthermore, the increase in technology and globalisation has problematised traditional notions of citizenship and belonging. Young people today are more likely to see themselves as 'global' or 'digital' citizens, and they are also more likely to embrace social movements rather than traditional political parties. The growth of organisations like GetUp is an example. Kieran Morris (2011), writing in the conservative *Quadrant* magazine, describes the popularity of GetUp:

> In Australia, the best-known version of the phenomenon has been GetUp, the so-called independent, progressive, community advocacy organisation whose antics captured the limelight in both the 2007 and 2010 federal elections. GetUp now claims a membership in excess of 400,000, mainly young people who owe no permanent allegiance to either side of politics but who are determined to change the current agenda to reflect their own interests (para. 2).

The desire to build upon the new understandings and interactions young people have with civics and citizenship has led to the development of what might be called 'alternative civics and citizenship education programs' in Australia and other countries. Such programs generally seek to engage young people in civics and citizenship matters through actual democratic practice and community-based activism, rather than the didactic pedagogy that characterised much of *Discovering Democracy's* implementation. An example from Australia is the *ruMAD?* program devised by Zyngier (2011), which encourages young people to take action about community issues. This program and the principles that underlie it are analysed in Chapter 5 where I identify how they informed the development of *Justice Citizens*, the youth participatory research project at the heart of this study (Heggart, 2012). Other similar programs will also be discussed in Chapter 5.

Justice Citizens is similar in some ways to the *ruMAD?* program. Taking the failure of *Discovering Democracy* as its starting point, *Justice Citizens* is an attempt to develop justice-oriented citizens within the confines of the formal high school education system. This study uses the term 'justice-oriented citizens', rather than the more common 'active citizens', because it better expresses the purpose of such a civic education program, in that a good citizen of a democracy should be working towards justice, rather than being simply

active. 'Active' lacks the criticality that I believe is vital for citizens in a democracy. The term 'justice-oriented' is drawn from the work of Joel Westheimer and Joseph Kahne (2004a,b), whose research will be discussed later.

1.2 Overview of the Research Site

Justice Citizens took place over six months during 2012 at a medium-sized (approximately 800 students) secondary school in Greater Western Sydney. McCarthy Catholic College (established 1986) is situated in Penrith City Council, which has an Index of Community Socio-Economic Advantage (ICSEA) rating of 1001 – a close to average rating for Australia. It should be mentioned, however, that the school draws students from a wide range of surrounding suburbs, including some that are significantly below average in terms of the ICSEA rating. At the time of my research the school had a teaching staff of almost 50. It also had issues with both poor attendance and poor academic results, with only 13% of students at McCarthy performing in the highest quartile for academic achievement, according to the 2011 NAPLAN (National Assessment Plan for Literacy and Numeracy) data.

Justice Citizens deployed a youth participatory action approach to civics and citizenship education. Students in Year 9 (ages 14 to 15 years) were involved in the project, which ran for one hour every two weeks for approximately 20 weeks. Students were also invited to attend optional after-school events and workshops. A select number of students were interviewed before the project began and at the conclusion of the project. Students also kept records of their learning via blogs and journals. In addition, after each lesson teachers kept detailed field notes.

During the *Justice Citizens* program, students worked in small groups to identify a social justice issue or other community-based issue they believed was important, and then they made a film about the issue. The purposes of the films ranged from raising awareness to actual attempts to change society in a positive way, for example, by changing the way community members treated refugees or young mothers. Interviews were conducted with stakeholders to explore the various models, approaches and philosophies of education that could help developing active citizenship among young people. These stakeholders were teachers, principals, parents, students and ex-students, and people who worked

in both formal and informal capacities with social movements and youth groups.

1.3 Aims of the Study

This thesis is a philosophical and empirical exploration of the ways that formal educative models and institutions aid (or do not aid) the development of justice-oriented citizens. It is a context-dependent study located within a secondary school in Western Sydney and is intentionally situated close to the practice of educators, and specifically civics and citizenship educators. *Justice Citizens*, a research and film-making student project, took place during normal school lessons and hours. This project formed the basis for my research into the development of justice-oriented citizenship among Australian youth. I chose this site because I felt that if this study was to make an informed contribution to the debate about civics and citizenship education, it needed to take place in an 'ordinary' school environment – as much as any such place can exist. It also needed to involve students from different social and ethnic groupings. In this respect, it is hard to find a more ideal location than a high school in Western Sydney. Furthermore, I am privileging the practice-oriented knowledge of the teachers, youth workers, activists, and arts and cultural practitioners such as hip-hop artists by investigating the ways their practices intersect with the development of justice-oriented citizenship.

In summary, this thesis explores the possibilities and challenges that are faced in the development of a 'thick' citizenship education program for Australian Stage 5 students (Years 9 and 10) in the digital age through a youth participatory action research project using student-developed short films. In this context, I am using thick to refer to the maximal ideas of citizenship mentioned earlier, but I have used 'thick' rather than 'maximal' because it is a term that captures a wider dimension of meaning. This is similar to the way that Luis Gandin & Michael Apple (2002) have used the term thick democracy. Using semi-structured interviews, I have explored stakeholders' points of view regarding the state of civics and citizenship education inside and outside schools. By interrogating current practitioners on the basis of their experiences with young people in a range of civics and citizenship educational forums, I have been able to document the current practice of civics and citizenship education as well as highlighting other areas of concern in this field.

My findings, as well as other theoretical influences, have provided valuable guidance for the continuing construction and implementation of *Justice Citizens*. Drawing these strands together has not only shown me how young people in Western Sydney 'did' citizenship – or at least what they thought was citizenship – but also informed my understanding of what a program seeking to develop justice-oriented citizenship might look like. I have developed these findings into a conceptual map of critical citizenship education called justice pedagogy.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Since the earliest iterations of democracy, politicians and philosophers have recognised that the education of citizens plays an important role in the governing of the state - for an example, see Plato's *Republic (*Plato, Grube & Reeve 1992). The idea that education was linked to democracy is based on the principle that, if the citizens of a particular nation state are the ones who are going to decide upon a course of action through debate and voting, then it is necessary to ensure they had a firm grasp of the issues; thus, citizenship requires an educative component. Such a position been espoused by scholars like John Dewey in *Democracy and Education* (1916). As mentioned earlier, the state is not the only actor in this space with a desire to educate citizens: social movements and advocacy groups have a history of trying to influence peoples' viewpoints through education.

With democracies in most Western states having become more representative than participatory over the 20th century (for a more detailed discussion of this shift, see Keane 2009), one might imagine that the emphasis on the development of active citizenship through education might have lessened to reflect this. In fact, there is no evidence to suggest this is the case. As mentioned earlier, countries like Australia and South Korea (Kerr, 1999), whose governments are considerably more representative than participatory, emphasise the importance of citizens being both active and informed. This recognises that, in addition to the matter of choosing government through the voting process, citizens have other obligations and responsibilities, all of which contribute to the development of the public sphere. This shared space and the contributions that it makes to the good of society have been analysed at length by scholars such as Levine (2007). One possible reason for this recognition is

that, while governments in the modern era might favour representative forms of democracy, there is still an important role for participatory democracy, as is seen in the robust and strong civil societies of South Korea and Australia. Both countries have long histories of social movements and protests, which have no doubt informally educated their citizens about their roles as much as formal education has done.

Formal civics and citizenship education in Australia has reflected this broader debate. With no single agreed definition of what constitutes civics and citizenship education, or of what it should include, the curriculum has oscillated between a number of different extremes. At times, a heavily content-based approach has been adopted, with an emphasis on teaching people to understand the ways that government and its institutions work (Kemp, 1997). At other times, there has been an emphasis on a more activist, community-based and participatory model (Senate Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training, 1989, 1991).

Any program of citizenship education can be examined through an analysis of two factors: the content of what is taught, and the pedagogy employed in the teaching. Both of these factors play an important role in developing young people's knowledge and agency, and neither should be discounted. However, in Australia debate has centred more on curriculum than pedagogy – see, for example, the arguments that accompanied the Australian Government's *Values Education* (2007) initiative where there was a lot more discussion and argument about what constituted Australian values, rather than how one might encourage the development of such values amongst school children. To my mind, this is a serious gap in the research, and it is my hope that this thesis will go some way towards starting a discussion around the appropriateness of pedagogical approaches. It should also be noted that it is not so easy to separate curriculum and pedagogy – each influences the other – but for the purposes of identifying an area where more research is required, I adopt this simplification while exploring ways the two can be woven together effectively.

Discovering Democracy exemplifies this problem, the program having been delivered in a didactic manner encouraged by the course materials and lesson plans provided by Curriculum Corporation. According to McLaughlin (1992), *Discovering Democracy* was generally delivered in a 'thin' fashion, where

the emphasis was on didactic, teacher-centred, non-participatory approaches. Such an approach uncritically communicates the dominant ideologies of the ruling classes to youth, who, for the most part, are encouraged to accept them without interrogating the qualities that underpin them.

Drawing on traditions of popular education and critical pedagogy, scholars like Paulo Freire (1974) and Henry Giroux (1988b) made it clear that schools and courses that claim to be free from any particular ideology are anything but. It is impossible for curriculum to be value neutral; claims to the contrary work to support the status quo. Value-laden ideologies are present in schools in at least two forms. First, there is the hidden curriculum (Jackson 1968), which according to Bain (1985), is the process by which the 'day-to-day conduct of schooling seemed to be a powerful mechanism for transmitting beliefs and values to children' (p. 146). Examples of this hidden curriculum might include expectations of certain kinds of clothing, appropriate ways to address those in management, attendance and the expected standards of schoolwork. In addition, ideology is present in the actual content of lessons. This is apparent in the privileging of certain kinds of knowledge over others, for example, by teaching about Shakespeare but not hip-hop students are learning that one form of knowledge is more valuable than another.

This thesis seeks to explore the other side of this debate. With *Discovering Democracy* acknowledged as a failure by teachers, academics and ultimately even the Australian Government (MCEETYA 2006), it is now appropriate to explore ways that civics and citizenship education might be delivered to students and how such educational practices might shape the next generation of Australian citizens. In particular, it is important to recognise that the voices of students have been marginalised in the past. Instead, they have been treated as objects to be acted upon by their teachers and the curriculum, rather than as subjects with agency.

1.5 The Research Question

Although civics and citizenship education has a long history in Australia and in many other Western democracies, it has remained a contested and confused field. This history of civics and citizenship education will be discussed later in this thesis, but it suffices to say at this time that the confusion is

reflected in both the range of pedagogical strategies employed by teachers and the large variations in content adopted in these teachers' classrooms.

The philosophy that informs the practice of civics and citizenship education also remains unclear, with much in the field still to be explored. One particular aspect that has been of great interest to scholars recently is the way that notions of social and cultural capital, and empowerment and citizenship are related. In Australia, for example, Zyngier (2011) has explored citizenship from the perspective of social and cultural capital; Choules (2007) has studied the ways that Freire's conceptions of empowerment might be adapted to a formal education institution; and Holdsworth (2007) has researched how young people might have more active and democratic roles in their schools through student action teams.

In this thesis, I actively seek to draw together the ideas of citizenship, empowerment and education to identify the ways these influence each other in a formal educational context. I attempt to synthesise these somewhat disparate strands. After describing the failure of a minimalist program like *Discovering Democracy*, I propose a new conceptual structure to the teaching of civics and citizenship education. I have called this new approach to civics and citizenship education justice pedagogy. This draws from the traditions of critical pedagogy and complexity theory, but is informed by my own research in schools and communities in Australia.

The principal research question for this study is: How might a critical pedagogy–inspired approach to citizenship education contribute to the development of justice-oriented youth?

Justice Citizens instigated such an approach, and used it as a tool to gather information about the interaction of the concepts outlined above. Justice Citizens was a curriculum intervention for Year 9 sutdents at a school in Western Sydney. Students took part in structured series of in- and out-f school activities where they investigated an issue related to justice, speaking to community members, film-makers and journalists, before creating a film about the topic that was shown to the community at a film festival.

It should be stated that at no time do I suggest that formal education can 'create' active citizens or justice-oriented youth by itself. Such a process is more likely to be a mix of factors, only some of which are present in the educational system. Nor is the idea of being a justice-oriented youth a badge to be earned or

an accolade to be presented with – rather, activism is a process of continuously acting in a certain way, and there are likely to be levels of activism.

The primary research question introduces further themes that are of interest in this project. As a teacher, I am curious about the ways that my model of citizenship might be implemented in formal educational settings should it prove to be successful. Linked to this is the importance of various literacies – critical, media, film and digital literacies – and in what ways these can be developed with young people. In addition, I am curious about the ways that these literacies can be demonstrated by young people through the films they make.

I am also keen to learn how teachers who are currently delivering civics and citizenship education in schools feel about their pedagogical practices and how the curriculum should be delivered. As well, there is tension to resolve between the principles of critical pedagogy and 'traditional' models of schooling.

Finally, I am interested in how technology might mediate the development of justice-oriented youth. As part of the research project, students used digital technology to make their films (including shooting, editing and presenting) and then reflect on the process through blogs. The development of justice-oriented citizens is therefore intrinsically linked with the means of production. I acknowledge that young people are spending more time utilising digital technologies than did previous generations, and this is important to consider in terms of the development of justice-oriented citizens.

In line with these interests, I will explore the following four subsidiary research questions in my study:

1. How might a critical pedagogy–inspired approach to citizenship education be implemented in a formal educational setting?
2. How important are the various literacies – critical, media, film and digital – to the development of justice-oriented youth?
3. How can these literacies be developed by young people through the products of their own research products and film-making work?
4. How does technology mediate the development of justice-oriented youth?
5. What is the relationship between active citizenship and justice oriented citizenship?

1.6 Preliminary comments about my positionality

It is important that I am clear about my own subjectivities. As a teacher who has worked in schools since 2002 in both the UK and Australia, I remain troubled by the lack of agency or control young people have over their schooling and the few opportunities they have for their voices to be heard in society. I therefore declare two assumptions that I make here. First, young people have a right to have their voices heard in society. Linked to this is the second assumption: in a Western liberal democracy like Australia it is essential for citizens to be critical, to be knowledgeable and to be active. These notions of voice and critical activism have naturally informed my approach to the development of justice-oriented youth.

1.7 Organisation of the Study

Below I document the way this thesis is structured.

1.7.1 Chapter One: Introduction to the Thesis

Here I set out the basic details of the research project, as well as explaining to the reader how this information will be presented. I will include a brief overview of the research site, a discussion about the aims and significance of the study, my research questions and the layout of the rest of the thesis.

1.7.2 Chapter Two: Methodology

This chapter deals with my methodological framework. I begin by establishing my research positionality, then I discuss the design of the research, as well as the methods that I employed to gather my data. I also include a discussion of my data analysis methods, including research portraiture, before concluding with a brief discussion of ethics, validities and the context of the research project, Greater Western Sydney.

1.7.3 Chapter Three: The Historical and Philosophical Arguments about Civics and Citizenship Education

This chapter discusses the long history of civics and citizenship education, tracing its development from antiquity to the modern era. It also recognizes the way that the definition of citizenship has expanded recently, to include notions

of active or global citizenship. In addition, I discuss, more narrowly, civics and citizenship education in Australia.

1.7.4 Chapter Four: The Current Climate for Civics and Citizenship

In this chapter, I present to the reader some of the current tensions in civics and citizenship in Australia, including the notion of a civics deficit, the success (or lack thereof) of programs like *Discovering Democracy*, and the current state of play for citizenship education in Australia.

1.7.5 Chapter Five: Alternative and Non-Government Organisation Forms of Civics and Citizenship Education

Whereas in previous chapters I have focused on government mandated approaches to civics and citizenship education, in this chapter I will discuss alternative approaches to civics and citizenship education, including Values Education, RUMad?, and social media.

1.7.6 Chapter Six: Contesting Definitions of Citizenship and Competing Theories of Civics and Citizenship Education

This chapter explores the different conceptions of civics and citizenship education in Australian and globally. I will discuss maximal citizenship education, multidimensional citizenship education and also justice-oriented citizens, amongst others.

1.7.7 Chapter Seven: Reviewing Traditions of Critical Pedagogy to Inform and Distinguish What I Label as Justice Pedagogy

There is a rich philosophical tradition about how social groups might enact power within their communities; in this chapter, I engage with critical notions of power, Foucauldian notions of power, feminist and critical race theory conceptions and other conceptions of empowerment in order to identify and explicate the theoretical standpoint upon which my research is based.

1.7.8 Chapter Eight: Changing Times, Changing Literacies

This chapter addresses the concept of different technological literacies, including how these literacies are relevant to the *Justice Citizens* project.

1.7.9 Chapter Nine: A Rich Description of the Justice Citizens Project
In this chapter, I will present 10 research portraits drawn from the *Justice Citizens* project. These research portraits will synthesize my ethnographic observation and interview learning and present my theorizing about civics and citizenship education in the form of research portraits. The purpose of these research portraits is to holistically communicate to the reader what happened and also what I learned through the conduct of *Justice Citizens.*

1.7.10 Chapter Ten: Thinking and Talking about Citizenship in Western Sydney
This chapter presents an analysis of the interviews with students and stakeholders pertaining to the way they think and discuss citizenship – active or otherwise – in Western Sydney.

1.7.11 Chapter Eleven: Prevailing Narratives about Citizenship Education
This chapter presents an analysis of the prevailing narratives of citizenship education as presented by adults and students.

1.7.12 Chapter Twelve: Student and Teacher Experiences of Citizenship Education
In this chapter, I discuss and analyse the different ways that teachers and students have experienced citizenship education, and what themes emerge from this analysis.

1.7.13 Chapter Thirteen: Appraising Justice Citizens
This chapter presents the analysis of the findings. Drawing on the synthesis of the literature reviews, the research project and the stakeholder interviews, I will describe and analyse some of the common themes. At this point in time, I will be exploring these themes through a conception of increased social and cultural capital, so I will be looking at how each of the themes identified below reflects that increased social and cultural capital, and how social and cultural capital might link to the development of different kinds of citizenship.

1.7.14 Chapter Fourteen: Conclusion – Justice Pedagogy
This chapter is the conclusion. It summarizes the findings from the research and identifies how they have contributed to the theory of civics and citizenship education. It then describes what this new understanding of theory means for

the practice of civics and citizenship education in formal school settings. Finally, this chapter concludes by identifying themes and avenues that require further research, as well as outlining my theory of critical citizenship education, *Justice Pedagogy*.

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

The significant and distinct contribution I hope to make to the body of research about citizenship education is based on the close and detailed attention I pay to the experiences and voices of students, frontline teachers and other stakeholders. Much of the research into *Discovering Democracy* (the civics and citizenship education program for school students implemented by the Australian Government in 1997), especially the government-led research (MCEETYA 2006) has been characterised by large-scale surveys and standardised assessment analyses that looked for content knowledge (for example, the mechanisms for passing a law, or the roles of the different levels of government), rather than the requirements of active citizenship. I will outline in more detail *Discovering Democracy* and other approaches to civics and citizenship education and their limitations in Chapters Four and Five. Many of these projects also lacked reference to students learning in a digital age, which is a notable exclusion when the relationship between democracy and citizenship is constantly changing due to the influence of technologies (Coleman 2007; Loader, Vromen & Xenos 2014).

To address these gaps, scholars like Anita Harris, Johanna Wyn and Salem Younes (2008) at Melbourne University's Youth Research Centre and Alex Lin (2015), have explored civics and citizenship education from a student-centred, local perspective, including interviewing both teachers and students about their perspectives. However, much of this research has generally been in the form of evaluative case studies of specific projects (e.g. Schultz, Guevara, Ratnam, Wierenga, Wyn & Sowerby 2009). While valuable, these case studies do not theorise much about the nature of citizenship and the conditions that encourage justice-oriented citizenship.

I am seeking to explore the ways formal educational opportunities might assist in the development of a particular kind of active citizen – a justice-oriented citizen (Westheimer & Kahne 2004a). While Westheimer and Kahne have defined the concept of justice-oriented citizens, my work attempts to develop and implement a pedagogical theory that supports the development of this model of citizenship. Furthermore, I am conscious that conceptions of citizenship are changing as our understanding of civil society is altered by

technology, and so this definition also engages with the way young people enact citizenship digitally, as well as physically.

My study explores the possibilities and challenges for 'thick' citizenship education amongst Australian Stage 5 students in a digital age. I have specifically chosen Stage 5 as the site for my research because it is a middle stage of high school in Australia. It covers Years 9 and 10, when students are generally between 14 and 16 years old. At this age, young people are beginning to become more aware of their role in civil society and in their communities, but are still considered to be citizens-in-waiting (Maitles & Gilchrist 2004; Weller 2007), rather than full participants, whereas older students in Stage 6 either have some level of citizenship (by being over the age of 18) already or are very close to it.

In this chapter, I begin by briefly outlining the history of positivist and realist research into civics and citizenship education. I then describe and discuss my ontological and epistemological perspectives. I explain the qualitative research methodologies I adopted, particularly the critical ethnographic tradition and the application of research portraiture. I explore some of the current debates surrounding these methodologies and describe my own position as a researcher within these debates. Following this, I describe the research design, including the site of the research, how I staged it, and the tools I used to gather data, namely, participant observation, interviews with students and stakeholders, and research portraiture. I then describe how I analysed the data, including how I used research portraiture. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the ethical issues that I encountered during the research project, as well as a few remarks about questions of validity within qualitative research and a brief description of the geographical and cultural context of the research project.

Before discussing the methodological framework, I wanted to make a brief point about the structure of the thesis. I have chosen to place this methodology chapter directly after the introduction, as opposed to after the literature review, as is more common. This is a strategic decision; I feel that the literature reviews flow directly into the research portraits, as this method was directly informed by the reviews. It would make the rest of this thesis disjointed to separate the two.

2.2 Methodological Framework

2.2.1 A history of realist and positivist research about citizenship education in Australia

Much of the research into civics and citizenship education has been heavily weighted towards positivist and realist interpretations. There are many examples of this, but a number of recent ones are worth examining. One of the most common methods of civics and citizenship research is to undertake a civic literacy survey. These surveys (e.g. MCEECDYA 2006) take the form of a test that assesses content knowledge about the structures and mechanisms of civics, or the history of Australian democracy. Topics covered might include identifying the first Australian Prime Minister, the different roles of the levels of government, or what needs to happen for a referendum to succeed.

Civic literacy surveying was the mechanism used by Paul Keating, the former Prime Minister of Australia, when he established the Civics Expert Group in 1994 (Krinks 1999). Their initial research found that 90% of young people did not know what the Constitution covered, and 83% people did not know what the Cabinet was (Krinks 1999). Other surveys identified that almost half of young people aged 17 to 18 had little or no interest in politics (Krinks 1999). More recently, the Lowy Institute found that only 60% of Australians, and just 52% of young Australians 18-29 years of age, believe that 'democracy is preferable to any other kind of government' (Oliver 2017, p. 4).

These approaches to research into civics and citizenship are minimalist; they are based on the assumption that to be a good citizen one must know certain facts about the structure of the government and the laws that govern a country, and thus they establish a binary approach to civics and citizenship education: if one knows what the function of the Cabinet is, for example, one is deemed a good citizen, with the reverse also seen as true. I am not disagreeing with the idea that these things are important for students to learn, but I disagree strongly that these are the only, or even the best, measures of active citizenship. I can find no research that suggests that these realist and positivist approaches successfully identify precursors to active citizenship in any meaningful sense.

For example, in New South Wales (NSW) students learnt civics through the History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship subject. As part of the standard assessment program for all NSW students in Year 10 until 2011, students were required to recall facts about Australia's history. For example, from the 2011

test, students were asked to identify the reasons given by the government of the time for Australia's committing to the Korean War, as well as the chronological order of Australia's entry into various regional organisations. Such content-heavy curricula are easy to develop and assess because students undertaking them can be placed on a scale illustrating their knowledge about these issues. However, there is no guarantee that the knowledge they have gained will equate to either higher levels of activism or even 'good' citizenship – whatever is meant by that. This demonstrates the assumption that underpins many of the approaches to civics and citizenship research. I acknowledge that I am suggesting that the purpose of Civics and Citizenship education is to develop active citizens; this claim is based on the fact that the Melbourne Declaration, the planning document for the development of the Australian Curriculum, specifically refers to one of the main goals of schooling as being the development of active citizenship, and provides examples of students engaging in various forms of activism such as working for the common good or taking part in public life. Although activism is a somewhat loaded term, I feel that in both of those cases, people are taking action; therefore it is a form of activism and thus, active citizenship.

The NSW curriculum did attempt to provide opportunities for more in-depth responses to issues of civics and citizenship education. In the later parts of the examination, students were asked to analyse or interpret specific historical events. For example, in the 2011 examination, students were asked to explain why the Petrov Affair was considered an important event in Australia's response to the threat of communism. This is an interesting question, but one that is of more interest to historians than active citizens. Again, the context of active citizenship is viewed here from a realist perspective, that is, the extrapolation of what this question says about active citizenship tells us that an active citizen is an individual who can outline in detail events from Australia's past.

Previous examples of civics and citizenship research (Codd 2008; Cogan & Morris 2001; Dieltiens 2005; Down 2004; Sears 2008) have, for the most part, failed to acknowledge the contextual way that civics and citizenship education has changed, and continues to change, around the world. Such studies in Australia (most notably MCEECDYA 2006) adopt a realist approach to civics and citizenship education, in which good citizenship exists independently of

the human experience, and thus can be measured regardless of context. For example, in Australia, the report into the *Discovering Democracy* program (MCEECDYA 2006) placed students on a scale based on a mean score, which was then used to group them into five proficiency levels. Students in Year 5 were expected to reach level 2, where they should be able to

> recognise the division of governmental responsibilities in a federation, that respecting the right of others to hold differing opinions is a democratic principle, and can identify a link between a change in Australia's identity and the national anthem. (p xiii)

Students in Year 10 were expected to reach level 3, where they would be expected 'to demonstrate relatively precise and detailed factual responses to complex civics and citizenship concepts or issues, and some interpretation of information' (p xiii).

The NSW Board of Studies (BOS), now the New South Wales Education Authority (NESA) assessed Civics and Citizenship using a band model where a student at Band 6 (the highest) 'analyses information from a range of written and visual sources demonstrating a thorough knowledge of major historical events and a thorough understanding of continuity, change and causation' (BOS 2007, 'Performance Band Descriptors'), while a student at Band 2 'identifies information from some written and visual sources' (BOS 2007, 'Performance Band Descriptors'). Needless to say, these are narrow conceptions of active citizenship. Such positivist approaches ensure that only those measures (for example, factual knowledge), which can be easily assessed, are used in these wide-ranging assessment tasks, the corollary being that other equally valid measures of citizenship are not assessed and thus deemed less important.

Furthermore, political discourses on civics and citizenship have also brought up these same tropes and themes. Despite the change of the Federal government to a Liberal-National Coalition in 1996, the rhetoric of civics and citizenship education barely changed. According to Krinks

> [Liberal Minister] Kemp's outline of the education program appeared to be little different from those that had gone before. The focus remained on teaching students about the institutions of government, theories of democracy and the role of political leaders in shaping contemporary Australia. ('Discovering Democracy', para. 4)

More recently, the Abbott Liberal-National Party government instituted a review of the Australian Curriculum, but the rhetoric and structure of the civics and citizenship curriculum, with its emphasis on developing active citizenship

through the study of Australian government institutions and mechanics, remained unchanged (Adoniou, Louden, Zyngier & Riddle, 2014). I will dissect these policies in more detail in Chapter Four but, for the moment, I present here a brief analysis of civics and citizenship education in Australia to demonstrate why I, as an educator, believe them to be impractical and illogical.

Civics and citizenship – and our understanding of the ways they are enacted in society and how educational institutions attempt to develop them – are dependent upon the context in which they are taught and the arenas in which citizens and students act. In its earliest forms in Australia, civics and citizenship education followed a very traditional model. Until the first half of the 20th century, a good citizen was patriotic and supportive of the British Empire, even to the extent that he or she would be willing to go to war to defend its interests, regardless of the distance one or the danger. Good citizenship included patriotism and military service, and it was heavily gendered towards masculine ideals of citizenship and public life. It was also almost totally white (Berlach 1996).

One may contrast this attitude with the significant changes that Australia underwent during the 1950s and 1960s. Beginning in the early 1950s, there was considerable civic activism about nuclear disarmament, with movements such as the Ban the Bomb' movement or the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament being prominent. In later decades, both the campaign against Apartheid in South Africa and the Vietnam War brought with it an increasing amount of protest and dissent, characteristics that then became associated with notions of participation in a democratic society and therefore what it meant to be a citizen. Furthermore, there was an increase in activism on other issues, such as multiculturalism and Indigenous rights. The 1965 Freedom Rides and the 1967 Referendum on Aboriginal Citizenship are two examples of the new ways active citizenship was being conceived as markedly different.

More recently, there have been other changes to the ways we conceive citizenship. The increase of globalisation and the pervasive influence of technology means that scholars, politicians and the general public have now begun to talk about global citizenship and digital citizenship (Davies & Pike 2009). There are particular approaches to digital citizenship embraced by young people, along with a growing recognition of the roles young people play in civic life. As a critical pedagogue, I recognise the inherently political nature of

education, and I feel that one of the purposes of education is to challenge existing power inequities (Giroux 2007). I felt it was important to draw on these realities to design my research project. Later in this chapter I attempt to explicate the geographical, political and cultural contexts of the *Justice Citizens* project so that readers can understand the particular model of justice-oriented citizenship I am seeking to develop.

Our understanding of citizenship is mediated by the lived experiences of people, and thus citizenship will be both socially and contextually located. This is one reason that civics and citizenship education remains so contested. In addition, I align myself with the nominalist point of view (that is to say, rejecting universal ideas as being unrepresented in any reality) of recent Australian citizenship scholars who have begun to explore the meaning of citizenship in different cultures and contexts. Harris, Wyn and Younes (2008), for example, have identified that the most important influences on young Australians are not the representatives of formal government but rather their own families, friendship groups and schools. It is among these groups that young people formulate their beliefs about active citizenship:

> This suggests that they are engaged with social and political issues, but they are discussing these in more informal networks and places where they already feel comfortable and like they belong, and where they feel they have a good chance of being heard. (p. 24)

I take the view that any attempt to engage with young people should begin from this position, rather than one determined by policy makers, which might well be foreign to the students involved. Sharing their findings from the *Global Connections Program*, Schultz et al. (2009) suggest that the most effective approach to civics and citizenship education (on either a global or a local scale) is to begin with the sites of importance to young people:

> The groups exchange communication pieces about issues of significance to them. The participants choose how they communicate, usually in the form of letters posters, short films, and drawing that discuss issues of importance to the group. (p. 1026)

Both of these examples identify a crucial point about civics and citizenship education: regardless of how formal documents like *The Melbourne Declaration* (MCEETYA 2008) might define it, students will interact with definitions upon their own terms, and thus redefine active citizenship as something they feel is appropriate to their context within society. This is reflective of the developing global understanding about citizenship and the

way ‘good citizenship’ is now defined. Cogan and Morris (2001), in a study of a range of countries that included Australia, Japan, Taiwan, Thailand, Hong Kong and the United States of America (USA), recognised that being a 'good citizen' can mean very different things to respective governments. For example,

> These differences reflected a fundamental distinction between a conception of civics education that stressed commitment to a specific and preconceived set of ‘good’ citizen values and one which stresses active participation in civic action, democratic processes and social enhancement. (p. 122)

Cogan and Morris identified that in many of the countries they examined there are significant differences between schools as to how citizenship is interpreted. In Australia, for example, some schools delivered a ‘citizenship for survival’ approach, while others taught ‘citizenship as leadership’. These ideas are discussed in more detail in Chapter Six.

2.2.2 An Interpretive and Critical Approach

In line with my assertion that there is no single definition of ‘good’ citizenship, I seek to research the multiple perspectives and contestations about the meaning of citizenship. For this reason, I adopt the perspective that studying the nature of citizenship requires an understanding – and valuing – of subjectivist knowledge. Furthermore, I am particularly interested in exploring whether various pedagogical approaches might encourage the development of justice-oriented citizens and how these approaches interact with young peoples' own understandings of how they enact citizenship. Such questions are not easily understood from the positivist perspective; while particular behaviours that signify justice-oriented citizenship might be observable, positivist research would likely lead to only a superficial understanding of the factors that influence justice-oriented citizenship and its development. To gain this deeper understanding, I needed to engage with the less-apparent reasons for young people acting as they do. Hence, my work lies along the continuum between interpretivist and critical approaches to knowledge.

In this section I will first address the interpretive axis of my work, and then I will discuss the ways in which it is critical. I see my work as interpreting teachers', students' and other stakeholders' opinions about what it means to be an active citizen. I seek to reflect back their own understanding of these concepts in the narrative research portraits pieces presented in Chapter Nine.

A key aspect of my research is the fact that I was both an insider and an outsider. I was an insider because I was a teacher working within the school where I established the *Justice Citizens* program. Having been employed there for a number of years, I had direct knowledge of the way the school worked. Furthermore, I was responsible for teaching Human Society and Its Environment (HSIE) subjects, including Civics and Citizenship Education. I was a part of the school community in almost every way, yet I was also an outsider because I stood separate from the experience of students in the school. Though I taught them, my frame of reference for their experiences as students was very different from my own as a teacher. I explore these different socially constructed realities and experiences in this study (Walsham 1993).

I was also an insider to the *Justice Citizens* program itself. The course was taught in a participatory manner, with my role being much more of a facilitator than a traditional teacher. I did this specifically because I was making a 'studied commitment to actively enter into the worlds of interacting individuals' (Denzin 2009a, p. 8). I wanted to understand the experiences of the students in the course and the understandings and meanings that developed from it, but these were implicit and only accessible to insiders (Eisenhart 1988). Thus, it was important that I became an insider as much as possible, and this meant that *Justice Citizens* needed to be delivered in a manner that allowed for this.

More broadly, I was also an insider in terms of living and working in Greater Western Sydney (GWS), and specifically the suburb of Penrith. I will discuss the exact demographic and perceived nature of GWS in a later chapter but it is worth highlighting that it is an area distinct from other parts of Sydney, and hence has its own cultural perspectives, tropes and ways of making meaning. The fact that I had lived in Penrith for more than five years by the time *Justice Citizens* began meant that I was able to understand the suburb's particular concerns.

Another important focus for my study was exploring questions of power and oppression, and the ways that civics and citizenship education creates inequalities within our educational communities (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008). In particular, I sought to understand how a critical pedagogical approach to citizenship education empowers students to challenge injustice and inequality in their lives. I analysed curricular and pedagogical choices that either help or hinder the development of active citizenship, in the belief that

young peoples' voices have been, for the most part, absent from any discussion about these choices. In effect, citizenship education is something that is done to them, rather than something in which they have the opportunity to participate. This is a central theme of my study and I will discuss it in greater detail later in this chapter.

A particular deficiency of these discussions (at least at a formal, school-based level) is the way the internet and digital arena can act as tools for empowering young people. Although there has been much discussion about the role of social media upon activism and democratic participation, it has only recently become a topic of research (Fuchs 2014; Gauntlett 2015; Stommel 2014), which so far has shown that the way social media mediates participation and citizenship is complicated and contested.

Interviews and ethnographic observation featured heavily in my research project to gather information about young peoples' perceptions and understandings of and civics and citizenship education. As Golafhsani (2003) writes, 'Qualitative researchers have come to embrace their involvement and role within the research' (p. 601). And Patton (2002) argues that the involvement of the researcher is essential due to the rapidly changing nature of the real world – the site of the research.

2.2.3 The Advantages of Qualitative Research

Qualitative research in education came to prominence in the 1980s. Before this, most educational research had been done according to a quantitative-positivistic paradigm, but many citizenship researchers (for an example, see Nicoll, Fejes, Olson, Dahlstedt & Biesta 2013) became dissatisfied with this epistemology because, they argued, such an approach would generate superficial understandings of citizenship. Lichtman (2010) writes of early qualitative educational researchers: 'They were concerned that a traditional view of scientific research kept the voices of many silenced. Some were interested in personal responsibility, multiple views and verisimilitude, instead of objectivity and validity' (p. 8).

The notion of certain voices being silenced was important in my decision to take an interpretive and activist approach to my research. Lichtman (2010) suggests that 'some feminist researchers and some postmodernist researchers take a political stance as well and have an agenda that places the researcher in

an activist posture' (p. 12). This viewpoint is reflected in the *Justice Citizens* study. I work as an activist for student voice and empowerment, while at the same time trying to encourage further activism amongst young people. *Justice Citizens* is a research project with a specific goal of increasing student activism; this means that I am acting politically and critically, and not just passively observing.

Another element I have taken from Lichtman is the role of the political. For this study, where the very subject of the research necessitates engaging with issues of politics and power, I felt it was important to foreground its political nature and select a research approach that would enable such issues to be interrogated. I was also conscious that educational research is often something that is done to students, rather than something that is done with them; so by choosing qualitative approaches, I was hoping my study would be a collaborative process. As Rubin and Rubin (2005) have argued, in qualitative research the researcher has partners, rather than subjects.

Lichtman (2010) also theorises about the subjectivity of the researcher, who is described as the 'research tool' or the 'lens' through which the data is passed. Therefore, the researcher's perspectives, background and personal experiences are central to the interpretations of data gathered. For Lichtman, 'All information is filtered through the researcher's eyes and ears and is influenced by his or her experience, knowledges, skill and background' (p. 16). Lincoln and Guba (1985) extend this idea:

> The advantage of the 'human instrument' is his or her adaptability, responsiveness, knowledge, ability to handle sensitive matters, ability to see the whole picture, ability to clarify and summarise, to explore, to analyse, to examine atypical or idiosyncratic responses. (pp. 193-194)

Linked to the concept of socially constructed realities, mentioned earlier, is the idea that there are multiple ways of knowing something, all of which are valid. Qualitative methods allow researchers to better understand and interpret social interactions as they approach a study holistically, rather than focus on its individual aspects. Collection of data emphasises the gathering of words, stories and pictures. Lichtman (2010) writes: 'Descriptions, understanding, and interpretations are based on the data you collect and your ability to organise and integrate them to make a meaningful whole' (p. 16). Data analysis is thus more complex as the researcher needs to identify common themes and interpret the findings.

Furthermore, there are more complex issues of validity and 'rightness' in qualitative research. There is no 'getting it right'. Rather, there are many possible 'rights' and many ways of presenting them. I will discuss validity later in this chapter. Bias is another tricky issue within qualitative research; many qualitative researchers (Golafshani 2003; Madison 2005) would argue that bias will be present during data collection, and thus the best approach is to be honest about any such biases. This is the approach that I have chosen to take in this research project.

It is important to note that qualitative researchers usually engage in-depth studies of particular contexts, rather than wide-ranging analyses. In this research project, I studied a small group of students and another small group of teachers and stakeholders as I sought to understand why they acted and thought as they did. According to Lichtman, 'those who studied cultures, the ethnographers, took the position that thick description, a detailed description of culture, is desirable in order to see underlying meanings and understandings' (2010, p. 18). In order to provide such thick descriptions, I have done two things. First, the research portraits provided in the narrative chapter (Chapter Nine) are detailed descriptions of my experiences as a teacher-observer and interviewer. Second, in the data analysis chapters, I include large excerpts from the interviews I undertook with students, thereby allowing them to speak in their own words.

My experiences have shaped my approach to the research. I discuss my subjectivities more in the research portraits section of this Chapter but I will briefly outline here my own conceptual baggage here for the sake of completeness. As a high school teacher since 2003 I taught students from many socio-economic backgrounds, mostly working class. As a result of these experiences, I have developed a humanistic approach to education and a strongly felt commitment to social justice. I know that school education in Australia is not a level playing field, and students from working class backgrounds often have poorer outcomes at school. I believe that education should attempt to bridge this gap. There is no reason why a child attending a school in a lower socio-economic area shouldn't have the same educational opportunities as one attending an exclusive non-government school – or for that matter, one attending a public school in a middle class suburb.

Education has a role in constructing a more just and equitable society, and not just contributing to the economic success of a country. I am not alone in this belief; many scholars (e.g. Dewey 1916; Giroux 1998a; McLaren 1989; Morrell 2005) have shared the belief that education ultimately helps to shape society, and so the kinds of education that students experience is vitally important for their own futures and the future of society.

2.2.4 Critical Ethnography and an Activist Commitment

I believe that young people's voices have, for the most part, been marginalised from any discussions about civics and citizenship education; indeed, there has been little opportunity for them to contribute to our understanding of education as a whole. In this project I sought to provide a space for young peoples' voices to be heard. This principle is fundamental to the *Justice Citizens* program. Unlike government-mandated forms of civics and citizenship education, I am placing the curriculum in the hands of the students.

I privilege the knowledge of the marginalised in a critical way by adopting a form of ethnography known as critical ethnography to study the everyday lives and language of students as they engage with matters pertaining to civics and citizenship education, particularly the *Justice Citizens* program. In order to provide a more meaningful context, I use material drawn from interviews with other stakeholders and adapt Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot's (1983) work on research portraiture. Research portraiture, which I discuss in considerable detail later in this chapter, was considered by Lawrence-Lightfoot to be quite distinct from ethnography. I disagree; research portraiture's emphasis on self-determination and representation makes it an ideal fit with critical ethnographical methods of qualitative research.

The nature of the research topic required me to cast a wide net for data collection, one that was consistent with my broad definition of civics and citizenship. Those used to a definition that related simply to voting and paying taxes might not be aware that they are engaging in activities that could be classified as civics and citizenship. I therefore took a thorough approach to observation and interviewing. The best tool for this wide net is critical ethnography. In order to explicate and then describe the understandings I have gleaned, the ethnographic features of rich description and detailed interpretation are most suited for this task.

But this research project is more than simply ethnographic in nature; it is also critical. I am seeking to describe the culture of a specific group – the young people at McCarthy College – as they experienced a program of study called *Justice Citizens.* This situates the work firmly within the framework of ethnography, although there are a number of salient features, like research portraiture, that it borrows more broadly from other research traditions. This study also takes a critical approach as it specifically speaks to questions of power and oppression, as well as the ways the current civics and citizenship curriculum can limit opportunities for students to be active citizens now rather than in the future.

Ethnography is often limited by being described as simply an approach to fieldwork, but Blommaert and Jie (2010) refutes this. They argue that there are significant theoretical underpinnings in ethnographical studies:

> [It is] an approach in which systems were conceived as non-homogenous, composed of a variety of features and in which part-whole relationships were central to the work of interpretation and analysis. (p. 5)

This means that central to ethnography is the study of things that are of value to humans. The value of civics and citizenship education and its central location in educational policy in Australia have been acknowledged by the *Melbourne Declaration* (MCEETYA 2008). In addition, *Justice Citizens* explores issues of value to young people in Penrith (e.g. racism, bullying, teen pregnancy and many more).

The intent of any ethnography is to 'provide a detailed, in-depth description of everyday life and practice' (Hoey 2014, para. 1). This is what Clifford Geertz (1973) had in mind when describing his theories of culture. Importantly, ethnographers not only explore what is happening or simply 'tell stories' about what they have observed, they also attempt to identify the cultural constructions and mechanisms in which we live, that is, the cultural understandings being played out through the observed phenomena. Geertz describes these as 'webs of meaning' (p. 89). In this study, I am explicating these webs through both the research portraits and the discussion.

Crucially, ethnographers work from an insider's point of view, often within the context of the observation. An example of this research method is participant observation. Ethnographers also value long-term engagement in the field as a way of ensuring they have fully understood the webs of meaning there. Both of these requirements are met in the *Justice Citizens* study.

However, my research methodology is not just ethnography, it is critical ethnography, which, according to Gulati, Paterson, Medves and Luce-Lapler (2011) is 'an applied form of ethnography that is in search of knowledge to inform change' (p. 525). Citing Quantz (1992), Gulati et al (2011) write, 'Transforming social groups through critical dialogue and the demystification of cultural ideology is the fundamental aim of critical ethnography' (p. 525).

Madison (2005), however, prefers a much simpler definition: 'Critical ethnography is conventional ethnography with a political purpose' (p. 1). Central to this definition is the notion of praxis, which can be defined in a number of different ways, including, 'the practical application of new knowledge, applying theory to practice, and translating ideas into action (Greenwood & Levin 2005 as cited in Gulati et al. 2011, p. 525).

According to Anderson (1989), critical ethnography grew out of researchers' dissatisfaction with traditional methods of ethnography on two main fronts. First, there was an absence of human actors in some social accounts, with too much emphasis placed on social structures. Second, there were cultural accounts that seemed to ignore completely the role of social structures, instead replacing them with only human actors. When faced with the challenges raised by postmodernism, post-colonialism and post-structuralism, researchers sought new ways of describing society, which led to what Geertz (1973) described as 'blurred genres', as ethnographers borrowed from other schools of thought. Anderson (1989) wrote that the rejection of positivism and traditional ethnography involved the spurning of 'grand theories':

> Research methods tied to the assumptions of a positivism borrowed from the natural sciences were increasingly viewed as incapable of providing conceptually sophisticated accounts of social reality… Within disciplines and fields generally, broad paradigms and grand theories were increasingly found lacking in their ability to provide guidance in asking and answering persistent and seemingly intractable social questions. (p. 250)

Critical ethnography, then, is the study of cultural and social groups, with a particular emphasis on the way that power is distributed and used within them. According to Madison (2005), it focuses on the implicit values expressed within ethnographic studies and, therefore, on the unacknowledged biases that may result from such implicit values. Another way of defining it is as 'critical theory in practice' (Thomas (1993) as cited in Madison 2005, p. 12). For Madison, the starting point of critical ethnography must be the researcher's

desire to address inequality or injustice within a particular lived domain. The words 'lived domain' are particularly important, and Madison goes on to tell us that critical ethnography must begin with empirical fieldwork; the ethnographer must be committed to challenging injustices at the site of research. The role of the critical ethnographer is to 'probe other possibilities that will challenge institutions, regimes of knowledge, and social practices that limit choices, constrain meaning, and denigrate identities and communities' (Madison 2005, p. 6). This is the starting point for the *Justice Citizens* study.

According to Madison (2005), one of the specific challenges faced by an ethnographer lies in choosing exactly what to depict in the ethnography. Representing Others (as Madison describes the group being studied) is a complicated and contentious undertaking, filled with dangers of representation and misrepresentation. This is why I believe knowledge and meaning is co-constructed in critical ethnographical research (and in many other forms of interpretive research). As the researcher I take an active role in the development of knowledge by choosing what to depict. I am invested in that development, and hence have a degree of power over the knowledge and meaning being constructed. My role as a researcher in *Justice Citizens* was to co-create knowledge with students about the development of justice-oriented citizens.

Citing the work of Fine (1994), who identified three possible positions for the researcher in qualitative research (ventriloquist, different voices and activist), Madison is in favour of the activist approach, where the researcher 'serves as an advocate in exposing the material effects of marginalised locations, while offering alternatives' (p. 6). This is similar to Jurgen Habermas' (1989) notion of critical theory as a position of social enquiry. Clearly, within *Justice Citizens*, I am working as an activist researcher.

However, Madison warns that critical ethnographers must also reflect on the act of research and the way that they can influence it and even adopt a dominant position because of it. Noblit, Flores and Murillo (2004) call this act of reflexivity postcritical ethnography and have described it as turning back on ourselves but I consider it simply to be a natural development of critical ethnography, not a new strand of thought. Madison (2005) writes, 'We are simply forbidden to submit value judgements in place of facts or to leap to thought conclusions without a demonstrable cogent theoretical and empirical linkage' (p. 22).

Regarding the research participants, Madison argues that critical ethnography is not about the researcher and his or her subjects; it is about the researcher being in dialogue with the Other. Conquergood (1985) framed dialogue as performance and contended that the aim of 'dialogical performance is to bring self and Other together so that they might question, debate and challenge one another' (p. 9). On a more personal level, Bakhtin (1984) described this process: 'I am conscious of myself only while revealing myself for another, through another, and with the help of another' (p. 9).

Finally, it is worth mentioning the links between critical theory and critical ethnography. Kincheloe and McLaren (2002) argued that, in critical ethnography, critical theory finally found its method. This is a line of thought that I have followed in my adoption of critical ethnography.

2.3 Research Design

2.3.1 Summary Overview of Research Design

The design for this research project has been influenced by the previously mentioned methodological considerations. I sought answers to my research question through different sources based on a framework drawn from critical ethnography and interwoven with research portraiture. These sources are: stakeholder interviews (before and during the project); teacher observations and field notes (during the project); and interviews with students (before and after the project). These sources are represented diagrammatically in Figure 1. I will now explain each of the sources in more detail.

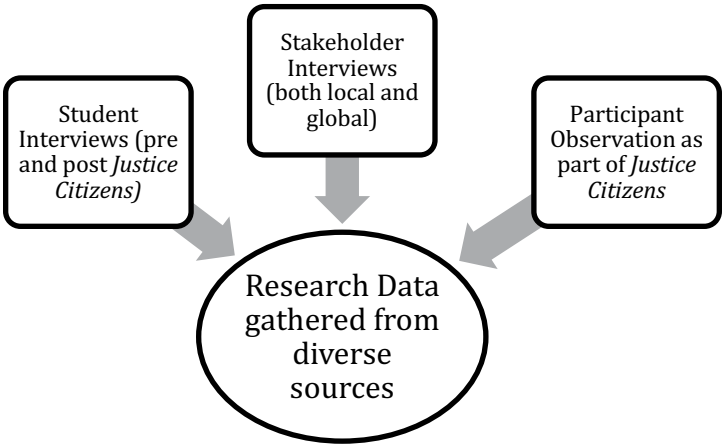

Figure 1: Summary of Research Design

I conducted 13 pre-project interviews with a range of stakeholders drawn from different backgrounds. As can be seen in Figure 2, I interviewed teachers from both primary and secondary backgrounds, and also tertiary educators. I was conscious, too, that I needed to interview people outside the formal educational sphere, so I also spoke to parents. I was also able to interview community activists and environmental campaigners, a local council cultural development officer, and teachers from rural NSW. Most of the interviewees were from the school's local area, which was appropriate to the local nature of my research, but I also engaged a more global audience by interviewing two experts in digital citizenship from the USA.

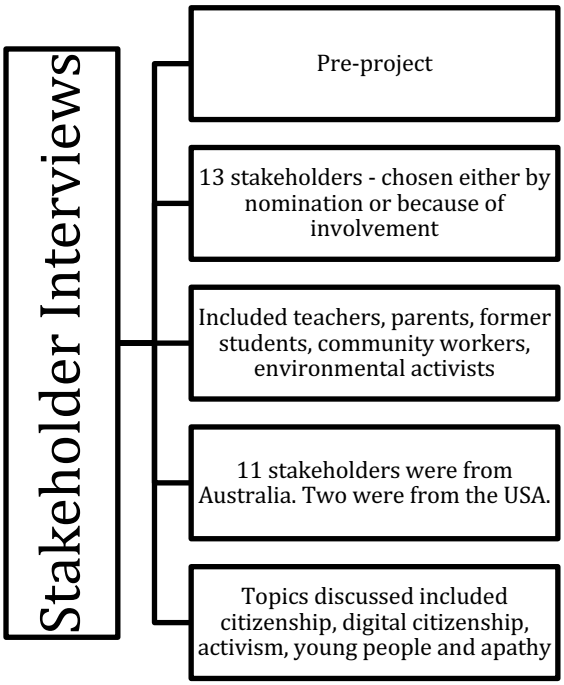

Figure 2: Pre-project Stakeholder Interviews

I interviewed these stakeholders to gain an understanding of the ways that civics and citizenship education is approached in different fields and educational roles; that is, I was trying to gain an understanding of current practices of civics and citizenship education, and how formal or informal they are. I had previously identified that civics and citizenship education is not just the domain of governmental institutions but is also used by non-government organisations like charities. The interviews with these stakeholders were semi-structured. The interview questions were both open ended and informal, and I felt that the interviews were more like discussions and conversations than

formal interviews. I also decided to tailor the questions to suit the individual being interviewed; there would be little point talking to a youth worker about the formal civics and citizenship curriculum, but it would be advantageous to have that conversation with a teacher. In this way, I sought to develop a more holistic understanding of what various approaches to civics and citizenship education might look like, and the principles upon which they were formulated.

The second method used to gather data was participant observation (Figure 3).

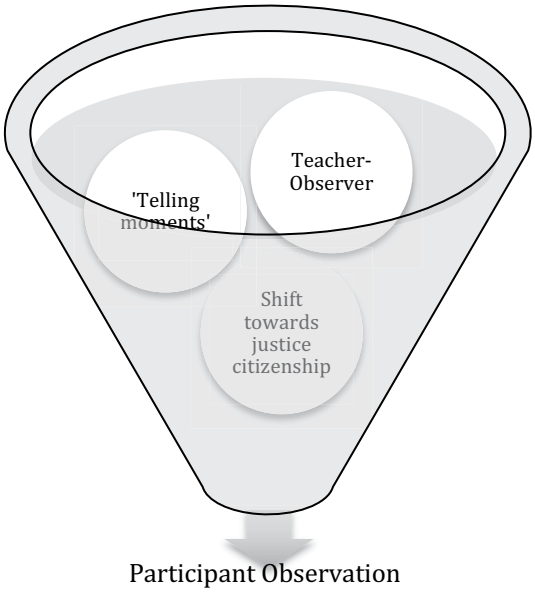

Figure 3: Participant Observation

During the course of the project, students were challenged to identify a local issue they felt was important, research that issue, and then present their findings about the issue in the form a short film. Some of these films were shown at a film festival to members of the community. Throughout the project, I acted as teacher-observer, looking for evidence of what might be described as justice-oriented behaviour. In particular, I was trying to identify important or 'telling moments' (Ely 2006, p. 52) that either demonstrated a concept or was evidence of a shift in young peoples' understandings about their own identities and the ways they enacted citizenship in their lives and communities; that is, a point in time where, according to the theoretical model I had adopted, they moved further along the continuum to becoming justice-oriented citizens. These

moments included my observations of when students themselves expressed a change in their own thinking, for example, when they described their new understanding of the media. I was also seeking answers to the question: What kinds of educational experiences had taken place in order for young peoples' understandings of themselves to change so that they could recognise themselves as justice-oriented citizens?

I conducted interviews with student participants before and after the project (Figure 4). I sought out a wide range of students to participate in the interviews – there was a mix of boys and girls, of higher and lower achievers, and a range of different ethnicities. The data gathered from these interviews allowed me to verify my own interpretations by a kind of triangulation, as well as exploring further details and interpretations.

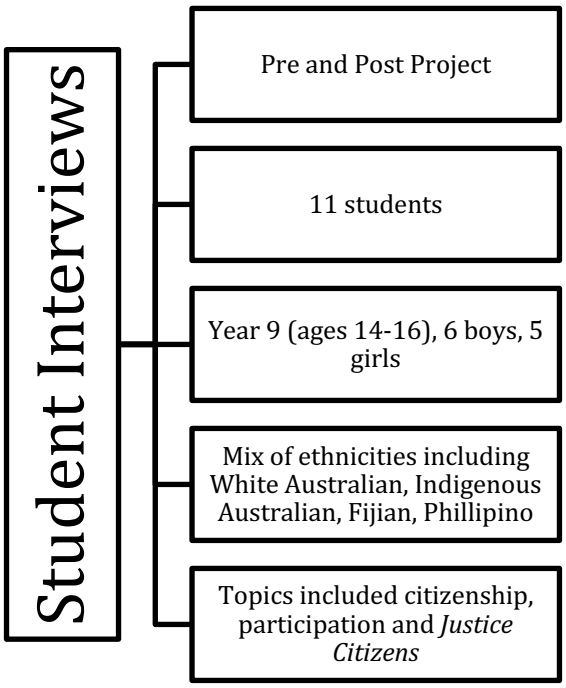

Figure 4: Student Interviews

In order to explicate the work and draw together the disparate strands of the research, I crafted a series of research portraits by building on the work of Lawrence-Lightfoot (1983) and Lawrence-Lightfoot and Hoffman Davis (1997) in order to more fully demonstrate these important moments in the development of young people. These research portraits were built from my own analyses of the transcribed interviews and field notes, and presented a stitching together of all the data sources into a unitary whole. I will present and discuss these research portraits later.

Research portraits offer a rich description of particular events or settings by exploring the complexities of the context and the way meaning is produced within those complexities. Essentially, the researcher, drawing on his or her analysis of the data, seeks to craft short narratives about particular moments during the research, and by doing so, achieve understanding about why participants acted in the fashion they did. Unlike Lawrence-Lightfoot, however, I do not feel that research portraiture exists separately from ethnography; rather it contributes conceptual understanding to the ethnographic explication of data.

2.4 Research Methods

2.4.1 Participant Observation

The reason I chose participant observation as a method of gathering data was that it allowed for a more nuanced understanding of human behaviour, as compared to other data collection tools such as surveys. According to Hammersley and Atkinson (1983), participant observation is a 'uniquely human, interpretive approach' (p. 249). When coupled with interviews (my use of which is discussed later), observation allows researchers to understand the subjects of their research at a much deeper level. Lichtman (2010) writes: 'Observing humans in natural settings assists our understandings of the complexity of human behaviour and interrelationships among groups' (p. 165).

One of the most commonly cited qualitative researchers, Clifford Geertz, argued that observations provided the opportunity for thick description (Geertz, 1973). In support of this argument, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) write:

> The use of immediate awareness, or direct cognition, as a principal mode of research thus has the potential to yield more valid or authentic data than would otherwise be the case with mediated or inferential methods. (p. 396)

Cohen, Manion and Morrison identify two other advantages. First, by observing, the researcher gets to see what people do, rather than what they say they do. This means that there is an added level of truth in observations that might be obscured in data gathered through other means. Second, observations are also less intrusive and time-consuming than interviews. The interviews I used to supplement my observations were artificial constructs – they were different experiences from those most students have every day. However, the classroom experience is a very natural one for students, and so students would

be more likely to act in a natural way, the observation of which would provide important data for my research. Delamont (2007) makes this point very strongly:

> Proper ethnography is participant observation done during fieldwork … spending long periods watching people, coupled with talking to them about what they are doing, thinking and saying, designed to see how they understand their world. (p. 206)

In this section, I will discuss in detail the elements of observation that are most pertinent to my own research. During the course of this study, I observed the participants of the *Justice Citizens* course in a number of settings. Most importantly, I was able to observe the students as they worked through the course during our normal lesson time. This meant that I could take note of their reactions to the material and process in the class, and also their interactions with myself and each other in ensuing discussions. For example, I was able to see how students reacted to material on asylum seekers – in a natural way, as I was in the classroom with them. I could also listen in on the conversations they had with each other without appearing obtrusive. In addition, I could observe the way they interacted and spoke to community members. By observing the students in this way, I felt that I was more capable of understanding their thoughts and actions in terms of active citizenship than I would have been had I used other data collection methods. However, I was also able to observe the students during other events in the school, and in the wider community.

Delamont (2007) says the aim of the ethnographer is to 'understand how the cultures they are studying 'work', that is, to grasp what the world looks like to the people who live in the fishing village, the boarding school or the mining community' (p. 206). There is an important point to be made here. Although this definition might lean more towards an anthropological definition of ethnography and participant observation (terms which Delamont suggests are often used interchangeably), my research in some ways differs from a standard classroom ethnography in terms of its setting.

The setting for the participant observation was a curious mix of both the realistic and the artificial. Although the students were engaged in a natural and familiar setting in terms of physical location, that is, a classroom lesson with a mixed ability group of Year 9 students, the setting was also artificial to the extent that the lesson content and process was non-standard. Rather than a typical Mathematics or English lesson, students were aware of taking part in a

new subject called *Justice Citizens*. This setting allowed me to explore the ideas and beliefs of these young people regarding civics and citizenship (and I discuss what evidence I was looking for later in this section). In order to gather the evidence that I felt was important, I needed to be free from the normal curricular and time constraints that might have otherwise limited my exploration of these issues; hence, a custom-designed and admittedly, partially artificial, program of study was necessary.

During participant observation, researchers must also decide on what is to be observed. Observers cannot possibly document everything they see, even in narrowly defined spaces, and nor should they try to do so – much of what is seen might not be relevant to the observers' interests. Although the advent of cheap video technology has allowed researchers to record activities for observation, the use of such technology brings its own challenges. For example, some subjects might feel that being filmed, even with their consent, is more obtrusive than having a researcher present, and thus their behaviours might change significantly.

Before the *Justice Citizens* research began I had already started considering what I would be looking for in the participant observation phase. Delamont (2007) argues that a well-conceived ethnographic study always begins with foreshadowed problems that guide the researcher in determining what is important and what is not. Identification of these problems arises from the researcher's own interest and from engagement with experts, advisors, and the literature of the field.

In an ethnographic study, it is often not simply a matter of observing one set of behaviours or one interaction; the nature of ethnography encourages deep immersion in the subject. As Delamont (2007) argues, it is a matter of observing and recording as much as possible. Anything not recorded is gone forever. The challenge – and the work – for the ethnographer begins with the decision about what is important enough to include in the analysis, and what must be abandoned. Of course, such decisions are the researcher's, but Erickson (1985) calls for educators to apply some rules as a mechanism for sorting their evidence. He acknowledges the impossibility of objectivity, but instead calls for a 'disciplined subjectivity' and a willingness to provide data that both contributes to and conflicts with the presented material in order to fully demonstrate the transparency of the research.

In the case of *Justice Citizens*, my evidence gathering was primarily directed by my analysis of two features of the course. First, I wanted to examine the interactions between the students, and between the students and myself. Second, I wanted to examine the behaviours of the students both in the classroom and beyond it, during and after the *Justice Citizens* course. This placed me in the position of teacher-researcher which introduces a number of challenges, including shifts in focus from the experiential to the theoretical, and from the personal to the intellectual (Labaree 2003). Fortunately, as I had already developed the curriculum for *Justice Citizens*, I was able to avoid some of the ethical challenges faced by teacher-researchers. As there was no formal assessment required in this course, I could afford to explore issues raised by students in more depth than teachers who were conscious of the impending deadline of summative assessment.

I examined how the students spoke to each other and to me, and later in the program, to other teachers. I looked for examples of when they were able to express a point of view, and how well reasoned it was; how they engaged in I their own information gathering about particular issues; and whether they felt that the government and other agencies should deal with those issues. I also wanted to hear the student's stories about their communities: what was happening in their homes and neighbourhoods; how they felt about those things; and what they felt could be done – by themselves and others – to enact positive social change. I also hoped to hear students discuss how they or someone they knew had been involved in what might loosely be termed 'active citizenship' in their local communities, and what the effect of that activism had been.

Regarding the interactions of the students, much of the *Justice Citizens* course was based on discussions between the students involved. These discussions would often begin with a stimulus – like a short film, a presentation by a member of the community, or an activity such as the Venn Diagram of Possibility and Interest (Chapter Nine) I sought to do two things during the discussions. First, I facilitated them by encouraging as many students as possible to contribute, rather than only hearing from the loudest voices in the room. Second, I shared my opinions about the different matters we discussed in class – but always prefacing with a statement about these being my opinions,

not what the students were required to think. This was a novel concept for the students and for me!

Another decision that a researcher needs to make is about both the frequency and duration of an observation. The time allocated for the *Justice Citizens* program was six months. During this period, I kept detailed field notes, writing two or three pages after every interaction or session with the students. This tool assisted in the reflecting part of the process (Delamont 2007). Although six months was quite a long time, I was concerned at first that I would not have enough exposure to the students as I was only seeing them for an hour each week. However, my concerns were allayed because I spent a lot more time with the students than I had expected; in addition to scheduled class times, we spent time before and after school, during lunchtime and recess working on the films. This meant that I was in regular and frequent contact with the students in varying degrees of formality, all of which, I believe, added to the trustworthiness of the research.

2.4.2 The Challenges of Acting as Teacher-Researcher

In some ways, my gathering of data was also constrained by the structure of the *Justice Citizens* course. I was the teacher for the course, so I focused my observations on the students, particularly the ways they responded, as a group and individually, to the questions and activities that were part of the course. This had advantages, too; when needed, I was able to adapt the lesson to include new and interesting lines of inquiry.

Linked to these decisions about what to observe is the requirement to gain access. Schools and other educational institutions often have stringent rules about researchers' access to students, and what can be discussed with them. Other, less formal, rules might dictate access to teachers or other staff, who might feel uncomfortable speaking with a researcher in their place of work. Fortunately, gaining access for my observations of *Justice Citizens* was straightforward as I was already an employee of the school. I did also gain Ethics clearance from the school's regional Catholic Education Office. The Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Technology Sydney also approved my research.

The process of participant observations required careful planning because I would be acting in a number of different roles within this research

project. Not only would I devise the course and source the content for *Justice Citizens,* I would be responsible for managing a team of teachers to deliver the course to students. As well, being a teacher within the class, I would be interacting with students as a participant who assisted them as they progressed through the material. This meant I would have the opportunity to sit in on many of the extra-curricular experiences that were part of *Justice Citizens*. I would also have a perspective that was intimately involved with the program. An example of this was when I accompanied students when they went to speak to a local refugee group.

The nature of my observations varied, too. For example, although I tried to limit the didactic aspects of the *Justice Citizens* course, I did at times need to act in such a fashion, if only to maintain a sense of structure to the lessons. These times when I was giving instructions were the hardest to observe. Ideally, I would have liked to watch the students' reactions to my instructions. However, as a facilitator asking questions or sharing ideas, I was able to carefully observe students and consider their replies. At other times, and this became more common as the program developed, I was able to observe the students as they went about their research or film-making. In these instances, I was superfluous to their requirements, which afforded me time to carefully watch as they discussed their films or made decisions about what to include or exclude.

The final issue for an ethnographic researcher to consider is what his or her role might be (Wong 1995). This becomes particularly important when the researcher must decide to be either a participant observer or simply an uninvolved observer. Participant observers take part in the actions of the research subjects as much as possible; they seek to learn about the lived experiences that they are studying by undertaking those experiences in the same ways as the participants. Of course, such an experience is impossible to fully reproduce, and participant observations are therefore often artificial to some degree.

The traditional role of an observer is to be non-interventionist (Wong 1995), but this was not appropriate in the context of *Justice Citizens* because I was a teacher in the class. Although I did not act as a participant observer in the sense that I was a student in the class, I was nevertheless a participant in the class as a teacher. The student-centred nature of my research project did blur

some of the lines between my role as a teacher and the role of the students. In some ways, I felt that I was acting more as a facilitator of learning experiences than as a teacher. Along with the experiences that I organised for the students, the newness of this style allowed me to participate in the project as well.

2.4.3 The Influence of My Authority as a Teacher

Although I was acting as a teacher, I think that the negative authoritative overtones that are often associated with the role of the teacher were largely absent. The students were aware of my role as the teacher, of course, but I worked to create a student-centred learning environment where the emphasis was on student choice and engagement rather than the enforcing of arbitrary school rules. For example, there was no-homework policy in the *Justice Citizens* classes, and no requirement to bring books or to complete set pieces of work. Having said that, I am not suggesting that my authority as a teacher was not present; rather, it was a positive use of authority, rather than a negative one.

2.4.4 Interviews

Kitwood (1977) identified three common conceptions of the interview. There is the interview as straight data transfer, in which the interviewee passes on information of a factual nature to the interviewer, who records that information. Another conception is of the interview as a biased transaction, where elements of the interviewee's and the interviewer's opinions will shade the meaning being constructed. Finally, Kitwood describes interviews as an encounter, sharing features of everyday life, almost like a purposeful conversation. Such an approach is shared by Siedman (2013), who suggests researchers consider interviews as relationship.

Interviews were used widely within *Justice Citizens* study. Students were interviewed before and after the program, and other stakeholders – teachers, community workers, parents – were interviewed about their thoughts on civics and citizenship education. I saw my role as a researcher to engage in the co-creation of knowledge with participants. This means that the interviews with students and other stakeholders were located between Kitwood's second and third conceptions, but were dependent upon the development of a relationship with participants, as suggested by Siedman. The conversation that took place was purposeful – I was looking to hear specific stories and opinions – but my

interpretation of the meanings of these interviews (as discussed in Chapters Ten, Eleven, Twelve and Thirteen) was shaded by my own experiences as a teacher, student and researcher.

The interviews I conducted were semi-structured. I approached them with a list of possible ideas and topics that I wanted to discuss with the participants, but I was also open to following leads and ideas that arose from our discussion. Cannell and Kahn (1968) describe an interview as

> a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information, and focused by him [sic] on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction or explanation. (p. 271)

This is a limited definition of interviewing. It doesn't give enough weight to the idea of interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee or what Holstein and Gubrium (2016) have described as 'active interviewing' (p. 67). The interviews that I conducted were successful for the most part because of the existing relationships I had with the participants, which allowed for a more open and frank conversations. The recognition of this relationship made my interviewing technique a mix of the 'standardised open-ended' and 'informal conversational' types of interviews suggested by Patton (2002).

I interviewed two groups of people for this research project. The first group were young people who were involved in the *Justice Citizens* film project. The second group were key informants and stakeholders, including teachers, parents and community workers. Through the interviews I also sought to engage with and explore the lifeworlds of the participants. In order to do this, as suggested by Kvale (1996), I tried to identify specific incidents, rather than more general ideas. These specific incidents were linked to the students' experiences in and out of the classroom and would encapsulate or provide 'telling moments' (Ely 1992, p. 58). I was also conscious of the need to accept contradiction and ambiguity between participants – where they might be describing the same event, but would attribute different meanings to it. Finally, I was conscious that, even though I worked with students every day, engaging with them as a researcher was very different to engaging with them as a teacher, and I needed to be mindful of that during the interview process (Groundwater-Smith, Dockett & Bottrell 2014).

In the *Justice Citizens* research project, 11 students were interviewed twice each. These participants were selected from different class groups

involved in the project, and they and their parents had to give consent. I sought a broadly representative sample of the Year 9 cohort. Six boys and five girls were involved. Two of the participants identified as Indigenous Australians, one as Fijian, and one as Philippino. The rest identified as White Australians. The students were aged between 14 and 16 over the time between the first interview, the research project and the final interview.

The first round of interviews took place before the first lesson of the *Justice Citizens* course and was intended to gather information about students' understanding of civics and citizenship in their lives and at school, as well as find examples of what they thought was active citizenship. Although these were my intended topics, the interviews actually covered a wide range of issues, including school, politics, environmentalism, faith and religion. Each of the interviews was conducted in a separate room with only the interviewer and the participant present, with the exception of one interview, where two participants asked if they could be interviewed at the same time. The students were all hesitant at the start of the interview process; it was a new experience for them, and they were concerned about having their voices recorded. However, I was able to allay their concerns, and as the interviews progressed, the students felt more comfortable talking to me. The students were more confident talking about practical issues, like their schooling or their involvement in sporting groups, but less confident talking about more abstract issues like what it means to be an active citizen.

I had a range of themes that I wanted to raise, but I did not limit the interview to these; I often followed conversation markers when I felt they might be fruitful. This led to some variation in the length and content of the interviews. The interviews lasted between 20 and 40 minutes, with most of them about 25 minutes.

After the conclusion of the *Justice Citizens* course, I interviewed the same students again. These interviews were generally shorter than the previous interviews (lasting between 15 and 25 minutes), and were more evaluative in nature in that they discussed what how successful *Justice* Citizens had been, and how their engagement with it had developed their ideas about active citizenship. Students were noticeably more ready to discuss their ideas about active citizenship at the second interview than they had been in the first. This is

reflective of their increased confidence and developing knowledge about active citizenship.

These second interviews were intended to explore how students' conceptions of civics and citizenship had changed over the course of the project, as well as to ask them to 'reflect back' and 'reflect forward.' I took this idea from the work of Hughes and Bruce (2013), who documented the value of this approach for students. When reflecting back, the students were asked to consider which parts of the project they felt were the best – where had they learnt the most, what had they enjoyed, what had they thought was pointless or of little value. This was, in part, an evaluation of the project, but I was also looking for information about how they felt that they had grown from the experiences within the project, in particular, specific instances where they felt that they had either seen or been an active citizen.

When asking students to 'reflect forward', I was challenging them to consider whether they were going to act as active citizens in the future, and if they were, what that might look like. I was looking for specific incidents or examples of how they might build upon the links they established as part of the project in order to continue to keep being an active citizen.

At this point, it is worth reflecting upon my own relationship with the students. I have previously discussed my role as both an insider and an outsider, and I think this has particular relevance to the interviews. As a teacher in the school, I was a figure of some authority to the students, capable of exerting power over them should I choose to do so. However, I was also a well-liked teacher and someone that students thought that they could talk to about things that they felt were important. This had occurred numerous times in the past. I also had a broader relationship with the students because of activities outside school. For example, I knew a number of them from parish activities and fundraisers and participation in the Rural Fire Service Cadet Program.

This broader relationship was critical to the success of the interviews. I was seeking honest responses to my questions; in many ways, this is the antithesis of what normally occurs in schools where students are trained to provide the answers that the teacher wants, and not necessarily the answers that they might think are correct. By knowing the students both as learners and individuals, I was able to establish a rapport that allowed them to speak openly and honestly with me.

The second group of interviews were different in terms of purpose, participants and content. I interviewed a range of educators and community workers, parents and ex-students about their experiences with civics and citizenship education in particular, and more broadly about topics like activism, digital citizenship and working with youth or in the community development sector. In total, I interviewed 13 individuals. These interviews were longer than the students' interviews, generally lasting for between 40 and 60 minutes, although one memorable interview with a very experienced teacher lasted for more than 90 minutes. To each of these interviews, I came with a list of topics I wanted to discuss, but, like the student interviews, the conversations often ranged well beyond these topics.

The central difference between these interviews and the student interviews related to my relationship with the interviewees. Unlike the student interviews, where I was in a position of authority, the power relationship between myself and these individuals in the second group was not as clear. In some cases I was an authority figure to the interviewee. For example, with teachers from the school, because I was a senior leader there they might have felt that my relationship with them necessitated certain responses. I addressed this by explaining that this interview was not related in any way to their work. Furthermore, the teachers all volunteered to be interviewed; they had their own thoughts on the topics we were going to discuss and wanted to share them, and they saw this research project as an opportunity to do so.

In other cases, I was working with professional colleagues – teachers from other schools and sectors that I had met in the course of my work. These included two teachers from the USA whom I knew through the Apple Distinguished Educator program. The conversations we engaged in were different from those with the Australian teachers, mostly because they were coming from different perspectives in terms of education.

Seven of the interview participants (especially in the group that were not teachers) were women, and during these interviews I was conscious that my gender might play a role in the interview. Similarly, when I spoke with interviewees of various ethnicities, I was aware that as an Anglo-Celtic male I might be seen as an embodiment of privilege and dominance, and thus influence the respondents' answers. I do not think that such traits can be completely negated during an interview, but I did attempt to limit these

influences by letting the participants speak as much as possible while I spoke as little as I could. I was very conscious of the way I framed questions, and did not interrupt or interject even when I was excited or interested about something that the interviewee was saying.

As discussed earlier, the relationship between an interviewer and an interviewee is central to the success of the interview and it is important to establish a rapport. I was fortunate in two ways in this respect. First, for the stakeholder interviews, I knew most of the participants, having already worked with them in some capacity. This pre-existing relationship meant that it was much easier to establish rapport. Second, and this applied to all the participants, I was talking about something that the participants were excited and enthusiastic about – young people and their participation in programs. This was especially true for the community activists and cultural development officers. The student participants demonstrated a similar level of enthusiasm when it came to talking about their school – and all the things they felt were wrong with it – and their participation in the local community.

One of the other issues that I faced was in terms of the transcription of these interviews and the reliability of these transcriptions. The act of transcribing the data from a recording is a crucial step in the interview process (Lichtman 2010), and has the potential for massive data loss even when professionally transcribed. When a sound file is transcribed, for example, the interviewer is already making an assumption that actions and body language are less important than what is actually said. It is incredibly difficult to capture every single action or gesture, every pause and hesitation. Therefore, it is important to recognise that the act of interviewing is already an act of interpretation. Interview transcripts are not simply collected by the interviewer; they are, in reality, co-authored by the interviewee and the interviewer.

If the transcription of an interview is beginning of the interpretive process, then the analysis of those transcriptions continues it. According to Anderson (1989), such analyses are 'reflexive, reactive interactions between the recorder and the decontextualised data that are already interpretations of a social encounter' (p. 368). There is a tension between the desire to look at the data holistically and the requirement to break data down into specific codes and themes, in order to make some kind of sense of them. Anderson describes

this process as atomisation of the data. I discuss my analysis, coding and categorisation of the data in the next section.

2.5 Data Analysis

2.5.1 Interpreting the Data

The methods described above allowed me to gather a wide range of data. The real work of any ethnography, lies in the interpretation of the data, and just like the tensions relating to the correct way to conduct an ethnography, there are similar tensions about how an ethnographer should interpret the data. As already described, I have positioned myself within the field of critical ethnography. I was interested in ways that an alternative program of Civics and Citizenship education might encourage empowerment amongst youth. This was expressed in the way that I was examining how the *Justice Citizens* course might aid the development of justice-oriented citizens.

This focus provided a means for me to interpret the text of the interviews and my observational field notes. Delamont (2007) describes the need to foreshadow any possible issues that one might come across; it is important to recognise that such foreshadowing of these issues is a starting point that is informed by one's own understandings and current theoretical models, but not a finishing point. I had taken into account ideas like Zyngier's elegant subversion (2007), Wierenga et al's global citizenship (Wierenga, Wyn, Guevara, Gough, Schultz, Beadle & King 2008), and Westheimer and Kahne's justice-oriented citizenship (2004), but I fully expected that my ideas about what constituted useful data, and the way I interpreted them, would change over the course of my analysis. Agar (2006) makes the point:

> Ethnographers develop codes interactively with the material itself before they address any theory. In fact, their codes change with time. Stable codes from outside, like from a prior theory, with none from inside, are a sure sign of an unacceptable ethnography. (para. 30)

As a critical pedagogue, I was particularly interested in exploring the ways in which the schooling system, as experienced by students in GWS, limited the opportunities the students had for empowering themselves. However, I was also inspired by Lawrence-Lightfoot's (1983) theories about research portraiture. She writes about looking for a holistic or 'good' interpretation of schools, rather than starting from a negative or deficit model. In *Justice Citizens* I was seeking to identify those aspects of the formal and

informal education system that not only limited student choice, but also allowed students to act in ways that could be described as empowered. In short, I wanted to theorise how young people 'did' active citizenship, without trying to measure it against traditional models of civics and citizenship.

In order to interpret my data, I again drew from both critical ethnography and research portraiture (and, indeed, the broader aspects of phenomenology that Lawrence-Lightfoot cites as being central to her work). Based on my previous experience and literature analysis, I developed a list of categories or open topics that I felt should appear in the research:

- Citizenship
- Citizenship Education
- Community Involvement
- Justice Citizens
- Active Citizenship
- Penrith
- Politics and Political Process
- Schools
- Social Class
- Social Justice
- Young People

I added new topics or sub-topics during the fieldwork as I began to understand more about the experiences of young people and other stakeholders. For example, in the list above, Social Justice was not one that I had originally identified. However, I noticed that it was regularly referred to in the stakeholder interviews, so I added it to the list.

In this way, my data analysis and interpretation became an iterative process in that I revisited the data and refined, deleted or added to the codes as appropriate. I wanted to be sure that my interpretation was credible and defensible. In addition, I also narrowed the focus of what these broad codes meant, which allowed the open categories to have a number of different levels within each of the broader categories. Figure 5 is an example of citizenship education having four sub-levels, some of which have a lower level of coding.

This exemplifies the way that I narrowed the focus of my interpretative gaze and refined my understanding of the participants' experiences.

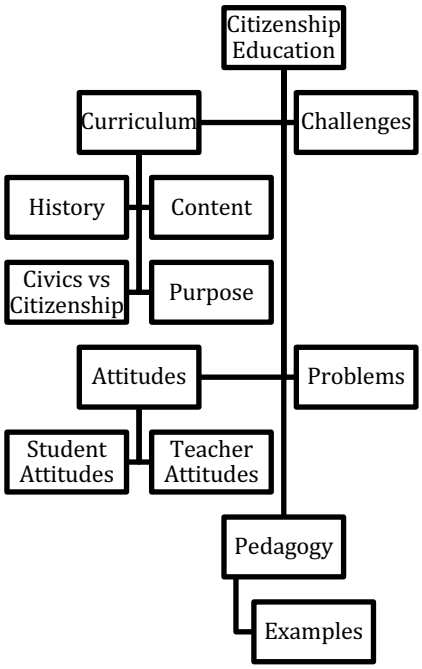

Figure 5: An Example of Coding Levels

As described earlier, I had a number of partly preconceived ideas and notions about topics like active citizenship and participation before I began the interviewing process. This meant that my research was not particularly 'grounded' – I had already developed a kind of interpretative lens through which I was gathering and examining data. This lens had been formed through my own investigations, my experiences as a teacher, and my understanding of the literature around active citizenship. However, I say these were 'partly' preconceived because I was still ready to be surprised by the data – which was often the case as the interviews progressed. For example, when exploring the ways students conceived of the agency of young people, I was surprised at how willing they were to accept that young people in general could be agents of change in society, but individually, they were not capable of this. This illustrates a more nuanced representation of agency and identity than any that I had previously understood, and hearing students talk about this 'learned helplessness', as I came to describe it, was an important part of the *Justice Citizens* study. However, crucially, I had had no preconceived notion of it and as my data gathering and interpretation progressed, I had to append it to my

theory of active citizenship. I discuss this notion at more length in Chapters 12 and 13.

In the first round of student interviews, I was looking for examples of previous citizenship education, as well as students' descriptions of what it meant to be an active citizen, and what kind of person was an active citizen. In the second round of interviews, I was more interested in the particular experiences that had occurred during the *Justice Citizens* course. The focus for my questions during these interviews was on specific concrete experiences that students felt had made them consider their roles as active citizens, as well as how their own feelings of identity and agency had changed since the start of the project. When I was interviewing other stakeholders, my questions were more related to their own experiences of citizenship education (if they were teachers), or the ways in which they felt youth engaged in active citizenship (if they were community workers).

Within the observations, I was looking for telling examples of interactions, either student–student, student–teacher or student–guest, during a lesson or other activity where I felt that there was something important taking place related to the development of active citizenship. I use the term 'interaction' in its broadest sense to include almost everything that took place within the classroom – and beyond when learning opportunities took us outside the formal domain of the school. Interactions included discussions between the students; I was also very curious about the kind of 'talk' they engaged in. The ways they talked about issues in Western Sydney (where *Justice Citizens* was located) revealed a great deal about their ideas of active citizenship. In one memorable example, a student spoke at length about domestic violence and how it was a growing issue – but the only solution she could conceptualise was for 'the government to do something about it'. Students also spoke about national or global issues like climate change and refugees, and more personal issues like school uniforms or bullying. These topics revealed that students saw active citizenship as something intensely personal and directly related to their own actions, and that appreciation of it also varied widely between individuals.

The themes I identified are discussed in Chapters 10 to 13. However, to draw these themes together and foreground my findings regarding the development of justice-oriented citizens, I developed research portraits. These

are presented in Chapter Nine. These research portraits provide an overview of both the *Justice Citizens* Project and the state of civics and citizenship education in Australia at this time in a way that combines observation and interpretation.

2.5.2 Research Portraiture

It is worth noting that the data in this thesis is presented in a non-traditional way; rather than a number of chapters wherein I discuss my data and findings, Chapters Nine takes the form of narrative vignettes or research portraits, as first described by Lawrence-Lightfoot (1983). Chapter Nine is a series of chronologically ordered narrative accounts about my experiences as a teacher-observer before and during the teaching of *Justice Citizens*. I have chosen this approach because I it allows me to share the 'rich description' that is so integral to developing an understanding of the *Justice Citizens* project. .

Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot (1983) (see also Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis, 1997) developed research portraiture as an inductive research method, 'to explore participant's experiences and the complexities of how meanings are produced within a particular context' (Gaztambide-Fernandez, Cairns, Kawashima, Menna & VanderDussen 2011, p. 4). Research portraiture is an approach to research that embraces complexity and contradiction; it seeks understanding, rather than to prove or disprove any particular theory. This makes it particularly valuable for educational research, especially in fields like citizenship education, where there has been a lot of contestation and argument about different theories. Also important is the fact that research portraiture does not begin from a deficit model; that is, it does not begin with the question, 'What is wrong in schools?' Instead, it focuses on 'local meanings' and 'seeks goodness' (p. 5).

Research portraiture is effective because it narrows the gap between narrative and analysis. In some ways, it is more honest in its approach than other qualitative methodologies because

> Recognizing that descriptions are always interpretive, the portraitist uses creative writing to carefully craft a narrative that integrates her analysis of the data while also leaving the text open for interpretation. (Gaztambide-Fernandez et al., p. 5)

Using research portraiture the researcher combines interpretation and analysis with narrative aspects. Naturally, this includes weaving together the researcher's own personal context with the experiences of the research participants to such an extent that the line between researcher and research

participants becomes increasingly blurred; thus research portraiture becomes truly interpretive.

Through these portraits, it is possible to make real those parts of the educational world that are often excluded from research. This attention to detail and description means that there is a more holistic approach to the data, which evokes a feeling of authenticity – something that qualitative research is often criticised for lacking. According to Hackmann, research portraiture 'makes the researcher's biases and experiences explicit, in essence becoming a lens through which the researcher processes and analyses data' (2002, p. 52).

The research portraits presented in Chapter 9 have been crafted after reviewing the interviews that I conducted with each student and stakeholder, as well as the notes I took as the teacher-observer during the *Justice Citizens* project. By crafting these research portraits, I believe I have met two goals: first, I have come to better understand young peoples' conceptions of citizenship and the ways they see themselves as active participants in the space of their local communities; and second, the portraits provide a meaningful way to share my findings with other interested parties.

2.6 Research Protocols

In this section I will discuss the protocols that governed my research. I will begin by identifying the ethical issues that I anticipated and encountered during *Justice* Citizens, and explain how they were addressed. I will also describe the kinds of qualitative validities that I used to ensure that my research was rigorous and meaningful.

2.6.1 Ethics

This project was approved by the University of Technology's Human Research Ethics Committee in 2011. The approval number is UTS HREC 2011-483A. In this section, I will outline some of the considerations that were required to ensure that the project was conducted ethically. According to the traditional definition, ethics .'represent a set of moral principles, rules or standards governing a person or profession' (Lichtman 2010, p. 54). Often this is presented to the beginning researcher as doing good and avoiding evil, although it should be noted that this definition of ethics only applies to research involving human subjects, not those with animals. Cavan (1977) defines ethical

behaviour as 'a matter of principled sensitivity to the rights of others, and that while truth is good, respect for human dignity is better' (p. 810). Cohen, et al. (2008) adopt a more nuanced view of ethics, instead suggesting that the major dilemma is how to present the truth to the audience, while at the same time respecting the values and rights of the subjects.

Lichtman (2010) aims a few cautionary comments specifically at qualitative researchers. First, she reminds us that qualitative research is still evolving in ways that are very different from quantitative research. One need only look at the growing debates around validity, or increasing number of branches of qualitative research to realise this. Second, she acknowledges that the divide between what is presented on paper and the reality of the phenomena can be great. This succinctly expresses what I consider the greatest challenge facing the qualitative researcher: How can a researcher accurately and honestly portray the lived experiences of participants in a report? Some of the safeguards that address this question of validity have been discussed below.

When research takes place within a school, there are additional questions that must be answered by researchers to show they are behaving ethically. These relate to working with children, the unequal relationships of power between teachers and students, and the ethical management of possible conflicts between researchers and teachers, especially when a research is both of these.

Lichtman (2010) identifies a number of principles of ethical conduct. The most important is that 'participants have a reasonable expectation that they will not be exposed to harm' (p. 14). Second is an expectation regarding participant's privacy and anonymity and thirdly, their confidentiality is to be respected in written or other communications. However, there are specific challenges to this principle when participants are cast in the role of co-researcher, as the *Justice Citizens* project which drew heavily on youth participatory action principles. One might argue that participants have a right to be identified, and participatory action researchers often credit their participants as co-researchers. Originally, it was my intention to de-identify the participants in the research project, as well as the school and the location. However, I explicitly stated that the films that the students made as part of the *Justice Citizens* project would not be de-identified. I wanted the students to receive full credit for the films they had made (and it was the intention from the start to publish the films widely

through physical and digital means), and this would not be possible if I was to remove their names from the films. Students' parents also consented to the students being identified as the authors of the films. However, this also means that it might be possible that the school (and therefore the diocese) could be identified from the films (as students shot on location at the school, are wearing school uniforms on occasion in the films, or they refer specifically to the school during the films).

This meant that I have identified the school by name in this thesis and other material about the *Justice Citizens* project. This change was forced by the realisation that, as people read about the project and research and viewed the published films, they would be able to identify the school through those means as described above. This approach would also allow me to identify the support that I received from the school and the education system in developing and undertaking the *Justice Citizens* project. This decision was made with the consent of the school principal at the time (Ms Robyn Meddows) and the Head of Staff Services at the Catholic Education Office, Parramatta (Mr Paul Menday). The school's name and details have also been used in teacher education journals and at conference presentations about *Justice Citizens* based on this consent where my attendance was funded by the school system. As a representative of the school, I, and therefore the school, were identifiable, and this means that maintaining the confidentiality of the school in this instance proved to be impossible.

However, in this thesis, I have de-identified students by changing their names in the research portraits and also in the interview accounts. This ensures that, while students might be identifiable as participants in *Justice Citizens* through their films, their contributions to the research and comments about *Justice Citizens* and citizenship education and other related matters remains confidential. The participants in stakeholder interviews have all been de-identified as was originally planned. This means that I have observed the first principle, that is to do no harm, and also, where possible, the principles of confidentiality and privacy.

The principle of informed consent becomes difficult when researchers are working with children. Informed consent is the expectation that participants know the nature of the study; that is, they know what is being studied, and what form that study will take. In addition, they should have a choice about

whether they want to participate, and can revoke that choice at any point in the study, or even after it. Cohen et al (2008) argue that informed consent is actually made up of four categories: competence (whether a participant is capable of understanding what is happening), voluntarism (whether a participant has volunteered freely to take part), full information (whether the researcher has presented the details of the research fully), and comprehension (whether the participant has understood the purpose and nature of the research). In a school, which was the site of *Justice Citizens*, I had to gain approval from both parents and the students to satisfactorily meet this principle. This is the course of action advocated by Cohen et al (2008) when working with young people.

Ethnography normally proposes that establishing a good rapport with participants is central for good research. Lichtman (2010) warns that this relationship should be genuine, too. While I needed to be mindful of this, it was not a challenge for me in my role in *Justice Citizens*. For most of the interviewees, I was a teacher as well as a researcher, which meant that I had to be constantly aware of when I was acting as a researcher, and when I was acting as a teacher – and I needed to ensure that students knew the difference too. Fortunately, I was able to do this by having developed a strong rapport and understanding with many of the interviewees over the time of my involvement with them.

Lichtman (2010) raises two more principles of ethical research: data interpretation and data ownership. Data interpretation raises questions of interpretation and analysis, but is more properly dealt with in the section on validity (as discussed later in this section). It is worth commenting on the issue of ownership more broadly. As part of the *Justice Citizens* project, groups of students created films to document and share their findings with the community in which they performed their research. These films remained the property of the students who made them, although a number of students did grant me permission to use their films in discussions and presentations about *Justice Citizens*. While the films belonged to the students, the data that was gathered through the interviews and observations, which ultimately informed the conclusions that I drew, belonged to me.

Priscilla Alderson and Virginia Morrow (2011) have written extensively about the ethics of working with young people. While, as a teacher, I had already undertaken extensive training aimed at minimising risk and harm

when working with young people, there are additional elements that elements that must be considered when working with young people as a researcher. In particular, Alderson and Morrow are careful to identify the harms that young people might be exposed to as part of research, including the possibility of over-research. I was conscious that students are being constantly assessed, both for in-school assessments and also for national assessments like NAPLAN. Therefore, I wanted my research to be as low-key as possible; with this in mind, I limited the expectations of students so that they did not become onerous.

There is an additional ethical issue that has particular relevance for this research project, and that is the role of the teacher-researcher. Unlike many other forms of research, I was acting as both teacher and researcher; scholars like Richardson (1994) acknowledge that an increasing number of academics recognise the value of the classroom teacher, while others, like Bishop (1998), identify an 'assumed power structure ... which accords the researcher's agenda and actions greater authority than the practitioners' (p. 36).

The crucial challenge for teacher-researchers relates to responsibility. To whom are teacher-researchers most responsible, their research, or the children in their care? Wang (1995) explains this dilemma in some detail. Describing an episode in his science classroom, he explains that, as a researcher, he wanted to pursue one line of questioning with a particular student, in order to find out why that particular student had come to the conclusion that he had. Pursuing this line of questioning would have been beneficial to Wang's research, but it also would have not been in the best interests of the other students in the class – to whom Wang had a responsibility to teach the content in a timely and appropriate manner. Wang noted: 'The business of research is generating knowledge in an ethical, timely manner ... To educate is to lead responsibly' (p. 8).

In *Justice Citizens*, I sought to meet both of these criteria to the best of my ability. Ultimately, I had a responsibility to act as a teacher first, and a researcher second, which meant my highest priority was the safety and personal success of the students in my care. My own research imperatives were secondary to this. However, by interviewing outside the classroom time, I was able to pursue insightful lines of questioning without endangering my educational responsibilities.

2.6.2. Validities in Qualitative Research

The notion of validity within qualitative research has been strongly contested, and, indeed, whether validity has any place in research based on these principles has been called into question. At times, validity has been replaced with a variety of different terms including authenticity, trustworthiness, rigour, quality and plausibility. This confusion about terms is a sign of the wider debate about validity in qualitative research, prompted by a desire from some researchers for a standard means of measuring validity, although there are some other social science researchers who reject any such standardisation (as outlined by Maxwell 1992).

Maxwell (1992) argues that there are two main reasons why qualitative research has struggled with the notion of validity. First, qualitative research denies the relevance of the scientific paradigm; and second, qualitative researchers acknowledge the value of this paradigm, but instead suggest that there should be different measures of validity for qualitative research. For Maxwell, a deeper understanding of what validity is can help resolve this dilemma; validity is not a quality of research, it is something that should be 'assessed relative to purposes and circumstances' (p. 281). In this, he is in agreement with Mishler (1990), who argued that issues about meaning are central to questions of validity. This approach is mirrored by Stenbacka (2001), as cited in Golafshani (2003), who argues that the most important test of any research is its quality, and then contrasts the purpose of quantitative research, which has the purpose of expelling, with that of qualitative research, which has the purpose of generating understanding. As Lincoln and Guba (1985) put it, 'How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences that the research findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to?' (p. 290).

To Maxwell (1992), this as a realist conception of validity that is inherent to the things it is intended to be an account of; in other words, validity cannot be separated from the research. Validity is a function of the data. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the quality of a study should be judged by its own paradigm's terms. For this reason, qualitative researchers should embrace dependability rather than reliability. As Golafshani (2003) writes, 'The consistency of data will be achieved when the steps of the research are verified through examination of items such as raw data, data reduction projects and process notes' (p. 401). In this case, trustworthiness is a crucial issue. Stenbacka

(as cited in Golafshani 2003) goes further, arguing that while validity may have some relevance, reliability, which is often mentioned in the same sentence, does not because reliability concerns measurement, which has no place in qualitative research.

Maxwell (1992) identifies the dichotomous nature of validity: unlike in positivist paradigms of research, where validity is independent of the context of the research, in qualitative research the context is part of understanding, and hence it also contributes to the validity. 'Validity, in a broad sense, pertains to this relationship between an account and something outside the account' (p. 283). However, Maxwell rejects the correspondence theory of truth, instead suggesting that critical realism allows no direct knowledge of objects, and thus any comparison between two different objects is impossible. Therefore, it is not the methods that are to be assessed for validity; rather, it is the accounts that make up the research data.

Maxwell then goes on to describe five forms of validity that might be applied to qualitative research. The first is descriptive validity: 'Description is the foundation upon which qualitative research is built' (p. 286). This is also described as reportage (Runciman 1989). Maxwell is at pains to explain that descriptive validity is more than simply describing what has happened. For example, a researcher's choice to privilege some voices or comments over others reflects the researcher's theoretical position; after all, no researcher presents every piece of data gathered in the course of a research project.

With regards to this research project, I have attempted to balance the different understandings described above in order to achieve descriptive validity. The voices of the students, which were the original focus of my research because I felt that they were less privileged than other voices when discussing citizenship education, are matched with the voices of other stakeholders. By doing this, I aimed to bring validity to the accounts of students in the data, but I am also seeking widely divergent groups and opinions within those accounts, which are presented to counterbalance the students' voices.

The second type of validity that Maxwell describes is interpretive validity. This type of validity is concerned with the researcher's attempts to understand what the observed acts or phenomena mean to those involved. Crucially, this is an insider view of validity, as opposed to the traditional outsider view. The researcher, acting as the lens, needs to be able to explain

both the actions and what the actions mean to those involved in the research. Creswell and Miller (2000) identify the 'lens of the researcher' as a viewpoint used for establishing validity in qualitative research: validity is 'not based on scores, instruments or research designs but a lens established using the views of people who conduct, participant in, or react and review a study' (p. 125). The researcher acts as a lens, determining how long to remain in the field, what themes can be extracted from the data, and how to use those themes to construct a narrative.

Next, Maxwell (1992) argues that qualitative researchers need to have theoretical validity, which connects action to theory:

> Theoretical validity thus refers to an account's validity as a theory of some phenomenon. Any theory has two components: the concepts or categories that the theory employs, and the relationships that are thought to exist among these concepts. (p. 291)

For this study, I was trying to link theories about critical youth studies and critical pedagogy with the ways young people feel about their schools and communities. I therefore believe my study meets Maxwell's criteria for theoretical validity: 'What counts as theoretical validity, rather than descriptive or interpretive validity, depends on whether there is consensus within the community concerned with the research about the terms used to characterise the phenomena' (p. 292).

The fourth measure of validity is generalisability:

> Generalization in qualitative research usually takes place through the development of a theory that not only makes sense of the particular persons or situations studied, but also shows the same process, in different situations, can lead to different results. (p. 293)

The *Justice Citizens* research has wide applications for generalisability in this sense. In some ways, it builds upon previous work by scholars like Wierenga et al (2008) and Zyngier (2007) where similar projects have been carried out in order to explore the phenomenon of justice-oriented citizenship. However, *Justice Citizens* is also a contextual project; there are factors that influence the outcome of *Justice Citizens* that make it unique.

The final measure of validity is evaluative validity. Although Maxwell (1992) acknowledges that it is not as important as descriptive, interpretive and theoretical validity and generalisability, evaluative validity still has a place in qualitative research: 'This aspect of validity differs from the types discussed previously in that it involves the application of an evaluative framework to the

objects of study.' In simpler terms, this means that the researcher ultimately makes explicit value judgements about the nature of his or her research.

2.7 Research Context

2.7.1 Greater Western Sydney

In this section, I will outline how my considerations of the research context have fed back into the research design. It is impossible to separate the *Justice Citizens* project and the research about it from its geographical, social and historical context. The context provides a mechanism for understanding more about the young people involved in the project and the ways they responded to taking part in *Justice Citizens*. They were young people growing up in Penrith and the surrounding areas, a site of immense and rapid change both geographically and socially. Penrith, a suburb on the far fringes of Sydney, Australia's largest city, is part of Greater Western Sydney (GWS) as shown in Figure 6.

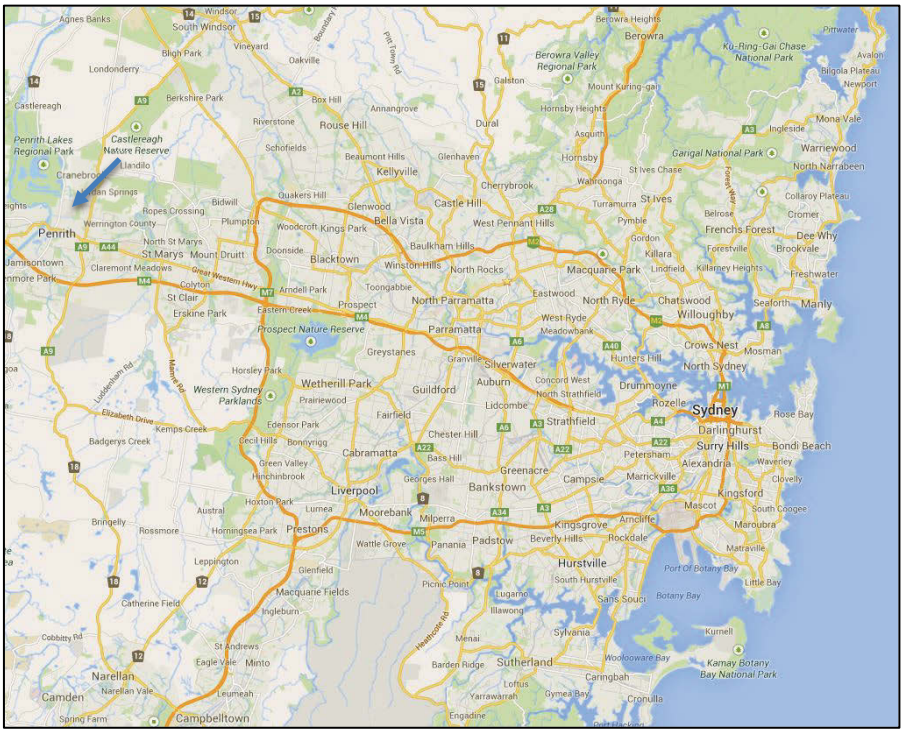

Figure 6: A map of Greater Sydney with Penrith indicated.

An understanding of the context in which *Justice Citizens* was set will assist in the appreciation not only of the choices made in the development of the program, but also and more importantly, the ways young people came to

explore their own agency, knowledge and understanding about their roles as active citizens.

GWS is Australia's fastest growing region and one of its most diverse, with people from many different ancestries and birthplaces living there. Penrith, however, has not yet been exposed to these levels of change and much of its population remains of Australian Anglo-Celtic ancestry. These changes around them influence the ways students and other stakeholders perceive the role of active citizens. There were many issues that were topical and relevant to young people from the local communities, for example racism and refugees (related to the sudden change in demographics), and I took these into account in the program design.

This is important because students in the *Justice Citizens* project are conscious of the nature and pace of change in GWS. During conversations before, during and after the program, students were able to quite clearly elucidate the ways in which their community was changing and how the different ethnic groups were establishing themselves within the wider community.

The political context of Penrith is important, too, and it links closely to the political context. In 2011, during the *Justice Citizens* project, David Bradbury, the Federal Member for (the electorate in which Penrith is located) was instrumental in the release of the Labor Party's policy on dealing with asylum seekers through offshore detention and he regularly appeared in the press or on television discussing the policy. In addition, one of the then Prime Minister's key election events was a forum about crime. Both events were held in GWS because the area was seen as crucial for either winning or retaining government at the next Federal election. The large numbers of self-employed tradespeople in Lindsay and the surrounding electorates were identified as swing voters by both parties, and huge amounts of election funding was directed towards winning their votes. This funding had a significant impact upon the young people involved in *Justice Citizens*, who became inured to reading or hearing about their suburbs, often in a less than positive light. This portrayal of GWS therefore influenced the research design. On reflection, the school's location was ideal for developing student awareness of their context and role as active citizens.

Finally, it is important to note that the *Justice Citizens* project took place in a Catholic school, McCarthy Catholic College, which is a run by the Catholic Education Office of Parramatta. While not all students who attended the college or all students who took part in the *Justice Citizens* program were Catholic, they had been, to some point, introduced to the Catholic faith through regular religious instruction lessons and other practices. Necessarily, this had an effect on the ways students approached issues of social justice, and it was important to be mindful of this when exploring their responses. The students were familiar with the concept of social justice and could give a number of examples, but these were generally 'band-aid' solutions such as charities that the school supported, and not related to structural changes. From a pedagogical point of view, this became a departure point for more detailed analyses of structural and institutional injustices.

In addition, McCarthy Catholic College itself was originally established as a senior school – Years 11 and 12 only. More recently it added a Trade Training Centre, where young people can gain trade qualifications alongside their Higher School Certificate. This context, too, has an effect on the *Justice Citizens* project: students at McCarthy were more likely to pursue a trade career than their peers at other schools. I found that I had to adapt my original material and content to a lower academic level and provide much more concrete examples than I had originally planned to do.

Again, this works to influence the perceptions of citizenship held by people in GWS. Service level occupations are often held by poorly educated individuals or people with limited English language skills, and are unlikely to provide opportunities for workers to act in ways that fit with a definition of active citizenship. In fact, it is likely that such employees will be exposed to exploitation because of their limited education and language skills, and they will find it more difficult to contribute to civil society. Their children often learn these attitudes as well. All of these factors influenced the development and the implementation of *Justice Citizens*, along with the students' own perceptions of active citizenship and their roles in society.

In the next Chapter I present to the reader the historical and philosophical arguments that have informed the development of civics and citizenship education. Beginning in Classical times, I will outline the way civics and citizenship education has developed through the influence of scholars like

Rousseau and John Stuart Mill. I will also identify the contribution made to civics and citizenship education by John Dewey, before focusing on the development of civics and citizenship education in Australia, and what this has meant for the *Justice Citizens* project.

CHAPTER 3: THE HISTORICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL ARGUMENTS ABOUT CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I guide the reader through models of civics education presented in the works of Plato, Aristotle, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, John Stuart Mill and John Dewey, as well as more modern scholars who frame civics education around consumerism, environmentalism and globalisation. My intention is to identify the main schools of thought in the history of democracy and then highlight elements of them that are relevant for educating contemporary Australian students about democratic participation and critical action. I hope to demonstrate where in this long tradition I situate *Justice Citizens* in terms of both the program itself and my research project. To do this, I identify key elements from each thinker and explicate why these are important for the development of my own thinking. Following the traditions of scholarship in this field, for the main part I limit my discussion to Western thinkers; however, as some of the students who took part in *Justice Citizens* come from other world views and cultures, I do acknowledge that democracy has a broad history that includes elements from non-Western countries.

3.2 An Ever-Expanding Concept of Citizenship

Even though the idea of education has been seen since antiquity as important in the development of citizens, concepts of what is a citizen and who can be a citizen have changed over time. In the democracy of Ancient Athens, the only people able to be citizens were Athenian men who owned land, which effectively curtailed the participation in government of most of the population. Although we might term the Athenian model as a participatory democracy rather than the more modern representative model, it behoves us to remember that there was only a limited elite participating in it.

The growth in the 19th and 20th Centuries of the suffragist and feminist movements, universal access to public education through the popular

education movement, and the civil liberties movements has meant that the proportion of the population considered citizens has also grown. As a result, not only has education been broadened to include these different groups, but the mechanisms for participation have increased as well. Recently we have seen the widespread co-opting of the term citizen into other arenas; terms like 'global citizens', 'active citizens' and 'environmental citizens' are used commonly, but they have less to do with ideas of nationality than with sets of accepted practices and behaviours. The idea of 'citizen' has moved from a strictly political context to one that has a variety of contextual connotations. This is also true for terms like 'digital citizenship', which is commonly used to mean an agreed upon set of behaviours when interacting on the internet.

The notion of citizenship has moved beyond strictly elitist and limited notions, and now embraces notions of participation in the public or civil sphere (McKee 2004) and not just the sphere of organised politics – although the notion of a public sphere is a contested one today (Papacharissi 2010). As part of this thesis, I will engage with these expanded notions of citizenship; indeed, the growing definition is part of my decision to use 'justice-oriented citizenship' where appropriate instead.

3.3 Civics and Citizenship Education: A Long History

3.3.1 Democracy in Ancient Times

Civics scholars like James Pocock (1998) traditionally identify Ancient Greece as the starting point for any discussion of democratic thought. However, because more recent scholars (for example, Keane 2009) have identified that the ancient Greeks were building on non-Western models, I will mention these historical antecedents briefly. As my empirical research is based in Australia, I limit much of my commentary to Western influences that have directly shaped Australia's form of government and thus the discourse from the State about civics and citizenship.

Even as the requirements needed for citizenship have changed over time, and, indeed, the idea of what democracy is and how it should function has continued to evolve, the notion that education is the tool to ensure that citizens are capable of participating in this democracy has remained constant (Keane 2009). It would be easy to limit a discussion of education to formal institutions like schools and universities, but such a discussion would ignore the educative

role that families and other communities play in non-formal settings, and the education that now takes place through social media and the mass media.

This chapter will primarily address the civics and citizenship education to be found in schools: I have chosen this field as it closely resembles the domain in which *Justice Citizens* took place, but this does not mean that I have no interest in the ways that other apparatus in society function to educate or indoctrinate. Where appropriate, as befits a critical theoretical approach, I have drawn from these fields to inform my own research and theory development.

The thinkers I discuss in this chapter are seminal in the development of civics and citizenship education, although I am conscious that some of them had less than ideal views towards women, indigenous people and lower classes. While I acknowledge such weaknesses, I hope to take what is useful from their works and apply it to my own, while at the same time avoiding their prejudices.

Democracy has a much more expansive history than is commonly supposed. Keane (2009) writes:

> It turns out that the democratic practice of self-governing assemblies is also not a Greek innovation. The lamp of assembly-based democracy was first lit in the 'East', in lands that geographically correspond to contemporary Syria, Iraq and Iran. The custom of popular self-government was later transported eastwards, towards the Indian subcontinent, where sometime after 1500 BCE, in the early Vedic period, republics governed by assemblies became common. (p. xi)

The ancient Athenian philosophers and citizens made further contributions to the development of democracy, although the Athenian philosophers like Plato and Aristotle were at best ambivalent about the value of a democratic state. Indeed, Plato argued that 'tyranny naturally arises out of democracy, and the most aggravated form of tyranny and slavery out of the most extreme form of liberty' (Plato in Bloom 1968, pp. 320-321).

My work deals directly with the notions of participation by people in the governance of their communities. In the next section I will briefly summarise some of the key figures in the development of democratic schools of thought and practice, before outlining how it applies to my research. It was Aristotle who noted that, for there to be liberty, it was necessary for all citizens 'to rule and be ruled in turn' (Aristotle, Barker & Stalley 1995, p. 12). This is a simple encapsulation of three of the important principles of democracy: equality, justice and participation. In order to ensure democracy, the Athenians felt that civic education was vital. In a marked difference to more modern forms of

civics and citizenship education today, it was the role of all free and land-holding men in the *polis*, not just teachers or tutors, to ensure that such citizenship education took place. This kind of civic education had two main principles: citizens should be literate and they should participate in the governance of the city-state.

The notion that literacy is a necessary prerequisite for participatory citizenship occurs regularly studies of the history of democratic processes. One recent explication of the value of literacy is Paulo Freire's work in. I highlight the work of Freire (1970) here because he is one of the key influences upon my empirical study, although there are other significant thinkers (John Dewey, for example) who have worked to develop our understanding of the role of education in democracy.

Like the Athenians, Freire recognised that for a democratic society to function effectively its citizens need to be able to read and write; literacy is the first step in empowerment because it provides access to the mechanisms of power and oppression, and with that access comes the opportunity to alter society. It is important to note here that literacy itself is a term that speaks to the power relations within society; oppressed groups have long recognised that being literate in the language of their oppressors provides them with some means of redress (Freire 1970). In today's world, it is also important to be literate in various ways, including digital and critical literacies. I discuss these new forms of literacy and their importance later in the Chapter Eight.

Aristotle's second principle – that citizens should participate in the governance of the city-state – is particularly pertinent for this discussion about how an individual learns to be an active citizen. Speaking about the nexus between learning and participation, Aristotle said, 'For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them' (Aristotle & Sachs 2002, p. 9). Aristotle identified some of the contradictions that still exist within modern civics and citizenship education; that is, it is necessary for young people to not only have experience of acting as a citizen, but also learn to act as a citizen. Aristotle was in favour of this learning and acting, or acting-as-learning, if you will, occurring together. Dewey (1938), too, recognised the role of experience in education, and Freire (1970) would come to describe this thinking-acting fusion as praxis. *Justice Citizens*, then, is my attempt to blend learning and acting together.

This idea of learning by doing was important in Athenian democracy, which was founded on the idea of participation by all citizens. In contemporary Australia, rather than a participatory democracy, we have a representative democracy, which limits the direct participation of the citizen in the running of government. Regardless of this more distant mechanism of power and governance, discourses of civics and citizenship education in countries like Australia, the UK and South Korea, for example, still emphasise the value of active citizenship and participation.

In the next sections, I describe and discuss the key ideas of prominent political and educational philosophers who have promoted ideas we now associate with democracy. It is important to note that many of these scholars were doing this in locations where the ruling regimes were openly autocratic, and many of the safeguards that Westerners now take for granted were conspicuously absent.

3.3.2 Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the Active Citizen

The Swiss scholar Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) was the most notable proponent of the benefits of democracy in Europe in the 18th century; indeed, during the French Revolution he was feted by the Jacobites, who admired his ideas of a social contract and the rights of man (Schama 1989). Although he is more famous for his insistence that the best kind of man is a natural man (Rousseau 1984), and the attributes most desirable in a person – independence, happiness, sympathy and equality – exist in nature when uncorrupted by the influence of civilisation, Rousseau also acknowledged that humans are social creatures who need some form of civic life. For Rousseau, civic education was synonymous with learning to function well in society (Rousseau 1920). He argued that the best form of civic education is one in which an individual learns to ask, 'What is best for all?', rather than the more selfish expression, 'What is best for me?' This is best achieved through a very specific form of education that he presents in his novelistic treatise, *Emile* (Rosseau, 2012). Rousseau's principles influenced later progressive educators like Johann Pestalozzi (1746-1827) and Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852), who emphasised that each child is an individual who prefers learning experiences that are self-paced and (to a certain extent) self-directed (Brehony 2001).

3.3.3 John Stuart Mill and Political Education

Rousseau was concerned with the education of the character of individuals. John Stuart Mill (1806-73), on the other hand, explored the idea of citizenship through political participation, with the focus on society as a whole. This was part of his life's work; as a follower of Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), Mill was responsible for developing many of Bentham's ideas about utilitarianism, and how a truly just society could be developed. Mill lived up to his own ideals of democratic participation: in his later life, he was a Member of Parliament in England, where he worked in favour of women's suffrage and supported the development of trade unions.

According to Mill, there are two main benefits of participating in democracy. First, there are benefits from people contributing to the development of policy and, more importantly for this discussion, there are significant educational benefits from behaving in such a way. Accordingly, citizens should participate in politics

> as a means to their own mental education--a mode of strengthening their active faculties, exercising their judgment, and giving them a familiar knowledge of the subjects with which they are thus left to deal. This is a principal, though not the sole, recommendation of jury trial; of free and popular local and municipal institutions; of the conduct of industrial and philanthropic enterprises by voluntary associations. (Mill & Gray 1998, p. 179)

Mill also identifies another common theme to do with citizenship education: the role of the government in determining the curriculum of such an education. Nor was he alone in this – the American statesman, scientist and philosopher, Thomas Jefferson argued that democracy was the fairest form of government, but for a democracy to succeed, it must rely on the faculties of the citizens who make up that democracy;

> Every government degenerates when trusted to the rulers of the people alone. The people themselves, therefore, are its only safe depositories. And to render them safe, their minds must be improved to a certain degree. (1999, p. 274)

Mill remains an important figure in democratic civics and citizenship education. In Australia, Mill's intellectual fingerprints can be seen in the development of *Discovering Democracy*, the program developed by the Australian Government to educate all school students about their role as active citizens in Australia. This program is discussed in more detail in Chapter Four, but, briefly, *Discovering Democracy*, which operated between 1997 and 2007,

emphasised the need for the education of collective groups, not just individuals; that is, all citizens (and citizens-to-be, in the case of children at school) needed to be both aware of how their federal, state and local governments work and also be involved in the workings of these governments. These two themes – awareness and participation – are also fundamental to my work in *Justice Citizens*. Like Mill and Jefferson, I want to ensure that students are active in their communities; one of the facets of meaningful civics and citizenship education is that it demands participation from the citizens in order for them to develop the skills necessary to fully participate in the running of their country. I feel strongly that there are links between these ideas and those of current scholars, like Jennifer Gore. Gore (1990) frames this in terms of power:

> [Empowerment] is not just a discourse or a state of mind. It requires the acquisition of the property of power and its exercise in the accomplishment of some vision or desired future condition (p. 14).

Thus, when Mill argued that citizens should be involved in political groups it is not only because such groups are often public good, they are also tools with which people may learn the knowledge and skills needed to democratically govern a country.

3.3.4 John Dewey and the Progressive Movement

Although many of the scholars mentioned here recognised the importance of education to democratic nationhood, to this point there has been only limited examination of what such education might look like in the context of a formal schooling system. This became more important as education (like citizen rights) became accessible to all, rather than the preserve of the wealthy. In the United States, John Dewey (1859-1952) built upon the work of earlier progressive educators and used the growth of the public education system and universal elementary education to explore the ways education and citizenship intersected.

The notion of a citizen who is active within his or her community was central to Dewey's understanding of democracy. For Dewey, the idea of democracy was intrinsically and inseparably linked to education. Dewey argued that citizenship is more than simply exercising one's rights as a member of a particular nation-state. It is both a state of being and a way of acting; that is, we are citizens not solely because of who we are, but because of what we do. In

Education and Democracy, Dewey (1916) wrote, 'A democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience' (p. 83).

This definition of democracy is significant for democratic education. In contemporary Australia (and to a lesser extent, other countries like the US and the UK), the discourse about civics and citizenship education has mostly focused on notions of government and history. This is especially true in programs like *Discovering Democracy*. One of my strongest criticisms of this program is that its focus detracts from the essential work of community building – the citizenship element of civics and citizenship education. Dewey recognised the importance of community for the development of young peoples' civic attitudes and it is his model of civics and citizenship education that I think should be taught in schools. I have modelled *Justice Citizens*, in part, on Dewey's ideas.

Dewey (1916) also argued that democracy was signified not solely by freedom of action, but also by freed capacity of thought – in essence, 'the freeing of intelligence for independent effectiveness' (p. 193). For him, schools were, for the most part, undemocratic in nature. There is relevance to his claim over a century later when we still see schools lagging behind the rest of society in embracing democratic growth. This leads, not surprisingly, to a conflict between schools and students:

> The teacher has not the power of initiation and constructive endeavour which is necessary to the fulfilment of the function of teaching. The learner finds conduits antagonistic (or at least lacking) to the development of the individual mental power and to adequate responsibility for its use. (p. 194)

Dewey was scathing of the ways teachers may be rendered powerless by educational systems. In Chapter Six, I discuss how the growing instrumentality (that is, the removal of professional judgement and its replacement with increased accountability and standardisation) has rendered teachers powerless in regards to civics and citizenship education in Australia. Although Dewey was writing of the US education system at the time, much of his criticism can still be applied to the Australian education system today. Specifically, Dewey identified that teachers had little or no influence upon matters of pedagogy or curriculum, and the direction of school affairs was in the hands of school superintendents, 'who have not necessarily any expert knowledge of education

and who are moved by non-educational motives' (p. 195). He described this as a 'profoundly undemocratic autocracy' (p. 195).

Furthermore, Dewey (1916) was critical of the dictation of subject matter, where teachers must teach as they are instructed to do, with little opportunity for decision making. He argued that this is a 'deliberate restriction of intelligence, the imprisoning of the spirit' (p. 196). Dewey then took issue with the argument that teachers are unfit to decide on a suitable curriculum:

> Moreover, if the teaching force is as inept and unintelligent and irresponsible as the argument assumes, surely the primary problem is that of their improvement. Only by sharing in some responsible task does there come a fitness to share in it. (p. 197)

Accordingly, if teachers are going to be 'fit' enough to teach a curriculum, then they must be included in the design process. This respects the professionalism of the teaching body rather than stripping it away by removing the teacher's role in curriculum design.

I discuss my ideas about the correct subject matter for civics and citizenship education in Chapters Twelve and Thirteen, but I'd like to make a few brief remarks about Dewey's critique in the context of contemporary Australian civics and citizenship education. Unfortunately, many of the criticisms made by Dewey still hold true in Australia. With the advent of the Australian Curriculum (and even before it, with nation-wide programs like *Discovering Democracy*), teachers have even less control over the subject matter that they are required to teach. It might be tempting to argue that having a centrally controlled and dictated curriculum would provide a suitable starting point for young people to learn about their role as citizens in Australia, but I would argue that this point of view is flawed. Civics and citizenship education is predicated upon their engagement of young people; it would be foolish to expect the majority of Australian students to be engaged by the rather dry curriculum offerings that are so general as to be almost meaningless. Instead, it is much more likely that students would be engaged by something that has direct applicability to them or their local community. Teachers therefore need autonomy to identify issues within their local community that will engage students, rather than follow a decontextualised curriculum dictated by the government.

Finally, Dewey analysed the effect that such a curriculum would have upon students' abilities to participate in a modern democratic society; like their

teachers, students are stifled. Democracy, Dewey (1903) wrote, rests in the principle of moral, self-directing individuality, where behaviour is modified by internal, rather than external authority. This means it is important that education is more than developing skills or learning how to do something; instead, it is about learning how to be something – and for Dewey, what students should be is active citizens. However, education (as it stood a century ago and, I suggest, still stands today) does not cultivate such intelligence.

Dewey (1916) wrote: 'Reform of education in the direction of greater play for the individuality of the child means the securing of conditions which will give outlet, and hence direction, to a growing intelligence' (p. 199). He reassured his readers that he was not calling for a 'riotous loosening' but instead a degree of freedom from oppression. Central to this was the primacy of first hand experience.

I suggest that Dewey's critique of education is still relevant in Australia. Despite constant calls for and initiatives purporting to be about educational reform, the result for many students is that they continue to study for the sole purpose of passing exams. In fact, the increased weight given to standardised tests like the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN, a form of standardized testing that all students in Australia undertake every two years) suggest that schooling is heading more than ever in the direction Dewey feared. Instead, we educators should be taking our role in developing the next generation of Australian citizens much more seriously, and this means we should try to cultivate the kinds of intelligences that will best suit citizens of the future. These include critical thought, organising skills, reflection and much more. Of course, such a 'call-to-arms' for teachers is also a challenge; few teachers have the experience or skills required for this critical work, although I imagine that they might enjoy developing them. Certainly, in the interviews conducted as part of *Justice Citizens* research project, teachers generally expressed the desire for more freedom within the curriculum and for opportunities to generate more experiential learning.

The role of education, then, is to prepare young people to act in accordance with ideals of democracy. For Dewey, the best way to do this was to ensure that education remained as relevant to the young person as any other part of their existence, such as their home life, their neighbourhood or the playground. Dewey instituted a pragmatic educational approach based on this

idea, and, echoing Aristotle, emphasised that students learn best by doing. Thus, if they are to learn to take part in Western democracy, they need to be, from the very start, involved in a school community that mirrors this approach, which means that schools need to be fundamentally restructured to better reflect democratic society, in contrast to the autocratic model upon which most schools are currently based. There have been numerous efforts to explore what such an approach to education might look like. For example, David Zyngier (2007) draws ideas like student-centred learning, experiential learning and empowerment directly from Dewey's theories and applies them in school-community contexts.

Dewey's ideas were never widely accepted in the US or the UK, mainly because they were perceived as too radical. Having said that, the progressive educational movement still exists today, and alternative schooling systems like the Steiner and Montessori schools, as well as other, less well-known models, operate around the world. An Australian example is Korowal School in the Blue Mountains, west of Sydney. Though not a large school, Korowal states that it is a humanist school whose aim is to 'prepare students for life as world citizens' (*Values of Korowal School* n.d.). It emphasises the need for all members of the school community to be involved in decision making. Such ideas are not popular in state or other independent school systems.

Dewey's ideas about education have often been reinterpreted and 're-discovered' before being adapted and implemented in various ways in different educational systems. Indeed, it does appear that there seems to be a regularly repeating 'fad' for Dewey-inspired approaches to education that alternates every couple of decades with an insistence on education 'getting back to basics'. Today there is increasing interest in his ideas about student-centred learning, often expressed as a form of 'project-based' or 'problem-based' learning. The New South Wales Department of Education, for example, as part of its Futures Learning Directive, discusses the efficacy of project-based learning (PBL) and how it might be implemented in schools: 'PBL engages students in rich and authentic learning experiences and can be transformative for your teaching practice' (NSW Department of Education, 2016, 'Project Based Learning Toolkit', para. 1). The language of engaging students and authentic learning is reminiscent of Dewey and other progressive educators, although it should be noted that the language of the Department is hardly convincing:

> [PBL] ultimately requires strong, supportive leadership and a commitment to innovation and contemporary pedagogies. It must be recognised that PBL may need to be adapted to be successful in your context. (NSW Department of Education, 2016, 'Project Based Learning Toolkit', para. 1)

3.3.5 Criticisms of Dewey

It is important to recognise that there has also been significant criticism of Dewey (Ravitch 2001; Rochester 2002; Sykes 1995). From my personal point of view, one of the most salient criticisms is that Dewey appears to have been naive about the dominant ideologies in education. He rarely engages in a critical appraisal of the ways vested interests influence the educational decision-making process or the day-to-day pedagogy of teachers in classrooms. For me, this is an important part of civics and citizenship education, and its absence from Dewey's work is troubling. For example, within Australia, the drive toward civics and citizenship education in the early 1990s was a directive from the Keating government in an effort to build support for the referendum on the republic. Shortly after the Howard government came to power in 1996, civics and citizenship education was instead used to build a sense of pride in Australia's democratic history as conservative ideologies came to the fore in the so-called 'history wars'. Although these are examples drawn from Australia in the late 20th century, they do highlight how school education is so often politicised.

Another criticism of Dewey's work (1916, 1938) that I would make is that he was relentlessly optimistic about social progress and the democratic nature of society. This might have seemed a reasonable assumption in the first half of the 20th Century, when participation in civil society was at its height (Putnam, 2001). While Putnam identified an increase in volunteer groups and civic participation in the 1950s and the 1960s, his data was gathered in the United States and ignored the troubling rise of totalitarianism in other parts of the world. Furthermore, Putnam described a disturbing decrease in volunteer participation after the 1960s. Dewey's optimism needs to be re-examined in the light of this changing participation rate.

I am not suggesting that people are less involved in civic communities than previously; rather, I am arguing that the nature of participation has altered significantly due to things like globalisation and social media. However, there are a number of key concepts in Dewey that are vital to the type of civics and

citizenship education that I am pursuing, principally, the importance of student involvement in, and control of, the projects they undertake. Simply put, if young people are expected to engage with the content at hand, it is vital that it is directed, at least in part, by them and relevant to their own interests. Although this idea exists more broadly, it has particular relevance to civics and citizenship education.

Dewey believed students learn best by doing and he argued against the rote memorisation of facts and statistics, as was common in schools of the time (and indeed, had been since the birth of public education in the 19th Century, notably satirised by Charles Dickens's Gradgrindian model of education as shown in in *Hard Times* (1854)) and instead suggested that students should learn by actually taking part in the activities that they were learning about. This idea of student involvement, while not exactly new, was a significant departure from the traditional perspective of children being seen but not heard. It is fundamental to the *Justice Citizens* program.

3.3.6 Civics and Citizenship Education: An Integrated Subject or a Stand Alone Approach?

As the 20th century drew to a close, there was a sudden growth of interest in civics and citizenship and, by extension, civics and citizenship education, in many countries across the globe. This sudden interest led to a range of different approaches to civics and citizenship education being adopted in different countries. Australian governments, in devising their approaches to civics and citizenship education, took the opportunity to draw from a number of different sources and models. Although there is insufficient space here to analyse each of these approaches in any great detail, the purpose of this section is to contextualise both the next chapter (civics and citizenship education in Australia) and my research generally.

One of the foremost analysts of civics and citizenship education policy is the English researcher David Kerr, who was part of the Citizenship Advisory Group that published the *Crick Report* (1998) into Citizenship in England. Kerr (1999) conducted a comprehensive review of civics education in 16 countries as part of the *International Review of Curriculum and Assessment Frameworks*. He identified that in the 1980s and 1990s there was a renewed interest amongst governments in civics and citizenship education and suggested this was partly

due to concerns about how democracies might be viewed in the new millennium. Kerr concluded that while most countries acknowledged their purpose was 'the preparation of young people for their roles and responsibilities as citizens' (p. 2), there was no real distinction or clarity between the countries studied. Classification was difficult because of the breadth and complexity of the different programs available. He did, however, identify that most civics education programs could be classified according to the clarity of the values expressed in the program. For example, citizenship education in the UK had minimal reference to values, while in Australia national values were expressed in general terms. Further along this continuum is South Korea, where there is explicit, detailed reference in civics education to national values. These ideas will be further explored in Chapter Six, along with other theories of civics and citizenship education.

Kerr (1999) explored one UK citizenship education program in detail. On the back of the *Crick Report* (1998), the UK adopted citizenship as a separate subject in the national curriculum. According to Crick (1998),

> The teaching of citizenship and democracy is so important both for schools and the life of the nation that there should be a statutory requirement in schools to ensure that it is part of the entitlement of all pupils. (p. 2)

Crick recommended that citizenship be taught as a separate subject, not integrated as it is now in a number of other countries, including Australia (Mellor (2003). This subject is based on concepts deemed essential to democratic practices, including democracy itself, justice, rights and responsibilities, in addition to the skills needed to fully participate in a democracy such as critical thinking, advocacy, and informed and responsible action. The purpose of such a curriculum is to encourage young people to be active citizens – young people who are capable of working together to achieve a more just and equitable society. For this, they need to learn about things like parliament, government, the legal system, the economy, the part the media plays in society, and national and international affairs.

Australia's counterpart to the UK's Citizenship subject will be discussed in Chapter Four, but it should be noted that there are significant differences from the UK version, both in content and delivery. The UK version is a separate subject, with specially trained teachers. In addition, its remit is far more wide-ranging, with what would be more properly called citizenship, whereas the

Australian version is focussed more on civics. The issue of whether the UK's program has been a success is difficult to discern. A House of Commons Education and Skills Committee, 2007 Report stated:

> It is too early to say with any degree of confidence whether citizenship education is producing the wide range of impacts originally hoped for. Initial evidence from small-scale studies and the experience of individual institutions is promising but on its own not enough. (p. 10)

The difficulties in assessing civics and citizenship education is a common theme; this too will be discussed in Chapter Six.

3.4 Civics and Citizenship Education in Australia

3.4.1 Introduction

Similar debates to those described above about the purpose of what is broadly described as civics and citizenship education have also taken place in Australia. The purpose of this section is to summarise some of the key developments in civics and citizenship education in Australia – both before and after European settlement. These influenced the development of the *Justice Citizens* program because I wanted this alternative offering to ameliorate some of the failings of previous, mainstream models. Thus, it was important to be conversant with both the nature of and the education for civics and citizenship in Australia.

3.4.2 Indigenous Australian Notions of Civics and Citizenship

To begin, it would be a mistake to suggest that there was nothing resembling citizenship amongst the original inhabitants of Australia. Indigenous groups would be quick to point out that before European settlement they had systems of government, healthcare and welfare, as well as mechanisms for dealing with other groups of people. In effect, Indigenous Australians were organised into different language groups, each with a form of government:

> Membership within each family or language group was based on birth right, shared language, and cultural obligations and responsibilities. Relations within groups predetermined categories of responsibilities and obligations to the group and to family. (Dudgeon, Wright, Paradies, Garvey & Walker 2010, p. 26)

and

> Reciprocity and sharing were and still are important characteristics in Aboriginal society. Sharing along the lines of kinship and family remains an important cultural value. (Berndt & Berndt 1992, p. 24)

Linked with these relationships and kinships were complex notions of citizenship, mostly around the idea of citizenship as belonging, rather than the idea of citizenship as subject that has become more common in the Western tradition (Berndt & Berndt 1992). In many ways, there are links here between Rousseau's (1984) ideas of a naturally good person, and the societies present in Australia before European settlement. As I will show later in this thesis, several students of Indigenous heritage who took part in *Justice Citizens* spoke about citizenship in precisely these terms; that is, citizenship as being part of belonging.

Throughout this study, I take a broad view of citizenship because the term itself is continually expanding to refer to concepts such as digital citizenship, consumer citizenship, and global citizenship. Consistent with this, I argue that before European settlement Indigenous Australians were citizens within their own nations; they had an agreed set of laws, belonged to different communities and collaboratively worked to address injustices.

After European settlement, the situation for Indigenous Australians changed catastrophically. As colonists moved outwards from the original settlements on the east coast in what Broome (1994) called the most 'fantastic land grab which was never again to be equalled' (p. 37), they took land from Indigenous Australians, which ultimately led to conflicts and violence, including massacres of women and children (Reynolds 1987). Although not often discussed in school history texts, Molloy and Grootjans (2014) describe these 19th Century conflicts as an 'undeclared war' (p. 207).

Michael Dodson (1993) has argued that, rather than there being an absence of such socio-political structures before British settlement, the existing Indigenous structures were simply ignored:

> The English colonial legal system itself, in order to impose sovereignty in the way it did, that is providing no recognition of pre-existing structures and rights, had to deny the existence of such structures. This is precisely what it did. (1993, 'The Prior Rights of Indigenous Peoples', para. 3)

Reconciling the White settler view of citizen with that of Indigenous Australians is a challenging prospect, but Raewyn Connell's notions of Southern Theory (2007) can identify ways forward. According to Connell, Southern Theory 'shows hidden geopolitical assumptions in northern social theory and discusses a wide range of powerful social thought from the

colonised and postcolonial world' (p. 210). Connell encourages academics to reject the dominance of northern institutions in the production and dissemination of knowledge and recognise that there are alternative knowledge systems present in the South. She writes:

> There is, in some views, an African knowledge system – or perhaps multiple ones – independent of the Western knowledge system … Similar arguments are made for indigenous knowledge in North and South America, in Australia and elsewhere' (2014, p. 212).

Connell is careful to warn against the silo approach to indigenous knowledge, but her arguments are persuasive in the context of describing what it means to be a citizen in Australia in the 21st Century – for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. These indigenous perspectives on citizenship connect not only with notions of Indigenous knowledges, but also with the traditions of post-colonial and anti-colonial theories. Connell's Southern Theory can be located in this wider theoretical realm. I subscribe to this notion of alternative knowledges, embrace the multiplicity of ways of being a 'citizen', and recognise that this might include Indigenous Australian knowledges. In fact, the more recent Western definitions of citizenship – the ones that abstract the meaning from the purely political sense and instead include belonging to a community or group or particular cause – share much in common with Indigenous definitions that emphasise kinship and community.

3.4.3 Citizenship Education in the 20th Century: Discrete or Embedded?

Before Federation, when each Australian state existed as an independent territory, civics and citizenship education existed in the guise of 'morals and values education.' Although it differed from state to state, this education was, for the most part, aimed at preparing students to take part in the class-based hierarchy present in Australia. Emphasis was placed on virtues like duty, patriotism and working as a productive member of society, as well as knowing one's place. In this form of education, citizenship was a right granted exclusively to White men, and the most basic act of citizenship, that of voting for government, was denied to much of the population. Nowhere is this more telling than in the fact that Australians were considered to be 'subjects' of the British Empire, implying subservience, rather than citizenship.

In 1901, the Australian colonies were federated, and the need to forge a strong national identity was added to the requirements for civics and citizenship education. It is important to note that this identity was not one of independence: there was still a great deal of emphasis on belonging to the British Empire, and the virtues of a good citizen remained those of duty, patriotism and military service. According to Print and Grey (2000), 'civics courses were introduced to NSW schools during this period. The New Education Theorists considered civics education as a discipline that encouraged independent thought and active citizenship' (p. 1).

The emphasis at this time remained on topics like the history of the empire and virtues like duty and patriotism. Regardless of the value of such topics, it is hard to ignore that this indoctrination by the British perspective was hugely successful. Perhaps this is nowhere more evident than in the way that generations of young men volunteered for military service in defence of England and her Empire during the First World War.

Throughout the 1920s and beyond, the topics remained very similar. Of course, the idea of a good citizen is a contested one, but in this case, it is clear that young people were being taught to be a specific kind of citizen in school – one who was obedient to authority and understood that their role in society involved voting, paying taxes and being aware of how their government functioned (Print & Grey 2000).

By the 1930s, however, a change had swept through the schooling system. In particular, the preceding approach to civics and citizenship education was seen as unimaginative and dull (Print & Grey 2000). Previously, citizenship had been interpreted in a narrow, technical sense, with the result that too much weight was given to understanding governmental structures and the mechanisms of political action, and not enough emphasis had been placed on the kind of active participation that was part of the requirements for a citizen. Perhaps informed by the growing influence of the United States, citizenship education now became integrated, alongside History and Geography, into Social Studies. This new approach still emphasised the traditional values of patriotism and duty, but added to the curriculum were new ideas about participation and active citizenship.

This swing between conservative and radical approaches towards civics and citizenship education, as demonstrated in the first three decades of the 20th

Century, is, in my opinion, one of the enduring tensions in the field. As will be described later in this chapter, this debate was still very much present at the end of the 20th Century.

So far, this chapter has briefly described the content of the civics and citizenship curriculum – what was being taught last century. Equally important is how it was taught. For the most part the main pedagogical method employed by teachers from federation through to the 1950s was the didactic passing on of knowledge (Campbell 2013). This approach was further supported by elements of the hidden curriculum that have continued to the modern era. For example, for most of the 20th century, students sang *God Save the Queen*, which was the Australian national anthem until 1984. In any normal school subject, such a didactic approach would be cause for concern; in a subject predicated upon active participation it is indicative of what I believe is a deeply flawed understanding of the way the skills and attitudes necessary for active citizenship are developed.

The end of World War II signified a period of rapid growth and significant social change in Australia, and it is ironic that, at the time when a principled and well-resourced approach to the teaching of civics and citizenship was most necessary because of the dramatic influx of migrants and refugees, civics and citizenship education was in the process of being phased out. The integrated Social Studies approach was the beginning of the demise of formal civics and citizenship education, as governments and therefore teachers devoted more time to the History and Geography components of the course. According to Print and Grey (2000), this lack of emphasis on civics education reflected the social upheaval present in Australia at the time:

> Change, prosperity, new values and a new focussing on youth eclipsed the earlier belief that there was a need to address issues of citizenship, national identity and democracy. (p. 3)

And according to Macintyre and Simpson (2009),

> Post-war migration began in the expectation that newcomers would conform to the host society, and stimulated efforts to codify the nation's culture and values as part of formal programs of citizenship education, but this yielded to a growing acceptance of ethnic diversity and an appreciation of its benefits. (p. 122)

This growing acceptance meant that by the 1970s any formal commitment to civics and citizenship education had disappeared; it seemed as if civics and citizenship education would be permanently removed from the school curriculum. But by the 1980s and 1990s there was a renewed interest in

the subject. Originally, this came in the form of a number of optional subjects that had significant citizenship components, like Commerce in NSW, or Politics in Victoria, but two Australian Senate reports (*Education for Active Citizenship* in 1989, and *Active Citizenship Revisited* in 1991) suggested there was a need for a national discussion around the place of civics and citizenship education in Australian schools. This discourse, the resulting curriculum materials and their reception in schools are the focus of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4: THE CURRENT CLIMATE FOR CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP

4.1 Defining the Civics Deficit

Building on the review of civics and citizenship education and its historical and philosophical arguments as presented in the previous chapter, this chapter seeks to explore the current climate of civics and citizenship education, with a specific focus on Australian education and policy settings. To begin with, the troubling notion of the civics deficit will be discussed; I will briefly outline what the term means and the role of the Civics Expert Group in establishing the term amongst educators, before considering some of the criticisms of the term itself. In the second part of the chapter, I will discuss *Discovering Democracy,* and discuss its effectiveness both from the official assessments and from other sources. Finally, I will consider the current climate of civics and citizenship education in Australia, specifically addressing its role within the Australian Curriculum and the review into that curriculum that was undertaken shortly after its implementation.

4.1.1 Education for Active Citizenship

One of the most enduring themes in civics and citizenship education in Australia is the notion of the existence of a 'civics deficit' (see Ewins 2006; Macintyre & Simpson 2009). This term supposedly describes the lack of knowledge most Australians, and especially young Australians, have about their government. From an educational perspective, such a framing of the problem is of limited utility as it fails to acknowledge the heterogeneous nature of young people and their diverse and often contextual knowledges. However, this construct is used so widely that I feel it is important to engage with it even though I believe that civics and citizenship education should not begin from an examination of the absence of student knowledge, but instead a recognition of lived experiences and knowledges of students. In addition, the idea of a deficit has to be problematised, and the work of the *Justice Citizens* program was

intended, in part, to explore the nature of this so-called deficit. For these reasons it is important to examine closely where the term came from and the context in which it has been deployed.

Part of the construct of deficiency concerns a lack of formal knowledge about government procedures. According to Print and Grey (2000), by the mid-1990s, 'it was clear that many young Australians were remarkably ignorant about political and government systems and their role as citizens' (p. 4). Even though 'their role as citizens' sounds like it could embrace a more maximal idea of citizenship, in reality, Print and Grey argue for no more than a limited understanding of what it means to be a citizen, an understanding characterised by having some knowledge about our political institutions and mechanisms. Indeed, one of the reasons why I chose to develop *Justice Citizens* was because I wanted to extend the common understanding of civics and citizenship education beyond this formalistic and limited definition of what active citizenship might constitute.

The Australian government's early interest in this subject was symptomatic of a global questioning about the role of civics and citizenship in society and in educational institutions. The broader, global debate set the parameters further towards an authentic definition of active participation in society. In Australia a growing control by the Commonwealth over the delivery and funding of education would have important ramifications on the development of a civics and citizenship education curriculum. The Labor Government in the 1990s had recognised that there was a link between 'educational achievement and national economic performance in a growing global economy' (Macintryre & Simpson 2009, p. 123). Australia's Federation in 1901 had left education in the hands of state governments, but during the 1990s, the Federal government sponsored a move towards greater consistency between the states with the aim of improving economic performance, a move that reached completion with the adoption of a national curriculum in 2014.

The first step on this process was a meeting of MCEETYA, now MCEECDYA (the Ministerial Council on Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs) in 1989. This led to the *Hobart Declaration*, in which the Key Learning Areas were formalised, one of which was Studies of Society and Environment (SOSE, previously called Human Society and Its Environment or HSIE in New South Wales), which included History,

Geography, Social Studies and Citizenship Education. This declaration is important because it reaffirmed the central place of civics and citizenship education in Australia. One of the agreed goals of the *Hobart Declaration* was that the educational systems in Australia should

> develop knowledge, skills, attitudes and values which will enable students to participate as active and informed citizens in our democratic Australian society within an international context. (MYCEETYA 1989, p. 6a)

Civics and citizenship education was about to be thrust into the limelight; In 1989, the Senate Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training released a report titled *Education for Active Citizenship*. This report attributed young peoples' powerlessness and disengagement in civil society to their lack of political knowledge (Krinks 1999). As described earlier, young people were once more framed in a deficit model. The solution to this problem, according to the committee, was to increase the levels of political knowledge among young people, with special attention to how they might become more involved in civic society. However, according to the Senate Standing Committee (1989), this education should not be equivalent to force-feeding students with facts about the political system which will either be forgotten because they seem remote and uninteresting, or remembered because they seem curious and arcane (Senate Standing Committee 1989). Instead the Senate proposed a more active approach be required. For example, the Senate Report argued for school–community partnerships and more involvement of young people in their local areas. Another recommendation was that such an approach be integrated into other subjects, rather than existing separately, in order to ensure that the curriculum did not become any more crowded.

A second Senate report, *Active Citizenship Revisited*, was released in 1991, and sought to address three goals:

> First, it drew attention to the initiatives begun since the first Report, in the hope that readers would make contact with others working in the field of active citizenship and share ideas, successes and failures; second, it assessed the changes that were underway since the previous Report; and, finally, the Report acknowledged criticisms made of the first report, particularly that the notions of citizenship, democracy and participation in that report were confined to the public or 'civic' realm. (Krinks 1999, "Education for Active Citizenship Revisited")

4.1.2 The Civics Expert Group

These reports led to the formation of the Civics Experts Group (the CEG, later the Civics Education Group) in 1994. The goal of the CEG was 'to

recommend a non-partisan program to enable all Australians to participate more fully and effectively in the civic life of our country, and thereby promote good citizenship' (CEG 1994, p. 2). There was a specific reason for the establishment of such a group by the then Prime Minister, Paul Keating. A critical factor in establishing the CEG was 'the Keating Government's initiative for a new identity for Australians based upon a republic within our lifetime' (Print & Grey 2000, p. 5).

4.1.3 The Civics Deficit

The first report from the CEG, *Whereas the people…,* was published in 1994 and, echoing the two Senate reports, it identified what became known as the civics deficit amongst young Australians. This was characterised as a 'limited understanding and knowledge about principles of responsible government, the division of power, and the relationship between legislature, executive and judiciary' (Hunter & Jimenez 1999, p. 22).

In order to address this deficit, the CEG (1994) made a number of recommendations, including making civics and citizenship education mandatory in all Australian schools. The CEG recommended that such education should take place mostly within SOSE subjects, but it should also be spread across the curriculum so that it would have applicability to other content that was to be taught. The CEG differentiated between civics education, which was seen to be more limited in focus, addressing the public institutions and mechanisms of government, and citizenship education, which had a broader, more issues-based scope. The overall goal of this new approach to civics and citizenship education was to develop a program that allowed Australians 'to act as informed, confident, tolerant citizens, secure in their rights and responsibilities as members of a diverse and tolerant society' (CEG 1994, p. 28).

As mentioned earlier, the dominant discourse of the time, supported by the government, was the so-called 'civics deficit'; however, there were voices of disagreement about this way of defining young people. Although politicians were in favour of more learning about the role of government and the importance of citizens voting, other educational authorities 'were concerned it go beyond teaching about the system of government and provide opportunities

to engage students in activities fostering active citizenship' (Macintyre & Simpson 2009, p. 124).

4.1.4 Criticisms of the Civics Deficit

The idea of a civics deficit is a limited tool for understanding young people's conceptions of civics and citizenship. It derives from an educational model where the purpose of an educational system is simply to 'fill up' a student with the required knowledge or skills before allowing them to enter the workforce. This is a reference to Freire's (1970) banking model of education. Such an approach implies that civic understanding is simply a 'thing' that can be applied to everybody equally. In reality, any understanding of civics and citizenship is much more complex, and more nuanced explanations of citizenship, such as those presented by Arvanitakis and Marren (2009) and Harris, Wyn and Younes (2007), focus on its performativity; that is, citizenship is not simply known, but enacted. Educational approaches should take this into account.

Another problem with the civics deficit model is that it implies that young people are a homogenous group that lacks understanding about all kinds of civics and citizenship. Young people are no more homogenous than any other section of society in Australia; they represent wide disparities in social class, race and culture, wealth, experience and opportunities. Not surprisingly, these disparities make teaching civics and citizenship a particular challenge, as students have different starting points for learning about these topics. The civics deficit argument was based on a simple definition of civics and citizenship (Senate Standing Committee on Employment and Training, 1989), that is, an understanding of the mechanisms and functions of government (although it should be noted that the subsequent federal government initiative, *Discovering Democracy*, did make some efforts to broaden this subject to include community issues and activism). It did not take into account the other ways that active citizenship might be exhibited. This is at odds with the *Hobart Declaration* (and later the *Adelaide* and *Melbourne Declarations*), both of which emphasised the active nature of civics and citizenship, not just the rote learning of facts but instead maximal or 'thick' approaches to the subject (McLaughlin 1992).

The reason for this limitation is simple; according to the CEG (1994), the ability of a person to participate in political and democratic matters is predicated upon the level of knowledge possessed by that person about both the matter at hand (be it immigration, climate change, education or any of a dozen other topics) and the process by that person can participate (for example, through membership of social movements and political parties, or by protesting). Later research about civic engagement by students (see, for example, Torney-Purta, Lehman, Oswald & Schulz 2001) suggest that this might not be the case, and instead less formal knowledge but more practical experience is central to increasing civic participation. According to scholars like Torney-Purta et al. (2001), there is no causal link between the two factors. Just as an increased civic knowledge does not automatically lead to an increased civic participation, less civic knowledge is no barrier to civic participation. There are a number of examples of this, especially in recent times. One might look at the growth of the Occupy movement where students and other young people were moved to protest, despite the high level of ignorance about the issues or political processes demonstrated by some of the protesters. Ultimately, these people were inspired to take action out of a feeling that something was wrong, rather than any specific understandings of the causes of the global financial crises, and it was their perceived powerlessness that specifically drove them to take action in the first place. The growing calls to address structural racism is another example, especially as characterized by the Black Lives Matter movement, which has seen significant community involvement and participation, as well as widespread social media coverage.

In the next section, I will discuss the development of *Discovering Democracy*, as well as the significant criticisms that were raised about the program at its inception.

4.2 *Discovering Democracy*

Regardless of the concerns about the genesis of *Discovering Democracy*, AUD25 million dollars was set aside in 1994 for funding a new civics and citizenship education program, and the contract was awarded to Curriculum Corporation to develop. Curriculum Corporation is

> a partnership of all Australian Education Ministers with a Board representing all education systems and sectors, teachers, parents and the NZ Ministry of Education. It undertakes activities that are in the national interests and that support and augment the

> work of education systems and sectors. Its curriculum resources and services are dedicated to improving student learning. (Curriculum Corporation 2015)

In 1996, the Keating Government was succeeded by the Howard Government, and this meant that the program underwent a review, despite the previous bipartisan support for it. There were significant changes to the program before it was released as *Discovering Democracy* in 1997. According to the education minister at the time, David Kemp,

> the emphasis on developing active citizenship skills to participate in current civics issues was lessened in order that greater emphasis be placed on knowledge of the historical development of Australian democracy. (Kemp 1997, in Macintyre & Simpson 2009, p. 125)

Discovering Democracy was released to schools in 1997 and 1998, with the intention that it would be delivered to students between Years 3 and 10. The program was divided into four academic ranges: Middle Primary, Upper Primary, Lower Secondary and Middle Secondary. Each range had a unit linked to one of four themes: *Who Rules, Laws and Rights, The Australian Nation* and *Citizens and Public Life*. These themes followed a developmental progression. For example, the *Australian Nation* began with *We Remember* and then progressed through *The People Make a Nation*, then *Democratic Struggles* and finally *What Sort of a Nation?*

4.2.1 Criticisms of Discovering Democracy

Despite being evaluated as being 'of high educational quality' by Erebus Consulting Group (2003, p. 4), there was almost immediate criticism of *Discovering Democracy* from a range of sources. The criticism mostly related to three areas. First, the conception of *Discovering Democracy* was flawed due to the deficit model of active citizenship that was adopted. The second criticism dealt with the nature of the curriculum and the learning materials involved with the project. Some critics argued that there was too much emphasis on content knowledge, and that it was the wrong kind of knowledge to interest young people. The final criticism was about the implementation of the project, arguing that there was little opportunity for teachers to improve their own understanding of civics and citizenship education, which ultimately led to the failure of the project in many sites.

One of the CEG's harshest critics was Kerry Kennedy (1997), who argued that *Discovering Democracy* was predicated upon a poor understanding of young

people. This flawed understanding of the heterogeneous group of 'youth' meant that the program had failed to identify, 'the things that matter to young people, the things that can help them understand their reality and give them a stake in the future that rightly belongs to them' (p. 3).

Kennedy wanted more of an emphasis on what he called 'civic megatrends' and 'civic realities', all of which needed to be linked to values and knowledge that were relevant to young people. Arguing in a way that would become increasingly popular in the next decade, Kennedy suggested that these civic megatrends, which included globalisation, the effects of technology and the challenging nature of global issues, would have 'the potential to define who citizens are at the end of the 20th century' (p. 3).

In a similar vein, Marjorie O'Loughlin (1997) criticised the content-heavy way the *Discovering Democracy* course had been constructed, and instead argued for a negotiated approach to curriculum and more emphasis on how young people might affect their own place in society. In particular, she wanted young people to develop 'knowing that involves going beyond our given identities in a leap of consciousness that brings about a condition of negotiated partnership with others' (p. 26).

This notion of a 'negotiated partnership' being one of the goals of civics and citizenship education is a common theme among progressive educators. As discussed in Chapter Three, it echoes the idea of 'living by association' espoused by John Dewey (1916) almost a century earlier. In my experience, as both an educator and a researcher, I strongly agree with O'Loughlin and Kennedy. It is foolish to think that a student is a *tabula rasa*, awaiting a teacher to inscribe his or her knowledge upon them. Rather, I am certain that students bring with them a range of interests and concerns, as well as skills and knowledges, to the classroom. The role of civics and citizenship education is therefore to explore these issues in a critical manner, and then provide a means for sharing stories that engender positive social change. Clearly, any effective educational program must start from the basis of what the students already know – what they think is important – not what politicians and policymakers feel is important. Otherwise, the most a teacher can ever hope to achieve is compliance, rather than empowerment.

The second area of criticism that I identified was that of the content of *Discovering Democracy*. I agree with Macintyre and Simpson (2009), who

critiqued the process by which the Howard Government changed the focus to emphasis the history of Australian democracy at the cost of minimising the activist parts of the course. Macintyre and Simpson argued:

> A number of subsequent studies have argued that the *Discovering Democracy* program placed excessive emphasis on government institutions and civic knowledge, that it failed to raise levels of engagement and that a far more imaginative and participatory approach was needed. (p. 130)

As I see it, this criticism of *Discovering Democracy* boils down to a simple question: does learning about the history of a country, and specifically that country's political history, better prepare young people to take part in the democratic life of that country? There is little or no correlation between these two factors as studied by scholars like Shermis and Barth (1982). Having spent more than half my career teaching civics and citizenship in a variety of different ways, I have found that the 'chalk and talk' method is clearly the least successful. I agree with the point made by Shermis and Barth (1982):

> By passively storing up information about historical events ... students are held to be disciplining themselves and thereby acquiring the knowledge and attitudes essential for citizenship at a later time. (p. 27)

As is shown in the interviews with students (see Chapters 10, 11 and 12), some students do not even realise that they are learning civics and citizenship in *Discovering Democracy*, while others struggle to remember anything related to what they have learned. Very few identify the ways that what they have learned (or failed to learn) will prepare them for a future in which they can be active citizens. Though I am sceptical of the need for students to know how laws are made, I would argue that it is far more important that students are engaged in their local communities, taking action on issues that they feel are important. The empowerment that students gain from such educative events might inspire further learning and involvement.

Shermis and Barth (1982) distinguished between the idea of passively storing up information, which was (and remains) the practice common in many US social studies classrooms, and that of actively learning important decision-making skills, which are fundamental to good government and active participation. More recent scholars, like Bennet, Wells and Rank (2009) identified that civics instruction in the US continues to be delivered with an academic focus on the forms and structures of government. They write:

> In such an environment, the best case scenario seems to be for an elite stratum of academic achievers to acquire the outward trappings of dutiful citizenship such as

> knowledge of government, while the majority of students (particularly those in the lower socioeconomic and academic tiers) are not well prepared for successful careers as citizens at all. (2009, p. 106)

Such approaches, they go on to write, are actually less successful in developing democratic citizenship than more activist ways. This research is supported by Brint, Contreras and Matthews (2001) who found that teachers emphasised notions of citizenship that related to obedience, order and good work habits, rather than activist notions.

At first glance it would appear that *Discovering Democracy* falls into the category of storing up information, but Macintyre and Simpson (2009) argue that this is actually incorrect: "[The program resources] were not didactic and followed principles of inquiry and discovery learning for students, but within a restricted compass and an emphasis on the political process" (p. 125). Macintyre, in particular, might sound defensive; after all, he was part of the CEG that guided the development of *Discovering Democracy*. This is not entirely surprising; Thornton (1994) found that teachers' approaches generally focussed on transmission, even though the preferred practice, at least as described in curriculum materials or teacher education programs suggested more activist approaches to pedagogy. What is clear is that there was little consensus about the way that civics or citizenship education was to be delivered in *Discovering Democracy*, and thus it was delivered in a range of ways, some of which were at odds with the original intention of the program. While there may have been examples of inquiry and discovery learning, there were just as many examples of teacher-centred and didactic approaches (Forsyth & Tudball 2002).

Such criticism soon broadened to include the way the program was developed. Even Macintyre and Simpson (2009), agreed that

> professional development helped teachers work with the new program, although only a minority of teachers were able to undertake it before funding ceased … full implementation was not achieved ... [and] use of materials was highly dependent upon individual teachers. (p. 127)

The problem was much larger than the lack of professional development opportunities available. Mellor (2003) identified that only one per cent of teachers in Australia had studied civics at an undergraduate level, less than three per cent had postgraduate qualifications in corresponding degrees, and, of the teachers responsible for delivering the civics and citizenship curriculum, 33 per cent said that they were not at all confident with teaching civics. Other

issues that Mellor identified include the fact that there was no national curriculum (although that is currently changing) and that there was only limited direction for teachers on how best to implement *Discovering Democracy*.

As evidence of this, Mellor cited the confusion over where in the curriculum civics and citizenship education fits. According to Mellor, it should be taught across all the subject areas, thus making the links of citizenship to all facets of public life clear. However, some states adopted a model where it was only taught in Social Studies subjects, while others only implemented it in discrete blocks. Regarding the pedagogy of civics and citizenship education, Mellor suggested that it was best delivered in a problem-solving way, with the emphasis on understanding and solving issues of relevance. This would be essential if students were to remain involved and engaged. However, Mellor provided no advice about how problem-solving approaches might be delivered, leaving that up to individual schools to decide.

4.2.2 Official Assessment of Discovering Democracy

MCEETYA undertook regular assessments of the efficacy of *Discovering Democracy* (2006, 2008, 2010). These took the form of a civics and citizenship test that a random sample of students in Years 6 and 10 from different schools completed. The results were then compiled, analysed and a report was published. The students who completed the test were judged according to whether they had met specific levels and this was extrapolated to provide a snapshot of the success of *Discovering Democracy* as a whole.

Students in Year 6 were meant to attain level 2, which meant that they were 'able to demonstrate accurate responses to relatively simple civics and citizenship concepts or issue, with limited interpretation or reasoning' (MCEETYA 2010, p. 23). Year 10, on the other hand, were to reach level 3: 'students are able to demonstrate relatively precise and detailed factual responses to complex civics and citizenship concepts or issues and some interpretation of information' (2010, p. 22). In Year 6, only 54% of students actually reached level 2. This level of achievement was lower in the Year 10 cohort, with only 41% meeting level 3 (MCEETYA 2010).

The results reflected similar studies (Torney-Purta et al. 2001; Mellor 2003). Students who came from families with parents who were senior managers or professionals significantly outperformed students from other

backgrounds, especially those whose parents were unskilled workers or unemployed. In addition, students from Indigenous Australian backgrounds or from regional areas performed worse than students from metropolitan areas. This might be linked to the greater economic, social and cultural capital possessed by the more successful students.

4.2.3 Findings from Discovering Democracy

There were a number of interesting factors peculiar to *Discovering Democracy*. For example MCEECDYA (2010) found three main factors, beyond those identified above, that influenced how well students performed in these tests. First, students who participated in outside school civics-related activities (for example, Amnesty International or climate change groups) were more likely to have a higher mean score. Second, schools that provided more opportunities for participation in either school governance or civics-related activities performed better. Third, students who participated in these activities did better than their peers who did not.

These findings raise some important points for my work in civics and citizenship education. They indicate that, at least in the case of civics and citizenship tests, there is a crucial ingredient in student success that exists beyond the traditional idea of classroom instruction; that is, it is necessary for students to actually practice some form of activity related to civics and citizenship, and not to simply learn about it. Not surprisingly, the international study by Torney-Purta et al. (2001) found there are also very clear links between student governance organisations like student representative councils and student voice groups, and the development of civics and citizenship understanding around the world.

In the penultimate evaluation report produced by MCEETYA in 2007, the failure of *Discovering Democracy* is made clear:

> By 2007 civics and citizenship education had a more prominent place and an agreed focus in curriculum policies in Australian states and territories than was the case in 2004, but not in such a way as to impact at the school or classroom level (2007, p. xix).

One must question the value of the program if, after 10 years, it had failed to affect those it sought to target. Of course, this is not to say that there were no excellent examples of civics and citizenship education in Australian schools throughout this period. However, these appear to have been the exception, rather than the norm.

4.3 Values Education

After the discontinuation of *Discovering Democracy*, there was a short-lived attempt at *Values Education* by the federal Liberal-National coalition government, headed by Brendan Nelson, the then education minister. Ultimately, that too failed and civics and citizenship education ceased to be an important issue in educational discourses, at least until the development of the Australian Curriculum (although, as discussed in the Chapter Four, the importance placed on civics and citizenship education has waxed and waned even within that domain). I will now briefly touch on the main features of the *Values Education* program before identifying the reasons for its failure.

More than AUD30 million dollars of federal education funding was given to implement the National Framework for Values Education (Curriculum Corporation 2005). It had nine values that it sought to promote: care and compassion; doing your best; fair go; freedom; honesty and trustworthiness; integrity; respect; responsibility and understanding; tolerance and inclusion. While these values are no doubt fine aspirations for members of society (although one might argue about whether they are as uniquely Australian as has been claimed),

> … the problem lay in how the federal government assumed these values and Australia's history were innate and uncontested, precluding debate about them in the classroom. (Clark 2008, p. 3)

As with the *Discovering Democracy* program, *Values Education* was presented in a way that sought to provide one dominant narrative of Australian history. That this narrative was meant to be an object lesson for young Australians on how they should behave or what they should embody was made even more clear by directly linking the nine values to, individually, Simpson (a heroic Australian figure from World War I, who carried wounded soldiers to safety on his donkey), and, collectively, the ANZAC myth. This is not necessarily a bad story in and of itself, but the limited opportunities for students to experience different perspectives meant that students could only experience limited conceptions of citizenship. As a final word, it is worth noting that, like *Discovering Democracy*, *Values Education* failed to take into account the wishes of the young people themselves. Clark (2008) wrote,

> While there is certainly powerful political and public pressure to define an uplifting 'national character' for young people, I argue there is even more value in letting them analyse such ideas themselves. And, perhaps unsurprisingly, many of them say just that. (p. 4)

4.4 The Current Climate of Citizenship Education in Australia

Civics and citizenship education is currently undergoing something of a lull in the Australian educational policy arena. Even though civics and citizenship education has been included in the Australian Curriculum since 2014, when compared to the interest generated by the release of *Discovering Democracy* in 1996, there currently seems to be a distinct lack of interest in the topic. Of course, this might be partially linked to the idea that one of the main drivers for civics and citizenship education, the debate about Australia becoming a republic, has almost completely disappeared from the national consciousness.

4.4.1 Civics and Citizenship in the Australian Curriculum

Civics and Citizenship is a subject in the Australian Curriculum (ACARA 2013), although it has not been treated with the same importance as other subjects, like English, Mathematics, Science and History, which were the first Australian Curriculum subjects to be implemented, beginning in 2014. Civics and Citizenship Education (CCE) went through a shaping phase between 2011 and 2012, which concluded with the publishing of a shape paper in October 2012. Between October 2012 and December 2013, the writing period was completed, with the draft curriculum available for consultation between May 2013 and July 2013. It was anticipated that the final curriculum would be published at the end of 2013, before implementation began in February 2014. Considering that there has also been a delay in the implementation of the other subjects, it is possible that CCE will not be fully implemented in Australian schools for some years to come. The current state of civics and citizenship within the Australian Curriculum, including the outcomes of the review into the Australian Curriculum, is discussed later in this chapter.

At first appearance, there is a great deal of similarity between the Australian Curriculum syllabus CCE and that of *Discovering Democracy*. Both identify the importance of an active and informed citizenry, citing the *Melbourne Declaration* as a fundamental influence on the development of content. However, the Australian Curriculum is much more explicit about what that might mean, stating that part of the aim of the Curriculum is to ensure that students develop

> a lifelong sense of belonging to and engagement with civic life as an active and informed citizen in the context of Australia as a secular democratic nation with a dynamic, multicultural and multi-faith society. (ACARA 2013, p. 5)

In addition, students are also meant to develop "the capacities and dispositions to participate in the civic life of their nation at a local, regional and global level" (p. 5). Considering the failure of *Discovering Democracy*, these are lofty aims indeed; there is a clear emphasis on active participation, rather than simply knowing.

Both syllabuses identify the difference between civics and citizenship. Civics is the study of political and democratic institutions and the mechanics of government, whereas citizenship is a much broader concept that includes the various multi-faceted ways that citizens interact with each other and their governing institutions and contribute to the life of the community. Something that is notably absent from both of the syllabuses is a concern with social justice and equity among citizens, which many scholars (Carr 2008; Westheimer & Kahne 2004b) argue is an essential part of active citizenship. I have positioned myself alongside such scholars.

An important difference between the two syllabuses is the inclusion of cross-curricular priorities. These priorities, which are common to all Australian Curriculum syllabuses reflect a new and growing commitment to the study of (a) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, (b) Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia and (c) sustainability. These topics have added a new dimension to the study of CCE. Perhaps because of the increased recognition of the potential effects of globalisation and its attendant problems on the lives of young Australians, there is a greater emphasis on citizenship as belonging to a global community, rather than what has traditionally been defined as a nation state.

Indeed, the notion that citizenship has relevance in a global context, rather than simply a national one, is one of the major changes in the current understanding of citizenship. This has influenced the way citizenship is currently being talked about in Australian schools (Criddle, Vidovich & O'Neill 2004), as well as spawning some approaches to civics and citizenship education that are more maximal (that is, student centred, project-based and experiential) than *Discovering Democracy*.

4.4.2 The Review of the Australian Curriculum

Before the new CCE curriculum was developed, ACARA released *Draft Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship* (ACARA, 2012). This document was intended to serve as a platform to establish what was to be included in the curriculum and the underlying philosophy that informed the curriculum's development. This Shape paper began by acknowledging that there had been a gradual shift in what is meant by CCE. For example, the Shape paper offers a much broader understanding of what citizenship means:

> Over the past two decades in Australia and internationally, there has been a broadening of the concepts, processes, and practices in civics and citizenship education. In particular, there has been an increased emphasis on the role of active citizenship, both as explicit content and as a key outcome. (ACARA 2012, p. 6)

This broader and deeper definition shows that the new curriculum was to contain a more sophisticated understanding of the nature of civil society, and the relationship between education and democracy, than previous incarnations. It rests on the assumption that democracy is a valuable institution, it is active, and reflects the fact that democracy necessarily reaches beyond the constitution and the legislature to genuine civic engagement.

This is important because, since the original Shape document, the Australian Curriculum has undergone numerous reviews. The most controversial took place in 2014, and was conducted by conservative academics Ken Wiltshire and Kevin Donnelly. This review limited the scope of civics and citizenship education and deliberately moved away from the activist notions outlined in the Shape paper. David Zyngier writes:

> A case in point is the Civics & Citizenship Education (CCE) Curriculum. This area of study, for example, is critiqued not by an educator or someone expert in the development of CCE but a professor of constitutional law who states that she is categorically against the inclusion of the cross-curriculum priorities as a general principle. Her view, accepted by the reviewers is that CCE should be more focused on an instrumentalist and content based curriculum teaching about democracy but not teaching for democracy. The review understands CCE in thin electoral terms with a focus on system of government and purposively rejects any discussion of diversity as too ideological. (Zyngier 2014, para 12)

This approach is reflected in the most recent version of the Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship (v 8.3, ACARA, 2015), where civics and citizenship education in Foundation to Year 6 is no longer a separate content area, but is instead folded into Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS). It also has no place in the General Capabilities section of the

curriculum, which was reduced considerably after the review. Instead of the emphasis on active citizenship as described in the Shape paper, this new version limits the curriculum to content-based aims: 'The Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship provides students with opportunities to investigate political and legal systems, and explore the nature of citizenship, diversity and identity in contemporary society' (ACARA, 2015). This is a disappointing change and suggests that ACARA, and by extension, schools in Australia, are no longer seeking to develop the same level of active citizenship in Australian students. Another change suggested by the Shape paper was the inclusion of a cultural dimension to citizenship, thus recognising citizenship as much more than its legal definition alone. At a deeper level, this subtler understanding includes notions of identity and belonging, as embraced by the three components to citizenship listed: civil, political and social. That citizenship has become three-dimensional is a marked improvement on past, narrow, curricula. This welcome depth also comes with the more modern definition of citizenship: 'A modern sense incorporates three components: civil (rights and responsibilities); political (participation and representation); and social (social virtues and community involvement). It includes governance of the country, and to what extent there is representation for them.' (ACARA, 2015)

While ACARA has recognised the complexity of 21st century citizenship, the above formulation falls short of acknowledging fluidity beyond the school gate. Neither students nor teachers move strictly or only between classrooms and wider school contexts. We all travel out the gate and into the community. At the same time, the community in multiple forms – non-teaching employees, volunteers, suppliers, parents, education bureaucrats, expert advisors, excursion hosts and many others interact with teachers, the student body, and the school as an institution. This failure to acknowledge fluid and fractured conceptions of citizenship is likely to detract from the ultimate goal as stated by *The Melbourne Declaration*: the development of informed and active citizens (MCEETYA 2008). Tudball and Henderson (2013) detail the nation-building role of civics and citizenship education, as well as the contradictions that arise when this agenda is contrasted with the stated desire to see a modern, active and critical population: 'At one level, studying a nation's civic traditions through its

past can be a form of national identity construction, shaped by the often conflicting influences of political conservatism and the tradition of preparing reflective citizens for a democratic society' (Tudball & Henderson 2013, p. 5).

It should be mentioned that the above authors were basing their arguments on The Shape Paper and not the final version of the Australian Curriculum. However, their comments are astute and rightly identify the shift in focus away from active citizenship that was to come in the final versions of the citizenship curriculum, as highlighted above. Tudball and Henderson (2013) further caution that, as with *Discovering Democracy*, the active citizenship emphasis is likely to be at least partially sidelined by renewed emphasis on values, as championed by conservative politicians. The stated aim here is usually to remove individual teacher opinions and biases. I believe the unstated aim is to replace innovative approaches by competent professionals with the ideology of the government of the day.

From content to delivery, the curriculum in fact defers the goal of agency in those young people who are the recipients of the program. Tudball and Henderson (2013, p. 5), citing Coleman (1972), highlight the mainstream view of young people as citizens 'always in preparation, but never acting'. Young people might be classed as 'citizens of the future', and not 'citizens of the present' - returning us to the 'citizens in waiting' approach highlighted above.

Ultimately, while the latest version of the Australian Curriculum is an improvement on *Discovering Democracy*, there is little innovative or creative vision. Rather, the exciting ideas expressed in the Shape Paper have failed to be translated into the curriculum documents that teachers will be using in the classroom. The discussion on attitudes and beliefs is weak because it fails to explain why these are important. The failure to consider culture of citizenship and senses of agency is a failure to consider not only how to engage students but how to best see them empowered for civic life. There is no point to having citizenship rights if the population is not empowered to exercise those rights.

As such, the Australian CCE Curriculum continues to be built on a deficit model. The document does recognise that young people are active outside the classroom and school. Yet this static observation contributes nothing unless there are innovative pathways to bringing this knowledge into the classroom. The obvious agent to create dialogue between the student-at-school and the student-at-large is the educator, yet there is no encouragement

or guidelines for teachers to make use of students' prior knowledge, externally derived knowledge, knowledge forged from lived experience.

In conclusion, this chapter has outlined the recent history of civics and citizenship education in Australia, from an analysis of the much-used but rarely-examined term 'civics deficit' through the development, and subsequent failure, of various governmental programs like *Discovering Democracy and Values Education* and up to the Australian Curriculum offerings. In the following chapter, I will examine some of the most common examples of alternative or non-government forms of civics and citizenship education, and describe the ways that they have informed *Justice Citizens*.

CHAPTER 5: ALTERNATIVE AND NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATION FORMS OF CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

5.1 Introduction

Having critically examined the Australian Federal Government's formal offerings on civics and citizenship education in the previous century, particularly its *Discovering Democracy* program, a reader might feel discouraged at the way policy makers failed to grapple with some of the key findings from research about young people and civic engagement, and the resultant failures in implementation of a meaningful national civics and citizenship project. Certainly, until conducting my own review of a range of different programs, I was concerned about the failure of civics and citizenship education to, first, embrace the important findings about student engagement and empowerment that have been discussed in the preceding chapter, and second, take its place as a fully developed and meaningful subject within the school curriculum.

However, this concern has been ameliorated by the impressive range of offerings from non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Research from a range of intellectual traditions, including participatory action research (Dworksi-Riggs & Langout 2010; Galletta & jones 2010), has produced examples of alternative civics and citizenship programs delivered by NGOs in Australian schools. The purpose of this chapter is to explore the philosophical and theoretical perspectives that have inspired some of these programs, outline the main features of some exemplar programs, and then identify the ways that these programs have influenced the *Justice Citizens* program.

This chapter outlines a number of alternative programs that develop active citizenship amongst young people. In particular, I will discuss school-community partnerships, action research projects, social justice pedagogy, reconciliation education and the growing role that social media-based programs play in the field of civics and citizenship education, while acknowledging how these programs informed *Justice Citizens.*

5.2 Some examples of School-Community Partnerships doing active citizenship education

I will now describe how school-community partnerships can be conceived as doing active citizenship education. Flowers and Chodkiewicz (2009) have focused on the way that schools might work with local communities in order to encourage active citizenship, particularly in terms of tackling sustainability concerns or addressing climate change. Although they are conscious that such approaches remain a major challenge for educators, they write

> Local communities and schools remain key sites for the development and implementation of programs that tackle issues of climate change and sustainability and provide more authentic and transformative learning experiences in, about, and for the local environment. (2009, p. 71)

This perception of the value of such partnerships means school-community partnerships are a growing area of interest for Australian schools and education research bodies, especially the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). In fact, so highly does ACER rate the importance of partnerships to school improvement is that it is one of the nine domains for their school improvement tool (the National School Improvement Tool or NSIT). ACER (2012) outlined its vision for good partnerships:

> There is a range of currently operating partnerships, each carefully planned and designed to enhance student outcomes (for example, to broaden student knowledge, build new skills, develop more positive attitudes, increase engagement levels, create applied learning opportunities for students, or facilitate successful transitions to work or further education or training). (ACER 2012, p. xx)

School-community partnerships have often been mooted as solutions for failing neighbourhoods or minority students. According to Schorr (1997),

> Schools can become islands of hope in otherwise devastated neighbourhoods. When schools and communities work together to give poor children the supports typically enjoyed by children in middle-class neighbourhoods, they help children avoid a culture of failure. (p. 289)

In the past two decades researchers have shown the different ways that family and community members can use their resources to support and improve the role of the school. For example, Epstein (1995) identified the way that partnerships can improve educational outcomes for students. Davies (1996) found a link between student empowerment and partnerships. Wheeler, Lang, Gow, Guevara & Smith (2014) explored how universities and communities can

partner to increase sustainability outcomes. Bryan (2005) has explained the ways that such partnerships might increase social capital:

> Partnerships among schools, families, and communities create avenues by which relationship or networks of trust can be formed among administrators, teachers, family, and community members. These relationships provide a source of connections, information, and understandings that parents can draw on to help their children succeed. (p. 221)

A researcher in Australia who has explored the role of school-community partnerships is Karen Malone. From her perspective as an environmental researcher and activist, Malone builds on the work of Putnam (2001) by including children in the determination and construction of social capital. Malone (2012) argues that children were previously seen as the beneficiaries of social capital, but not as generators of it. Now, through school-community partnerships, young people can develop agency and social capital themselves. Furthermore, the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) has argued that 'children's participation is an assertion of agency as the right for children to have adults take what they say seriously and act on children's views' (Malone 2012, p. 375). As James and Prout (2008) put it, children can and should be 'active in the construction and determination of their own lives' (p. 8).

An example of a school-community partnership (and also an example of environmental education) was the *Dapto Dreaming* program. This program was implemented between April and July 2011, its aim being

> To provide an opportunity, for children, through research, to have authentic input into the design of the new development in order that it will incorporate the visions and dreams of children growing up in the area. The study utilised the framework of the global Child-Friendly Cities Initiative, basing its student design and outcomes on a rights-based paradigm. (Malone, 2012, p. 377)

In my opinion, *Dapto Dreaming* was a breakthrough program that profoundly influenced *Justice Citizens* because it conceptualised the idea that young people bring their own experiences to programs in which they are involved, and they can use these experiences; that is, they are not simply objects, but are actually subjects capable of engaging and working with other subjects in society. According to Wyness (2006),

> Rather than romanticising children's agency, we need to start from the basic assumption that children are of the social world and are, in a number of complex and not always readily visible ways, socially competent. (p. 237)

As well as recognising the social capital that children already have, *Dapto Dreaming* set out one possible model for involving young people in school-community partnerships. Malone outlines the way that young people were involved in the project from start to finish – from designing the actual playground areas of the community to actually turning the sod when the construction started. Most of the activities involved were participatory action research projects, the structure of which is discussed in the next section. Participatory action research is an effective way of engaging stakeholders in a process as participants rather than bystanders.

Finally, *Dapto Dreaming* is also important for *Justice Citizens* because of what it suggests about localising children's experiences. This notion is central to our developing understanding of activating citizenship among young people; there is a requirement to work with young people on local issues. I use the term 'local' carefully; It may mean geographically proximate, as in the case of *Dapto Dreaming*, but it may also mean issues that are close to young people's interests, like schools or the use of technology. Malone (2012) emphasises this point:

> Drawing on theories of social capital, social agency and environmental competence, this study documented children's local environmental knowledge and competence by focusing on mobility, accessibility and the affordances identified as significant in the neighbourhood. This, in conjunction with positioning children as active change agents, led to young people recognising their sense of connectedness and stewardship for the local environment and inevitably their sense of responsibility to the planet. (p. 391)

5.3 Examples of Participatory Action Research projects doing citizenship education

Another example of a form of education that has much in common with more maximal (as defined by McLaughlin 1992) approaches to civics and citizenship education is that of action research. The term 'action research' is generally assumed to have originated with Kurt Lewin in the 1940s, as a form of research which linked the idea of experimental research with programs of social action. Lewin argued that such a form of research would have two purposes: it would advance theory, and it would lead to social change. This approach became known as action research, and was popular throughout much of the second half of the 20th century. Action research had elements of participatory or democratic practice within it from the start: 'Action research was (and is) an expression of an essentially democratic spirit in social research' (Kemmis 1982, p. 35). Or, as Minkler (2000) has argued,

> [It] stressed the active involvement of those affected by the problem in the research through a cyclical process of fact finding, action, and reflection, leading to further inquiry and action for change. (p. 191)

By the 1970s, another generation of radical ideas about social change and research were beginning to develop, as evidenced by the work of the Brazilian educator Paolo Freire and Colombian sociologist Orlando Fals-Borda. According to Minkler (2000),

> these scholars evolved approaches variously termed 'participatory research', 'mutual enquiry', 'community-based action research', 'participatory action research' and most recently, 'empowerment evaluation'. (p. 192)

This was the birth of what became known as Participatory Action Research (PAR). There is some differentiation between the above approaches, but they do share a basis founded on the involvement in the research of those people upon whom the research is being performed, and a commitment to social change, and the term Participatory Action Research (PAR)

> has increasingly been used as an overarching name for orientations to research practice that place the researcher in the position of co-learner and put a heavy accent on community participation and the translation of research findings into action for education and change. (Minkler 2000, p. 193)

According to Green et al. (1995 p. 12), PAR is a: 'systematic investigation with the collaboration of those affected by the issue being studied, for the purposes of education and taking action or effecting social change.' More important, though, are the principles that underpin PAR. Cornwall and Jewkes point that it is not the methods that make PAR distinctive; rather, it is the participatory nature of the process that is 'the corresponding location of power at every stage of the research process' (1995, p.1667). Kemmis (1980) has written at length about the way action research puts the researcher and the people being researched at the same level as co-participants, a concept that is central to both PAR and *Justice Citizens*.

One example of a PAR project that does active citizenship education is *ruMAD?* This program makes its activist goals very clear: the name itself is an abbreviated form of 'Are you making a difference?', which places the focus of the program on youth action and student voice (Black, Stokes Turnbull & Levy 2009; Stokes & Turnbull 2009). Devised by David Zyngier in 2001 and now used in more than a thousand schools in Australia (Bell, Shrimpton & Leger 2004), *ruMAD?* takes students through a series of steps aimed at developing their

awareness of their own agency. These steps have a great deal in common with PAR. As part of *ruMAD?*, Zyngier specifically references *The Melbourne Declaration* (2008) and its emphasis on the development of an active and informed citizens.

In exploring the necessity for programs like *RUMad?*, Zyngier (2007) identified that teachers in Australia were being blamed for the failures of students, despite excellent results received by Australian students when compared with other OECD countries. To counter what he calls 'the current dominant paradigm of division and disadvantage' (p. 52), Zyngier suggests that teachers 'elegantly subvert' (p. 51) this through an approach that emphasises new pedagogies and curricula. The term 'elegantly subversive' is one that Zyngier uses to describe a program of education that meets the needs of all learners within culturally, linguistically and ethnically diverse (CLED) communities. Summing up the *ruMAD?* syllabus, Zyngier describes it as 'values-focused, student-led and at its core starts from student-identified values and visions' (2007, p. 54).

The *ruMAD?* program has the following aims:

1 The active participation of young people in the community through action research projects
2 Providing young people with opportunities for engaging, independent, student-centred learning
3 Modelling engaging, student-centred learning for teachers
4 Enabling young people to make a difference in their school or community
5 Supporting student leadership
6 Creating the conditions for identifying core values
7 Building social competencies such as self-esteem and confidence
8 Building the skills and knowledge to solve real world problems. (Zyngier 2011, p. 140)

As an example of a project constructed using the *ruMAD?* framework, Zyngier (2007) recounts the story of Whitfield District Primary School and Jessie's Creek. The students at this school worked with a raft of government and non-government agencies to clean up the local creek. They conducted a biodiversity study of the local area, during which they had to engage with the

public, undertake problem-solving activities and work collaboratively to achieve desired outcomes. Zyngier (2007) writes:

> From the outset they have been at the centre of the campaign to save Jessie's Creek, mustering community support by producing brochures, conducting surveys and sending letters to government bodies linked with management of the creek. (p. 53)

Four core pedagogical principles underpin this example and all *ruMAD?* programs. First, the programs come from young people's own ideas of what is possible. This is important because it inspires young people's willingness to participate. Second, there is a requirement to create real and lasting change. Zyngier argues that the only way to do this is by tackling the main cause of the problem. A challenge for any civics and citizenship education program is to move beyond the superficial issues and examine what Westheimer and Kahne (2004b) call the macro-economic causes of social injustices. This is one of the main points of difference between service learning and maximal approaches to civics and citizenship education; whereas service learning often has the primary focus on benefitting the learner through involvement in charity work, maximal approaches to citizenship education seek to address both the learner and societal injustices as a whole. An example might further illuminate this point: a service learning program might require a student to volunteer at a soup kitchen for a number of weeks. While this might be considered to be an admirable endeavour, it does little to address the structural causes of homelessness or poverty. On the other hand, a maximal approach to citizenship education (such as those espoused by *ruMAD?*) would seek to address the causes of such homelessness, such as lack of access to mental health institutions or affordable housing.

Third, there is the need to encourage the students and community to work together in order to address issues that are of importance to both groups. While the media often paints young people as divisive influences in the community – criminals, gang members, vandals and dangerous drivers (Giroux 2008), *ruMaD?* and similar programs challenge this dominant conception and provide a competing narrative: young people, with guidance and support, are capable of being valuable contributors to civil society.

The fourth pedagogical principle of the *ruMAD?* program is that it seeks to encourage the development of critical thinking by young people. This is something that is often overlooked in civics and citizenship education

programs, or is presented in a watered-down form. Critical thinking, in this sense, means the capacity of an individual to identify the dominant discourses present in society, and the ways these discourses seek to influence members of that society, including the individuals themselves (Burbules & Berk 1999). If one considers how media and advertising affect us, consciously and unconsciously, it becomes apparent that critical thinking is an essential skill in today's world (Mason 2016). In summarising the pedagogical theory behind *ruMAD?,* Zyngier writes:

> I have found that students most at-risk of failure, from socially, culturally and economically disadvantaged conditions are the least likely to be exposed to intellectually challenging and relevant material. My considerable experience and research has shown that these students are more likely to be engaged through 'productive and reciprocal pedagogies' that draw on students 'real life' concerns and enable them to have more control of their lives and be connected to a more participatory social vision of society. The *ruMAD?* program is firmly grounded and based on these pedagogical understandings. ("Are you making a difference", n.d.)

There is one final point to be made about *ruMAD?* As stated earlier, Zyngier's concern began with students from low diverse or lower socio-economic backgrounds. However, since developing *ruMAD?* Zyngier (2007) has pointed out that this kind of 'elegant subversion' of educational policy has relevance to all students, and not just those from these particular backgrounds:

> Critically, these systems must connect to and engage with the students' cultural knowledge while also affirming the different strengths that knowledge forms bring to classroom pedagogy, if those most at risk are to find themselves in schools, so that their knowledges, histories and experiences are validated and accounted for. Such student engagement is an empowering one, developing a sense of entitlement, belonging and identification. Otherwise students are doing time, not doing democracy. (p. 55)

In order to achieve this goal, Zyngier has identified a four-step process which he has defined as CORE (Connect – Ownership – Respond – Empower) Pedagogy (. First, teachers and students must connect with students' cultural knowledge. Second, students need to feel ownership of the learning, and see themselves within the work. Third, there is a need to respond to students' lived experiences, but also to critically comment on that experience. Fourth, there is a need to empower students with the idea that their actions will make a difference in their lives and in their worlds. Clearly, there is a lot in common with the goals of PAR here.

5.4 How *Justice Citizens* is extending participatory action research

The principles behind PAR, and especially the pedagogical guidance provided by *ruMAD?*, were important in the development of *Justice Citizens*. Specifically, I was inspired by the way *ruMAD?* drew on expertise from community members, thus developing and strengthening community–school partnerships to provide a localised opportunity for students to be part of social change. Equally, that 'local' nature of the research expressed itself in issues that were of importance to students themselves (Jessie's Creek, for example) and the range of topics that students chose as part of their filmmaking for *Justice Citizens.*

However, *Justice Citizens* extends and develops *ruMAD?* in three important ways. First, there is more of an emphasis on justice, as evinced in the name of the program. I felt that this was central to the development of the *Justice Citizens* pedagogy: too many school-based programs focus on ideas of what to learn, but relatively few address the more important question of why we are learning it. I am hesitant to place RUMAD? in this category, because I think Zyngier does foreground the development of active citizenship in the program, but I do think that the focus on justice encourages a focus beyond single issues. By placing justice at the centre of the discussion, the school curriculum is opened to more important questions that can, and should, deal with ideas of democracy, marginalisation and equality – all of which can sometimes be ignored.

Second, *Justice Citizens* had a much more wide-ranging scope than *ruMAD?* In contrast to the Jessie's Creek example, where a whole group of students worked on a particular issue, I recognised that within the *Justice Citizens* cohort there were students with many different knowledges and attitudes, and these characteristics shaped the wide variety of topics they chose to explore. The addition of the film festival at the conclusion of the project became a unifying force for these different projects.

Third, *Justice Citizens* was much more structured than *RUMad?* in that there was a specific process that I had set out for it. In this way, my work was more like Freire's (1970) Circles than a PAR project. In the culture circles, facilitators used primers and codified pictures. In the Justice Citizens Project the equivalent were the beginning activities that I used to encourage students to

consider issues of justice and equality; for example, there were a series of true and false statements about student achievements, and a range of short films that showed young people engaging in activism in both physical and digital environments. More of these are discussed in the research portraits presented in Chapter Nine. I had specific goals in mind and had structured the course in such a way as to achieve them; for example, engaging critically with the media is something that I value and hence we spent a great deal of time looking at this, although it should be noted that I did allow for developments and student input as the course progressed.

5.5 Social Justice Education

Often linked to PAR are the theories of Social Justice Education and Social Justice Pedagogy (Schensul & Berg 2004; Powers & Allaman 2012). These terms are often used interchangeably and have a much broader reach than simply education studies; they are used in conflict resolution studies and conflict transformation, for example. According to Hahn Tapper (2014) the growth of interest in this field is due to the realisation that it is essential to include social justice education in schools, and not just models of education aimed at managing conflict between groups.

I believe that such discussions are part of the changing nature of the civics and citizenship discourse in Australia and around the world. The increased focus on social justice reflects both globalisation and the globalised nature of education, in addition to recognising the inequalities that exist in our world, and the importance of addressing these in educational institutions. Thus, social justice education and maximal definitions of civics and citizenship education share the same commitment to democracy and equality. I will be discussing an example of a project that seeks to bind the two together, but first it is worth exploring social justice education in a little more detail.

According to Hahn Tapper (2014), social justice education 'explicitly recognises the disparities in societal opportunities, resources, and long-term outcomes among marginalized groups' (p. 412). Tapper argues that this approach to education is related to Freire's analysis of power in the classroom and that education can either domesticate or liberate both students and teachers; hence education and power are, and always will be, interrelated. Tapper then outlines the importance of identity in shaping and implementing

education. In particular, students are disempowered when they are identified as empty, blank slates; instead, 'they should not be approached as if everyone in the classroom, including the teacher, is starting from the same place in terms of social status and identity (p. 414). The identity of the teacher is important too: 'A teacher needs to create experiences with, and not for, students, integrating their experiences and voices into the educational experience itself (p. 414). From this starting point, Tapper identifies what he calls the five core pillars of social justice education:

1. Freirean notions of social justice
2. An examination of individual and group identities
3. Intersectionality
4. Experiential education
5. Responsibility and Empowerment.

I believe that Hahn Tapper (2014) has identified a common link between the theories of social justice education and civics and citizenship education. Specifically, Tapper writes about the notion of intersectionality as being pivotal to social justice education. Intersectionality can be explained as the connectedness of oppression; that is, oppression experienced in one place is linked to oppression everywhere. Understanding this is a requirement of social justice education – after all, there is no point working to empower one group of people at the expense of another, which, unfortunately, seems to be a side effect of some educational programs. But what is worth considering is that intersectionality also speaks to a more maximal understanding of civics and citizenship education. Such an approach is described by Guevara (2013), who writes

> Making the connection between poverty and the denial of rights is an inherently political view of the world, and it is asking young people, teachers and their parents to understand their relationship to their national and global citizenship and their responsibility to be aware of what they can do to contribute to global social justice (p. 243)

As borders become more porous, and nation-states begin to lose their relevance to the youth of today, students are becoming increasingly concerned about, and involved in, global campaigns against oppression. Thus, with *Justice Citizens* I was faced with two, seemingly contradictory, goals: on the one hand, there was the requirement to localise the issues young people were addressing

so that they could bring their knowledges to bear upon them, and on the other, to place these issues within a global context, rather than the previously dominant national one. Fortunately, the solution was straightforward: rather than limiting such issues to geographically local ones, students selected issues that were 'local' to their own sites of knowledge. Hence, students could make films about internet freedom if they felt that they were 'experts' in that area, or wanted to become so.

5.5.1 The Global Citizen

As mentioned in Chapter Four, educators and policy makers have recently increased their focus on the 'global' citizen, rather than simply the citizen as a subject of a particular nation. There is a recognition that globalisation has had a profound impact on the lives of young people today (Pleyers 2005), and this impact is likely only to increase in the coming decades. According to Schultz, Guevara, Ratnam, Wierenga, Wyn and Sowerby (2009), young people are living vastly different lives, especially in regard to the choices and opportunities available to them, when compared to their parents. These different lives, brought about by the globalising aspects of education and employment, mean that young people's rights and responsibilities are changing too. They have concerns about the economy, their quality of life and their ability to span national and religious boundaries. Schultz et al. (2009) write:

> Accordingly, young people are often overwhelmed by both local and global issues and do not necessarily have many resources or opportunities to engage in activities that allows them to process this surge of information, or act upon the interests or concerns it generates. (p. 1024)

Nor are young people's concerns limited to the issues mentioned above; Harris et al. (2007) identified that young people are concerned about issues like war on a global scale, social divisions, and social disharmony brought about by the intersection of different races and religions. However, research by Eckersley et al. (2007) has identified that young people also often want to contribute to solving such problems but are unsure about how they might participate in these solutions.

These issues are complex. Just as globalisation has had both positive and negative effects upon people's lives generally, the reactions of young people in Australia to the effects of globalisation have been mixed (Dwyer & Wyn 2004). Globalisation, which has brought about rapid social change as well as increased

consumer markets and new technologies, will continue create greater opportunities for connection among young people. The paradox is that these greater opportunities for connection have also led to increased fears of diversity and divisions within society. According to Schulz et al. (2009), this raises questions about 'the ways and places in which young people will need to engage and the new tools and resources they will need to equip them for emerging forms of participation and exchange' (p. 1023). I believe this fear of diversity has been inflamed by the media and by government policies that emphasise personal and national insecurity. The intersection of the media, active citizenship and young people is a particularly relevant in the *Justice Citizens* project.

These concerns have been recognised by Australia's state and federal governments. In addition to the wording of the Australian Curriculum, which makes specific reference to 'citizens in a global context', governments in New South Wales and Victoria have identified the importance of developing 'global citizens'. According to Schultz et al. (2009), there have been numerous critiques of this concept, most notably about the lack of training for teachers in these areas. Schultz et al. (2009) emphasise the importance of young people learning not just about the issues, but also the importance of taking action and how to do it: 'There is a growing awareness and recognition that young people's citizenship means supporting their full participation in their communities now, as well as in the future' (p. 1024).

Unfortunately, in ways that mirror many of the mistakes made in *Discovering Democracy*, teachers and educational institutions still appear unprepared to allow young people to fully participate in their communities, instead opting for simplistic, didactic, solutions. Schultz et al. (2009) write: 'Many educators have relied and often still do rely on resources that do not allow for experiential, youth led learning' (p. 1024).

Schultz et al. (2009) outline an example of active citizenship-centred, youth-led, global learning: the *Global Connects Program*. Developed by PLAN International and based on a community cultural development framework, from the outset the *Global Connects Program* places children in the position of decision makers. In the example cited by Schultz et al. (2009), middle school children in Melbourne engaged in conversations over the course of six months with youth groups in Indonesia. The two groups exchanged communication

pieces about issues that they felt were of significance to their lives. These pieces included letters and posters, as well as short films. Crucially, the global elements of technology made this project more feasible than would have been previously possible, and much more relevant and engaging to the young people involved.

Having begun communicating with each other, the next step of the *Global Connects Program* was for the two groups to identify common issues, and then establish action plans to address these issues in their local communities. The project was intended to develop active citizenship skills: 'As a result, PLAN expects that children will undergo more of a personal transformative experience than they would if they were passive recipients of information' (Schultz et al. 2009, p. 1025). This appears to have occurred:

> [Students] demonstrated a number of skills and personal changes that have allowed them to engage as active citizens, within their own communities and in wider national and global communities, now and in the future. (p. 1027)

There are three crucial factors that separate successful programs like *Global Connects* from the discredited *Discovering Democracy*. First, and most importantly, *Global Connects* requires that students make decisions about issues that they think are of importance. Although there were elements of *Discovering Democracy* that allowed for students to explore topics of their own interest, these were limited in scope, and not the whole purpose of that project.

Second, there is much greater emphasis on the present in *Global Connects* than was in *Discovering Democracy*. Indeed, in *Global Connects*, this is the only content that is addressed, whereas *Discovering Democracy* placed a great deal more importance on historical matters. This is important because, as mentioned earlier it is important to focus civics and citizenship education on the things that matter to young people, and not on the things that matter to the people who write education policies (Kennedy 1997; O'Loughlin 1997).

Third, *Global Connects* specifically addresses citizenship knowledge, rather than civics knowledge. Each project is community based, even if that community is an international one. In this way, the program is not concerned with the mechanisms of voting or electing representatives, or the ways laws are made, but rather it addresses how community members – the students taking part in the project themselves – can work to address problems in those same communities. This suggests that young people do not need an encyclopaedic

knowledge of civic laws and processes in order to be active citizens; rather, they can be become motivated and active simply by exploring those topics of interest to them. In a world where global issues impact on young people in all countries, forcing them to reconsider the validity and usefulness of their national political institutions, it is important to explore other ways in which youth might become capable and active citizens in their local communities.

Global Connects is presented as an example of the movement towards global understandings of citizenship and education that reflects these new understandings. Of course, these new conceptions of global citizenship are not without their problems. More recent scholars (Pais & Costa 2017) have highlighted the apparent contradiction between neoliberal global education policies and the emphasis on human rights and critical democracy. Catherine Hartung (2017) has also explored what kind of citizen is the preferred global citizen; she concludes that there is a strong element of entrepreneurialism involved. There is also concern that such an approach to citizenship education may limit the opportunities for transformative practice as well as being unnecessarily homogenizing (Bamber, Lewin & White 2017). The domain of global citizenship education is one that remains contested as it continues to evolve.

5.6 Reconciliation Education

Another model of education that has been developed, especially in Australia, is termed 'reconciliation pedagogy'. This approach to education, which has been implemented in tertiary education, schools and communities, is an attempt to apply the ideas of consciousness raising to the troubled history of Australia's colonial past, a history that is, for the most part, glossed over in schools. According to Rigney, Rigney and Tur (2003), reconciliation pedagogy's purpose is 'to deepen the understanding of the role education plays within the colonisation of Indigenous Australia through analysis of the principles of social justice (p. 137).

Much of this work is based on the Education for Social Justice Research Group, and in particular the text, *Teaching For Resistance* by Rigney, Rigney and Tur (1994). This text advised readers how they might

> develop and research a model for teaching which engaged participants in the struggle for social justice in education and society. The utilisation of a Gramscian approach to

> resistance informed the project team as it sought to actively engage participants as 'agents of struggle' against injustice. (Rigney et al. 2003, p. 136)

Rigney et al. (2003) identified the need to teach people to name the social justice issues in their lives, before explaining the process by which they might tackle these injustices. The process by which this, and also Reconciliation Pedagogy, would take place is, despite the reference to Gramsci, one that would be instantly recognised by scholars of Freire. In addition, and echoing the recommendations of the earlier sections about school–community partnerships, Rigney et al. envision a teaching and learning continuum that extends beyond the school fences. Rather, they argue that there is a need to form alliances with other social and political movements. The purpose of this alliance building is to

> confront inequalities at their structural and cultural sources. Within the education system, we need to identify and work to change the structures and ideologies which create unequal educational outcomes in education now, and which will inhibit the role that schools might play in the broader political struggle. (p. 137)

Rigney et al. (2003) mostly focussed their research on the experiences of pre-service teachers, which is eminently sensible. By changing the ways that teachers understand complex notions of race and power, and their own roles in maintaining or changing the status quo, there is the potential to make significant long-term changes to the way race, identity and reconciliation are taught in Australia's schools. There are, however, other examples of reconciliation pedagogy that take a more short-term approach, and are in effect across Australia today. One such example is *The Torch Project*.

5.6.1 The Torch Project

Since 1999 *The Torch Project* has been working in various settings including schools and prisons among Victorian communities. This project takes a community cultural development model to challenge people's notions about challenging issues like racism, alcoholism, violence and drug abuse. Although it does not explicitly state that it draws on the ideas of Reconciliation Pedagogy (and nor is it work confined solely to questions related to Indigenous Australians), it shares many of the principles that I have outlined above. According to Stephen Payne (2004), then the Executive Officer of *The Torch Project*,

> Re-Igniting Community is the main activity of *The Torch Project*. Over the past six years it has evolved as a community cultural development model that uses the arts to

> mobilise communities around issues that fall into the 'too hard basket'; including racism, substance abuse, family violence and disability. These issues are addressed in an on-going inclusive process using community consultation, workshops, activity in schools, theatrical and artistic expression, and ongoing community development activities driven by the local communities and involving hundreds of volunteers. (p. 94)

The Torch Project has, in the past, worked with both schools and the wider community; this is unlike other programs which create an arbitrary divide between schools and communities. It deliberately tries to link the two in a holistic attempt to change both. This attempt is linked to reconciliation pedagogy (and, more broadly, Freirean and Critical Pedagogies). As part of the Community Cultural Development work, participants are encouraged to see that they have the potential to add value to their community; that is, they can change the issues that are taking place in there. As well, *The Torch Project* is very clear about the community causes of such issues: rather than blaming individuals for alcoholism, for example, *The Torch Project* recognises the role that society plays in these illnesses and works towards finding community-based solutions. In this way, it is following the principles of Reconciliation Pedagogy: participants are unmasking power, language, culture and history (Rigney et al. 2003).

5.6.2 Relevance to Justice Citizens

I drew on two main ideas from programs like *The Torch Project* when I was developing *Justice Citizens.* First, in the formulation of the pedagogical theory that underpinned *Justice Citizens,* one of the core goals for the program was to encourage young people to see how language, especially in the media, worked to shape their own understandings of identity and agency. In some respects, this is similar to Reconciliation Pedagogy's efforts to unmask power in the construction of race in Australian Schools.

Second, as in *The Torch Project* the use of community groups was central to *Justice Citizens*. My project was funded by a cultural development grant from the local council, and I used this money to involve local artists and filmmakers, in much the same way that *The Torch Project* does. The emphasis here was on skill development and participation; that is, I wanted the films made with the participating students, not about them.

5.7 Social Media Campaigns and Civics and Citizenship Education

One of the most recent developments related to civics and citizenship education (and, indeed, in all forms of education) is the role of social media. Although the educational use of social media is still a relatively new field, a number of researchers (for example, Hardey 2011) have been exploring how social media tools (and especially microblogging platforms like Twitter and Facebook) are being used to leverage interest amongst young people. Of course, such innovations have not been without criticism: the internet and social media has been blamed for cyberbullying, increases in teenage promiscuity and shortening attention spans of teenagers – all without a great deal of evidence (for more on this, see boyd 2014). David Gauntlett (2015) has written about the way that the internet and social media have a liberatory potential, and he refutes the arguments of such critics: 'These writers suggest that the shift where citizens become media creators rather than mere consumers is a waste of time – which I find rather shocking' (p. 2). He then explains that the internet has the potential to allow more meaningful communication between groups of individuals – something which is directly linked to creativity and, in my opinion, also essential to a functioning democracy: 'The internet enables humanity to get back onto the track which had been the main story for centuries, where we at least try to develop bonds and communities and exchange things largely at a manageable, social level' (p. 3).

Crucially for *Justice Citizens* and other examples of Justice Pedagogy, Gauntlett argues that the internet encourages a sense of collective engagement that was previously hindered by individualism. He cites the work of Daniel Miller (2012), for whom networks like Facebook have similarities to older traditions of societal relations, like kinship groups. Supporting this is the notion of the internet being one of the last commons; that is, something held in trust for all people. James Arvanitakis (2006) has explained the importance of the commons: '[It] is the social and political space where things get done and where people find belonging and an element of control over their lives (p. 3). This is in opposition to academics like Lanier (2010) who suggests that the internet is like a bazaar, where hundreds of providers sell their products or services directly to consumers, without the need for an intervening company. The reality is that most things on social media and the internet exist on a continuum between open (and free) and closed (and paid).

What does this mean for civics and citizenship education? Fortunately, many of the debates and discussions relevant to it take place in the commons areas of the internet. An individual who is capable of accessing the internet is also capable of engaging with the people and institutions of their democracy. Indeed, this is precisely the mechanism upon which citizen journalism is built. According to Gauntlett (2015), is not important that the people engaging in this way are not professional politicians or journalists: 'The ocean of independent amateur activity is where the interesting and powerful stuff is to be found' (p. 6).

Ivan Illich (1973) argued that it is part of human need to shape our own environment. People are engaging with this much more fully now because of the spaces that the internet and social media provide. Although some scholars (for example, Fuchs 2009) have suggested that this is a form of exploitation, Gauntlett rejects this idea. I agree with Gauntlett and feel that we are seeing what is a natural desire of humans to act upon their environment. To use Freire's (1974; 1970) terminology, we are seeing people desiring to be subjects rather than objects. Gauntlett (2011) suggests that using social media in this way is part of our resistance to being positioned as a consumer.

Gauntlett's final piece of advice is that 'the digital internet is good, but hands on physical things are good, too' (2015, p. 19). In other words, the best of the web is when it is connected to physical things. He suggests that the people who gain the most from the internet are those

> who like to do 'real world' things, but whose activity has been given a substantial boost by the opportunity to connect, organise, share ideas and inspire each other online. (2015, p. 12)

These notions of the commons have influenced the development of a number of civics and citizenship education (CCE) programs, including *Justice Citizens*. In particular, when designing *Justice Citizens* I felt that any program of CCE should ensure that students were positioned as creators, not consumers of the media, and this led to the emphasis on making films. The notions of film and media literacy are discussed later in this thesis. Meanwhile it is worth examining an example of a CCE program that has capitalised on social media more closely, the *Aussie Democrazy* project.

5.7.1 Aussie Democrazy

The *Aussie Democrazy* project, which began just before the Australian federal election in 2010, is interesting for two reasons. First, it took place as part of a formal Civics class in a Victorian school. Second, it made explicit use of social media as a means to build engagement amongst students and involve them in the actual election as active participants rather than disinterested bystanders. In many ways, it meets the criteria set out by Gauntlett (2015) as an example of connecting to physical things.

The *Aussie Democrazy* project was the idea of Mike Stuchbery, a teacher in a Victorian high school. He was conscious that despite the looming 2010 federal election, students were, for the most part, apathetic about the election and the issues related to parliament and government. Instead of teaching them in the usual way (a minimalist approach) by using textbooks and the *Discovering Democracy* syllabus and resources, Stuchbery attempted to teach the students about Federal Parliament by actually involving them in the election campaign – as political commentators, reporters and journalists. He describes the change that this caused in the classroom:

> As I move around the room, showing them the Twitter account I've set up for them, the blog and a few other gadgets I've picked up, they get it. They sit down in groups, working on questions that they want to direct at politicians. They're good questions too. There are ones on trade alliances, school funding and the pressures of public scrutiny. Truth be told, I'm kind of gobsmacked. One kid asks me whether he and his mate can call a TV station, that they reckon they might be able to get Julia or Tony if someone reported on what we're doing. I nod, smile, and send them off to write a script for the phone call they'll make. There's electricity in the air. It doesn't feel like school. It feels like something else. The kids are alert, focused, loving what they're doing. (Stuchbery, 2010)

By making the lessons about civics and citizenship education much more real and maximal, Stuchbery managed to tap into the interests of young people. As Gauntlett (2015) recommends, he was linking the digital world to the real world. It is important to remember that the young people have as much right to ask questions of the politicians as anybody else. Indeed, as much as *Aussie Democrazy* might have been about civics and citizenship education, it was also about young people learning that it is essential for members of a democracy to challenge their leaders, to ask difficult questions and to demand transparency. These are the kinds of attitudes that are often overlooked in a minimal approach, but they were firmly foregrounded in *Aussie Democrazy*.

Another important point relates to the way Stuchbery encouraged his students' participation through the use of social media. Websites, Twitter and Facebook accounts were all leveraged to ensure that students could engage in the most efficient way with politicians, journalists and other relevant individuals. This is important for two reasons; first, the use of social media in this way is still a relatively new phenomenon, and second, it allows for engagement at a much closer and more immediate level. In particular, many politicians have taken to engaging with members of the Australian public on a regular, daily level through Twitter. For example, as of 2016, more than 140 federal politicians have Twitter accounts. Compared to the traditional methods of letter writing or telephoning, Twitter adds a level of immediacy to the discussion and the debate; it is now possible for school students to have an instantaneous conversation with a person of some importance.

In addition to immediacy, there is also a higher level of visibility of these conversations than with previous forms of communication. This ensures that there is more chance for transparency and encourages more robust debate. For example, a question tweeted by a student from the *Aussie Democrazy* class to a politician about national debt or something similar might have been retweeted hundreds of times by like-minded people – or by people who simply thought it was a good question for a politician to answer. These 'retweets' act as a kind of echo chamber, with more and more people on Twitter being exposed to the question and passing it onto their followers, or adding questions of their own. Thus, a 'conversation' can form that is moderated and curated by the Twitter public. From the perspective of civics and citizenship education, Twitter is a far more egalitarian way to approach debate and discussion than through the mainstream media.

While I acknowledge that there are inherent risks in using social media, I feel that the potential benefits outweigh these risks. The students in *Justice Citizens* made films about issues that they felt were important, and they then shared those films with a wide audience via YouTube. This meant that their potential audience was much wider than just the attendees at the students' film festival. Not surprisingly, this increased exposure had powerful effects. The real world nature of the program (or in Gauntlett's terms, the fact that the internet part was connected to the physical act of making a film and investigating a local issue) meant that the students were more intensely engaged in the filmmaking

processes. This increased exposure also meant that students were not isolated; they had opportunities to not only look at similar projects, but also respond to the questions about *Justice Citizens* they received from people around the country and the world.

This chapter has presented a range of alternative examples of civics and citizenship education programs. This has included social justice education, school-community partnerships, reconciliation education, participatory action research and the role of the internet and social media. I have explained how these alternative approaches have influenced the development of *Justice Citizens*. In the following chapter, I am going to discuss some of the contesting theories of civics and citizenship, and civics and citizenship education, and how those different approaches informed the development of Justice Pedagogy.

CHAPTER 6: CONTESTING DEFINITIONS OF CITIZENSHIP AND COMPETING THEORIES OF CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

6.1 A Contested Field

There are few Western governments that do not explicitly acknowledge the importance of civics and citizenship education to the health of their democracies (Kerr 1999). However, what should be included in this civics and citizenship education is contested in many of these countries (Abowitz & Harnish 2006). The purpose of this chapter is to describe some of the main approaches to civics and citizenship education, including maximal citizenship education, justice-oriented citizenship education and multi-dimensional citizenship education. In doing so, I will begin to develop the themes that have influenced the development of justice pedagogy, which will be discussed in Chapter 14.

In addition to the contestations about what should be included in any formal curriculum for civics and citizenship education and how this curriculum should be delivered, there is also discussion about whether human rights education and global education are forms of citizenship education. For example, one might rightly question whether democratic education is a subset of civics education, or whether they can exist side by side. Other links have been explored between civics and citizenship education and human rights education. Ozdowski (2015), for example, argues that, rather than civics and citizenship education, which is often considered to have a national focus, there should be more of an emphasis placed on human rights education (Davies, Evans & Reid 2005). Finally, there is also discussion about the place of civic and citizenship education within the curriculum (Alderson 1999): Should it be taught as a single subject; be integrated across a wide variety of subjects; or be limited to extracurricular or 'special events' days?

6.2 What is a citizen?

The nature of civics and citizenship education and what it entails are necessarily influenced by the definition of citizenship within a particular national context. Although this too is a complex discussion, and has changed over time (see Chapter Three), I will briefly discuss some of the main theories of citizenship as they apply to this thesis. Generally speaking, a citizen is a member of a political community, with its attendant rights and obligations. However, the influence of feminist thought, the diversity between different liberal democratic states, and the unfolding influence of globalisation have all meant that discussions about what constitutes citizenship continue to be relevant today. According to Ambrose (in Zbar, 2008), the first conception of citizenship is a classical one. In ancient Athens, a citizen was conceived as a free man, as opposed to slaves, women and children who participated in their own government. Pericles, the Athenian statesman, described their government in this way: 'Our form of government does not enter into rivalry with the institutions of others. We do not copy our neighbors, but are an example to them. It is true that we are called a democracy, for the administration is in the hands of the many and not of the few' (Thucydides, Warner & Findley 1972, p. 231). This classical conception of citizenship is often described as the republican model, and is embodied in the idea of civic self-rule, as described both by Aristotle (1995) and Rousseau (1762). This model has features that we would recognise in liberal democracies today: voting, rotation of offices, the co-authoring of laws. In this classical conception of citizenship, the emphasis is placed more on a participatory, as opposed to merely representative, forms of citizenship, where each citizen is able, and indeed, obligated to, participate in governing. In today's democracies, the public imagination is more easily captured by representative rather than participatory forms of democracy. While value is still placed on volunteering, protesting and public debate, there is much work required to strengthen active participation.

In contrast to the republican model, Walzer (1989) describes the liberal model of citizenship, which takes on a legal, rather than political meaning. In this case, citizenship is about being subject to and protected by the laws of the state. It does not connote any participation in the development of those laws. At the heart of the liberal model is the notion of individual liberty – but it is a liberty that is exercised in the private sphere, rather than in the political one.

This form of citizenship grew out of the rise of nation-states during the Enlightenment, and identified that within these nations there has always been a tension between the rights of citizens to act as autonomous individuals and the requirement of the state to ensure all citizens are treated equally. This conception of citizenship gave rise to the development of representative government, at least in a form that is still recognisable today, where the responsibilities of a citizen are limited to participating in elections, rather than in the actual crafting of laws and policies.

Both liberal and republican approaches to citizenship have been criticized by feminist scholars like Okin (1992), who have argued that the division of a private and public sphere is both oppressive and arbitrary. Okin (1992) argues that this requires a reconception of what it means to be a citizen, and also how citizens must work together in order to construct laws that take into account personal circumstances, but also realise that some problems require the collective action of the state to solve.

Recent Western democracies have also been forced to face that their efforts to afford the same civil, political and social rights to all citizens have not necessarily led to equality. This universalist approach to citizenship, as most famously described by Marshall (1950) was critiqued by race and gender scholars (Young 1989; Williams 1998) who argued that this universal model was exclusionary, and instead proposed a more pluralistic approach to citizenship, centred on the recognition of difference – although that too has been criticised as working against the unity of the state (Barry 2001).

Globalisation is also beginning to challenge previous notions of citizenship. In particular, the migration of large numbers of people has meant that there are often citizens and non-citizens living together in large numbers in one country, and this has led some scholars like Baubock (1994) to consider what rights should be afforded to non-citizens in these instances. A further development is to question whether a liberal democratic state is required for citizenship – or if there might be such a thing as a trans-citizen?

These conceptions of citizenship help to explore the way education systems have attempted to implement civics and citizenship education. In Australia, the Howard government from 1996 to 2007, adapting *Discovering Democracy* to suit its purpose, embraced a conception of citizenship that would align more closely with republican conceptions of citizenship. *Discovering*

Democracy (at the level of implementation, if not rhetoric) aimed to teach students their rights and their responsibilities, with much of that focus on understanding how they would vote for representatives in the various levels of government, and what the roles of those representatives were.

6.3 Contesting views about what should be included in Civics and Citizenship Education curriculum

In the following sections I will discuss contesting views about what should be included in the curriculum of civics and citizenship education. This debate centres on understandings of what citizenship means, and I will present the arguments about private versus public ideals of citizenship, and also those discussing whether civics and citizenship educations should encourage activism or obedience.

6.3.1 Education for public versus private citizenship

One of the criticisms of many models of civics and citizenship education is that they do not address the values a citizen might need on a personal or private level. O'Loughlin (1997), in particular, identified this as a weakness in *Discovering Democracy*. Whether this is a valid point hinges upon the definition of a citizen; if a citizen can only be constructed socially, then it is fair that the curriculum should address only public and social values, attitudes and knowledges. By contrast, if a citizen can exist apart from society, then there is a need to address more private, personal values. This criticism is linked to another issue related to definitions of 'public'; traditionally, men dominated the 'public' role of the citizen, and this suggests that the qualities desirable in a citizen are only those possessed by men. These debates between those who advocate either public or private models of citizenship have played out in educational spaces in regard to what should be taught in the citizenship curriculum (Carolissen 2014). Making this point, Schugurensky and Myers argue that new conceptions of citizenship must embrace both private and public domains:

> The twentieth century conceptualization of citizenship has been focused primarily on the public sphere. By framing a universal concept of citizenship constructed on the attributes, identities and practices of male subjects, gendered relations and the private sphere have been neglected. (2003, p. 4)

This is another challenge within this field; any new approach to civics and citizenship education must address the sexist nature of previous curricula.

6.3.2 Activist citizenship education: encouraging dissent or obedience?

According to Westheimer and Kahne, 'democracy in the US has been predicated on citizens' informed engagement in civic and political life' (2003, p. 9). They acknowledge the importance of civics and citizenship education to the US, citing Thomas Jefferson:

> I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them but to inform their discretion. (Thomas Jefferson, in Westheimer & Kahne 2003, p. 9)

However, educators can't seem to agree on what educating democratic citizens might actually mean. For example, Westheimer and Kahne (2003) quote the former US Secretary of Education, William Bennett, who stated that the purpose of civics education was to point students in the direction of 'what is good and true' (p. 10). Of course, such a moralistic point of view cannot fully account for the myriad of competing discourses, values and ideologies present in modern American society. By contrast, Westheimer and Kahne cite a Carnegie Mellon University report which states that civics and citizenship education could be a tool to 'explore difficult and unresolved issues in politics' (p. 10). This suggests another question for civics and citizenship educators: Is the purpose of such a curriculum to mould young people into some previously described notion of a 'good' citizen, or is it to encourage young people to more fully develop into citizens capable of questioning their governments and societies, identifying injustice and working to make their communities more equitable? The two concepts are not mutually exclusive; It is possible for citizens to question their government and still be considered 'good citizens', at least in some contexts. Cogan and Morris (2001) have identified that in some countries (like Australia), there is more support for young people engaging in civil disobedience campaigns and still being considered as a 'good citizen', whereas in countries like South Korea, obedience is much more highly prized. While it might be more highly prized in South Korea, I think that Cogan and Morris have been too quick to generalise here; South Korea has a long history of civil disobedience and mass protests against authoritarian regimes that have ruled the country in the past (De Groot 2014).

6.3.3 Should Citizenship be taught discretely or embedded across the curriculum?

There is also the question of whether citizenship should be embedded or taught separately. In the UK, for example, the Crick Report (1998) stated that citizenship was far too important to be integrated into other subjects, which meant that a new subject called 'Citizenship' (interestingly, in the UK the term civics was omitted, which is often used synonymously with citizenship) was created and made compulsory through primary and junior secondary school. In South Korea, civics and citizenship is taught explicitly throughout the school years. In Australia, however, civics and citizenship is a much more complicated issue. Despite federal oversight and increasing accountability, education remains the purview of state governments, each of which undertakes its own approach to the teaching of civics and citizenship education. In NSW, for example, it is taught as part of the key learning area Human Society and Its Environment (HSIE), usually integrated with History and Geography, but in Victoria and a number of other states, it exists as a separate subject called 'Civics'.

The formal structures insisted upon by the various state education departments disguise an element of civics and citizenship education that is often overlooked, however. This is the part that takes place in the 'embedded curriculum' (Apple 2004, p. 54). Although not often explicit in a school's curricula, students learn about their role as citizens through the kinds of activities that interrupt or otherwise punctuate a school's calendar. An example, in Australia is Anzac Day (25 April), which commemorates the war service of the Australian and New Zealand military personnel since World War 1. Though a public holiday, Anzac Day is usually commemorated at schools, often with an accompanying service if the school is a religious one. Events like this serve to teach students about what is regarded as important and acceptable in society. They contribute to constructing a national identity, and thus contribute to the notions of belonging. Julie Matthews and Ravinder Sidhu (2005), for example, have explored how school ceremonies like Anzac Day are exclusionary, privileging notions of identity based on white heterosexual and male power, alongside narratives of invasion, violence and colonisation.

6.4 McLaughlin's continuum of maximal and minimal citizenship education

One of the most important explorations of civics and citizenship education is the work of British scholar, philosopher and moral educator, Terence McLaughlin. McLaughlin (1992) acknowledged that, while civics and citizenship, and education for them, may be contested and challenging, all notions of citizenship can be mapped out against a continuum stretching from minimal forms to maximal forms. Civics and citizenship education can be placed on a similar continuum.

McLaughlin identified four main features of this citizenship continuum (Figure 6). The first is the varying interpretations of the identity of the individual citizen in relation to the state. In minimal forms, a citizen is defined in very limited ways: formal, legal, and juridicial. By contrast, a maximal definition defines the citizen in more broadly, taking into account things like social, psychological and cultural notions of citizenship.

The second feature is that of the virtues required by the citizen. At a minimal level, these are limited and localised; for example, a citizen might only be expected to vote, obey the law and pay taxes. At a maximal level, a citizen might be expected to act in a much more empowered way, including having a responsibility to challenge, question and protest against the government.

The third feature is that of the expected political involvement by an individual. At a minimal level, there is suspicion of too much involvement, and so political involvement might be limited to voting during elections. Maximally, there would be more emphasis on a fully participatory democracy.

The fourth feature is the social prerequisites expected of citizens. A minimal interpretation would be limited to a legal understanding of citizens and citizenship, while a maximal interpretation would have citizens recognising and challenging specific social disadvantages.

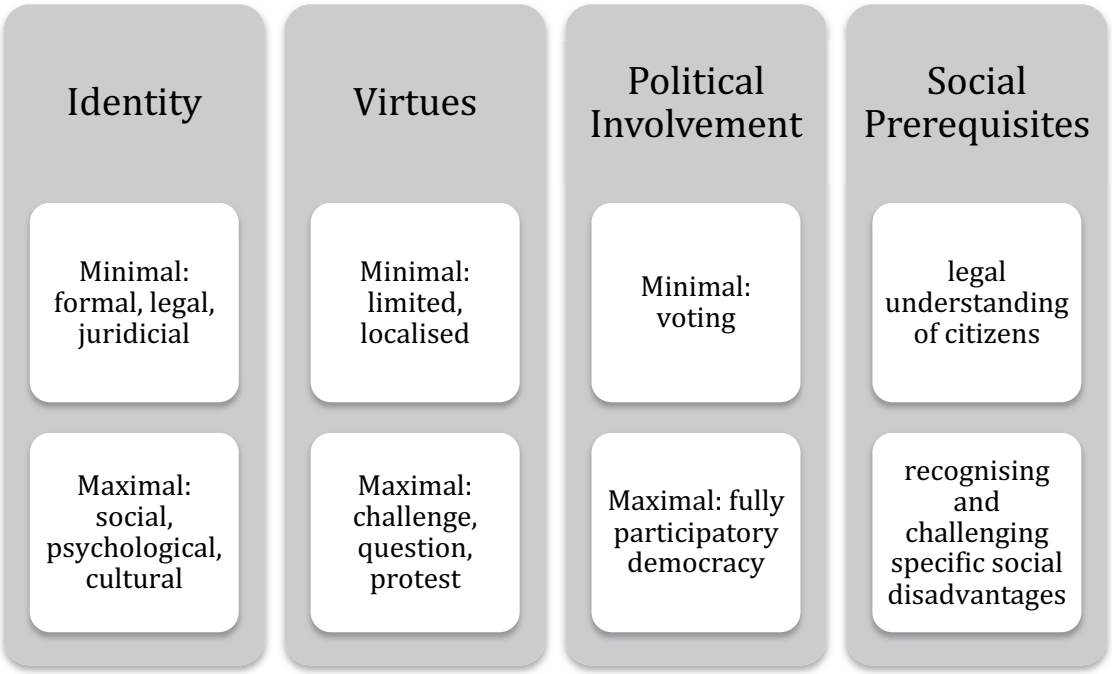

Figure 7: McLaughlin's Citizenship Continuum

Having defined this continuum and the specific features it impacts upon, McLaughlin (1992) suggested that it should not be viewed as a fixed schedule; most conceptions of citizenship could be placed at some point along the axis between minimal and maximal, and would not likely exist just at either end of it. However, McLaughlin did identify what he considered to be the most salient question to consider: what degree of critical understanding and questioning was considered necessary for a citizen?

The notion of a continuum between maximal and minimal also applies to civics and citizenships education. McLaughlin's (1992) main criticism of minimal forms of citizenship education is that it may lead to 'an unreflective socialisation into the political and social status quo' (1992, p. 238) because its main aim is the provision of information and development of local virtues.

> There is nothing in interpretations of this kind which require the development in students of a broad critical reflection and understanding … Nor is there concern to ameliorate the social disadvantages that may inhibit the students form developing into citizens in a significant sense. (pp. 237–238)

By contrast, a maximal approach to civics and citizenship education is much more egalitarian; it actively seeks to develop among young people both the knowledges and the skills required to be citizens in a more complete sense, which includes a critical awareness of the way political ideologies can shape

their lives. However, McLaughlin pointed out some of the challenges with approaching citizenship education this way. Citizenship education, for the most part, is linked to the notion of 'public virtues', which are contextual to particular societies. These shared public virtues can be difficult to identify, and even more challenging to develop, in a society based on liberalism and tolerance of diversity, practice and values. The tension facing maximal citizenship educators is to find a balance between the critical reasoning and independent judgement required of citizens and the shared values, loyalty and commitments necessary in a cohesive society.

David Kerr has built upon McLaughlin's work, and been even more explicit about the differences between minimal and maximal citizenship education. According to Kerr (1999), minimal citizenship education can be described as exclusive, elitist, civics based, formal, content driven, knowledge based, didactic, and easier to achieve.

> [Minimal interpretations] seek to promote particular exclusive and elitist interests, such as the granting of citizenship to certain groups in society but not all. Minimal interpretations lead to narrow, formal approaches to citizenship education – what has been termed civics education. (p. 11)

By contrast, maximal forms of citizenship education are inclusive, activist, citizenship based, participatory, process driven, values based, interactive, and far more challenging for educators to implement. This analysis throws up some interesting points; the first is made by Kerr himself, who identified that citizenship education can often be described as 'education about citizenship, education through citizenship and education for citizenship' (1999, p. 12). This reinforces the notion that various interpretations within civics and citizenship education that can be applied. According to Kerr (1999),

> [Maximal interpretations] seek to actively include and involve all groups and interests in society. Maximal interpretations lead to a broad mixture of formal and informal approaches to what has been termed citizenship education, as opposed to narrower civics education. This citizenship education includes the content and knowledge components of minimal interpretations, but actively encourages investigation and interpretation of the many different ways in which these components (including the rights and responsibilities of citizens) are determined and carried out. (p. 11)

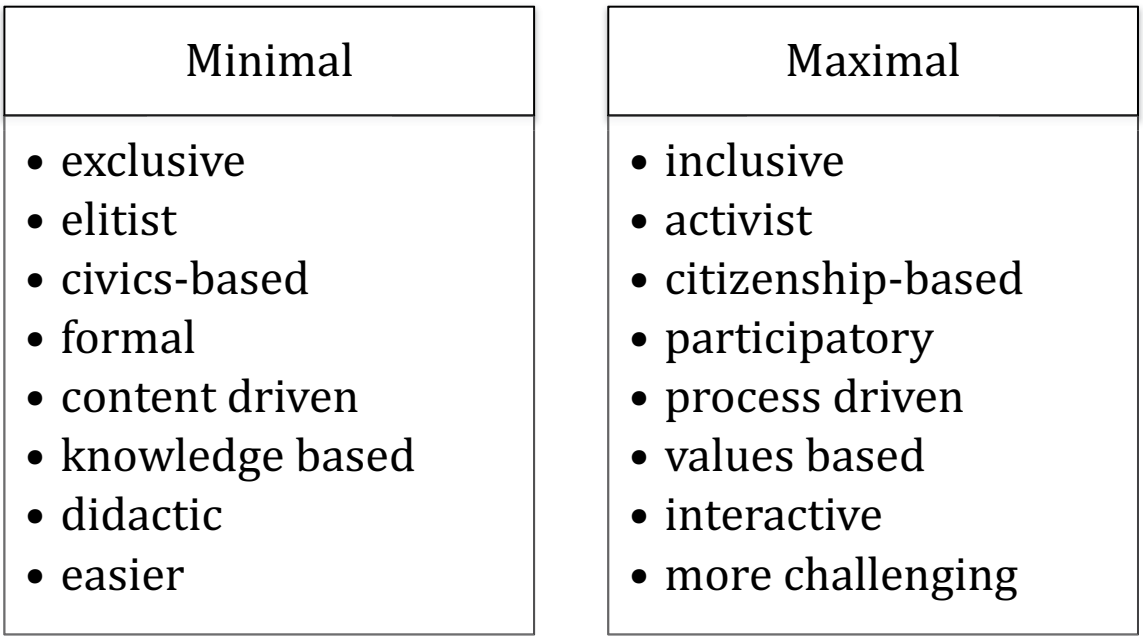

Figure 8: Minimal vs Maximal Approaches to Citizenship Education

Other researchers who have explored what is meant by the terms 'maximal' and 'minimal' are Cogan and Morris (2001), who developed a model of citizenship (multi-dimensional citizenship) that I explore in the next section. They also analysed civics and citizenship education within schools, rather than at a systemic or national level, and found McLaughlin's work useful for interpreting the different approaches within schools. They write (of minimal approaches),

> This is largely content-led and knowledge based. It is centred on formal education programs that concentrate on the transmission to students of knowledge of a country's history and geography, of the structure and processes of its system of government, and of its constitution … On the other hand, maximal approaches are very different: as the outcomes of maximal approaches are broad, involving the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, and the development of values and dispositions, and skills and attitudes, it is much more difficult to measure how successfully these outcomes have been achieved. (2001, p. 120)

Minimal

- formal education programs
- transmission of knowledge of history and geography, structure and processes of government

Maximal

- broad outcomes
- acquisition of knowledge
- development of values, dispositions, skills and attitudes
- more difficult to measure

Figure 9: Cogan and Morris' Conception of Maximal vs Minimal Citizenship Education

Again, it would be wise not to try to bracket a particular example of citizenship education as either maximal or minimal; rather it would exist at some point on a continuum. For example, *Discovering Democracy*, in both theory and practice, would be closer to the minimal end of the continuum. As already discussed, the emphasis in *Discovering Democracy* was on the development of an understanding of the history, formal institutions and mechanisms of Australian democracy. This narrow approach is consistent with the minimal approach to civics and citizenship education. *Discovering Democracy* (speaking generally of course, in the way that it was taught in most classrooms) took place in a formal sense and was limited to set classes of civics or Australian History and Geography. The emphasis in *Discovering Democracy* was on a teacher-led curriculum, with teachers in the classroom enabled by the curriculum as the gatekeepers of civics knowledge, tasked with the duty of passing it on to the students in their charge. There were limited opportunities for student participation, and what participation there was, was based on teacher-constructed activities taken from the *Discovering Democracy* curriculum.

By comparison, some of the other examples of civics and citizenship education discussed in Chapter Five are more in keeping with the maximal approach. For example, the *ruMAD?* Jessie's Creek project adopted a curriculum and pedagogical approach that is much more maximal in a number

of important ways. In particular, the program was inclusive; not only were students from the local primary school involved in the whole project, but the whole project was focused on activism and social change, rather than storing up knowledge or developing an understanding of the formal democratic process.

These sorts of discussions of maximal and minimal approaches are of value because they assist in identifying some of their main features, but ultimately they create an artificial divide in civics and citizenship education. By classifying different programs on a continuum between the two extremes, I believe we ignore the way that maximal and minimal approaches feed into each other. A more complete model would have a spiral instead of a continuum. The spiral best encapsulates the way that maximal and minimal approaches feed into and off each other. Unlike a continuum, which suggests an ever-widening separation between the two forms, a spiral allows for a kind of cross-pollination that I think better demonstrates the underlying structure of the way civics and citizenship education works.

I would argue, based on my experiences with *Justice Citizens*, that a maximal approach to civics and citizenship education also encourages the development of minimal knowledges; that is, by focusing on activism and social change matters, students also have the benefit of developing a minimal knowledge about the way government and its institutions operate, although this takes place at a much different level than in strictly minimal approaches. One way of conceiving of this is that maximal approaches develop civic knowledge as a 'just-in-time' kind of knowledge, whereas minimal approaches develop that knowledge 'just-in-case'.

6.5 Morris and Cogan's Multi-Dimensional Models of Civics and Citizenship Education

Another way of exploring civics and citizenship education is to examine the way that civic values, as expressed within society, have developed over time. This is the approach taken by Cogan and colleagues, who attempted to identify a common core of civics and citizenship skills and attitudes as a means to providing a framework for civics and citizenship education.

Morris and Cogan (2001) begin by theorising about what is meant by a 'good citizen'. According to Cogan, this involves 'developing a capacity for and commitment to a civic ethic characterized by socially responsible habits of

mind, heart and action' (2000, p 22). Specifically, Cogan mentions a 'willingness to protect the environment, to defend human rights, and to engage in public life' (2000, p. 22). At a more general level, Cogan points to what he describes as socially responsible habits of mind, the ability to think critically, and skills including problem solving and conflict resolution.

The social dimension builds upon the personal dimension. Cogan (2000) expressed the idea that citizenship is a social activity, and young people need to develop the skills that allow them 'to engage in public debate and discussion, to participate in public life, to deal with the problems and issues that face them' (p. 23). He also identified that the political arena is only one part of the social dimension, and civics and citizenship education must encompass a range of other economic, cultural and social domains.

The third dimension is spatial; 'citizens must also see themselves as members of several overlapping communities: local, regional, national and multinational' (p. 23). Cogan (2000) included this dimension because of the increasingly globalised nature of the world, where national boundaries are becoming blurred and communities are becoming more diverse and disparate. Associated with this are significant changes in technology, communications, trade patterns and immigration. Even so, he predicted people will still retain a strong sense of national identity:

> The challenges of the next century transcend national boundaries and will require multinational solutions. However, people's sense of identity is and is likely to remain rooted in the local and the personal in terms of nation and culture. (p. 23)

Cogan's (2000) fourth dimension model is temporal, which means 'that citizens, in dealing with contemporary challenges, cannot be so preoccupied with the present that they lose sight of the past and the future' (p. 24). This is an interesting dimension to citizenship education and one that is, in my opinion, often overlooked. It also has links directly with notions of sustainability, which are becoming more prevalent in Australian schools' curricula (ACARA 2014).

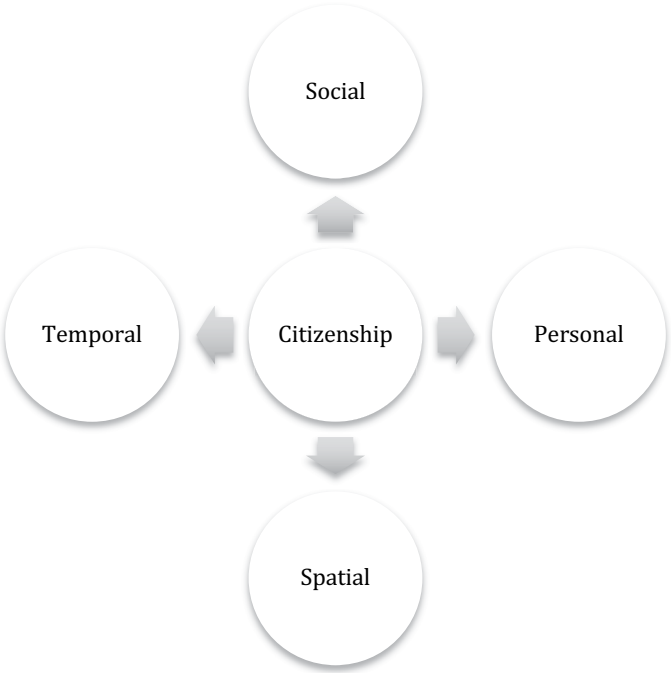

Figure 10: Morris and Cogan's Multi-Dimensional Citizenship Model

Cogan and Derricott (1996) set out a four-step framework for the practical implementation of these dimensions. The first step involves developing the school itself as a model of multi-dimensional citizenship, where each of these dimensions is recognised and nurtured amongst young people. This leads to the second step, which involves recognising that the school exists as one part of a much wider community, and that for successful implementation of multi-dimensional citizenship, the school must be integrated within the wider community. Third, the school must also become a model for that wider community of environmental stewardship and sustainability. The heart of the school should be a deliberation-based curriculum, where students are not only taught to make decisions, but are allowed, even encouraged to do so, either individually or collectively. The fourth step necessitates a new approach to teaching, which means teacher professional learning and professional development need to change.

Cogan and Morris (2001) began like many of the researchers previously mentioned, by identifying the difficulty in determining the meaning of 'good citizen' or 'good citizenship education'. As evidence for this, they cited the wide range of educational curricula that purports to deal with civics and citizenship education. These included the National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies in the US (1994), the Guidelines for Civic Education in Hong Kong

(1996), the Crick Report in the UK (1998), and *Discovering Democracy* in Australia (1997). Studying these approaches, which shared similarities, showed the variety of content, pedagogy and purposes that constitute the broader civics and citizenship education agenda.

Cogan and Morris (2001) also criticised the abstract nature of much of the study about civics education, stating that while it is the teachers who are the key determinants of a pupil's experience, 'there is a dearth of studies that focus on schools (as opposed to national systems and curriculum components) as the core unit of analysis' (p. 3). To remedy this, they studied 17 schools in Australia, Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan, Thailand and the US. Data was gathered through a program of lesson observations and interviews with teachers and students. This research explored four main areas: the particular school's policies in regards to citizenship education; the nature and extent of curriculum citizenship activities; how key stakeholders perceived the importance of these activities; and similarities between the schools. In order to make this research more general, Cogan and Morris agreed that they would use the term civics and citizenship education in the broadest possible sense. The issue of values, that is, the types of values promoted through civics and citizenship education, was another difficult issue. In the end, Cogan and Morris identified the following values: democracy, social cohesion, self-cultivation, economic success, family life, natural identity, and civic and community values.

Their study provides an interesting analysis of the ways that civics and citizenship education differ across countries. The first point they make is that some countries blend civics and citizenship education into other subjects, whereas other countries simply have a separate subject. They identified some difficulties:

> The boundaries are weak as the delivery of civic values relies on its infusion or permeation across more traditional school subjects, such as social studies, history and geography … In Australia, civics and citizenship education was not the primary role of any group of teachers and the assessment of civic learning was not a key element of high stakes assessment exercises' (p. 112).

In addition, the actual curriculum, as evidenced through the learning materials provided, did not always address the active citizenship component of civics and citizenship education:

> Generally, where textbooks were available, their focus was on content and knowledge that stressed education about citizenship. Thus, the goal was to provide pupils with

> knowledge about national history and the structures and processes of government. (p. 112)

Cogan and Morris refer to Le Metais (1997), who had identified that values within civics and citizenship education worldwide were expressed in three separate ways. Their research suggested that in the first way, as evidenced by schools in the US, there is little or no reference to values. The second method, which is the one adopted by Australia, is where values are expressed in general terms. Finally, in countries like Japan, the national values are expressed in great detail - and are often at risk of becoming academicized.

Regarding the importance of civics and citizenship education in the schools they observed, Cogan and Morris are critical. They argue that in schools where there were no separate subjects called civics, there were

> difficulties (which) arise from the integration of civics as a theme within other school subjects. Activities such as special days are haphazard across schools, student councils are limited to a few students and they have no power, and school parliaments are lame. (p. 116)

6.6 Murray Print's typology: Civics for survival, for community service and to exercise leadership

An important figure in the history of Australian civics and citizenship education is Murray Print. As well as being one of the designers of *Discovering Democracy*, Print also examined the ways young people and teachers feel about civics and citizenship. One of his findings was about the relationship between the kind of school a child was attending and the form that civics and citizenship education took that in the school (Print 2001). This research relates directly to the guiding question of this chapter; namely, what should be the content and structure for a citizenship curriculum. One can draw from Print's research a threefold typology where the curricula focus is either on (a) survival, (b) community service or (c) leadership.

This study was conducted between 1997 and 1999, when Print examined the kind of citizenship education being delivered in three different schools, each representative of a different administrative system. One of the schools was an 'average' government school in Sydney. According to Print, civics and citizenship education here was focused on 'civics for survival'; that is, students learnt the kinds of skills that are useful for later life: literacy, numeracy, an understanding of Australian history, perspectives and way of life. This was

expressed in a number of different ways: in the school's welfare and discipline policy, and in a number of extracurricular events that emphasised particular parts of Australian culture, like ANZAC Day. According to Print (2001), this school's leadership team believed this would

> provide students with the knowledge, skills and experienced that will enable them to become effective and committed citizens of Australia. In the process, and in the context of this highly multicultural school, it is believed important that students develop civic values of tolerance, support for diversity, equality, civility, respect for the law and social cohesion. (p 80)

In spite of these ideals, civics education was not translated effectively in the curriculum. Instead, it was delivered mostly through the extracurricular events such as ANZAC Day. This approach was supported by the pedagogical theory underpinning it: the staff at the school were well aware that

> students learn civics effectively through active engagement. Consequently, they supplied a large number of special days and taught minimal civic knowledge through academic subjects (p. 88).

An illustration of this approach was the school's implementation of a school parliament and a student representative council, both of which were seen to be developing important civic knowledge in an active way. However, Print (2001) was sceptical about the value of such an approach:

> While the school clearly supported students' learning about and acquiring values of social cohesion, civility and equality, this did not translate into learning about identity or important democratic values. Vast areas of civics education were omitted from students' learning opportunities. (p. 81)

The second school Print (2001) examined was a non-government religious school. Here Print identified a form of civics education that he described as 'civics for duty', which is characterised by the inculcation among students of a desire to help those less fortunate than themselves. Print wrote:

> The principal of (this school) sees the role of the school as providing high quality education to students from quite wealthy backgrounds. These students are expected to acquire a civic responsibility to help others not from their privileged situations. (p. 81)

In this school, the most important thing for students to learn was to acknowledge a sense of duty or service to the community. This notion of 'service learning', by which students work to assist members of the community in need, is often conflated with civics and citizenship education and warrants further comment. First, many schools have an element of service learning or outreach, where, for example, young people work in soup kitchens, do fundraising or, in more exclusive settings, travel overseas to work in

orphanages in Thailand, for example. Service learning, however, deals with only one segment of civics and citizenship.

It is important to recognise that these activities do not necessarily encourage a critical understanding of the causes of injustice in the world. If it is acknowledged that central to democracy are the principles of equality and justice, then it is equally important to ensure that as part of civics and citizenship education, young people learn to perceive the causes of injustice, and learn to work to address these causes. Too often in cases of service learning, young people are merely servicing these injustices, rather than relieving them.

In this school, according to Print, the focus of the learning was on being a dutiful citizen. There was minimal evidence of civics and citizenship education within the school, and it was not well known or understood by students. Print argued that it had little effect upon the culture of the school. According to Print, 'this was partly due to the school leadership which viewed civic education narrowly as students' learning about their duty as an Australian citizen (p. 83).

In the third school, an academically selective government school, Print (2001) identified civics for leadership as its form of civics education.

> The principal wanted the school to provide the best education possible for these talented students while maintaining the virtues of a government school education. In this environment, civics policy has a subdued role in school subjects, though through other school activities there are opportunities for students to learn civics and apply leadership skills. (p. 81)

In this case, civics education had a particularly low status. It was superseded by other subjects that were seen as 'more academically rigorous'. Exam success was the overarching goal of the school, and this forced civics and citizenship education to the informal and extracurricular parts of the school. When it was delivered, 'civics education was based on supporting values for enlightened leadership ... but the applied values were about personal success, gaining knowledge and success on examinations' (p. 89).

This analysis identifies two common challenges for all civics educators. First, in schools where the emphasis is on academic success, how can civics and citizenship compete with other subjects, especially when there is limited value or requirement for a civics and citizenship examination? And even if it could, would it be recognised as being of the same value as other subjects that are seen as being more academically rigorous? In the UK, education authorities, acting on the recommendations of the Crick Report (1998), dealt with this challenge by

implementing civics and citizenship as a separate subject, complete with the option to undertake a GCSE in Citizenship.

Second, it is important to recognise that there must be an element of collaboration – and learning about collaboration – in civics and citizenship education. According to Dewey (1916), 'democracy is primarily a mode of associated living' (p. 87), and it is therefore vital that learning about civics and citizenship education is not just a personal activity, it should be undertaken as a member of a community.

6.7 Kerry Kennedy and fluid definitions of active citizenship: the patriotic, self-regulated entrepreneurial and empowered models

Kerry Kennedy observes that, 'As students, they are not yet citizens, but nevertheless are subject to family, school and community socialisation processes that prepare them for citizenship' (2007, p. 305). As part of these socialisation processes, Kennedy (2007) identifies three main approaches to active citizenship. In the first approach, Kennedy recognises that the idea of active citizenship has entered the political and ideological lexicon of governments from all sides of the political spectrum, and that these governments have appropriated the term to mean whatever they have wanted it to mean: 'They simply adopt "active citizenship" almost as a slogan that suits the politics of the day' (p. 307). This indicates that there are significant differences among countries about what is meant by active citizenship. An example of this can be seen in *Discovering Democracy*. When it was originally instituted, the Keating Government sought to use it as a tool to encourage support for an Australian republic. In this case, an 'active citizen' was someone who was informed about the Republic debate and would take an active part in any referendum on the nature of Australia's statehood. When the Howard Government came to power, it wanted to maintain the conception, and so an active citizen became someone who was aware of Australia's historic links with the British Commonwealth.

The second approach identified by Kennedy (2007) is conceptual/theoretical. This acknowledges that citizens have always been expected to take an active role in government. But what constitutes active is shaped by the politics of the day. In an era where neo-liberal politics are dominant Kennedy observes there is a focus on the self-regulatory citizen, free

of government restraints' (2007, p. 307). To be an active citizen means to be entrepreneurial and to champion do it yourself and self-help models of active citizenship.

The third approach is what Kennedy calls empowerment. Here the concept is to encourage students to become empowered citizens. However, Kennedy identifies that one of the major issues in this approach is that there is a complete lack of consistency between researchers on how to measure empowerment, which means it is difficult to compare the outcomes of empowerment programs.

6.8 Westheimer and Kahne's threefold taxonomy: the personally responsible, the participatory and justice oriented Citizens

An illuminating example of how civics and citizenship education is often co-opted by dominant discourses is given by Westheimer and Kahne (2003), who examined the way that educators and policy makers in the US have conflated democracy with patriotism. They argue that many school programs that purport to be developing democratic principles are actually only developing patriotism and community service. Neither of these two things are necessarily bad, but they are certainly not the same as developing an active and informed citizenry. Indeed, they suggest that the development of patriotism actually serves to silence the critical voice that is often considered crucial in democracies. Westheimer and Kahne write, 'Democracy requires more than community service; it requires citizen participation in the affairs of state' (p. 12). They argue strongly that schools should not be forced into making a choice between the false dichotomy of service education and political education; democracies require people with both of these skill sets to be effective. In addition, they caution that service and volunteering are by themselves not necessarily predictors of democratic participation by citizens, and should not be confused as such.

In response, Westheimer and Kahne (2004a,b) suggested that education programs could be classified according to the conceptions of citizenship they were trying to develop. They argued that, while some programs might draw from more than one of these three conceptions, they would, for the most part, be aimed at just one of them. The first conception of citizenship is that of the 'personally responsible citizen.' According to Westheimer and Kahne (2004a,b),

this is a type of citizen who fulfils the basic requirements of a citizen, but does little more than that and is certainly not politically active in any meaningful sense beyond voting regularly. The personally responsible citizen obeys the laws, pays their taxes and votes in elections, but little more. Westheimer and Kahne paraphrase such a citizen in the following way:

> The personally responsible citizen acts responsibly in his/her community by, for example, picking up litter, giving blood, recycling, volunteering, and staying out of debt. The personally responsible citizen works and pays taxes, obeys laws, and helps those in need during crises such as snowstorms or floods. The personally responsible citizen contributes to food or clothing drives when asked and volunteers to help those less fortunate whether in a soup kitchen or a senior centre. S/he might contribute time, money, or both to charitable causes. (2004b, p. 2)

Westheimer and Kahne are critical of civics and citizenship education that focuses mostly on teaching personally responsible citizenship. They argue these programs teach an individualistic understanding of what it means to be a citizen, emphasising traits such as honesty, integrity and responsibility for one's owns action. However, Westheimer and Kahne are quick to point out that

> these traits are not inherently about democracy. To the extent that these traits detract from other important democratic priorities, they hinder rather than make possible democratic participation and change. For example, a focus on loyalty or obedience (common components of character education as well) work against the kind of critical reflection and action many assume are essential in a democratic society. (2004b, p. 4)

Educational programs that seek to develop these kinds of citizens are, to use McLaughlin's (1992) terminology, minimal, that is, they generally teach that citizenship is a political right, granted by birth or naturalisation, rather than a way of acting or being. There is an emphasis on knowing the rights and responsibilities of a citizen and usually a great deal of content directed at teaching students the mechanisms required for governance. Furthermore, they often privilege individuality and personal traits over collaborative approaches to democracy.

In Westheimer and Kahne's taxonomy, the second idea of citizenship is the 'participatory' citizen. This kind of citizen is personally responsible citizen, but also committed to addressing injustice and social inequality.

> Educational programs designed to support the development of participatory citizens focus on teaching students about how government and other institutions (e.g. community based organizations, churches) work and about the importance of planning and participating in organized efforts to care for those in need, for example, or in efforts to guide school policies. While the personally responsible citizen would contribute cans of food for the homeless, the participatory citizen might organize the food drive. (2004b, p. 4)

The third conception of citizenship, and the least considered if judged by the number of programs that attempt to develop this kind of citizen, is the 'justice oriented citizen.' This is the model that inspired the *Justice Citizens* program that I developed and led. A justice oriented citizen is capable of identifying issues of inequality or injustice in the local, national and even global community, and of working collaboratively with other justice oriented citizens to effect long-lasting change. Westheimer and Kahne (2004b) assert that:

> Justice oriented citizens critically assess social, political, and economic structures and consider collective strategies for change that challenge injustice and, when possible, address root causes of problems. The vision of the justice oriented citizen shares with the vision of the participatory citizen an emphasis on collective work related to the life and issues of the community. (p. 5)

The crucial difference between a participatory citizen and a justice oriented citizen is the citizen's understanding of how to effect systemic change. A participatory citizen might address a particular issue by seeking to alleviate the immediate issues through charity work or some similar endeavour. A justice-oriented citizen would interrogate the issue from a critical and structuralist perspective to understand the root causes of the issue, and thus affect change at a macroscopic level. An example might make this distinction clearer: while a participatory citizen might be concerned about homelessness in their community, and set up a soup kitchen to provide food for homeless people, a justice oriented citizen might choose to deal with this issue by establishing a social action initiative that campaigns for better mental health funding, based on the premise that there are links between the lack of proper care for people with mental health issues and the high numbers of homeless people that suffer from them. In addition, justice oriented citizens need to be conversant with lobbying and the way lobby groups seek to influence legislation. Therefore, linked to the education required for this latter kind of citizen is an understanding of how to work collaboratively with others and how to establish and lead social action initiatives.

In the following chapter, I am going to discuss the various traditions of critical pedagogy, and how they have informed the development of justice pedagogy. I will pay particular attention to the way that civics and citizenship educators have deployed critical pedagogy in the context of civics and citizenship education, and the challenges they have faced as a result of doing so.

CHAPTER 7: REVIEWING TRADITIONS OF CRITICAL PEDAGOGY TO INFORM AND DISTINGUISH WHAT I LABEL AS JUSTICE PEDAGOGY

7.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines some of the principles of critical pedagogy that I have drawn on for the *Justice Citizens* program. I begin by briefly describing the traditions of popular education, out of which critical pedagogy grew. I then review several traditions of critical pedagogy, including Paulo Freire's early work and the later influences of popular educators, and analyse its application in citizenship education contexts. I also consider the influences of feminist, post-modernist and post-structuralist thought on critical pedagogy, as a means of developing my own approach to civics and citizenship education, which I label Justice Pedagogy.

7.2 Traditions of Popular Education

Freire is often considered to be the founder of critical pedagogy, but as his work is derived from a long history of popular education, it is worth discussing some of the earlier traditions that have informed the modern understanding of critical pedagogy. Flowers (2009) has identified a number of these, including working-class education in Europe during the 18th and 19th centuries, progressive and radical education in England in the late 18th century, and adult education for democracy in the early 20th century, as well as Freire's work in the mid-20th century. The central tenet of these approaches, according to Flowers, is that popular education is distinct from other forms of education in that its focus is not necessarily education for the people, but rather it is education by the people and with the people. However, such approaches are not immune to the influence of dominant powers in society. Flowers describes some of the contradictions present in these earlier forms of popular education:

> Here we see an ambiguity in the history of popular education that continues to this day. There were then, as there are today, concerted efforts to make education more

> accessible to groups who, historically, had been excluded. The people engaged in these efforts believed that they were shifting education from an elitist to a popular form. Yet, in many cases, education continued to be controlled by elitist interests and was simply being made more accessible. (2009, p. 12)

In summarising the common features of popular education, Flowers identifies that such approaches to education share the common purpose of helping excluded people exercise leadership in their social lives and communities. This is underpinned by the belief that, at a grassroots level, people should be consulted about the changes that are necessary to make their communities more just. Finally, Flowers (2009) finishes with a note of caution regarding other forms of community-based or student-centred educational approaches:

> But what is often missing is a concern with social and material change and with the development of a critical consciousness. It is one thing to help people create and tell stories, but another to help them understand social and political structures and to act strategically to change those structures. (p. 19)

Justice Citizens is very clearly situated in this tradition of popular education; as Flowers encourages, I seek to engage in civics and citizenship education *with* the students in the class rather than simply seeking to perform education upon them.

7.3 Key Features of Critical Pedagogy

Critical pedagogy, as a term, grew out of Freire's work in Brazil, although the term was coined later by Henry Giroux (1983). It should also be noted that there were critical pedagogical elements in the work of earlier scholars like W. E. Du Bois (as identified by Kincheloe 2008). Originally drawing on Marxist theory, and in particular the work of the Frankfurt School, critical pedagogy is an 'educational movement, guided by passion and principle, to help students develop consciousness of freedom, recognize authoritarian tendencies, and connect knowledge to power and the ability to take constructive action' (Giroux 2010, p. B15). I would hesitate to suggest that there is any one critical pedagogy; rather it makes sense to discuss critical pedagogies (McLaren 2003), as variations developed through the influence of feminist thought, critical race theory and other approaches. In this section, I will discuss some of the key features of critical pedagogy, including the centrality of a pedagogy of love, the role of critical consciousness and its relationship to power, the importance of dialogue and praxis, and the notion that schools can be both sites of oppression and resistance.

7.3.1 The Centrality of a Pedagogy of Love

According to Freire (1970), education is an act of love: teachers are motivated by love for humanity in general, and their students in particular. Darder (1998) is quick to point out that this notion of love is not a romantic or long-suffering kind of love. Instead, it is a love that is 'lively, forceful and inspiring, but also critical, challenging and insistent' (p. 1). In Freire's (1988) words, it is 'armed love – the fighting love of those convinced of the right and the duty to fight, to denounce and to announce' (p. 42). Darder (1998) contrasts this love-based determination with 'the insipid generosity of teachers or administrators who would blindly adhere to a system of schooling that transgresses every principle of cultural and economic democracy' (p. 3). Furthermore, this love is the basis for both creative and revolutionary work. McLaren (2003) evocatively describes it as a love that 'ignites not only the revolutionary but also the creative action of the artist, wielding a palette of sinew and spirit on a canvas of thought and action, its explosion of meaning forever synchronised with the gasp of human freedom' (p. 239).

Despite these descriptions, Freire has been criticised for not sufficiently explicating what he meant by love, or how it might be expressed in an educational setting. Schoder (2010) has suggested that Freire meant a love that comes from within, and is guided by virtues like fairness, respect and gratitude. In this sense, love is the 'conscious moral appraisal and bestowal of value on a person or thing' (p. 80). However,

> [Freire] exercised a preferential option to appraise and bestow value on those who were oppressed. These appraisals and bestowals of value apply to all people, regardless of their social class, if they have been dehumanized by the prescribed thoughts and actions of others. (p. 80)

According to Freire, from this foundation of love educators develop their determination to address inequality and injustice in the world. The love he describes is a political and radical form of love; that is, it is an emotion that drives reflection and action, rather than passivity. Truly democratic education cannot take place without the deep commitment to humanity as expressed through love because it is through this conscious regard for others that one finds the motivation to act on behalf of and for each other. This is not an easy process; Darder (1998) describes how acting through love requires a 'deeply reflective interpretation of the dialectical relationship between our cultural

existence as individuals and our political and economic existence as social beings' (p. 3).

7.3.2 The Development of Critical Consciousness

The central aim of Freire's work was the development of critical consciousness, which is the ability for people to perceive the ways in which they are socially or economically oppressed and to understand how they can take action to challenge and overthrow that oppression. Freire said that people's awareness of their own empowerment can be described in terms of their consciousness. Building upon Engels' (Adoratskii, Engels & Torr 1936) concept of false consciousness, Freire (1970) argued that there are three levels of consciousness: magical, naïve and critical. The highest of these, critical consciousness, occurs when people become aware of both how they are being oppressed by the dominant classes in their society, and how they might act collectively to resist power. The process of becoming critically conscious (conscientisation) is difficult because the oppressed will have come to see themselves and the world through the oppressor's eyes.

Various scholars have explored what this process of conscientisation might look like from the perspective of civics and citizenship education. Both Freire (1970) and Giroux (1992) have recommended the important of giving students agency, although Davies (2006) has suggested that in addition to agency there is also a need for outrage to engender action. This might seem to contradict Freire's own description of the primacy of love, but I disagree; I think that outrage at marginalisation, oppression and powerlessness can come from the kind of love that Freire described. Sibbet (2016) has suggested that in civics and citizenship education critical consciousness is 'a solidarity based conception of who is involved, a strategy centred around social justice activism and disposition to critique' (p. 3).

7.3.3 The Relationship between Power and Conscientisation

Central to the Frankfurt school of critical theory, and therefore to critical pedagogy, is an understanding of the way power shapes our relations with those around us. According to Kincheloe (2008),

> A consensus seems to be emerging among critical pedagogues that power is a basic constituent of human existence that works to shape both the oppressive and productive nature of the human tradition. Indeed, we are all empowered and we are all

> unempowered in that we all possess abilities and we are all limited in the attempt to use our abilities. (p. 54)

A long line of Marxist theorists has analysed the exercise of power through ideology. One term often used to describe this process is hegemony (Gramsci 1971), which can be described as 'people's consent to domination through cultural institutions such as the media, the schools, the family and the church' (Kincheloe 2003, p. 54). Ideology can be described as the way that the results of oppression become normalised and accepted as the status quo. Hegemony operates within a sea of different struggles, intermixing with notions of race, gender and class, and affecting different groups in different ways. And people are not passive victims of ideology. The media does exert hegemonic influence but this does not mean consumers are helpless dupes who cannot resist and subvert. Ideological power can be exercised through language; indeed, the language and discursive practices related to who is allowed to speak and who is silenced, whose voice is privileged with authority and whose is not, are rich sources of inquiry into the nature of power and the way it is enacted within groups. Kincheloe (2008) writes,

> In an educational context, for example, legitimated sources of power insidiously tell educators what books may be read by students, what instructional methods may be utilized, and what belief systems and views of success may be taught. (p. 58)

While conscientisation is important in critical pedagogy, critical pedagogy also recognises the importance of taking action to improve society. Freire (1970) was particularly critical of what might be described as armchair activism, by which he meant reflection and thought without action. Instead, he argued that critical pedagogy must be linked to meaningful action in the social realm; that is, critical pedagogues and their students must take action to challenge injustice and gain control of their own lives. In this respect, the notion of immanence – of what could come to be – is important. In a very basic way, critical pedagogy is about imagining new ways for the world to work for ourselves and for everyone else. These new imaginings must then be worked towards by critical pedagogues and their students.

Perhaps the most significant criticism of critical pedagogy comes from what Kincheloe (2008) calls the 'post-discourses': poststructuralism, postmodernism and postcolonialism. In particular, the call by postmodernism to abandon universal narratives has meant that critical pedagogy's desire to achieve social justice for all has been fragmented and its organising principles

often discarded. Poststructuralism, too, has called into question the notions of class. Traditionally, critical theory and critical pedagogy have been interested in economic oppression, particularly of the poor and working classes. However, newer understandings of power show the limits to analysing solely by class. In particular, the influences of feminism show how social groups can be both oppressors and oppressed. For example, a white woman might be capable of oppressing people of colour, yet still be oppressed by the patriarchal society in which she lives. This varied understanding of class and power means that traditional notions of class have had to be revitalised if they are to remain relevant. Darder, Baltodano and Torres (2003) tell us:

> In response, a number of critical educators began to rethink post-civil-rights notions of class, race, and gender, in an effort to begin formulating new language for our understanding of gendered and racialised class relations and its impact on education. (p. 17)

Poststructuralism rejects the universalising ideas of class, gender and race and hence limits the effectiveness of any analysis that uses these measures as tools to explore oppression within society. Whereas the original critical theorists argued that all individuals' experiences of oppression were the same, regardless of the context of the oppression, a more modern, reconceptualised approach to critical theory and critical pedagogy acknowledges the importance of social and historical contexts and recognises that factors like gender, race and class are interlinked in experiences of oppression. This recognition allows modern critical pedagogy to make use of tools like poststructural psychoanalysis in order to further explore the operation of power. Kincheloe (2008) writes:

> A postructural psychoanalysis, in its rejection of traditional psychoanalysis's tendency to view individuals as rational and autonomous beings, allows critical researchers new tools for rethinking the interplay among the various axes of power, identity, libido, rationality, and emotion. In this configuration, the psychic is no longer separated from the sociopolitical realm. (p. 52)

Attempts to address the concerns of poststructuralist have given rise to new traditions of critical pedagogy such as border pedagogy (Giroux 1992), radical pedagogy, liberatory pedagogy and revolutionary pedagogy (Johnson & Morris 2010). In some of these approaches, the Marxist focus on class and power has been abandoned entirely in favour of the newer, more relativistic approaches, some of which have been criticised by other critical pedagogues. For example, Wrigley (2006) suggests they connect 'poorly with life in the classroom' (p. 179), and Johnson and Morris (2010) write:

> It is also acknowledged, even by those "inside" the field, that the association of critical pedagogy with the more individualistic post-modernist perspectives has 'opened up' critical pedagogy to the range of criticisms of those perspectives (p. 80)

7.3.4 Problem-Posing Education: Dialogue and Praxis

In order to develop critical consciousness, Freire suggested a problem-posing model of education that challenges the prevailing banking model. In the banking model, teachers 'deposit' knowledge in the heads of their students, much like a coin in a cash box. This 'constituted a great hegemonic oppression' (Johnson & Morris 2010, p. 79) upon the learners because they were disempowered from taking control of their own learning. By contrast, a problem-posing pedagogy comprises context-specific pedagogical methods that allow learners to use their experiences as the basis for examining problems and contradictions in their lives, and 'students and teachers [to] examine their experiences and perspectives in light of those of other people in relation to larger public issues and processes of domination and liberation' (Nagda, Gurin & Lopez 2003, p. 168).

Problem-posing education encourages dialogue between teachers and pupils. Contrary to the banking model of education, dialogic approaches to education are based on honouring the knowledge, perspectives and experiences of both students and teachers (Nagda, Gurin & Lopez 2003). The purpose of dialogue is to examine the unequal power relations that exist within the classroom and more broadly within society for the purpose of critical inquiry directed at 'unearthing the silenced and subjugated voices and examining why these voices have been suppressed' (p. 168).

The use of dialogue and deliberation is not solely restricted to critical pedagogical approaches to education. Burbules and Berk (1999) identified that the term critical is used widely in educational research and practice, but it is often unclear what is meant by the term; for example, it might mean either critical thinking or critical pedagogy. Exploring the differences between these meanings, Burbules and Berk (1999) suggested that critical thinking seeks to encourage logical and reasoned approaches to values and behaviour. Critical thinking proponents argue that the solution to society's ills can be found in dialogue with different parties, and for this reason we must value difference and diversity (Sibbett 2016). Critical thinking makes a claim to ideological neutrality (and even emotional neutrality) – a claim that critical pedagogues

reject by arguing that such an approach to deliberation cannot be neutral: 'Indoctrination is the case already; students must be brought to criticality, and this can only be done by alerting them to the social conditions that have brought this about' (Burbules & Berk 1999, p. 55).

Critical pedagogues reject the possibility of ideological neutrality and argue for a broader definition of difference than the pluralist one adopted by critical thinkers. In the case of citizenship education, this recognition of difference is based on notions of solidarity and a rejection of hierarchies. It links back to Flowers' (2009) definition of popular education as working 'with' the people. As Sibbett (2016) puts it: 'Political solidarity, from this perspective, entails alliances among actors from divergent backgrounds—the privileged and the marginalized alike' (p. 2). Critical pedagogues must therefore also acknowledge their own biases as part of the dialogic approach to education:

> Critical pedagogy as a social theory necessitates that the teacher has taken a stand and has recognized his/her ideological basis. It means that whatever and however they teach, they connect knowledge to the social and political agenda and install democratic values to their students in an effort to make them agents of social change. (Nikolakaki 2014, p. 59)

Through dialogue, praxis (a combination of critical reflection and action) is developed. The notion of praxis has been described as the most distinctive element of Freire's pedagogy (Fischman and McLaren 2005) and also as a fragile union of theory and practice (Giroux 2003). By engaging in praxis, students become 'involved in the organised struggle for their liberation' (Freire 1970, p. 40). It is important to note that the reflection that Freire calls for as part of praxis is not simply a period of self-reflection by the learner. Instead, it is a critique of the world in which the learner is placed, and an attempt to understand the causes for inequality and injustice. It seeks to enable students to 'perceive, from historical, cultural, economic, personal and political perspectives, and to act upon the "structures of domination" which oppress the people' (p. 101).

More recent critical pedagogues have been examining changes within schools engaged in active citizenship have suggested that this praxis can have a collective component. Hatcher (2007), for example, has called upon educators to leverage school communities based on class interest, and DeLeon (2007) has argued that students and teachers might work together to challenge corporate power in school settings. The purpose of praxis in these settings is twofold.

First, there is the need to translate political voice into political influence (Allen & Light 2015), and second, part of this kind of civics and citizenship education requires young people to learn to build and take part in social movements that challenge an unjust status quo (Kirshner 2015).

In summing up the pedagogical differences between critical thinking and critical pedagogy, Burbules and Berk (1999) write, 'Critical thinking's claim is, at heart, to teach how to think critically, not how to think politically; for critical pedagogy, this is a false distinction' (p. 55). I agree with this, but I would go further: the purpose of critical pedagogy is not just to teach young people to think politically, but also to act politically.

Despite the approaches described above, a criticism of critical pedagogy is that it has not developed models of classroom practice that are accessible (Deng 2015, Young 2011). According to Sibbett (2016), there is a 'general inattentiveness to practical questions of curriculum and instruction'. The activist and philosopher, Michael Apple (2015) has called for more focus on 'detailed examinations of what actually happens in schools' (p. xv). However, I suggest that, in the case of critical pedagogical approaches to citizenship education, this absence is being remedied. For example, Sibbett (2016) has critiqued both critical thinking and critical pedagogy in an effort to develop an approach to democratic citizenship education based on transformative criticality; Johnson and Morris (2010) have suggested a possible framework for critical citizenship education; and Dejaeghere (2006) has suggested that McLaughlin's (1992) framework (as described in Chapter Six) could be modified to include a critical approach to citizenship education.

In Australia, Choules (2007) has explored the use of critical pedagogy in Australian classrooms and identified a number of areas of difficulty, in particular the differences between Freire's original work with illiterate peasants in Brazil and the teaching of Australian high school students who might come from many different backgrounds and social statuses. This is part of a much broader question to do with critical pedagogy: how can we contextualise the work of social change education while remaining true to the particular contexts and experiences shared by students? Choules writes:

> The way that social change pedagogy is experienced, understood and responded to differs significantly depending on the positioning of the students. A significant issue is whether the social change vision of pedagogy furthers the interests of students or challenges their status, power and wealth. (p. 161)

This is one reason I describe *Justice Citizens* as having been influenced by critical pedagogy while more accurately representing a new tradition that I call Justice Pedagogy. If a pedagogy is to be truly effective in awakening students' desires for social justice and equity, it must recognise both the artificial nature of schools and the fact that there are disparate groups within classes. Justice Pedagogy does this.

Choules (2007) has identified that applying critical pedagogical practices with groups that are dominant in society (in Australia, the white Anglo majority) requires these groups to consider how such a vision of social change might threaten their status within society.

> There was a significant group that resisted any suggestion that Australian society benefited from the presence of a diversity of cultural groups. They felt that their privileged position as part of the dominant cultural group (White Anglo-Australians) was threatened by the changes to society brought about by multiculturalism and even more so by the arrival of unauthorized asylum seekers. A compassionate response to asylum seekers was in conflict with their need to feel in control. (p. 161)

Although this is a simplistic reading of power and class in modern Australia (and Choules does make this point), it speaks to the difficulties faced by educators attempting to engage in critical pedagogy in contexts different from those originally envisioned by Freire. Rather than avoiding these controversial topics, it is important that they be spoken about. Hence, Justice Pedagogy values difficult conversations as starting points for a critique of injustices faced by students in schools and the wider community.

Choules (2007) makes a number of useful suggestions for working with critical pedagogical principles when the social group is a mix of privilege and oppression. In particular, she recommends adding an analysis of privilege to the ideological critique. Such an analysis can help identify less overt racisms, like those that are systematic or institutionalised. She writes,

> The same structures that result in oppression also maintain privilege. Whether based on economic, racial, gender, or other differences, the privileges of a dominant group can usefully be analysed in this way. (p. 167)

Choules (2007) also writes about the role of the teacher. Traditionally, critical pedagogues and their students have a more horizontal relationship, rather than the vertical relationship normally employed by teachers and backed by institutional power. While this horizontal approach has great merit, it is also dangerous, especially in areas where there are students who have different experiences of oppression within the classroom.

> With the presence of students from the dominant social group, a failure by the educator to exercise authority can allow exclusionary processes to exist and the dominant discourse to assert itself. (p. 168)

Echoing Carmen Luke's (1994) concern about uncritical acceptance of women's lived experiences, Choules (2007) also warns against the uncritical acceptance of students' own experiences:

> [Such accounts] can result in an individualized discourse around discrimination and a denial of structural oppression and discrimination. It also allows the dominant group to (mis)position itself as the victim in relation to a particular social justice issue. (p. 170)

Central to critical pedagogy is the notion of dialogue as the central learning process. Choules (2007) quotes Freire and Macedo: '[Critical pedagogy] is a dialogue of equals, and through this social process, knowledge and learning are generated' (p. 173). However, such a dialogue can be difficult when working with groups from different social backgrounds, as Ellsworth (1989), one of the best known critics of critical pedagogy, has pointed out:

> Dialogue favors individuals who are confident, articulate and educated. Those who dominate societal relations, such as men, Whites and the wealthy, are able to dominate dialogue in an educational space. (1989, p. 172)

To address these challenges, Choules (2007) suggests creating smaller groups that are more homogenous, giving students 'thinking time' and creating possibilities for other approaches to dialogue that allow all members of the group to communicate equally, such as online forums. In conclusion, she cautions critical pedagogues that 'a change in the context in which a pedagogical tradition is to be applied requires changes to the pedagogical practices' (p. 175).

I integrated these strategies into the development of *Justice Citizens*, which is my own attempt to explicate a form of critical citizenship education that I have described as Justice Pedagogy. Outcomes varied among teachers in the project. Some found it challenging to restructure their expectations around encouraging dialogue, and allowing students to pursue their own interests often forced teachers to confront the basis of their own authority in the classroom.

7.3.5 Schools as Sites of Struggle

Another key concept common to many versions of critical pedagogy is the idea that schools – indeed, all educational institutions – and the people that work within them cannot be objective or neutral. Kincheloe (2008) describes

some of the decisions that must be made on a daily basis by educators, decisions related to justice, democracy and ethics. According to Kincheloe, these are not just individual decisions, but they also deal with the surrounding institutional morality: 'A central text of pedagogy maintains that the classroom, curriculum and school structures teachers enter are not neutral sites' (p. 2).

What seems normal or natural in schools is made that way through the actions of powerful groups that make certain practices seem acceptable and others not. Kincheloe argues that every form of schooling exists within a politically contested space; teachers who choose to ignore the ideologically charged atmosphere of schools are simply supporting the status quo. This is apparent in many different forms in Australian schools. An example can be found in the teaching of the history of white settlement in Australia. Educators are faced with a range of decisions about how much emphasis they should place on the 'Frontier Wars' (the name given to the often violent clashes between white settlers and Indigenous Australians). Were teachers not to detail this part of Australia's colonial history they would be taking the side of colonialist powers and marginalising and oppressing competing voices. Such an act would be unashamedly political, whether or not the teachers were conscious of it. Of course, should they choose to emphasise the violence and savagery of the conflict, then that too would be a political act, and one that has been repeatedly criticised. For example, former Prime Minister John Howard called upon teachers to reject such a 'black armband' view of history (Ferrari 2010).

7.4 Henry Giroux and Education for Critical Democracy: Moving beyond Marxist Theories of Reproduction

Critical pedagogy may have begun with Paulo Freire in Brazil in the 1960s, but it was Henry Giroux, through his work in the 1970s and 1980s in the USA, who established critical pedagogy as a mainstream field of study. Speaking of this time, Kincheloe (2008) writes:

> Bringing together Freire's work, the cultural capital of Pierre Bourdieu, the radical democratic work of Aronowitz and the critical theory of the Frankfurt School, Giroux establishes critical pedagogy as a domain of study and praxis. (p. 76)

Giroux's crucial contribution to the study of critical pedagogy was to develop the understanding that schools are sites of resistance to oppression, not just centres of oppression. Before Giroux, most critical educators had simply – and

simplistically – labelled schools as mechanisms for the reproduction of social, political and economic power, although it is important to recognise that critical educators had been puncturing the myth that schools functioned to cultivate democratic participation amongst young people, especially young people from marginalised groups (hooks 1994; Nieto 1995).

Giroux sought a more agentic understanding of the role of education and how it can be both a force for resistance and emancipation and a force for oppression. He emphasised that education was important not just as a site for social reproduction but also for the opposite, which was social change and activism. Education could assist in

> creating the formative culture of beliefs, practices and social relations that enable individuals to wield power, learn how to govern, and nurture a democratic society that takes equality, justice, shared values and freedom seriously. (Giroux 2011, p. 42)

Giroux's primary focus was on what he called critical democracy and the role of schools in developing it.

> As ethical agencies, it is crucial for schools to link learning to a larger theory of social welfare and cultural democracy. At the very least, this means that educators can work to insert the idea of the public back into schooling and thereby defend their responsibilities as public servants by referencing and critically engaging the principles that shape their view of schooling and society within rather than outside of the principles and practices of a critical democracy. (Giroux 1991, p. 308)

Giroux (2005) critiqued the influence that neoliberal theories have had on society and education: 'The naturalness and common sense appeal of the neoliberal economic order produces a crisis of political and historical imagination, on the one hand, and an educational crisis on the other' (p. 3). He described a culture of positivism – a way of educating students and their educators that privileges instrumentalism and technical rationality for the transmission of the ideologies of dominant groups in society. In this case of neoliberalism, the dominant ideology is maintaining the status quo: students are guided into career paths that maintain the existing social order. There is no room for analysis and critique of power or dominant forces, or how students' identities are shaped by power.

Few teachers today have the opportunity, time or skill to engage in the critique of society and education the way Freire did. Notions of power are mostly ignored or dealt with only desultorily by teachers who are under immense pressure to raise the standards of student achievement. This is especially true in terms of civics and citizenship education, where values like

solidarity and collectivism are gradually being replaced by individualisation. Nikolakai (2014) writes, 'New modes of subjectivity and citizenship are forged through a social mandate to provide for one's survival solely through individual "choice"' (p. 14). Central to this is the replacement of democratic values by market values: 'Values of competition, salesmanship and deception have replaced the democratic ideals of truth and justice' (Beder 2008, p. 18).

Other scholars have written about the instrumentalisation of teachers, and the ideology present in the neoliberal attack on public education (Connell 2013; Darder, Baltodano & Torres 2003; Malu 2009) and their criticisms continue to be valid. Far from the powerful vision of education that Dewey and others proposed in the early 20th century, educators around the world are increasingly pressured to prioritise the attainment of employability targets rather than strengthen active citizenship (Nikolakaki 2014; Sahlberg 2011).

Critical pedagogy is, then, a call for teachers and students to reclaim the discourse of education, to become participants rather than clients or objects, and to question not only how they learn, but also what they are learning and why they are learning it.

> Those who employ critical pedagogy, then, are teachers who drawing on social and critical educational theory and cultural studies, examine schools in their historical context and as part of the existing social and political fabric that characterizes the dominant society. (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell 2008, p. 23)

By undertaking such an examination of society education can empower students to take collective action against perceived injustices and thus work towards transforming their society to make it more equitable. According to Duncan-Andrade and Morrell (2008), 'Genuine pedagogical practice demands a commitment to social transformation in solidarity with subordinated and marginalized group' (p. 23). Justice Pedagogy, as I envision it, is an approach to the teaching of civics and citizenship education that allows teachers and students to engage in just this kind of social transformation.

In the late 1980s and 1990s, influenced by the criticisms of critical pedagogy from feminist and poststructuralist scholars, Giroux broadened his theoretical perspective to include these new fields of cultural studies. In particular, he was trying to legitimise popular culture. Much of his work through this period was in exploring the negative ways the media and popular culture can affect young people, and how young people inhabit these sites and work against dominating powers.

> I have argued for the last few years that pedagogy is about a creation of a public sphere, one that brings people together in a variety of sites to talk, exchange information, listen, feel their desires and expand their capacities for joy, love, solidarity and struggle. (Giroux 1994, p. x)

In discussing the educative potential of media and popular culture, Giroux (1994) wrote, 'Though I do not wish to romanticize popular culture, it is precisely in its diverse spaces and spheres that most of the education that matters today is taking place on a global scale' (p. x). Giroux was building on the work of other media scholars (McLuhan 1994; Hennen & Chomsky 1990) to problematise the powerful role the media plays in shaping young people's perceptions of society, and their roles in it. In particular, he was concerned with the way the media criminalises young people, especially young urban men of colour. Although Giroux's concerns were based on American youth in the 1990s, the construction of identity through media popular culture is perhaps even more relevant to today's world. I discuss this further in Chapter Eight.

I have built upon Giroux's work in the development of *Justice Citizens* and then in the development of Justice Pedagogy. The experiences that *Justice Citizens* values are those I have identified as mostly excluded from schooling. The program specifically seeks to generate conversations that encourage students to make decisions about what they will learn, and what they think is important. This allows the students to become the subjects of their learning, not the objects.

In addition, *Justice Citizens* recognises that students are both creators and consumers of media. In fact, they are actively challenging ideological assumptions as they interact with media and their digital sites become locations of both reproduction and resistance. The growth of new literacies and new technologies is allowing students to colonise digital sites and present stories about what matters to them. Building upon this is an important part of Justice Pedagogy.

7.5 Broadening Critical Pedagogy: Considering Feminism and Race

Critical pedagogy has attracted its fair share of criticism, including from democracy educators Knight and Pearl (2000), who argue that critical pedagogy is not an efficient way of encouraging active citizenship amongst students – an argument firmly rebutted by Denzin (2009b). While much of this criticism is directed at the critical theory roots of critical pedagogy, it is important to

consider that critical pedagogy, and those who practise it, emphasise the way that it has grown and developed to take into account more nuanced understandings of oppression, power and ideology (hooks 1994, 2003). While some of these criticisms are relevant to Justice Pedagogy, it has been in direct response to these criticisms that the newer forms and critical pedagogy (and Justice Pedagogy) were developed.

Some of the strongest criticisms come from a feminist perspective. Critics Elizabeth Ellsworth (1989) and Carmen Luke (1994) identified that the most important voices in the development of critical pedagogy have been male; women have been excluded. Even Paulo Freire was criticised (by bell hooks, among others) for not 'engaging forthrightly with questions of women, anchored within the context of female experience and knowledge construction' (Darder, Baltodano & Torres 2003, p. 15)

These critiques also target the underlying assumptions of rationality that are part of critical pedagogy. Drawing from Marxist philosophy, critical pedagogues often argue that learning is an emancipatory act and a rational process. Within feminist scholarship learning and reasoning are seen as more complicated than this, with a broader frame needed to encapsulate the notion of rationality. Darder, Baltodano and Torres (2003) write:

> Hence, in an effort to challenge the privileging of reason as the ultimate sphere upon which knowledge is constructed, feminists have passionately argued for the inclusion of personal biography, narratives, a rethinking of authority, and an explicit engagement with the historical and political location of the knowing subject – all aspects essential to questioning patriarchy and reconstructing the sexual politics that obstruct the participation of women as full and equal contributing members of society. (2003, p. 14)

In the context of formal educational institutions, which are often dominated at the lower-age school levels by women, these criticisms are valid. Even within mixed-gender schools, teachers can have entrenched sexist tendencies, as evidenced by teachers (both female and male) who take answers from boys first, or who identify students of a particular sex more gifted in certain subjects (for example, see Lee, Marks & Byrd 1994). To be truly critical, a teacher must identify those areas of personal practice that serve to privilege this sexism, and challenge it actively. Thus, in *Justice Citizens* great emphasis is placed by teachers on providing space for all students to share their stories.

Along with Giroux, hooks (1994, 2003) has contributed a great deal to the development of new traditions of critical pedagogy and broadened its perspective to include influences from poststructuralism, feminism and

postmodernism. As a young woman, hooks became greatly concerned about the classed and racialised nature of the feminist movement. In particular, she criticised the notion that all women were united under a common banner, and that all women, black or white, experience oppression in the same way. Instead, she argued that the oppression experienced by black women is different from that experienced by white women, and to ignore the difference served only to entrench racist ideologies. In this way, she challenged the claims of white women who speak for the 'sisterhood', instead arguing that it was necessary for them to unlearn their racism before they could truly work towards emancipation and emancipatory education.

hooks also sought to broaden critical pedagogy; instead of challenging oppression via the vectors of class, she espoused an approach that challenges oppression along the lines of race, gender, sexuality, class and the colonial state. According to Kincheloe (2008, p. 83), 'Her own pedagogy ... is informed by anticolonial, feminist and critical theories'. Education is about empowerment: 'It is about finding and claiming ourselves and our place in the world' (Parker in hooks 2003, p. 43). This notion of claiming a place in the world is clearly derived from critical educators, and she draws freely from Freire to argue that one of the most important tools for any democratic educator is that of conversation. hooks (1994) emphasised the importance of educators valuing all kinds of language and conversation as tools for questioning the existing structures of domination.

> To educate as the practice of freedom is a way of teaching that anyone can learn. That learning process comes easiest to those of us who teach who also believe that there is an aspect of our vocation that is sacred; who believe that our work is not merely to share information but to share in the intellectual and spiritual growth of our students. To teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students is essential if we are to provide the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin (p. 13)

This idea is present in Justice Pedagogy, too. In the *Justice Citizens* program I look for ways to have authentic conversations with students. These conversations are not just based on what I feel is important; students are able to share their ideas and thoughts. This lack of direction from the teacher (I mean that in the sense of not having a specific curriculum to address) provides a space for students to choose their own curriculum. However, this choice of their own curriculum is not always uncritically accepted; it can be – and is – challenged by other participants.

In her work, hooks comments that it is impossible to separate her own pedagogy from that of Freire's; they are inextricably woven together. Also like Freire, hooks remains optimistic about the teaching of youth. When discussing the ways dominant groups have shaped schooling, she contends, '[Young people] are more than ready to break through these ideological barriers to knowing' (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 84).

Importantly, hooks rejects any notions of positionality. Rather than having one's stance dictated by one's race or gender, hooks argues passionately that the cause a person is fighting for, and the methods they employ in that fight, are more important. In this way, it is important to recognise that ending oppression of any form is a mutual enterprise between the oppressed and the oppressors. The role of the teacher in this mutual enterprise is paramount. While acknowledging that service is devalued in current Western culture, hooks positions the act of teaching well as a valuable service, a tool to build community. The importance of community has also been identified by other feminist critical pedagogues (hooks 2003). In contrasting Freire's pedagogy with various feminist pedagogies, Weiler (1991) emphasised the need to build coalitions rather than divisions through conflict.

> It is clear that this kind of pedagogy and exploration of experiences in a society in which privilege and oppression are lived is risky and filled with pain. Such a pedagogy suggests a more complex realization of the Freirean vision of the collective conscientization and struggle against oppression, one which acknowledges different and conflict, but which, like Freire's vision, rests on a belief in the human capacity to feel, to know, and to change. (p. 470)

The criticism about the masculine domination of critical pedagogy has led to another criticism: its mostly white proponents have ignored the voices of scholars of colour. Academics have challenged this one-sidedness, and have 'raised concerns about the failure of critical pedagogy to explicitly treat questions of race, culture or indigeneity as central concerns or from the specific location of racialised and colonised populations' (Darder et al. 2003, p. 15).

Like the issue of gender in the first wave of critical pedagogy, questions of race were largely ignored in favour of arguments about class. Such arguments were seen by other scholars as reductionist because they limited the study of critical pedagogy to European philosophical principles that emphasised class, rather than race, gender or sexuality. Feminist and race scholars have encouraged a different reading of history from the traditional critical theory, Marxist-inspired understandings and insisted that notions of

race and gender should be foregrounded in this reading. Linked to this was the emphasis on empowerment of those groups who had traditionally been marginalised. This has developed into approaches to educational research based on critical race theory. Lynn and Parker (2006) write:

> While calling attention to the inherent racism in qualitative research, [scholars] have offered new visions for how to conduct qualitative research in education that is sensitive to the needs of marginalized communities of color. (p. 270)

7.6 Second- and Third-Generation Critical Pedagogues: New Avenues for Research

The critiques of critical pedagogy outlined in the previous sections have led to the development of new traditions in the field, as described by Flowers and Swan (2016). These include public pedagogies (Sandlin, Schultz & Burdick 2010), Hip Hop music as a pedagogical tool (Horton, Byker & Heggart 2017), digital critical pedagogy (Stommel 2014), and the ways that youth and popular culture might be integrated more effectively into traditional classroom and schooling structures. Regarding the latter, Ernest Morrell and Jeffrey Duncan-Andrade have built on the engagement with post discourses identified by Kincheloe (2008) and others, and brought renewed enthusiasm to exploring how power and domination interact within schools and educational institutions. In particular, they have examined the intersections of youth, poverty, race and education within urban schools in the USA, and developed a critical pedagogy that seeks to address the inequality present in the school systems there (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell 2008; Morrell 2002; Morrell 2005;). In some ways, the critical pedagogy of Morrell and Duncan-Andrade is the forerunner of Justice Pedagogy, both responding to the older forms of critical pedagogy of Giroux and McLaren and focussing on radical notions of collective action for justice.

In a commentary that is more explicit than those of other critical pedagogues, Duncan-Andrade and Morrell (2008) argue that the American school system is not broken – a criticism often levelled at public institutions of education due to the high drop-out rates of students of colour, and from urban areas. Rather, urban schools are achieving exactly what they are intended to do: they are creating an underclass of individuals who are disempowered and incapable of acting in any collective way to gain their place in an equitable and democratic society. In essence, American schools act as a de facto sorting

mechanism, ensuring that the status quo is maintained and dominant interests remain in power.

Influenced by Giroux, among others, Duncan-Andrade and Morrell (2008) argue that part of the solution to this issue is that teachers need to engage their students in the learning process more effectively, and one way to do this is to make more use of popular culture. Morrell (2002) also suggests that as the diversity of the school population increases it will become increasingly difficult to find critical and academic texts that speak to all students. Instead, new techniques will be needed, one of which might be the critical teaching of popular culture texts. 'Popular culture can help students deconstruct dominant narratives and contend with oppressive practices in hopes of achieving a more egalitarian and inclusive society' (p. 72).

In line with this recommendation, Morrell and Duncan-Andrade (2008) explored the use of Hip-Hop culture as the content for the delivery of critical pedagogy courses in which young people learn to identify and then overcome the challenges preventing them from becoming successful in school and then later in life. They found that by encouraging these young people to see themselves as knowledgeable about certain aspects of their lives such as Hip-Hop – and that these aspects are as important as the more common content they might learn at school – the students are more likely to gain a measure of control over their lives.

Morrell and Duncan-Andrade's work has much in common with public pedagogical approaches to critical citizenship education. Although public pedagogies are often concerned with non-formal educational institutions and domains, they share similar aims. For example, Tavin (2010), discussing the role of art educators in public pedagogy, writes:

> Critical citizens are individuals who are self-reflexive – setting themselves and their world in question – and have a deep concern for the lives of others. Teaching about and critically learning through public pedagogy offers opportunities to work toward critical citizenship, where students see themselves as agents of change. (p. 435)

Another example of using popular culture is Denzin's work on critical performance studies. Embracing postmodernism, Denzin argues that performance ethnography is a valuable tool for educational researchers seeking to explore questions of race, class, gender and more in the 21st century. He describes a paradigm of performance that 'views performance as a form of activism, as critique, as critical citizenship. It seeks a form of performative

praxis that inspires and empowers persons to act on their utopian impulses' (Denzin 2014, p. 236).

The incorporation of popular culture is central to Justice Pedagogy, and hence my *Justice Citizens* program. Justice Pedagogy asserts that educational institutions should allow young people to alter their sense of their own identity; that is, instead of being simply depositories for other people's knowledge, young people involved in Justice Pedagogy see themselves as possessors of knowledge about themselves, their lives and their culture. This knowledge (and the change in self that comes with this recognition) therefore becomes the stimulus for their empowerment and their ability to work collectively to challenge injustices.

7.7 Informing Justice Pedagogy

Although this chapter is a brief description of the central concepts of critical pedagogy, it is important to the following: as critical pedagogy comes to terms with the roles that gender and race play in education, and also better understands the ways power, the media and popular culture influence society, newer traditions of critical pedagogy are emerging. One of these is Justice Pedagogy. As I discuss in this chapter, Justice Pedagogy is not a strict application of Freirean critical pedagogy; rather, it is part of this lineage of critical pedagogies, and sits alongside others like popular pedagogy, critical race pedagogy and Hip Hop pedagogy. It is inspired by the ideas behind critical pedagogy and has co-opted these ideas and strategies in order to generate a new paradigm specifically related to the development of civics and citizenship education.

CHAPTER 8: CHANGING TIMES, CHANGING LITERACIES

8.1 Introduction

'Literacy' is often used in conjunction with active citizenship (see, for example, Arthur, Davison and Stow 2014; Lo Bianco 1998; Stromquist 1997), but, like 'active citizenship', it is a term that has long been contested. This chapter engages with these contestations. I begin by tracing the historical contours of how the term literacy has been deployed; from the outset it has been linked to the ways power is exerted by dominant groups within society. The next section examines the growing but poorly documented pressure for the development of 'critical literacy' and critical thinking amongst young people, as well as how terms like media and digital literacy have become prevalent in the public sphere. I then introduce ideas relating to the public sphere and argue for the importance of young people becoming literate in order to participate in this space. Finally, I explain how these terms are related to the *Justice Citizens* program and to Justice Pedagogy.

8.2 New and Old Meanings of Literacy

During the *Justice Citizens* program, the students and teachers often discussed the meaning of the term literacy. Although at the start of the program the students often used the term narrowly and interchangeably with English (as in their English language classes), they developed a more expansive and nuanced understanding of the term by the end of the program, and began to speak about it in terms of being able to do certain things. In the case of *Justice Citizens,* this was generally related to technical matters, like being able to make a film or interact on a website but, as I will demonstrate in Chapter Nine, there were also links to a critical literacy, namely, the understanding how the media shapes peoples' opinions. Students began to speak about being more critically literate when analysing the media; their comments suggested that they were using new meanings of the word literacy and were conscious of how the term is linked to empowerment, as well as specific technical skills.

These discussions inspired my own thoughts about what it means to be a justice-oriented citizen and how the various forms of literacy inform

citizenship. I examined policy development and scholarship that focus on the development of the various kinds of literacy needed for participation in civic society. Any analysis of young peoples' development and participation requires an exploration of what these literacies mean, and how young people develop them as part of a wider understanding of the development of active citizenship. This chapter discusses these ideas in more detail.

It is important that teachers and policy makers pay attention to the complex socio-political connotations related to the 'literacy', the traditional meaning of which is restricted to the acquisition of skills involved in writing and reading; that is to say, for example, if one can read or write English then one is seen as literate. However, it is important to remember that literacy – and the determination of who is literate – is related to the influence of the dominant groups in society. For example, despite some being able to read and write in English, peasants in the UK were not considered to be 'literate' by the French-speaking aristocracy during the middle ages (Szarmach 2017). This is important because, although the divisions between social classes today are not as stark, there are still specific meanings of the word literacy that relate directly to the knowledges that are privileged by dominant and oppressing groups; conversely, there are knowledges possessed by oppressed groups that are not privileged (for more on this, see Luke 1989). This is something that teachers today will be familiar with: there is more than one idiom of English language and literacy, and different kinds of English present in their classrooms, yet teachers are required to teach the dominant version, thus ignoring others. Peter Freebody (1992) has explored literacy through a socio-cultural lens in the four resources model. As an example of the socio-cultural elements of literacy learning, one might look at the growing literature around Hip Hop pedagogy, mentioned in Chapter Seven (Morrell & Duncan-Andrade 2002). This was particularly evident in a course I taught on Hip Hop, which exposed me to the challenging ways that young people were using English to shape meaning in forms unknown in traditional English lessons (Horton, Byker & Heggart 2017).

With the continuing development of new media, educators have expressed interested in whether individuals should be required to become literate in them (Hobbs 2010). Researchers have attempted to describe the new skills and understandings related to these emerging literacies using terms like media literacy (Livingstone 2004), digital literacy (Buckingham 2008), film

literacy (Blum-Ross 2012) and so on. These terms suggest there is a new 'language' to be learnt and, by implication, a privileging of its users and a marginalisation of those unable to access it. Of course, there is no actual language to be learnt; rather, there is an idea of these literacies encompassing skills, knowledges and cultural assumptions about behaviour.

These new terms (film literacy, media literacy, digital literacy, etc.) are often conflated (Federov 2003), referring as they do to a subset of skills required for working with particular forms of communication. There are arguments about whether this should be the case and whether they can adequately encompass the knowledge required (Johnson, Smith & Haywood 2010; Blum-Ross 2012). For instance, digital literacy is often linked or confused with the notion of digital citizenship (Mihailidis & Thevenin 2013) the act of behaving in the online world according to agreed-upon rules of etiquette, which itself is troubling for a range of other reasons I will outline shortly.

Technical definitions of digital literacy (that is, being able to do something as suggested by Adams and Hamm 2001) are too narrow for two reasons. First, they don't engage fully with the different forms of communication that are available to young people. The skills needed to create and publish a film are not the same as those needed to post an update on a blog, for example, but that is essentially what is being argued by those who hold to this definition as explored by Town (2003). Second, it implies the use of a particular medium of communication, when in fact the development of literacy is more complex and involves an understanding of societal and cultural norms that is often overlooked in technical definitions.

Becoming literate is linked to social mobility. This is recognised in those definitions of literacy that have as their underlying aim the desire for empowerment among those people who become literate (Giroux 1988a; Morrell 2004): if literacy is purely a skill, like automotive engine repair or flower arranging, then it does not necessarily follow that gaining it will lead to empowerment. However, that is precisely the argument about both the old form of literacy (language acquisition) and the new (digital, film and media literacy). Interestingly, the nature of the empowerment and the exact mechanism of the empowerment are often unclear (Buckingham 2008). One should not assume that simply acquiring the skills is universally empowering; the digital space is a significantly contested one, and becoming more literate can

equally serve the reproduction of longstanding dominant and subordinate relationships (Giroux 1992).

Freire, whose work was discussed in Chapter Seven, was aware of the link between literacy and empowerment, and it was this connection that formed the basis of much of his work in Brazil (and, ultimately, led to his imprisonment). Freire was writing about the more traditional forms of literacy – reading and writing in language – but as described above, these notions of empowerment are often present in more modern forms of literacy, too.

Later in this chapter I will reflect more on the relevance of the term literacy to the *Justice Citizens* program. Literacy was regularly used both in terms of acquiring new skills, as in digital or media literacy, and to describe the acquisition of new types and levels of consciousness by students, as they learned to 'read the world' as well as the 'read the word'. In particular, students became much more astute readers of the ways the media presented information to them. My analyses of how the media shaped the students' opinions, and how they learned to reflect on it, are discussed in Chapter Nine.

8.3 Beyond Academic Literacy: Recognising Popular Culture

As mentioned in Chapter Seven, Ernest Morrell and Geoffrey Duncan-Andrade have written widely about the use of popular cultures (particularly Hip Hop) to engage and educate students. They argue that US society is continuing to diversify, not just in terms of race and ethnicity, but also in terms of the many sub-cultures defined by tastes in music, fashion, cars and other things. One of the challenges faced by educators, therefore, is finding ways to recognise and understand the terrain of popular cultures and develop curriculum and teaching practices from it. Successful teaching, they say, is dependent upon teachers learning to use texts that are accessible by as many students as possible. However, there are difficulties in finding academic texts that meet this need because of the diversity present in society. Some school systems have opted for so-called 'multi-cultural education texts' that try to bridge the gaps between different cultural groups, but Morrell and Duncan-Andrade (2002) criticise these texts as being of limited use in mainstream classrooms.

In order to meet this challenge, Morrell and Duncan-Andrade argue that, rather than searching for suitable academic texts, teachers should instead

educate students to develop critical literacy about popular culture. However, Morrell and Duncan-Andrade (2002) have an explicit political motive in recommending this; it is not simply about becoming better readers and writers. Instead, like Freire before them, the ultimate goal of developing this critical literacy is the development of empowered young people. According to Morrell (2005), 'Popular culture can help students deconstruct dominant narratives and contend with oppressive practices in hopes of achieving a more egalitarian and inclusive society' (p. 72).

Morrell's ideas draw heavily on the idea that literacy is affected by social context, and that a student's failure to exhibit literacy in a particular form is not necessarily a failure of intelligence on the part of the student but instead reflects the student's inability to access and comprehend the culture of the dominant group. This links the notion of literacy with that of power, and the development of literacy and its attendant skills is therefore, at least partly, dependent upon the social class of those who are learning. As mentioned earlier, it is the dominant groups in society that identify what is meant by literacy. One example of this is the insistence upon students learning to speak and write 'Standard' English as part of the National Curriculum in England: 'Pupils should be taught to control their speaking and writing consciously and to use Standard English' (Department of Education 2013).

Students who speak standard English at home will almost certainly be judged as more literate than those who speak another dialect, or even another language, in their homes. Regarding the different English dialects, the Department of Education (2013) in England has stated that this so-called 'standard' English is the correct version, and a student's academic career therefore hinges upon how well they can adopt the patterns of this 'correct' English, as opposed to other kinds of English they might have been exposed to, and be 'literate' in.

This notion of power mediating the development of literacy is important, particularly when considering new literacies, like film, media, TV or online literacy. Deciding about what constitutes valuable literacies is, of course, an exercise in power, and has requisite impacts upon students. For example, one might consider why it is important that secondary school students are required to read and write text extensively while they have fewer opportunities to view and create films. Although this has gradually been changing with the advent of

the Australian Curriculum (ACARA 2017), there is still a preponderance towards assessment that is based on reading and writing, which clearly places a value on these over other forms of expression.

Morrell (2002) recognises this conundrum. Instead of assessments being made about whether students are literate or not, Morrell argues that most students are literate; it's just that they may not be literate in the ways recognised by the dominant powers. Teachers need to start recognising these new forms of literacy and find ways of binding them together. As an example, Morrell presents the way that academic literacy, which is required in school and can be understood as the methods used to engage with academic texts, can be linked with more popular literacies that allow students to interpret popular culture. He recommends students develop critical literacy, which he defines as reading and writing that allows students to understand the relationships of power and domination that exist in their cultures.

The evaluation of critical literacy is complex. Buckingham (2010) writes: 'Critical evaluation rests on a substantial body of knowledge regarding the broader social, cultural, economic, political and historical contexts' (p. 6). In any analysis of literacies, it is vital to consider the dominant ideologies involved in their development. As part of *Justice Citizens*, therefore, I sought to go beyond narrow notions of academic literacy and challenge the notion that students are 'illiterate' because they don't read or write at a standard we teachers may expect of them. Instead, I provided opportunities for young people to demonstrate their cultural literacies in film and media and to deconstruct the ways the media presents them as young people.

8.4 Media Literacy for Employability and Active Citizenship

The desire for an ICT-literate population has influenced policy makers in Australia and other countries where school students are required to gain skills that prepare them for a workforce dominated by the use of ICT. An example of this is the inclusion of an ICT General Capability in the Australian Curriculum (ACARA 2017). Similarly, the public is coming to terms with what a literate population might look like. Since the late 1990s, media literacy has been the subject of renewed debate on two fronts. First, there has been discussion about whether literacy is the appropriate term to define the ways students (and indeed, all people) interact with media; and second, there are unresolved

questions about what is meant by the term 'media', and how this term relates to resources like film, television, social media, and the internet generally.

Central to these issues is what it means to read. Previously, one could only 'read' written material – books, newspapers and so on (although, one could argue that other ways of conveying meaning, such as artworks and buildings, could be 'read', too). Discussion now extends to audio-visual material, and whether students can learn to 'read' these materials as they might read written texts. The New London Group (1994) used the term multiliteracies to describe increased multimodality in contemporary literacy practices. From a critical perspective, debate about the appropriateness of the term 'literacy' revolves around differences between the older and newer uses of it. Livingstone (2004) writes:

> History tells us that the narrow and common sense meaning of the term "literacy" – being able to read and write – masks a complex history of contestation over the power and authority to access, interpret and produce printed texts. (p. 4)

This is in keeping with the ideas expressed by Morrell (2005), mentioned earlier: literacy is as much about social context and oppression as the gaining of skills. In contrast to when literacy was understood as reading and writing texts, its use in an increasing range of contexts has led to a vagueness of meaning. According to Livingstone (2004), with the advent of audio-visual domination, communication scholars began to speak about reception and interpretation, but we are reverting to talking about 'reading' now. Livingstone suggests this is because media is now socially diversified and accessible in various formats, by disparate groups, in different ways. She writes: 'People now engage with a media environment which integrates print, AV, telephony and computer media' (p. 5). Since 2004, when Livingstone was writing, the profusion of media formats has grown exponentially.

There is another possible reason for this renewed talk about 'reading': the increased popularity of the term since the work of Freire and other critical pedagogues. Freire (1970) placed a great deal of emphasis on students learning to 'read the word and read the world'. While talking partly about basic literacy skills, he was urging students to learn to understand not only how dominant groups oppress lower classes but also the role of media in this process.

Livingstone (2004) identifies that texts are increasingly based on the use of ICT and gives examples of new literacies, labelling them computer, cyber, internet, network, digital and information literacies. Even 'old' media, like

books, are increasingly becoming part of the digital world through e-readers. Livingstone gives other examples of the old literacies: print, audio-visual, visual, oral, social, cultural and critical. It is interesting that Livingstone places critical, as well as social and cultural literacies, in the old literacy category. This is troubling, especially as she discusses later in the text the way one's use of these technologies is mediated by the social and cultural context. Do we no longer need these seven 'old' literacies? To my mind, they remain as vital as ever.

Livingstone (2004) recommends that rather than trying to define these various types of literacy, it is more efficient to categorise them all as one kind of literacy: media literacy. Livingstone acknowledges that there is a wide variety of definitions of media literacy, from the tautological to the idealistic, but she proposes the following definition: 'Media literacy is the ability to access, analyse, evaluate and create messages in a variety of forms' (p. 5).

However, Livingstone (2004) acknowledges that this definition does 'constitute a skill-based approach to media literacy' (p. 6) and that each skill learnt in this way supports other skills. The acquisition of these skills, and hence media literacy, is a non-linear, dynamic process, central to which are three key categories. First, media literacy is dependent upon access, which is more than simply the provision of hardware. For example, while having suitable access to the internet, increases the use of the internet, the relationship between the two is more complex: 'The social context frames and directs the nature of engagement and learning' (p. 6).

The second category is analysis and the analytical skills required to interrogate and decode visual media. I would include in these skills the specific cultural and social knowledges required to decode these kinds of texts. For example, the rapid growth of internet memes are examples of online texts that refer to people, social mores and other memes to generate humorous effect; there is more taking place in the mind of the viewer than simply reading the text on the screen.

Finally, there is the notion of evaluation as a part of media literacy. According to Livingstone (2004), this is the pinnacle of becoming literate, and requires an understanding of three features: the way knowledge is represented in the media; the way we interpret this knowledge; and the way access and power intermingle in the development of literacy. Livingstone concludes:

> Crucially, however, it is the relationship among textuality, competence and power that sets those who see literacy as democratising and empowering of ordinary people against those who see it as elitist, divisive and a source of inequality. (p. 12)

8.5 Digital Literacy

The boundaries between digital and media literacy are blurry; Buckingham (2008) argues that the term 'literacy' itself has been extended too far, resulting in simply a 'vague synonym of competence' (p. 76). Addressing the nature of media literacy, Buckingham reminds readers that media, in and of itself, is hardly a new concept in classrooms, and all the past arguments about the educational use of television, or even overhead projectors, are relevant when applied to newer media. Before students can be educated through or with media, they must firstly be educated about the media and the role that it plays in today's society. He cautions: '[The media] is not simply a neutral means of delivering information, and we should not teach students to use them in a merely functional or instrumental way' (p. 73). This caution is supported by scholars such as Gauntlett (2011, 2015), who argue that new media presents opportunities for grassroots authorship and more communication between groups and individuals without corporate interest. In *Justice Citizens,* students were encouraged to use new media in precisely this way, sharing their films widely via tools like YouTube.

The uncritical approach leaves consumers of the media ill-equipped to understand how it might be influencing their decisions. As mentioned earlier, the requirement for a critical education *about* the media precedes the requirement for education *by* the new, or even old, media. Linked to this notion of critical engagement with the media, Buckingham (2008) also identifies a convergence between different forms of media. This has two important meanings. The first is the idea of the different kinds of media gradually being subsumed into one overarching media. Even as recently as the late 20th century, print media was distinct from online or film media. Since then, these forms of media have been gradually approaching each other. Some futurists already envision a world where print books will be obsolete, and all media will be interactive (see, for example, Staley 2012).

Second meaning relates to the progressive blurring of the purposes of different forms of media. On television, for example, informational and educational programs are increasingly being branded as 'infotainment'; it's not

enough for them to inform the viewers, but they must also entertain them. By contrast, school teachers must consider the choices they make when teaching literacy. For example, English teachers have to consider not only how to teach students to engage with texts in a critical way (this is traditional critical literacy), but also whether and how to enable students to be critical readers as well as activists who create media to change public opinion or encourage action.

Buckingham (2008) reports that, despite the emphasis given to these new literacies, some academics argue that they are not worthy of study because, in essence, they are not on the same level as the other literacies. He gives examples of definitions of digital literacy that seem to emphasise its skill-based nature while ignoring the symbolic or contextual nature of literacy as a whole. Buckingham warns against definitions of digital literacy that are 'minimum sets of skills', or are assessed through checklists. Instead, he urges educators to provide students with a means of understanding their digital experiences. This, he argues, is the function of digital literacy. After all, 'outside school, children are engaging with these media, not as technologies, but as cultural forms' (p. 74).

Absent from Buckingham's discussion is an understanding of the role of students as creators, not just consumers. The advent of new media was heralded by scholars such as Abramson, Arterton and Orren (1988) and Rheingold (1995) as potentially emancipatory due to the opportunity for individuals to create their own content. This was a significant departure from previous understandings of the 'new literacies', which would have film, television and even digital literacy restricted in their access and only 'consumed'; that is, the audience was not able of creating objects of their own in these media forms. However, with the advent of cheaper film software and hardware, Web 2.0 technologies and sharing resources like YouTube, every consumer is now potentially a creator. Young people especially are creating and sharing content in ways that were never before possible (Bruns 2008; Jenkins 2006; Leadbeater 2007).

It is interesting to ask why YouTube has remained so popular, and in what ways are young people interacting with the films uploaded to that site. On a broader scale, do similar examples of content creation from students

demonstrate a growing understanding of what it means to be literate in the 21st century? In addition, do these interactions show evidence of critical literacy?

8.6 Combining Digital and Media Literacy

There have been attempts to encourage a more critical understanding of what it means to be digitally and media literate. Hobbs (2010) recognises the urgent nature of this task: 'People need the ability to access, analyse and engage in critical thinking about the array of messages they receive and send in order to make informed decisions (p. vii). Hobbs is aware that young people are creating and sending messages, as well as receiving them. This makes the domain of media and digital literacy a site of contestation, power and resistance. It is at such a site that I place *Justice Citizens*. My plan has been to enable young people, via the mechanism of civics and citizenship education, to learn to be activist authors, editors and filmmakers about topics they feel are important.

Hobbs (2010) also suggests that for participation to be meaningful it should rely upon both the creation and consumption of messages; people need to understand how to allocate attention to high-quality messages. As well, for Hobbs there is no real point in trying to define media, film and digital literacy as separate from each other. She quotes Horton: 'The boundaries between the various members of this family overlap but they should be seen as a close-knit family' (Horton 2007, in Hobbs 2010, p. 17). Hobbs (2010) says educators should instead speak about digital and media literacy as a whole, as a

> constellation of life skills necessary for full participation in society [that] include: the ability to make responsible choices and access information; the ability to analyse messages in a variety of forms; the ability to create content in a variety of forms, and reflect on one's own content and also the ability to take social action, either individually or collaboratively. (2010, p. 16)

In contrast to other definitions of digital or media literacy, Hobbs (2010) includes a foundation of research skills and elements of critical analysis in this literacy:

> When people have digital and media literacy competencies, they can recognise personal, corporate and political agendas, and are empowered to speak out on behalf of the missing voices and omitted perspectives in our communities. (p. 17)

Hobbs calls this a spiral of empowerment, where people take part in a cyclical process of Accessing, Analysing and Evaluating, Creating, Reflecting and Acting (2010, p. 18).

There are links here between techno-optimistic definitions of digital and media literacy, such as those outlined above, and Freire's notions of critical consciousness. Centrally, both processes are about empowerment and coming to 'read the world'. Freire advocated basic literacy skills for illiterate peasants in Brazil so that they might attain an understanding of how to control their world, and engage in it as equals, rather than being oppressed by other interests. For Hobbs, students and young people need to develop a new literacy of the media and the online world in order to identify bias and influence and then work out ways to counteract them. At the core of both Freire's and Hobbs's visions of literacy is the idea of engaging with dominant forces in order to create a more just society.

It is also worth mentioning the current tendency to subvert the term digital citizenship. It is quite common to hear educators calling on students to learn to be good 'digital citizens', but I see this as a troubling development. For the most part, like digital literacy, the term 'digital citizen' has come to mean simply a set of accepted behaviours and practices related to a student's online presence. For example, a good digital citizen will keep personal data private and safe on the internet; not use images or music without appropriate permissions; and not engage in trolling. While such skills and values are important, they are only a part of what 'citizenship' might mean. Again, like digital literacy, they represent a checklist of ways to act rather than a deep understanding of how citizens should participate in a modern democratic nation.

8.7 Civic Actors and the Public Sphere: Becoming Literate in this Space

Considering the focus of my research is active citizenship education, it is germane to discuss the notion of the public sphere (Habermas 1989), especially in terms of its relation to digital media and youth. As will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter, scholars like Zuckerman (2014) have recognised that, in order to become active citizens (or civic actors, as he describes them), young people need to be literate in the ways of the digital public sphere. An effective civics and citizenship education must pay attention to how young people can develop the new and different skills and knowledges required for this literacy.

Habermas (1989) advanced the idea of a public sphere as a conceptual space that allows for the promotion of rational discourse in order to shape

public opinion and ultimately the actions of government. To be effective for the development of active citizens, the public sphere requires three criteria: the social status of the participants is to be disregarded; the topics discussed are to be common causes to all involved: and the level of discussion is to be such that it is accessible to all. Caban (2012) writes:

> According to Habermas, this bourgeois public sphere contributed to the creation of a more able and active citizenry that was ultimately empowered to shape the political contours of the nation-state. (p. 46)

There have been concerns raised about Habermas's conception of the public sphere, especially his blindness to the role played by economic influence and the privileging of the academic elite (Iosifidis 2011; Mahlouly 2013). Curran (1991) also identified that, far from being sites of reasoned discourse, newspapers (in their role as central to the development of a public sphere) were often used for the propaganda campaigns of the bourgeoisie rather than any measured approach to discourse and shaping of public opinion. Mahlouly (2013) has also identified elements of elitism in the supposedly egalitarian public sphere and that the public sphere of Habermas' conception was, in reality, a bourgeois sphere that provided a way for the videos of the highly educated social classes to be normalised. Central to this process, she argues, is the evolution of the press, which both stimulated rational discussion and enhanced the idea of the public good and at the same time provided the opportunity for intellectual leaders to be heard by the broader range of the population. Fuchs (2014) has also critiqued Habermas's notion of the public sphere from postmodern and cultural imperialism perspectives. While it is important to acknowledge these weaknesses (which are instructive because they inform current debates about the public sphere in the digital age), the public sphere remains a useful analytical tool to consider public interaction in the digital age.

Other scholars have also conceptualised the public sphere. McLuhan (1994), for example, identified one of its key features when he wrote in the 1960s about a 'global village' where everyone in the world could be connected with each other. This idea has been picked up by Kellner (2014), who suggests that the new technologies mean it is now possible to have a global public space, where public opinion can be formed at a transnational level. Iosfidis (2011) writes: 'In theory, this open, free and decentralized space could create the conditions for ideal speech and enhance the ability to voice one's opinion and

organize collective action (the very notion of democracy)' (p. 626). Iosifidis has also describes the influence of technology and globalisation on the public sphere:

> The space for public discourse and the formation of public opinion increasingly take place at a transnational context that crosses national boundaries. It has been put forward that new technologies have allowed the formation of a transnational or global public sphere as a forum for political discussion. (p. 623)

Central to this idea of a global public sphere is what Boeder (2005) has described as computer-mediated communication, a form of communication that has replaced the coffee house as the central place for public sphere discourse. This communication is composed of the internet, and specifically transnational online communities. The new technologies of the internet and social media have led to the emergence of a networked public sphere (Benkler 2006) and sharing sites like YouTube are themselves a cultural public sphere, where citizens can observe different cultures (Burgess & Green 2009). Loader (2014) suggests that the limited access to participation in the traditional public sphere, which has become dominated by large media companies, has driven young people to other modes of participation:

> Faced with an impoverished public sphere that all too often restricts the pluralistic expression of diverse interests, and instead favours the voices of the most powerful groups in their societies, many young citizens have sought alternative digital channels to find expression for their discontent. In this way, social media become the communicative tool of choice for many young citizens to express their indignation and sense of outrage at their bequeathed plight. (para. 5)

In addition to a level of transnationality, Mahlouly (2013) also argues that one of the key differences between previous conceptions of the public sphere and thes one that now exists, is that an online public sphere provides all citizens, rather than only the well-connected elite, with opportunities to express themselves publicly. Flichy (2010), speaking specifically about Web 2.0, notes that the internet allows amateurs to contribute, find an audience and even confront different opinions while not being subject to any form of editing, control or gatekeeping.

Doubts have also been raised about the value of social media and the digital public sphere as a tool for enlivening public discourse and shaping public opinion. Flichy (2010), for example, has suggested that online political engagement, for example, is much less likely to be ongoing and sustainable because it is hard for it to engender a sense of community. Gladwell (2010) has similarly argued that the weak ties that develop between users of social media

might be useful for new sources of information and ideas, but they do not equate to the forms of physical activism that require participants to confront entrenched norms and practices.

Fuchs (2014) is more strident in his criticism: those in the techno-optimist camp have ignored the political economy of the public sphere. He suggests that such scholars have not considered notions of power and ownership, and he calls for a return to Habermas's 'critical political economy as a foundation for the analysis of social media' (p. 58). Fuchs also critiques the digital public sphere for being too partisan and isolating, and therefore of limited utility. He is concerned that of the lack of rationality in the public sphere means that it will not lead to any meaningful change. Furthermore, because the internet is open to amateurs, it can be subject to both errors and deliberate misinformation (what has since come to be known as 'fake news').

This does not mean that the digital public sphere is beyond hope. Rather, I believe part of the solution lies in developing critical literacy approaches to 'reading' in the public sphere; civics and citizenship education programs need to educate young people away from the uncritical 'like' or 'retweet' functionality, and towards a more thoughtful examination of the material presented. This can be the first step in the development of cyber-activism: by deciding not to share information that is false or misleading, or by speaking out against it (via comments, for example), young people are challenging misinformation and oppression. The interactive nature of Web 2.0 allows them to step beyond the kind of critical literacy that has been practised in the past.

Having discussed new meanings of media and digital literacy, and notions of critical literacy, I now wish to combine these with ideas about how the public sphere in the digital age might inform understandings of young people's development as active citizens. I am particularly interested in exploring what this might mean for the education of young people about new media if they are to become active citizens. Kellner (1997) made this clear many years ago: 'Active citizens … need to acquire new forms of technological literacy to intervene in the new public spheres of the media and information society (p. 42).

While there is now a range of ideas about what young people should learn about and do if they are to participate in the new media space, ideas about what is being classified as 'digital citizenship' are limited. Simply staying safe

and private online ignores research (for example, boyd 2014) on the conscious choices young people make about their interactions with each other in the public sphere. This is not citizenship as I would describe it; rather than taking part in any kind of democratic space or public sphere, this is merely a set of codified behaviours aimed at minimising the risk young people might face on the internet. In and of itself, this is an admirable goal, but I believe digital citizenship education really should be more than simply a code of conduct.

Those programs that do attempt to engage with more activist notions of citizenship education are based on an informed citizen model of democratic engagement. Zuckerman (2014) defines and then critiques this model:

> In this model, your role as a citizen is to understand the political process and the issues of the day, and to participate through voting for representatives, voting on legislation through referenda, and contacting your representative when you're concerned about an issue, whether local or global. (p. 155)

Zuckerman notes that the fairly recent development of this idea of an informed citizen correlates sharply with a drop in participation in the political process. Schudson (1998) has suggested that, at this time, we were experiencing a type of rights-based citizenship, which tries to enforce change through the judicial system. Keane (2009), by contrast, suggests that we are now living in a post-representative democracy that is developing a monitorial citizenry. Zuckerman (2014), however, rejects these notions in favour of 'participatory civics' (p. 156), which is not to be confused with 'the participatory citizen' (Westheimer & Kahne 2004) discussed in Chapter Six. For Zuckerman (2014), participatory civics

> refers to forms of civic engagement that use digital media as a core component and embrace a post-'informed citizen' model of civic participation. One of the characteristics of this version of civics is an interest – perhaps a need – for participants to see their impact on the issues they're trying to influence. (p. 156)

Young people who have grown up on a diet of participatory media are used to sharing their views with their peers and the wider world. Zuckerman (2014) suggests that this habit has shaped how they might participate, citing micro-financing initiatives like *Kiva* or crowdfunding sites like *Kickstarter* as examples. These approaches tend to be driven by specific passions, rather than linkages with organisations or social groupings, which means they often ignore traditional political parties or political lines and are unlikely to bring about social change. Zuckerman notes:

> A public sphere built of passionate, self-interested people will likely have problems coming together to deliberate possible solutions, and may not even be able to agree on what issues are worth considering (p. 157).

There is some evidence, however, that such approaches do work, at least in part, particularly when combined with physical actions (Earl & Kimport 2011; Oladepo 2016).

In order to conceptualise the development of activism in young people though civics education, Zuckerman (2014) suggests we think of participatory civics as two intersecting axes: from thin to thick civics on one axis, and from instrumentality to a focus on voice on the other. In this context, thin refers to forms of engagement that require predetermined actions, for example, signing a petition, going to a protest march, and changing your Facebook profile picture to indicate support for a cause. Thick engagement requires more organising and planning, as well as more networking. Instrumentality refers to engagement that has a specific theory of change. Examples might be changing the law to allow for marriage equality, or for presenting a petition with 50,000 signatures to a member of parliament. Voice, on the other end of this scale, is more complicated and refers to when people express their dissatisfaction with the current state of affairs in the hopes of enacting social change. For Zuckerman, voice is an essential part of the process of becoming an active citizen:

> It's likely that voice is an important path to civic engagement even when we are not directly advocating a policy or norms change. Voice may be the first step toward engagement in instrumental civics. We use voice to identify with a movement before taking more instrumental steps, whether this involves coming out as a DREAMer, or identifying as an ally by turning our Facebook icon pink. (p. 162)

8.8 Relevance of these terms to Justice Citizens and Justice Pedagogy

Zuckerman's (2014) work is a persuasive depiction of how young people learn to become active citizens. Such an approach fits well with the framework of minimal and maximal citizenship education proposed by McLaughlin (1992) and discussed in Chapter Six. More maximal approaches to citizenship education have much in common with developing voice among young people, and this is where I would locate the *Justice Citizens* project. This project sought to provide young people with both the skills and the directions to share their opinions about topics that were of importance to them. It had a limited focus on instrumental approaches to civics and citizenship education; making a film, for example, was not likely to lead to legislative changes but the participants were

trying to develop their voice in order to effect public opinion by presenting their films in the public sphere. This public sphere was composed of two domains: the physical domain, which is the film festival in which the films were shown and members of the local community were invited to participate in; and the online space, where the films were shared via YouTube and other social media channels.

The notions of digital and critical literacy within the public sphere are essential to the *Justice Citizens* project. It was my intention when developing the program that as students began to make their films, they would develop some understanding of digital and media literacy. Even more importantly, they would begin to critically consider the information they consume within the public sphere and how they might work to challenge incorrect or misleading narratives. *Justice Citizens* would assist them to become both critical consumers and creators of digital content. Of course, the students will have had previous knowledge of digital and media literacy and be already developing a critical faculty.

Drawing on Hobbs (2010) and Buckingham (2008), I combined the terms media and digital literacy into the term digital literacy in *Justice Citizens*. This was because students would be engaging with digital media on a daily basis, and accessing and creating a wide variety of content over the course of the project. They would be blogging regularly, watching and making films, viewing websites and posting content in an online collaborative environment. It seemed inadequate to arbitrarily divide their experiences into digital, media or film literacies, especially when these (and others, besides) are combined together. It makes more sense to speak of a single literacy that encompasses all of these literacies. For example, which literacy – film, digital or media – is a student employing when logging into a YouTube account, posting a film they made, and then moderating comments left about previous films?

However, the purpose of *Justice Citizens* was to develop a critical literacy amongst students. I distinguish this from digital literacy because foregrounding the students' engagement with dominant groups is central to the *Justice Citizens* project, rather than simply describing the new technical skills they might develop. The first stage of *Justice Citizens* was to develop an understanding of the media. Young people's engagement with the media is of special interest because of the increasing amount of screen time they spend, including double

screen time (where students are engaging with two different media at the same time, for example, tweeting about a TV show while watching that TV show). But this has been documented extensively elsewhere (Buckingham & Willet 2013; Loader, Vromen & Xenos 2014) and it is not my intention to discuss it at any length in this thesis. Rather, I wanted the *Justice Citizens* participants to develop a more complete understanding of media and the purposes of the texts they engage with. The emphasis was on technical aspects of media, such as the differences between films and newspaper articles, and the best ways to present information.

The second stage of *Justice Citizens* was to develop a level of skill as a creator, rather than simply a consumer of media. In this case, it was important to bring in professionals to work with the students so that they could learn how to effectively create storyboards, accurately record sound, and efficiently edit their films.

The third stage was the development of critical literacy, especially in regards to media. This took the form of analysing the purposes of different texts. This began quite simply by asking questions of the students such as 'What does the author of this text want you to think?' and 'Do you agree with that?' It was important for the students to realise that there are hidden biases in all kinds of media.

While this may sound like a very structured approach, with each stage following on from the other, in reality this did not occur in such discrete ways. Rather, the stages fed into each other somewhat messily; for example, after watching various films about bullying, students would respond in a critical way about both the making of the film and its content.

The next chapter presents research portraits drawn from my participant observations during *Justice Citizens.* Ten portraits are presented as short vignettes of important moments observed before, during or after the project. They illustrate events I felt were valuable for understanding young people and their perceptions of civics and citizenship. They present a more complete picture of both the development of justice oriented citizenship and the features that I have identified as central to Justice Pedagogy.

CHAPTER 9: A RICH DESCRIPTION OF THE *JUSTICE CITIZENS* PROJECT

9.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research portraits related to the *Justice Citizens* program. It takes a chronological approach, beginning with some of my formative experiences as a teacher and a researcher, which I share to provide context for my interest in active citizenship and critical approaches to education. I then draw heavily from my field notes (compiled during the participant observation section of the program) as well as my own theorising to develop portraits of the important moments during the program. Throughout these chapters, my theorising is informed by the previous chapters (chapters 3 – 8) as I drew on the concepts and theories presented in these chapters to help interpret what I was experiencing through *Justice Citizens.* This is a slightly different approach than a traditional thesis might adopt, but I think it fits well with my research aims as I am trying to weave together both my own knowledge of previous citizenship education theorizing with the experiences of students as part of the *Justice Citizens* project. I conclude by sharing, again in the form of research portraits, some of the ways the students and I presented their films and our experiences of *Justice Citizens* to a wider audience.

9.2 Opening Credits

> I don't know why you bother. I mean, what's the point? I can make more money here in Redfern than I can going to school or getting a job. Shit, I bet I make more money here than you do.

This challenge from a cocky, 14-year-old named Blake, as he rested on the handlebars of his bicycle, was my first confrontation with the social conflicts present in education. It would not be my last. Like many teachers I've known, teaching wasn't my original choice. I'd already had a short-lived career in the armed forces, and an even shorter one in the health industry. When I first broached it one Christmas, my parents' had mixed reactions; they were disappointed, having expected me to do something they thought worthwhile

such as law, medicine, or engineering, but they were at least pleased I would be doing more than 'just an arts degree'.

My previous experience with educating children had been limited to a few camps and in-school programs, and I hadn't felt any kind of vocation to become a teacher. I had always been accomplished at English and the Humanities at school, so now I could capitalise on that with a new career, teaching. It was a peculiarity of the teacher training program at the time that trainees didn't actually spend time in schools until their fourth and final year; they had to have almost completed their training before finding out whether they were actually any good in the classroom. Aware of this, and wanting to gain some experience before that happened, I volunteered to work at The Learning Centre in Redfern Police and Communities Youth Club, answering an advertisement in the university newspaper.

Redfern is an inner-city suburb of Sydney. Once an area of working-class cottages, over recent years it has undergone a form of gentrification, with high-rise apartments being constructed and technology parks established to meet the needs of the new generation of workers and residents. Less prosperous residents are moving to the outer suburbs. Like much of Sydney, Redfern is multicultural, its school students coming from more than a hundred nationalities. (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] 2016) It is also home to 'The Block', the centre of Indigenous culture in Sydney, and once a regular location for confrontations between police and indigenous residents. At that time, Redfern was also a centre of the drug trade in Sydney, as well as having a reputation for violent crime. Youth unemployment was high and education levels were low (ABS 2016)

The Learning Centre was funded partly through corporate donations and fund-raising. Its aim was to provide the youth in the area with alternatives to becoming involved in crime by improving their chances at completing high school. The centre ran a homework club every weekday afternoon between 3 pm and 7 pm, as well on Saturday mornings. Originally conceived as a chance for students to get assistance with their homework, during the time I worked there it gradually metamorphosed into a life skills program and drop-in centre. In addition to the homework club, there were arts and crafts classes, hip-hop lessons, capoeira classes, cooking lessons, basketball and much more.

It was a rather inauspicious place to begin my teaching career; the first time I went there, I was among a group of five new volunteers. I remember walking into the main centre and being vaguely horrified by the ancient desktop computers in the room. I also remember the threatening silence that greeted us: about 15 kids turned from what they were doing – eating, talking, pretending to do homework – and gave us a beady-eyed stare. When I sat next to a group of students, they packed up what they were doing and moved away from me. The message was clear: I was going to have to show the kids my commitment to them before they would be bothered engaging with me. Of the volunteers in my group, I was the only one still returning after the first month.

I quickly divided the students I came to know into two groups I called the Regulars and the Drop-Ins. The Regulars were mostly between 11 and 13, either in the last years of primary school or the first years of high school. They would be fairly regular attendees at schools in the area who on occasion would bring school work to the Learning Centre, but more often they would simply show up in the absence of anything else to do. The Centre became a de facto home for them, providing the social interaction they seemed to be lacking at home.

Among the students were Diana, Raylee, and Taylah. Diana is the only child of an Albanian single mother who barely spoke English. Raylee, would spend more time looking after her five or six brothers and sisters than she ever did at school. I once drove Raylee, her mother and her youngest sister to Sydney Children's Hospital late one evening after the youngest one had fallen and cut her head. They had shown up at the Learning Centre, unsure of what to do next.

Taylah was the leader of this little group, and I came to realise that if I could connect with her I would have a way in with the rest of the group. As I became a regular at the Learning Centre, my relationship with Taylah developed haltingly. She saw me as a resource; she would present me with her homework and tell me 'to get on with it' while she did other things. I would refuse.

'Well, why not?' Taylah would say.

'Because it's your homework – you have to do it if you are going to learn anything.'

'That's shit. No one cares whether I do it or not.'

'That's not true. Your teachers care about your homework.'

'No, they don't. They don't care if I even show up at school.'

I often encountered arguments like this during from the Regulars during the years I worked in the Learning Centre. I came to understand how these kids felt abandoned – by their parents, schools, almost everybody.

And then there were the Drop-Ins. These kids were a different level of challenge compared to the Regulars. I called them Drop-Ins because they were only sporadic attendees at the Learning Centre; they dropped in when there was something they wanted. The Cooking Program was our attempt to draw these kids into the Learning Centre, as were our regular Thursday night movies. Our success was limited.

Blake was one of these Drop-in kids. I didn't know how long since he had been to school, or even where he lived. He would wait in the car park of the PCYC, watching the Regular kids go in each the afternoon. It became common for me to talk to him, trying to entice him into the Learning Centre. Sometimes, he would come in, but more often he would refuse. He would insist there was nothing on offer for him in the Learning Centre, or in education as a whole. Instead, he took money for delivering drugs around Redfern, knowing he had impunity where the police were concerned. Earlier that year, a young boy had been killed after being impaled on a fence while running from police. There was a huge community uproar, and since then the police avoided kids like Blake.

I spent more than two years working with students at the Learning Centre before I left to work in the United Kingdom. The main thing that I remember was the social inequality, despite Australia having a high standard of school education. Nothing in my teacher education had prepared me for this and I had no tools in my repertoire to deal with the disaffection and disengagement of the kids at the Learning Centre. This has bothered me repeatedly over the years since then.

9.3 Theme Song

As mentioned in Chapter Two, most schools in Australia are multicultural, especially in Western suburbs of Sydney. McCarthy College in the suburb of Penrith (see Figure 6) is an exception, having mostly white

students, many of whom can trace their heritage back to Irish settlers or First Fleet convicts. This means the school has limited cultural diversity.

Penrith, though, is gradually changing from a semi-rural location to one that is more urban, with business developing and high-density housing under construction to meet the demands of the increasing population that includes Chinese, Filipino and Sub-Saharan African migrant families.

Tadi and Panashe are first-generation immigrants from Zimbabwe whose parents have high expectations of them, wanting them to go to university to become engineers or project managers or something similar. As a teacher at McCarthy, I was troubled by their isolation from the rest of the student body. Perhaps because of this isolation they embraced Hip Hop clothing styles and language, trying to wear baseball caps instead of the school uniform, and listening to American rap music rather than the music chosen by their fellow students.

When McCarthy College was given an opportunity to work with Dr Akesha Horton in 2012, a Fulbright Scholar from the US, in an innovative *Hip Hop for Social Justice* program for disaffected students, I leapt at the chance. By this time, I had already started my doctoral work, and I was particularly interested in the intersection of citizenship, social justice and technology. This seemed like an ideal learning opportunity for both the students and myself. Dr Horton and I worked with a group of 12 students, from Years 7 to 10, who were selected either by teacher nomination or self-nomination. These students were removed from normal classes for four sessions, each lasting two hours. During this time, they examined Hip Hop culture from around the world, blogging about their experiences and using translation software to identify some of the common themes in Hip Hop music from Ghana, France and Romania. They also brainstormed about important social justice issues in their local communities, before writing a Hip Hop song and recording it at a local studio that had donated the time and the services of a sound engineer.

The Hip Hop program had limited success. Most students wrote their lyrics, performed their songs and mastered the recordings, but they played them once or twice to their friends and then seemed to forget the whole project. I saw no changes in their participation in social justice and the local community.

This wasn't true for Tadi and Panashe, however. For them, the *Hip Hop for Social Justice* program was an unqualified success. These young men were

engaged in something they could relate to, and it seemed to pay dividends. At one point, late in the project, when it looked like we might not be able to go to the studio, the other students shrugged their shoulders, but Tadi and Panashe would meet me every morning in the school yard, ask for updates and suggest other studios we could contact.

Ultimately, they wrote a two-minute rap song called 'Six Hours of Pain' that highlighted an issue they felt was important in school – the fact that they had to have the school-issue backpack, rather than a backpack of their choice. It is a densely packed recording, full of clever word play and allusions to other songs and important people in their lives. Perhaps the highlight for me was how Tadi and Panashe used the motto of the school, 'Integrity, Justice and Peace' as part of their song, and challenged the school to treat them with the equality they felt they deserved. They introduced biblical allusions, likening students walking to school with these heavy backpacks to Jesus carrying his cross. Finally, they poked fun at other music and dance styles, singing that they looked like they were 'shuffling' under the weight of these heavy bags.

Overall, the work was an incredibly intelligent and mature. Although Tadi and Panashe were not the highest academically achieving students at McCarthy, the lyrics from 'Six Hours of Pain' clearly demonstrated that they had a critical and cultural literacy that is not often recognised in schools (Morrell & Duncan-Andrade 2002).

In addition to recording the song, the highlight for Tadi and Panashe was meeting the Hip Hop artist L-Fresh, a young man from South Western Sydney and a Street University Ambassador, who had agreed to work with the students on the process of writing. L-Fresh is only a few years older than the students in the Hip Hop program, and the atmosphere in the room changed when he started speaking. This was an important point of reflection for me: while I might gain the grudging respect of the students as a teacher, L-Fresh was accorded respect because he was involved in the industry. The students were rapt when he agreed to 'freestyle' for them.

I was initially disappointed at Panashe's and Tadi's choice of subject matter; to me, school bags didn't seem like a suitable social justice topic, and I remember trying to encourage them to write about something else, like racism or refugees. I realise now that I was trying too hard to impose my concepts about social justice onto them, and not allowing enough time for the process to

work. The following year, when we ran *Hip Hop for Social Justice* a second time, Tadi and Panashe wrote their own individual songs, each with powerful lyrics about what it was like being a young black man growing up in a predominantly white culture.

This episode was important to my future work for two reasons. First, I realised that while a lesson may not have reached the end point I intended, it won't have necessarily failed as a learning experience for the students; Panashe and Tadi's learning was evident, despite my beliefs about what they should have focused on. Second, I realised it was inappropriate to expect students to develop a critical consciousness in the space of a couple of hours. That such development requires long periods of growth and reflection was exemplified by the way Tadi and Panashe had matured as artists and songwriters between the first and the second *Hip Hop for Social Justice* courses at McCarthy. Both students took part in the *Justice Citizens* program that I ran later that year. Panashe especially, because of his experiences with *Hip Hop for Social Justice*, was a big supporter of the project and was able to use the skills he had learnt during *Hip Hop for Social Justice* to help his group during *Justice Citizens*.

My experience with Tadi and Panashe was instructive for another reason. I had begun the Hip Hop project with some clear ideas about suitable topics for young people to be socially active about. For the most part, these were weighty matters that dominated the news cycle at the time, for example, domestic violence, refugees, and substance abuse. Instead, the students wanted to write, sing, perform, and make films about topics that were vitally important to them but I thought were 'small' or limited.

This reaction exemplifies one of the main fissures in civics and citizenship education today. Some scholars (Boeder 2005; Iosifidis 2011) have adopted a Habermasian notion of the public sphere, and the modernist notion of idealised public discourse. From this frame, citizenship should be about weighty issues of public thought, with other topics seen as trivial, commercial or unimportant. More recent postmodernist scholars (for example, McKee 2004) have argued that this trivialisation of the public sphere is not necessarily a bad thing; it reflects a broadening of the public sphere to include diversities of viewpoint that were previously ignored and unheard.

9.4 An Exciting Opening

The first piece of advice my mentoring teacher gave me when I began teaching was, 'I don't care what you do in the first six weeks of teaching, as long as you get the students to behave.' To him, a veteran teacher of more than 20 years, the most important skill for a young teacher to develop was strong classroom management. This was totally at odds with everything I had done at university, where the emphasis was on pedagogy, lesson planning, micro-teaching and content knowledge. I quickly came to realise that none of these mattered unless the students were under control. To my mentor, teaching is a battle of wills, and teachers need a range of strategies – the teacher 'look', the 'non-verbal cue', the 'tactical ignore' – if they are to triumph over the students. It is an us-and-them mentality straight out of a war zone. My mentor's evaluations of me generally ignored any pedagogical issues; instead, it was a matter of how long students spent on task, and whether I was aware of everything going on in my classroom. With hindsight, I realised he was helping me develop the fabled 'eyes in the back of the head' needed by teachers everywhere. I have since developed these strategies myself and shared them with other teachers.

However, early on in my planning for *Justice Citizens*, I realised this was not what I wanted for this program. I had just finished reading Postman & Weingartner's *Teaching as a Subversive Activity* (1971), and for the first time was conscious that how we teach is at least as important as what we teach. This is even truer in a subject like civics and citizenship education, where the very subject matter – democratic process and civil society – would be evidenced in the lesson plans and lesson activities. I knew that if I didn't 'walk the talk', the students would challenge me, and any meaning behind the learning would be lost in a miasma of mixed messages.

If I was going to design the lessons in line with the content of the *Justice Citizens* program, I would also have to alter the way I taught those lessons, and that meant letting go of some of my control. Freire (1970, 1974) writes about teachers becoming students, and students becoming teachers. However, he was mostly talking about adults learning outside the structured confines of a formal schooling system, not adolescent Year 9 students. I had some concerns: What if something happened in the classroom while I was relinquishing control? What if someone was hurt?

The first lesson of Justice Citizens began after lunch on a hot Tuesday in January. The students had noticed a new class listed on the timetable called Research and Literacy, but I had steadfastly refused to answer any questions about it. Now, as the students sat in front of me, the first thing I did was nothing. I leant on my desk and allowed students to come in and sit down. The well-organised students – the ones who knew the unwritten rules of school and wanted to follow them– carefully unpacked their bags, taking a brand-new exercise book with Research and Literacy carefully written on the front. Then they watched me expectantly, ready for the lesson to start. Other students – those who either weren't familiar with the rules of school or who wanted to flout them – talked loudly, pushed each other, or hid behind their school bags and played games on their mobile phones.

I waited some more. A few students asked me questions, wanting to know what they should do. I smiled, said nothing and continued waiting. This felt like one of the strategies from the classroom management toolkit: if you wait long enough, students will become silent and you can begin your lesson. Of course, students sometimes see this as a challenge, and you risk losing lesson time while you wait in vain for them to become quiet.

That afternoon, however, the class quickly settled and everyone looked at me. Eventually, one brave soul put up his hand and asked, 'What are we meant to be doing?' I answered, 'What do you think you should be doing?' That caused a few laughs, and a few worried frowns too. After a short silence, there was a chorus of replies, some of them serious, some less so: 'We should be sleeping,' 'We should be on Facebook,' 'We should be playing games,' 'We should be outside,' 'We should go home.' A few replies were directed back at me: 'You should be telling us what we're learning,' 'You should be writing on the board for us to copy.' And then there were lots of vacant stares.

At that point, I felt like I had achieved a small victory. I had first managed to capture the attention of the students, and then show them that participating in *Justice Citizens* (which to the students was still Research and Literacy) would be different from their more familiar school experiences. I then wrote on the board 'If you could learn about anything you chose, what would it be?' I was hoping to gauge the students' interests and provide the opportunity for them to talk about what they wanted to do, and that this would naturally

develop into the project I had prepared. I would move from the 'sage on the stage' teacher model to the 'guide on the side'. At least, that was the plan.

What greeted this question was complete silence. Thirty faces looked up at me, blankly. I had made a mistake: they were not ready for this discussion. And then, as I watched, the silence was gradually swallowed up by the usual hubbub of a classroom, as students turned back to their friends, their mobile phones, their other distractions. I tried to regain their interest, but I had the feeling that their attention was slipping away from me. I called on individual students, but I only got half answers along the lines of 'I don't know,' and 'Isn't that your job?'

I retreated to my back-up plan – a journaling exercise about their learning in other lessons. I dutifully wrote questions on the board, which the students either answered in their exercise books or ignored, finding distraction in other activities. There was a palpable decrease in tension. For the students, this made sense: they now knew what they were expected to do and were able to do it easily.

I was not the only teacher to have difficulty with the first lesson of *Justice Citizens*. Of the three teachers who were teaching this course with me, only one had attempted to follow the lesson plan. The other two had said that 'they didn't feel comfortable' with the agreed lesson plan, and had changed it into a worksheet. One of them had even made up a list of keywords, placed them in a word scramble, and given that to the students to complete. None of them understood my disappointment or frustration.

9.5 The Montage

Despite my disappointment with the first couple of lessons, I quickly found that I looked forward to each *Justice Citizens* session. I believe it was due to the fact that I had ownership of this program and I was embracing the freedom offered by a student-derived curriculum. I was not determining the content, structure, outcomes and assessment of this lesson; instead, the students did these things themselves, while I guided and advised. I recognised the shared construction of meaning that was taking place between all of us in the room.

After these first lessons, I realised I would need to modify my approach to *Justice Citizens*. While the students were open to discussing their thoughts

about communities, for many this was the first opportunity they had had to do this. In the banking model of education as described by Freire (1970), students are simply there to have knowledge 'deposited' in their heads, knowledge they will then reproduce in the form of examinations. There is no place for them to argue about what knowledge is, or what knowledge is important. In fact, there is usually very little choice even about how they might learn.

When confronted with the opportunity to do precisely that, most of the students were naturally hesitant. It must have been a challenge to reconsider their roles within school, and how they might subvert the dominant regime. I realised I would have to teach them how to challenge their beliefs so that they could engage with their education instead of seeing it as something that is done to them.

My first plan was to propose that young people around the world were capable of engaging in meaningful social change. For example, I found pictures of student groups in Chile protesting about the poor quality of their education and closing down schools and universities. I told them about young North Americans challenging the legal system over wrongful convictions, and French students causing change to the laws regarding the minimum wage.

I presented these propositions individually to the students in the classroom. For each proposition (for example, young people can take on multinational corporations and win), I asked students to consider if it would be possible for young people could do this and then move to a side of the room according to their point of view. To start off, most students milled in the centre of the room, unsure about this new game. I would then show the accompanying pictures and stories of the young people taking action on the issues at hand, and we would discuss what they thought about it. Soon they began to spread around the room to demonstrate their opinions.

This was the first surprise: most students spent their time in the 'completely possible' section of the classroom. This meant that they accepted the idea that young people could challenge corporate interests, change laws, overcome wrongful convictions, close down school systems, and much more. Further discussion with the students was enlightening. Nick, a basketballer, very active in the local church and a leader in the class, explained it best. 'Sir,' he said, 'It's possible for young people to do all of these things. It's just not possible for us to do those things.' When I pressed him on why that might be

the case, he said it was because they didn't know how. No one had shown them.

My second surprise was related to how easily the students and I could misunderstand each other. One of the propositions was 'Young people can challenge large corporations about their health'. It was based on a number of schools in North America that had campaigned successfully to prevent McDonalds opening a restaurant on their campuses. Most students agreed that this was completely possible. However, there was a lot of confusion when I showed them the story to which the proposition referred. Daniel explained the confusion: 'So, they were protesting to stop McDonalds' coming into their school?'

I agreed.

'Oh, that's wrong. Why would they do that? I thought they were protesting to get McDonald's built at their school!' Quite a few students seemed to agree with Daniel.

On another occasion when we spoke about the Chilean students protesting about education, the students originally supported the idea of the schools being closed, but only because it sounded like an extra holiday. These conversations were confronting to me; they showed how illiterate the students were about the ways they are influenced by dominant groups in society. I would return to this notion of literacy repeatedly over the course of *Justice Citizens*. While the students in my class, for the most part, had a functional literacy in that they could read and write English, they were ignorant of the way oppressive forces shaped their understanding of the world.

The next activity was designed to identify the students' own interests and their feelings of capability as change agents. I distributed a post-it note to each students and asked them to write their name on it. Then I projected a two-circle Venn diagram on the board. In the circles were the words ‘I care about this’ and ‘I can do something about this’ (Figure 11).

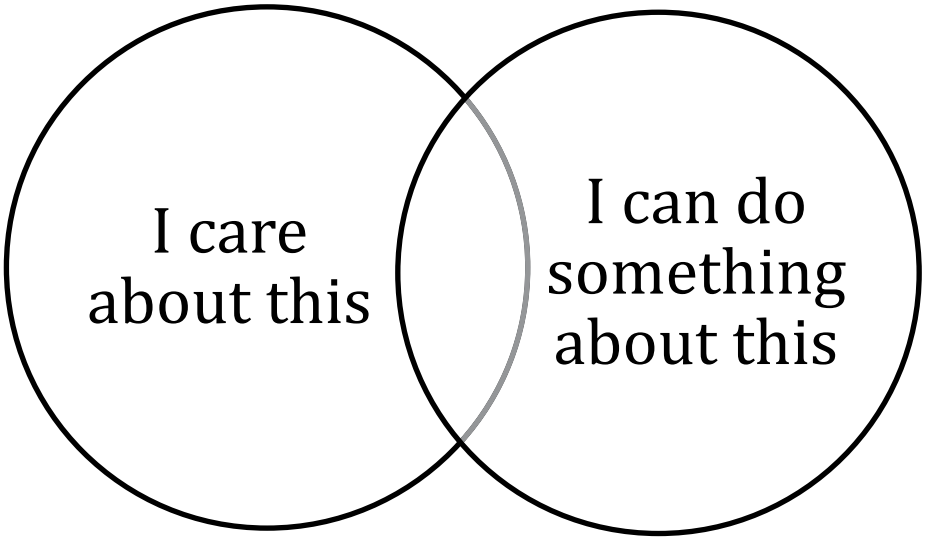

Figure 11: The Venn diagram

Above the Venn diagram was a topic such as 'self-esteem', 'healthy eating', 'social media', 'body image', 'the environment', 'homelessness', 'teen violence', 'drug and alcohol abuse'. For each topic, I asked students to place their post-it note in the position they felt was most appropriate. The purpose of this activity was to encourage students to consider what issues they are interested in. I had taken the topics from the Mission Australia survey (Fildes, Robbins, Cave, Perrens & Wearring 2014) about young people. According to this survey, these were the topics and issues that young people in Australia were most concerned about at the time.

What was interesting during this exercise was the range of responses. I was expecting – and hoping – to see a pattern in the responses that could lead to a discussion about that particular issue. Instead, the whiteboard looked like it had been liberally dusted in yellow post-it notes. There was no consensus on the sorts of topics they either cared about or could do something about.

9.6 First Steps

As outlined in Chapter Two, Penrith is in Greater Western Sydney, an area that is home to almost one in every 11 Australians, many of whom have conservative political views. During the 2010 and 2013 Federal election campaigns, the Labor and Liberal parties spent vast amounts of money trying to sway the voters of Western Sydney in their political directions. One of the

most emotive campaigns focussed on the 'asylum seeker' issue. Asylum seekers who arrived in Australia by boat were vilified by politicians and the media as 'illegal boat people' and subject to mandatory detention. Particularly during 2013, with voters like those of Western Sydney in mind, both parties promised that they would 'stop the boats.' The media responded and related discussions soon made their way into McCarthy College and my *Justice Citizens* classroom.

About two weeks into the program Emmalee mentioned the 'boat people' issue. Up to this point, I been concerned that she was growing frustrated by the whole program, that she wanted to get on with 'classwork', so she could demonstrate how good she was at it. Thus far into the course, and there had been no work, homework, assignments or tests, which to her mindset would have meant I wasn't teaching them anything and were just wasting time.

When she raised her hand and asked, 'What do you think about boat people, sir?' I was excited. Finally, here was a real topic that we could talk about and research. I restrained myself from sharing my personal opinion about the injustice of the asylum seeker policy, and instead returned the question to Emmalee: 'What do you think about them?'

Uproar!

Immediately, there were 20 or more voices crying out ideas and suggestions. Not surprisingly, most of these were in favour of more brutal measures to stop the boats. For the first time, I felt like I had picked something that the students might have a genuine interest in and I was bemused by the uncommon level of excitement. Several of the students were also perplexed. The responses had surprised them too.

After settling the class down, I again asked Emmalee what she thought. She was hesitant now and seemed unprepared to answer when the rest of the class was watching her intently. She passed the question to someone else and we were soon having a discussion that included the disturbing use of racial epithets. Jaiden shared that he had heard on Facebook that a woman was assaulted by refugees in nearby Blacktown.

I needed to tread carefully now. I could have insisted on adherence to the Catholic teachings of the school, but I knew this would have discouraged many of the students from contributing to this potentially inflammatory conversation. The students were interested because they felt they had something to contribute; they had opinions they wanted to share. I could also

have taken the path of uncritical acceptance, suggesting that all opinions should be heard in the discussion, but this was not something that I wanted to do. My understanding of critical pedagogy was that peoples' lived experiences should be shared but not accepted uncritically.

The dilemma was resolved by employing a problem-posing approach. I asked the students to consider what the problems were with refugees and write their responses on the whiteboard. Their reasons were simple and straightforward: Refugees were queue jumpers. They were terrorists. They were going to destroy the Australian way of life. They were Muslims.

I was ready for the next step. By reporting on something that he had read on Facebook, Jaiden had opened the door to questions about the truth of that story. I began simply by asking if he knew who originally posted the story. Jaiden hesitated and eventually admitted that he did not know who that person was.

I then asked another student to explain why he thought all refugees were criminals. He said it was because they were always stealing things at nearby Blacktown Shopping Centre. I asked him how he knew they were refugees. He said it was because they were black.

'If that's the case,' I said, 'are all black people refugees?'

This was a loaded question: Panashe was in the room, and he was not a refugee. This question was greeted with an uncomfortable silence.

'Sir,' one of the girls said, 'That's racist. You can't say that.'

As I suspected, even the mention of colour was seen immediately as racist, regardless of what was actually said.

'I'm just asking a question. Is that racist?'

The students were unsure how to answer that. Seizing the moment, I asked 'How many of you have actually met a refugee?'

None of them had.

9.7 Interview with Talent, Part 1

Everything that we had done thus far in *Justice Citizens* had been centred around the students: What were their interests? What did they think was important? After the challenge of the lesson where our conversations had moved on to other topics like 'boat people' and my students had admitted to never having met someone who identified as a refugee, I realised that we had

come to a critical juncture in the progam. It seemed a good time to involve the refugee community in some meaningful way.

I had two ideas about how to do this. First, I knew that Mamre Homestead, a charity in the local area, did a lot of work with Sudanese refugees, especially women's groups. I spoke to Sister Mary-Louise, the head of its education programs, and invited her to speak to the class. We talked about whether she might bring some of the Sudanese women, but Sister Mary-Louise decided against it, as they would be too shy to speak to a classroom full of students.

I knew how passionately Sister Mary-Louise would speak about the vital work she was doing, and I was confident she could explain the challenges faced by Sudanese refugees now living in Australia. It was my hope that this approach would challenge some of the dominant conceptions held by my students about refugees.

While these were my hopes, the reality was somewhat different. The day of the presentation was very hot; we were in one of the old classrooms, without air-conditioning, and the students were sweltering before we even started. Sister Mary Louise spoke about the journey to Australia by a refugee she worked with, about her escape from Sudan and the dangers she faced. It was a gripping story, but as I looked around at the students I realised that most of the students were listening to it but not comprehending it. This was evident when Sister Mary Louise asked for questions. Everyone was silent. I tried to prompt the students, but their responses were desultory. After Sister Mary Louise finished I felt the need to apologise to her; I could see that she was a bit disconcerted by the whole process too. She suggested that perhaps these students were too young and immature to understand.

At this point, I began to theorise about young people's civic involvement – at what point is it at its highest? Perhaps students were simply not interested as they felt that they were too far from being able to do anything – like voting. Had I been trying too hard to push the students in the direction I wanted them to go?

At the next *Justice Citizens* lesson I asked them what they thought of Sister Mary-Louise's presentation. After the usual grumbles and comments, I said, 'Enough. I'm not angry. This is different. I'm interested. I could tell that most of you weren't really interested. Am I right?'

There were a few nods around the room, Once again, I was conscious that this was getting a little bit uncomfortable for the students. I was pushing them out of their comfort zone again.

'So,' I continued, 'Here's your chance to tell me. Why weren't you interested?'

Silence. I'd learned a trick, by now. If I waited long enough, holding eye contact with the class, eventually someone would say something. This time it was Tuesday, a girl who hadn't participated much in our lessons so far.

'It's like this, sir', she began. 'I know that what happened to those people she was talking about is bad ... it's just ... I don't really care about something that happened so far away.' Tuesday paused here, but the nods and mumblings of agreement seemed to spur her on.

'We live in Penrith, right, in Australia. And all we hear about are all the problems happening everywhere else in the world. Well, what about the problems happening right here in Penrith? I've got friends who can't afford petrol for their car, sir. It's not as bad as getting killed, but it's something I understand, you know?'

I nodded, and thanked Tuesday for her honesty. She looked nervous. I asked the class if others agreed with Tuesday. Who else felt there were more problems around Penrith? More than half the class put up their hands. I asked them what were some of the issues, and was inundated by their responses. Things that I had been looking for in previous lessons suddenly started showing up: domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse, social media, road safety, bullying, crime, teenage pregnancies and so on. In the space of 10 minutes, I had 20 topics on the board.

This was a really important point in the whole *Justice Citizens* project. For the first time, the students were beginning to direct their own learning. They had rejected an idea I had given them as being too divorced from their own context, and were instead suggesting alternatives. This interlude reinforced to me the importance of context: critical pedagogy should be rooted in the experiences of the student, something I departed from with Sister Mary-Louise's presentation.

As a side note, a couple of students still wanted to find out more about refugees. But again, the context was crucial; they wanted to talk to refugees about what it was like living in Australia, in Penrith.

9.8 Interview with Talent, Part 2

My second idea about refugees was more of a long shot. I was receiving some funding through Penrith City Council, and their community cultural development officer had put me in touch with a young man called Yadav Timsina, a Bhutanese refugee studying to be a nurse at a nearby further education college. He agreed to be interviewed on camera by a delegation of my students. I knew which students I wanted to take with me: Emmalee, who had asked me the question about refugees the previous lesson, and her friend Liz. They agreed and we met Yadav at his college's library after school. Emmalee, Liz and I had gone through a couple of basic filming techniques, and I had asked them to construct some questions without my help. I wanted them to take the interview in the direction they wanted.

As we waited for Yadav in the library, Liz and Emmalee nervously paced the room. They were out of their comfort zone; neither had been to this college before, and dressed in their school uniforms they looked out of place among its older students. Yadav arrived and was eager to help, but he was nervous too. He said he was worried about what he might be asked, and how well he could answer. I looked at Emmalee and made an 'over to you' gesture. She smiled, giggled apprehensively, and switched on the camera. The next 45 minutes were surprising. From the moment she turned on the camera Emmalee assumed a totally new demeanour. Gone was the shy school student, and instead here was a determined neophyte journalist.

In our conversations in previous lessons Emmalee had agreed with many of the comments about asylum seekers being dangerous to the Australian way of life. Not surprisingly, she and Liz led off in that direction, asking why Yadav had felt the need to flee Bhutan. As Yadav laid out the details of his life – fleeing the country one night, spending the next 12 years in Nepal in a refugee camp, and then finally being resettled in Australia without his brothers and sisters – I could see Emmalee's and Liz's ideas about refugees changing. They had probably never met anyone who had been through such upheaval, and to hear it from someone who lived near them and was only a few years older than they were made the interview process even more powerful.

The most telling section of the conversation, though, happened towards the end when Liz and Emmalee asked Yadav about his experiences in Australia.

Yadav started off by saying everyone had been friendly to him, but Emmalee changed tack and asked whether he had ever experienced racism. After pausing, he said that sometimes on the train he gets called things like 'dirty Indian', even though he is Bhutanese. When Emmalee asked how that made him feel, he responded that he felt pretty bad.

9.9 Working with Experts

From the outset, it was important to me that *Justice Citizens* produce outcomes that were of some artistic merit. Although the refrain, 'It's the process that's important, not the product', is one that is commonly deployed in group-based projects like *Justice Citizens*, this is not something that I necessarily agree with. I wanted the students to be able to point to a product they were proud of and say 'I did that'. Peer and self-esteem would be contingent upon the students producing something they felt was worthwhile.

This idea presented me with a significant challenge. I was, at best, a well-meaning amateur when it came to making films. Although I had toyed with running the Media Club at the school for a year or two, I was acutely aware of the mediocre nature of the products we had produced. These were fine for a hobby club, but the *Justice Citizens* films were going to have a much wider audience and I was hoping for a much more polished product.

Working with my contacts in Penrith City Council, I enlisted the help of Bernadette, a local filmmaker, radio personality, artist and journalist. Bernadette was very supportive of the *Justice Citizens* program and agreed to present three sessions to the students about interviewing people and making films.

Schools are often closed communities. With the raft of child protection legislation, as well as the demands of time and curriculum, it can be very difficult to invite outside people into schools and to have them accepted by students. Bernadette is not a school teacher, and I was unsure how the students would relate to her. Would they be rude or, worse, uninterested? And if that happened, what should I do? To intervene would be to undermine Bernadette, as well as ruin the advantage of having an outside expert speak to the students. On the other hand, I knew their apathy might generate a kind of ennui that would limit the success of the rest of the project.

The sessions got off to a rocky start. Bernadette was visibly uncomfortable, as were the students. I'd selected 25 students who had shown the most interest in the project so far and taken them to a classroom that was rarely used. The strangeness of this seemed to affect them. They were unsure about how to act, or what to do, and Bernadette led off with an academic reading about what made something 'newsworthy'. Some of the less academic students were already looking bored, and I was close to intervening when Corin, a girl who was new to the school and rather quiet, raised her hand and interrupted.

'Miss, can you show us a film that you've made?'

'Okay,' said Bernadette. I could see that she was hesitant. She attached her computer to the projector and pulled up a film she had made about an Indigenous Australian music group in western New South Wales. Without introducing it, she played it straight away. The class didn't settle immediately, but once the talking in the film started, they became attentive.

The film was a mix of interviews and clips from a music video. It lasted only three or four minutes, but the class was silent throughout it. I was gratified to see this. The students in *Justice Citizens* had grown up around things like YouTube; they were more used to watching short films and there was nothing new about watching a film in class. So now, rather than reading about news, they wanted to watch it.

When the film stopped, Bernadette turned to the class and asked them what they thought. She was greeted by silence. I was sure that they had questions, but I needed to nudge them. I put up my hand up, and with a look of some gratitude Bernadette pointed at me.

I asked where the film was shot. Even before Bernadette had finished answering, another couple of hands went up. I had broken the tension in the room, and the students now felt comfortable enough to ask about what we were doing. There were technical questions: 'How did you record the sound?', 'What kind of camera did you use?' and 'How did you do the landscape shots?'; questions about film-making as an art form: 'How did you decide who to interview?' and 'Why do you think this was a good thing to make a film about?'; and even questions about the Indigenous men and women in the film: 'Why were their lives like that?' and 'What was their song about?'

At some point during this class, we had started some real learning. Though we were no longer talking theoretically about interview techniques and camera shots, what I saw was much more important. The students were in charge of their own learning. They were directing it by their questions and had already picked up more than I could have taught in a presentation about camera angles. This was learning by doing, rather than learning by receiving.

Over the next three sessions, Bernadette adapted her teaching to a model that seemed to work well. She would show them something that she had done or was still working on and then ask the students what they thought. They would then comment, ask questions, and offer suggestions about the film. By the third session, the students were making decisions themselves. Bernadette had brought in footage of an interview she had filmed, and the whole class chose which shots to use and how to build the film. This was evidence of how far they had come in just six hours or so.

These film-making sessions with Bernadette were a microcosm of the whole *Justice Citizens* project. The involvement of someone from outside the school had made a significant difference. There was the novelty value of the students not knowing Bernadette and the fact that she was an expert in her field; she was someone who actually made films. These were attributes that made the students more likely to listen to her.

It is also important to note how the students changed the focus of these sessions with Bernadette; making them less like traditional lessons and more like workshops was vital. As in *Justice Citizens*, Bernadette's emphasis was on doing something, rather than learning about it; the students could practise with real footage. I believe this 'hands-on' approach meant more to them than hours of theory.

9.10 The Premiere

After about six months over the course of 2013, the students were finally ready for the premiere screening of their films. Since the start of *Justice Citizens*, I had been using this screening as a motivator for the students to keep working on the project, even when they were struggling. I had promised them that there would be an audience of community members to watch the best films. With the support of Penrith City Council and their Magnetic Places program, I had enough funding to book the Bringelly Community Centre. Although I would

have preferred a real movie theatre, I had neither the funds nor the contacts to organise that. I was also aware that the students were not going to become professional film-makers over the 20 hours or so that *Justice Citizens* ran. Rather, I was hoping the unsophisticated films would speak to the youth of the filmmakers and to the honesty of their concerns.

Not everyone in the class produced a film. I was expecting to have about 25 to 30 films; this was predicated on every group finishing their film. However, I hadn't taken into account that students would run out of time, or just lose interest in the project. This was one of the problems with the limited face-to-face contact we were having. In future, a shorter, more intense project would probably achieve better outcomes than the one-hour-per-week project that I had been forced to use in the first iteration of *Justice Citizens*. All together there were 18 films, spread almost evenly across all five class groups. The content of the films ranged from school experiences like bullying, school bags, and teacher-student relationships, to much wider issues such as racism, dirt-bike safety, domestic violence, and environmental degradation Figure 12 shows the films that were shown at the Film Festival. Many films started off in the context of the school, for example, a student accused of stealing a book from the school library, but then addressed issues present in many levels of society. I saw this as evidence of students seeking ways that the overarching theme of social justice applied to them in their own lives.

Figure 12: Films Shown at the Film Festival

When I spoke to the students who had not made a film, for most the reason was simply a lack of time. Many expressed a desire to finish their film, even if it meant re-shooting or re-editing the parts of it that hadn't turned how they had wanted, but they were unwilling or unable to give up the time to do so. Many lacked the autonomy to make decisions about their own lives – to stay at school after class or to give up time on the weekend – and so they struggled to fully commit to the project.

Some students were disinterested in the whole project; they finished the course having done the bare minimum. These students fell into two groups. One group consisted of students who acted the same way in many of their courses: it was a trial to be endured, I had failed to convince them that *Justice Citizens* was different from their other courses of study. Having said that, *Justice Citizens* did succeed in engaging a number of students who were part of this group; in fact, one of the better films, *Dirt Bike Safety*, was made by two students who were constantly in trouble and whose continued enrolment at the school was in jeopardy.

The second group consisted of students who had lost interest when they found out that there would be no formal assessment for the course; they would rather devote their efforts to a subject that was 'important'. Among this group, however, were some high-achieving, motivated students who indicated that, despite the lack of assessment, *Justice Citizens* was valuable because it was so student centred.

After the films were submitted, I posted them on the school's YouTube channel. I had already gained the permissions of all the students and community members for this to happen. Using a simple online form, I then asked students to watch the films and vote for the one they felt was the best. I left the poll open for a week, and after more than 100 students had cast their votes, I was able to determine the best eight films. Despite some resistance, I had already insisted on the students introducing their own films at the festival. I wanted them to be proud of their work and be recognised for it.

I invited all the filmmakers to the film festival along with everybody who had been involved in any way with the project: council workers, professional filmmakers and sound technicians, school principals, parents and community members. More than 70 people show up on the evening. A local Penrith Councillor, Prue Car spoke about youth initiatives, and the festival was

opened in absentia by the then Federal Member David Bradbury, who, despite not being able to attend, had recorded his own short film about the importance of active citizenship.

A couple of memories of the film festival stand out for me. The first is the gratification in the faces of some of the film participants. For example, one of the young women who participated in the teen pregnancy film made a point of speaking to Liz and Emmalee, the students who had made it (Liz and Emmalee actually made two films – one about refugees and this one about teen pregnancy). She was quite emotional – to the point of tears – as she expressed how grateful she was for the opportunity to explain her point of view. Liz and Emmalee were surprised at the response that their film had created, and pleased that they had provided this opportunity for the woman.

The second memory is that nobody wanted to leave after the films had finished. I had provided a light supper, and I was hoping that there would be a general discussion after it, but there were still people talking about the films more than an hour after the last film finished. The conversations were often about the 'what's next'; that is, now that the students had made a film, what were they going to do about it? We hadn't really talked about this in class, so the students were not prepared. The students were confidently talking to the other people in the room, and I was pleased to see them answering honestly and sensibly.

9.11 Critical Reception

The Grace Hotel is in the centre of Sydney, about an hour's drive from Penrith. Paul Vittles, then Chair of the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce in Australia and New Zealand (RSA A+NZ), which had contributed some funding to the *Justice Citizens* project, had selected the Grace Hotel for a seminar that I was to give about the project to Fellows of the Society and other guests. I had suggested we also invite some of the students who had participated in the project to speak about their experiences of *Justice Citizens* and show some of their films. The audience of more than 60 people was a mix of RSA Fellows, media professionals and educators, as well as some younger people. Among them were independent film-makers who had been drawn by my use of film in a school setting.

I wondered whether the students would cope with the questions from the audience? Would their films be appreciated? Though the students and I were proud of their films, the Fellows of the RSA might be expecting something more professional and polished. I began the seminar by showing the shortest film. Simply entitled *Domestic Violence*, this film shows the effects of domestic violence upon a young boy. The film packs quite an emotional punch, and as it finished the audience was silent. I then spoke for about 40 minutes about the reasons for the project, the theory underlying it, and how the project had developed. Finally, I spoke about my preliminary findings about *Justice Citizens*, including my regret about the lack of evidence of critical consciousness developing amongst the students. By critical consciousness I meant an understanding that they are capable of interacting and influencing the world, that they have the power and the will to exert that power when making important life decisions, as well as an understanding of the influence of the media, among other bodies. This had been one of my great hopes for *Justice Citizens*, but nothing that the students had said in the follow up interviews indicated an increased capacity for critical analysis of the media.

I then introduced Nick, Lachlan and Emmalee, who spoke for about five minutes each. I had given them only a rough outline of what I thought they might talk about because I felt it was important that they speak genuinely about their reflections. They had also written their own notes, so I knew very little about what they would say. Their presentations were the highlight of the whole seminar. Each student spoke with confidence and passion about *Justice Citizens*, and I was pleased to hear them speak critically about their own participation and the participation of others in the program.

I was proud of the way they spoke about how they had changed as young people because of the *Justice Citizens* project. For example, Lachlan and Nick spoke about wanting to join the Student Representative Council at McCarthy College in order to make the school more responsive to the needs of students and to make it a fairer and more equitable place. They also talked about the importance of the school recognising and welcoming students from minority backgrounds.

What I was most pleased to hear about, though, was Emmalee's description of the way that she now engages with media. During *Justice Citizens* we hadn't talked much about the mainstream media in Australia, but we had

worked on the students developing some skills that would help them interpret the media. As mentioned earlier, Emmalee and Liz had made a film about refugees, in addition to their film on teen pregnancy. This film took the form of an interview where Emmalee invited Yadav from Bhutan to consider why he was forced to leave Bhutan, what it was like living in a refugee camp, and how challenging it was making a new life in Australia, separated from friends and family. Emmalee spoke about how she had previously been influenced by the media. As a young person living in the Western suburbs of Sydney, she had heard a lot of political debate about asylum seekers who came to Australia via boat and were often vilified in the media. Many of these people were settling in the area and the issue was a key political battleground.

Emmalee spoke quite candidly about these issues, exhibiting not only an understanding gleaned from her conversations with Yadav and others, but also a knowledge of the ways that the media had been shaping people's perception of refugees. She mentioned the term 'boat person' and described its disparaging connotations, suggesting that it was fairer and more appropriate to use the terms 'asylum seeker' and 'refugee'. Emmalee also spoke about the way that the Australian media often highlighted how refugees may be involved in crime but ignored people like Yadav, who was training to be a nurse and was clearly contributing to Australian society. In this way, Emmalee showed an understanding that the media shapes opinion not only by what it presents, but also through what it omits.

After their presentations, the students and I took some questions from the floor. After one or two to me about the mechanics of *Justice Citizens*, most of the questions were directed at the students; as I had hoped, the guests had identified that the crucial value of the project lay in the effect that it had upon the participating students. A question that resonated with me was about the differences between *Justice Citizens* and other, more traditional lessons and programs. All three students replied that they liked the *Justice Citizens* approach because they felt more included in this method of teaching, and they enjoyed the ability to choose a topic to research. Emmalee also liked having the opportunity to pursue a topic that interested her, as evidenced by the fact that she ended up making two films. For Lachlan and Nick, the program allowed them to learn skills that would be more relevant to their lives than the skills they normally learnt at school.

CHAPTER 10 – THINKING AND TALKING ABOUT CITIZENSHIP IN WESTERN SYDNEY

10.1 Introduction

As stated earlier in this thesis, the nature of civics and citizenship and the education of young people for it, is a complex and challenging concept to understand. One of the purposes of this thesis was to explicate some of the ways that students in Western Sydney think about themselves as active citizens, and what the notions of civics and citizenship mean to them. I also wanted to further examine the way that adults who work with young people think about active citizenship and in what forms young people might demonstrate it. My findings, as they emerged out of my own observations, my reflections from the research portraits presented in Chapter Nine, and the interviews that I conducted, as well as the previous scholarship discussed in the literature review (Chapters 3 – 8), are presented in this chapter. In Chapter 13, I focus specifically upon the effect of *Justice Citizens* on students' perceptions of active citizenship, before I draw these ideas together in the final chapter (Chapter 14), where I reflect upon a new philosophy of social justice education, Justice Pedagogy.

In this section, I have taken great care to present the thoughts of the students and adults in their own words - hence the lengthy quotations from the interview transcripts; although I acknowledge that qualitative research is always a cooperative and collaborative process, and it is I, the researcher, who has selected these particular excerpts as being of particular importance, I am also conscious of the fact that students' voices have been largely absent from any discussion regarding civics and citizenship education, and one of my goals in undertaking this research was to redress this omission. I have included excerpts from my interviews with adult stakeholders where they offer support, contrast or an interesting insight into perceptions of active citizenship and civics and citizenship education.

The sections within this chapter developed from my analysis of the interview transcripts. Although, as I described in the methodology section

(Chapter Two), I had some preliminary ideas of what categories and themes might emerge from the research, and there were particular instances or ideas that I was looking for in the interviews which guided my questions, the interview process and my analysis of the transcripts was grounded in that I was open to exploring the text through a range of different lenses. Where possible, I have grouped these common themes into sections within this chapter: thus, for example, under 'Discourses about Citizenship', I have placed any telling examples that I identified from the interview transcripts.

This chapter, and the two following it, follow a logical progression: Chapter 10 deals with the way both students and adults conceive of citizenship in Western Sydney. Chapter 11 engages with the prevailing narratives about citizenship education, and Chapter 12 discusses the experiences of citizenship education by both students and teachers.

10.2 How Students Do – or Do Not – Think of Citizenship

This section will identify telling examples from the interviews with students and staff in relation to engaging with and clarifying previous definitions of citizenship, identifying the various models of citizenship education adopted in schools, and also what my research has shown about the best model for developing justice oriented citizenship. By explicating these themes, I am seeking to answer the original research questions about civics and citizenship education amongst Australian students.

One of the reasons for the Federal Government's *Discovering Democracy* initiative was concern about the ignorance and apathy of all Australians, but especially young people, in regard to their rights and responsibilities as citizens. The question of young people's apathy towards citizenship I will address later, but my research provided a number of insights into young people's understanding of what it means to be a citizen in Australia. In line with the general approach that I've taken in this research project, I have begun with the assumption the young people that I interviewed already have their own knowledges and understandings of citizenship and their role in society, although they may have trouble explaining it, and that understanding will quite likely be radically different from that present in syllabus documents.

A principal finding was that, despite the amount of work invested in civics and citizenship education over a number of years, and the quality of the

curriculum offerings, many young people at McCarthy College struggled to articulate what it actually meant to be a citizen of Australia - or, indeed, any kind of citizen. Often, when asked to explain what citizenship was, students would respond with a flat 'I don't know.' Even when prompted, (see below for an example with Ellie), students could only explain citizenship in terms of where they live.

> KEITH: Okay, alright. So let's get a little more focused here. Let's talk about citizenship. What is citizenship?
> ELLIE: I don't know.
> KEITH: Okay. If I said: "Are you a citizen of Australia, Ellie?" What would I be talking about?
> ELLIE: I don't know. Do I live in Australia?
> KEITH: Okay, so it's about where you live, yeah?

Very few students mentioned things that adults might mention - only one of the students interviewed spoke about citizenship in terms of rights and responsibilities, and none of the students mentioned voting. These are interesting indicators of the success of citizenship education in this school – or, more correctly, the lack of success that it has experienced. Instead, students talked about citizenship almost exclusively in terms of belonging to a group or community. This is addressed later in this chapter.

There was also confusion about how one became a citizen. Three students felt that you only needed to become a citizen if you were born somewhere else; that is, citizenship didn't apply to someone who was already born in Australia. For example:

> KEITH: Good, good. Okay, so that's just a little background on who you are and what you're up to, thanks for that. The next thing I want to ask you about is citizenship. What is citizenship? What is a citizen?
> NICK: It's like when, you say, if I lived in America and I moved to Australia, and I was on a visa which is going to run out, and I wanted to become a citizen, cos I wanted to live in Australia because it's better than America, you do your citizenship, which is you know everything about Australia, well, not everything, but most of the stuff, and then you become a citizen of Australia, which you'll be proud of. You're a person of that country, which you're proud of. So, yeah.
> KEITH: Okay, um... So it's associated with becoming a part of a different country.
> NICK: Yeah.

For students like Nick, as shown in the excerpt above, this was probably linked to their knowledge of citizenship ceremonies. Every year, on Australia Day, residents in outer Western Sydney suburbs like Penrith and Emu Plains celebrate people who have gained Australian citizenship and are officially welcomed as Australian citizens. Understandably, this only pertains to people

who have migrated to Australia - and therefore, to young people, this is perhaps the only mechanism of becoming a citizen that they see. They focus more on gaining a particular type of citizenship status, rather than the responsibilities or rights exercised by citizens.

Some students, however, did respond with everyday understandings of what it meant to be a citizen. These everyday understandings were linked to notions of belonging or being part of something else:

> KEITH: Citizenship. What is citizenship? If I say, you know, "That person's an Australian citizen" what's that actually mean?
> CHLOE: An Australian citizen or an any kind of citizen is someone that belongs to a group or something like their own kind of title.
> KEITH: Belongs to a group; so citizenship is all about belonging, yeah?
> CHLOE: I think so.

It is significant that Chloe identifies the word 'title', in the sense of something that is conferred upon a person as an honour. This suggests that Chloe feels that being recognised as a citizen is a title of respect and honour - this separates it from a strictly political-legal definition. Supporting this notion of citizenship as being linked to belonging, and equally significant is that students also understood that citizenship is a collective process; that is, it is not just an individual's exercise of rights.

> KEITH: What is citizenship?
> TUESDAY: Like groups, like people; citizens and people and they work together; that sort of thing, I guess.
> KEITH: Yeah, so if you're an Australian citizen, what does that mean?
> TUESDAY: You live in Australia or as a group and you've been accepted into Australia or...
> KEITH: Okay, good. So, you mentioned a group is important to this whole idea of citizenship. So you can't be a single citizen.

Tuesday suggests that becoming a citizen requires acceptance from other members of the community - that is, they are not a citizen until they have been accepted into Australian society. And:

> KEITH: No, okay. All right, next question: if I said to somebody "You're a citizen", what do you think that means? What is a citizen?
> JADE: About citizens...there's this citizen like, you're an Australian citizen and there's a citizen like, you're a citizen of society and like, you're a part of something big.
> KEITH: Okay, so hang on you said two really good things, or really interesting things. You said, "You're an Australian citizen." So if you're an Australian citizen, what does that mean?
> JADE: Like, you were born in Australia or you've got your Australian citizenship.
> KEITH: Okay, so if you were born overseas and you came to Australia and you became...
> JADE: Yeah.

KEITH: Okay and the other thing you said was, "You're a part of something." So what does that mean? If you're...
JADE: Like, you're a citizen of some group or some place and you are helpful to (inaudible) (11:16).
KEITH: Yeah. So, you kind of belong to something? Is that the right word – belonging?
JADE: Yeah.

The final comment to be made about young people's perspective of citizenship is that most of the definitions of citizenship are linked to belonging to local groups, rather than the nation-state. Although the students spoke about citizens as being part of Australia, they generally used local examples of groups that people might belong to as citizens - youth groups, church groups, sporting clubs and communities:

KEITH: If I said to you - you know, Lachlan, what civics and citizenship? What would you answer?
LACHLAN: I think it would be about being a citizen of...and just about our kind of rights and stuff in Australia.
KEITH: So what, what is a citizen?
LACHLAN: A citizen's a person who like lives in and is involved in a community, is a part of the community or a group. And they – yeah they like normally have a country.
KEITH: So -
LACHLAN: And a citizen is a person, just lives in a country and town they're a part of it, they're involved with it.

Only one student, namely Lachlan, mentioned the idea of the rights of each citizen. However, it is worth noting that Lachlan's definition of 'rights and stuff' is vague. Eckersley, Cahill, Wierenga & Wyn (2007) observed that as students grew closer to the voting age, they were more likely to be interested in politics and voting. Lachlan was more mature than the other students, and this might be the first expression of a growing understanding of the role of politics.

Lachlan also extended the definition beyond belonging to a group or community. He included examples of how a citizen might become involved in their community. To Lachlan, but not to other students, belonging was linked to action; to pick up on what Tuesday said about acceptance, Lachlan suggested that through working as an active citizen with communities, one 'bought' acceptance in Australian society.

It is my contention that students' understanding of citizenship has been muddied by the indiscriminate use of the term by teachers, policy makers and adults in general. 'Citizen' is no longer employed in a strictly legal or nationalistic sense; instead, there has been a recent profusion in the different

ways a young person might be a citizen - and this has changed or even diminished their understanding of the legal or political definition of citizenship. For example, the students were familiar with terms like global citizen or active citizen, and seemed to feel more comfortable describing those terms than they did with simply 'citizen' by itself.

10.3 Student and Staff Narratives about Active and Global Citizens

As well as wrestling with more traditional political definitions of citizenship, students and teachers were also conscious of another narrative or discourse regarding citizenship. This discourse is characterised by a broadening of the term 'citizenship' from its purely political sense to a wider definition, where the term is often appended with 'active' to denote the difference. In this sense, active citizenship is often linked to working with the community or helping others. This 'active citizenship', according to the Australian Government (MCEECDYA 1996, p. 9), is the desired result of civics and citizenship education in Australia. I believe that active citizenship should go beyond notions of national identity or suffrage, and include a wide range of actions, including protest and civil disobedience.

However, official definitions of 'active citizens' get watered down and have been interpreted in multiple ways by various educational institutions. Rather than engage with this potentially confusing definition, I have instead chosen to adopt Westheimer and Kahne's (2004, p. 241) term, 'Justice Oriented Citizenship' which includes the development of an understanding of the macro-economic and structural causes of inequality in society. I have deliberately chosen this term because it goes beyond the definition of citizenship that includes simply being able to vote or having a certain national identity.

It is pertinent that there is also ambivalence amongst teachers about what is meant by active citizenship. Firstly, it should be noted that not all teachers felt that there was - or should be - a difference between active citizenship and citizenship by itself:

> OWEN: Should there be a difference? (Laughter) I can't answer a question with a question, can I? Should there be a difference? To me, citizens are subjects, subjects in the sense that the government, even if it's a very benign government, does what it likes and we are subject to it. If we are citizens, then citizenship in and of itself is an active process in the sense that we would describe Australia, hopefully, as a participatory democracy, in the sense that we are able to contribute to it, participate in it, as opposed to the democratic republic of North Korea, which is very much not participatory, which

> is quite the opposite. I don't know whether there should be a difference between citizenship and active citizenship, and by calling it active citizenship in some ways it's kind of a double superlative where actually the word citizenship should express that, the fact that citizenship is an active process.

In the excerpt above, Owen describes citizenship, by its very nature, as active, due to the fact that, in Australia, we exist in a participatory democracy (though I would argue that Australia is more of a representative democracy, recent postal surveys notwithstanding). Owen is a teacher of HSIE (Human Society and its Environment) and his answer is quite lengthy (interestingly, he doesn't suggest the ways in which citizens can be active or participatory but one would assume that he means voting) especially when compared with other teachers. For example, Nick H, a fellow HSIE teacher, struggled to define what was meant by active citizens but is much clearer about what an active citizen might do:

> KEITH: What do you think identifies an active citizen?
> NICK H: That's a good question. With words like this, you immediately, you have this image, but sometimes its really difficult to put into words. I feel that it is someone who is....
> KEITH: Maybe, what are some actions that you think an active citizen might do?
> NICK H: I ... The image that first comes to mind is someone who is involving themselves in political parties, and actively involving themselves in issues, but that's the initial image I see, but I don't feel that's the correct image, that's a very, you know... quick view. I feel that an active citizen is someone that doesn't necessarily have to be standing out the front and handing out leaflets and being part of... but understanding what it means to be a citizen of your country, and understanding their rights, and acting out those rights, so for example, not having a blasé or apathetic view towards an election, I find a lot of people don't really care about an election, they're like I'm voting for one dickhead over another dickhead. I don't care, all politicians are wankers, but I feel an active citizen, in this context, is someone who is informed about how important it is to be informed about an election. About how lucky there are...

Nick's answer was notable for its hesitancy; Nick is a new teacher, having only been in the profession for three years, and although he clearly has some ideas about what citizenship and active citizenship is, he is also conscious that these are not complete, fully-fleshed ideas. However, Nick does deserve some credit; he is in the process of engaging with the idea of citizenship and how it might influence the way he teaches his subjects. This leads to an unwillingness to commit fully to a definition of active citizenship. Unlike Owen, Nick does explain what he thinks an active citizen might do: to Nick, this is someone who is likely to be involved in a political party. Nick also speaks about the importance of being informed - linking action with being informed, which is an issue that is at the heart of citizenship education. What should be obvious from

both of these teachers is that their expectations of active citizenship are quite low. To use Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) terminology, they would be advocating personally responsible or participatory citizenship, but certainly not justice-oriented citizenship.

Other teachers were very clear about what an active citizen is, and were capable of defining what an active citizen should be doing and also the role of schools in developing such citizens:

> PETA: Being a good citizen, doing the right thing to help people less fortunate than themselves.
> KEITH: And is that part of a school's mission? To produce good citizens?
> PETA: Absolutely. You know, it is part of a school's mission, and especially at Christian schools, to live those values and to get students to live those values. To do what they would have wished for themselves. To be kind to other people, to be thoughtful, to be aware of other people less fortunate than themselves, so there's a focus in Catholic schools. To be sympathetic and empathetic.

Peta, who is an experienced head of department, identifies that active citizenship is broader than simply actions - she was the only interview participant to talk explicitly about the role of values in civics and citizenship - and the way that education inculcates these values. For example, Peta argues that one of the key features of being a good citizen is helping people less fortunate than themselves. Of all the teachers and other adults who were interviewed, Peta was the most explicit in finding a correlation between social justice and active citizenship.

This research took place in a Catholic systemic school, where there is a great deal of emphasis placed on social justice. This commitment to social justice is often expressed in terms of charity; for example, there is a fund-raising drive for Caritas throughout Lent. Peta is expressing these values here; however, it is worth noting that this is not what would be described as justice-oriented citizenship, although it is certainly more than personally responsible citizenship, according to the continuum described by Westheimer and Kahne (2004). This kind of citizenship is closer to what Westheimer and Kahne (2004) describe as participatory: in this type of citizenship, a citizen works to alleviate the obvious symptoms of injustice. For example, they might organise a food drive to feed homeless people, or work in a local respite shelter. However, this kind of citizenship lacks the kind of critical awareness that leads to an understanding of the causes of inequality and injustice.

Students, too, ranged from having little concept of what active citizenship is:

> KEITH: What do you think active citizenship is all about?
> JAIDEN: Not too sure.

to quite sophisticated answers - answers that sometimes mirrored those of teachers:

> KEITH: Yeah... no, no, no. Good answer. The next question I want to ask is kind of related to that one. Is this emphasis in some schools about 'active citizenship'? What is active citizenship?
> SHANECE: I think active citizenship is like when you take time from your life to help the society, the community--that's active citizen to me. Like if you can...
> KEITH: Can you give us an example of what they might be like?
> SHANECE: Oh, like you could be helping the community just by going to maybe help old people at housing, taking care of the elderly or you could just be helping keeping the Australia's environment clean so that we don't run out of resources.

In this excerpt, Shanece demonstrates an awareness - and even a commitment - to environmental justice and equality. In addition, Shanece identifies that community, volunteering and activism are central to citizenship, and her ideas reflect those of Peta's about social justice. In many ways, Shanece is demonstrating some aspects of justice-oriented citizenship before *Justice Citizens* had even begun - although there is no evidence of a critical understanding present yet. Another example came from Lachlan:

> KEITH: Okay, good. So something else you often hear about is an 'active citizen'. what's an active citizen?
> LACHLAN: Active Citizen I guess they're...an active citizen would be someone you see they're always in like, they're standing out for like example (the carbon tax) they don't want the carbon tax, they'll stand up against that and use their freedom of speech which is why Australia's...Australia's known for.
> KEITH: So, could that be an active citizen if they're standing up for the carbon tax as well?
> LACHLAN: No, yeah, well if they stand up for what they believe in that's...
> KEITH: Standing up for what they believe in, okay, yeah, good. Alright great, that is an active citizen.

Lachlan's answer is interesting because he actually engages with this idea of resistance - albeit on a superficial level. Nevertheless, Lachlan specifically identifies that being an active citizen involves 'standing up for what you believe in' and he acknowledges that this might lead to conflict between different points of view. Other students also suggested that there were a variety of forms of resistance or protest that were possible:

> KEITH: Okay, let's go back to what you said. You said it's fighting for what you believe in? Does that mean actually fighting?

MADDY: No, no.
KEITH: So what kind of things do you do when you fight for something?
MADDY:: I mean like doing something about it. Like, for example, Kony 2012 thing, that guy he actually got people to learn about what was happening in Uganda.
KEITH: So making a film about it.
MADDY:: And kind of like informing people.
KEITH: What about protest march?
MADDY:: Yeah. Yeah.
KEITH: I'm really interested in this Kony 2012 thing. Tell me about this Kony 2012 thing.
MADDY:: What I've heard is that this guy has been like raping children...
KEITH: Who? Kony?
MADDY:: Yeah, Kony. And he's been treating people like slaves and scum. And the government can't really do anything about it. So now this guy he found out about it and he's trying to stop it and I think he's done a good job.
KEITH: Have you done any research on the whole thing yourself?
MADDY:: Yeah, I've watched a couple of videos, made by this Invisible Children guy.

Maddy identifies that the media is capable of informing people's opinions about different subjects, raising the Kony 2012 (this was a social media campaign aimed at raising awareness about Joseph Kony, the leader of a guerrilla group in Uganda) example as one way that a film, distributed via social media, has galvanised public feeling about an issue, especially amongst young people.

Whether students or teachers, there were two camps - those who struggled to identify what was meant by active citizenship, and those who could define active citizenship and provide examples of it.

My interviews reveal that there is hardly any explicit understanding of, let alone commitment to, justice-oriented citizenship. The examples of citizenship mentioned by teachers and students were based on ideas of community service (helping the elderly), charity work (raising money for poor people) and environmental work (cleaning up the local environment). Justice-oriented examples might involve some of the same elements, but would possibly include questioning why there are poor people in the first place, or demanding to know why companies have the ability to pollute the local environment to begin with.

Although most of this research project engaged with ideas of active citizenship, at times there were discussions about some of the other variants of citizenship; in particular, 'global citizenship'. However, this was even more challenging for students to engage with, and all the students I spoke with struggled to explain what global citizenship might mean:

KEITH: Okay. Something that you often hear mentioned these days, that is, have you ever heard the term 'global citizen'?

ELLIE: No.
Keith: No? Okay. What do you think a 'global citizen' might be? It's a bit hard if you haven't heard it before.
ELLIE: A person who goes all around the world? I don't know - someone like that.

While I have no particular interest in defining global citizenship, I have included this because I think it problematic that it has become another commonly used term in the debate about citizens and citizenship. It furthers the argument that the actual notion of citizenship has become muddied and confused in educational circles.

In summary, the teachers and students who I interviewed did not espouse a justice oriented perspective on citizenship. They defined active citizenship only with a focus on community service or Christian values. However, it should be acknowledged that some participants (like Lachlan and Shanece) bring quite sophisticated inklings about the other end of the continuum by referring to environmental justice and standing up for what you believe. Some participants suggested that being informed was a necessary part of active citizenship; the next section will discuss this and other more critical components.

CHAPTER 11 – PREVAILING NARRATIVES ABOUT ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

11.1 Definitions of Citizenship: Top-down vs youth-led

Shermis and Barth (1982) reject the received notion that before students can become an active citizen, then they must be informed about the institutional principles that underpin democracy. The dominant creed, however, is often articulated as a top-down, government-led approach to citizenship education like *Discovering Democracy* (Curriculum Corporation 1998, as discussed in Chapter Four). O'Loughlin (1997) suggests, by way of contrast, that citizenship education should be less about the history of democracy and its governing fundamentals, and more about the experiences of young men and women growing up in Australia. This call for a youth-centred approach to civics and citizenship education is one that is growing increasingly common; Nicoll, Fejes, Olson, Dahlstedt and Biesta (2013), for example, have rejected the dominant discourses in citizenship education and instead suggested broadening the notion of citizenship discourses to include ideas of citizenship that stem from young people themselves.

My interviews confirm the wider research that the construction of active citizenship remains a confused field; that the states and territories of Australia have all, in the past and continuing on to the present day, adopted different approaches to citizenship education compounds this. This confusion was probably enhanced by the fact that staff who were tasked with delivering civics and citizenship education lacked formal qualifications in the subject area (Mellor 2003), and some were not able to take part in the professional development that accompanied the launch of *Discovering Democracy*.

11.2 Tentative Understandings of Active Citizenship

Of the 12 teachers and youth workers that I interviewed, most struggled to describe active citizenship. The most commonly identified trait of an active citizen was the need to be informed. A number of the teachers interviewed

suggested that it was important for students to be informed or aware, but these teachers often did not develop that further by suggesting that there was a need for a critical approach. Thus, in terms of civics and citizenship programs like *Discovering Democracy*, some teachers seemed to feel that knowing about the systems of government was enough to be active as a citizen - there was no requirement to actually take part in any meaningful way. This is one such example:

> OWEN: Well, I think active citizens, the first part of the process is being informed. One of the ... civil and political rights... is the right to seek and impart information, so surely part of being a citizen is being informed, which I think goes beyond reading the Tele (a local Tabloid newspaper), to hear what someone else thinks about it., you know, nine year old reading level, nine year old reading language.

Owen is expressing a point of view that is quite common amongst the teachers I spoke to (and, according to my review of the literature, also amongst other teachers and policy makers). In the extract above, Owen suggests that there is a chronological order to be followed in citizenship education. Firstly, a student must become informed. Only after that, Owen seems to suggest, can a student actually become 'active' - whatever that might mean. As well as coming first, the notion of being informed is also the most important part of being an active citizen; indeed, a teacher's responsibility, according to some, ends with informing young people.

This approach, while common, is part of the problem with citizenship education in Australia. Rather than a linear, cause and effect understanding of citizenship (if you know this, then you'll be an active citizen), my research seeks to introduce an alternative paradigm, based on a new philosophy of civics and citizenship education. This approach, which I describe in more detail later in this thesis, is called 'Justice Pedagogy' and it is a more complex approach because it adopts a praxis model to citizenship education. Freire (1970) described praxis as 'reflective action' - wherein action and reflection are combined into the same motion. When applied to citizenship education, this suggests that students can become informed through the process of doing citizenship education-related activities, rather than having to learn about them first, before doing them.

Another element that some teachers identified was the idea that the purpose of citizenship education was to develop an element of criticality. This

was best exemplified by Owen who said that this critical element occurred as part of becoming informed:

> OWEN: And so it would be my hope that, once we've educated these students, that they will believe democracy to be important, I think it is, believe it to be important and be able to actually participate in it in a thoughtful, critical, intelligent way, rather, than I vote Labor cos me dad does – that sort of unthinking approach, I think its really important.

In the interview excerpt above, Owen also unconsciously highlights one of the contradictions in citizenship education. He expresses the hope that students would come to believe that democracy is good and important -this kind of assumption is common in many forms of citizenship education - but in the next sentence he argues for students to be able to think critically and analytically. This suggests then it is also important to encourage students to think critically about democracy as a form of government, too, rather than simply accepting the assumption that it is automatically 'good'. Such an analysis might require students to consider the way that democracy might only serve the needs of a limited number of groups within society, or the troubled history of women's or Indigenous rights in Australia when compared to the ideals of democracy.

Discussions about the value of democracy over other forms of government go straight to the centre of the matter of what it means to be an active citizen in Australia; the development of a tolerant and diverse society is important in Australia for many reasons.

As shown in the excerpt above, Owen was disparaging about parts of the print media, especially the tabloid newspapers. This was mirrored by most of the other teachers, who were critical of the media and its role in 'dumbing down' and oversimplifying public debate. Television media, in particular, was heavily denigrated for its less than critical approach to important issues. I've chosen Peta's comments to represent the general thrust of the teachers' point of view regarding the media.

> PETA: I think what immediately springs to mind is that we're used to being a first world nation, we're possibly one of the most economically successful nations in the world at this present time, and we don't have hardship, we don't have war, we don't have conflict, we don't have insecurity, so um what I think is really important is to raise kids that are aware that this ain't reality, we live in an <unintelligible>> world, and one of the most important things is to make it clear to young kids that our trickle of refugees that arrive by boats is like a miniscule point something of a percent of the number of refugees that exist in the world and we shouldn't be bleating and crying about what are we going to do, but that's the general dialogue of the commercial media and it's really hard to work against that. It's not our dialogue, it's the dialogue of a certain mindset.

KEITH: I understand.
PETA: I think it's really hard to explain that to children. Also, I think that Australia has a really, really big problem of being isolated. It doesn't share a border, so the minute anyone comes across its borders, we have, we get really stressed, which is not reality for any European country, it's not reality for any Asian country, you know, they're all interconnected.
KEITH: Yeah, it's that island mentality.
PETA: And I think that's a really important global issue that we need to instil in children. I think that there is some work being done, and I think that's important for schools to do because sometimes there's a mindset around, in that age group that take the Today-Tonight view, so I think it's important that schools work hard on that, and again I think that global issues, like whaling, how do you untangle that whole thing about we're being illegal... these people are being illegal by boarding these whaling boats, but we're being a bit spineless by not saying you can't do this because they're a trade partner. So that international relation is a really hard one to untangle, and most people can't do it, but kids can engage that, if it's presented to them.

Peta is suggesting that young people are not being engaged critically by the media. Because the media presents controversial issues in a certain way, students often accept that as fact, when in reality it is far from a considered point of view. However, Peta is optimistic about young people's capability of engaging with these issues on a more sophisticated level when they are given a chance. In particular, she suggests that while the issues related to whaling and asylum seekers are 'hard ... to untangle', 'kids can engage with that if it's presented to them.'

This is another form of critical engagement with the media and these issues; in such a case, the citizenship education classroom becomes a site for resistance, and the whole structure of the course moves away from awareness raising and towards an approach more closely aligned with critical pedagogy. As Owen explains:

> OWEN: I use those specific examples to teach those specific ideas and to try and teach students to approach what's happening in the world around them in a fairly critical way, and not to simply accept verbatim what we're told by the media and the politicians, the particular interpretations that are given to things by political parties in order for their own political ends.

Owen is explicitly teaching students to question what they are told by media and politicians, but he is doing this in a particular way. Rather than the self-defeating resistance that characterises much student action in schools, this form of resistance is aimed at developing a better understanding of the world and the students' role in it; this echoes Freire's (1974) depictions of a critical consciousness.

Other teachers (and many students) identified much more localised issues than whaling or asylum seekers. In some cases, this was linked to a

critical awareness of place. For example, Peter, an older teacher who was dedicated to teaching students about environmental issues, emphasised the importance of students learning about place and its links to civic responsibility:

> KEITH: So, the kind of um... the kind of trait that you've identified an active citizen might have is a critical awareness, I guess.
> PETER: Yes. You've got to have a very strongly analytical sense of the quality and place. Sense of place is so important to a sense of civic responsibility. Because if you really are connected to the place in which you live, you are constantly looking at how it's going and you are making moves to minimise its problems and accentuate its values, so that you are liable to do things that other people would find astonishing. Landcare strikes me as a marvellous initiative. And the fact that it came out of the Farmer's Federation, working with the Greens, strikes me as the most amazing combination of bedfellows. Farmers have for years been accused of pillaging and you know not caring.

In the excerpt above, Peter makes a point that other students mirrored. For Peter, active citizenship has direct links with being part of, and looking after, the local community, especially its natural environment. Students were far more likely than teachers to identify examples of active citizenship that were related to their local community than more national examples.

11.3 Adult Accounts of Active Citizenship

While students and, indeed, teachers, struggled to reach a consensus on the definition of what citizenship meant or what it included, both groups were able to identify examples of what they thought was active citizenship. While teachers were more likely to identify examples of active citizenship with a political angle, students were more likely to identify examples that were closer to their own experience, centred in their own community.

Teachers often drew examples from their own experience in the classroom. Owen, for example, spoke about a student who was passionate about Indigenous issues:

> OWEN: Yes, I used to teach a girl in year 10 several years ago whose father was one of the original freedom riders... Charles Perkins (Charles Perkins was a well-respected Indigenous rights campaigner)... used to travel around NSW. Aboriginal man, educated at Sydney Uni, and his daughter was absolutely fanatical about anything Aboriginal. Aboriginal rights, tent embassy and she would on occasion, be so desperately passionate about these issues that she exceeded the bounds of the information she had. The opinion outstripped the information. But she was passionate about it and willing to debate it and critique it and everything else.

Again, in the excerpt above, Owen identifies the notion of being informed as being vital to active citizenship; however, he acts as a kind of gatekeeper in this excerpt, criticising the student in his class because her passion 'exceeded the bounds of the information she had.' Owen identifies the struggle for Indigenous

Australian recognition as something that an 'active citizen' might be involved in, but he is hesitant to describe his student as an active citizen, despite her interest and desire to work towards justice for Indigenous Australians. For Owen, in his authority figure role of classroom teacher, he was only willing to allow the student in question to be 'active' in the ways that he accepted. This is an example of the ways that an adult discourse about what is or isn't active citizenship can silence a student's voice.

Another teacher, Nick, identified an issue that was in the news at the time. He explained the way that social media was alive with criticism about the SOPA Act in the US (SOPA was a proposed law planning to limit privacy for online media users):

> NICK: There was an enormous uproar in these online forums and these online communities and it was quite a shock for me to see young people so... and a lot of these people are people who are not politically minded, and they felt that it was an attack on their freedom, so whenever there's an attack on their freedom, and... that's when I see young people becoming, you know... outspoken, and you even see this within school, whenever students are told, you, for example, year 11 can't go home early on Thursdays because they've got a class, and they feel that's an attack on their freedom, and their privileges as a senior student, so I feel whenever there is an attack on personal freedom on the young people or on their privileges, that's kind of when they stand tall, but on issues of things that don't, aren't, tangible to them or aren't direct to them, so boat people... they're like, it doesn't affect me, I don't live on the coast of WA, I don't ever see it, I only see it on the news, if they watch it on the news, definitely attacks on personal freedom.
> KEITH: So motivated, perhaps, by self-interest?
> NICK: Yeah, of course, self interest.

Nick identifies that young people are far more likely to become outspoken about an issue if they feel that it is an attack on their personal freedom; in this, Nick identifies the key notion of self-interest and its role in determining active citizenship. Crucially, he also is aware that some of the issues that are important to young people are not necessarily those that are seen as important by others: for example, the SOPA Act received very little in the way of coverage in the Australian mainstream media, but young people were clearly both informed of the issue and concerned about the way that they felt it might impinge upon what they saw as a fundamental right: the right to access the internet. This also is interesting for the fact that it shows that young people are often capable of using new media in order to gain information about topics that they are interested in - and engaging income forms of activism about those issues (debates about the virtues of clicktivism notwithstanding).

Another individual that I interviewed, Sue Brown, was not a teacher. She was the president of the Parents and Friends Association at McCarthy and

played a very active role in the school community, attending events, working in the canteen and acting as a 'critical friend'. I interviewed Sue because I thought that, as a parent of a teenager and also as someone not expressly trained as a teacher, she might have some contrasting examples of what it meant to be an active citizen. Not surprisingly, Sue was very forthright in her views about just this topic:

> SUE: It's not an easy thing because by the time kids are in high school and becoming young adults, they've all these different layers of interest and things that pique their interest or don't. So, you have to try and tap into all those areas. The only way you can do that is by continually having people from the community come in through the door and inviting those kids to come and help at whatever activity they've got. For example, you've got Relay for Life, so you've got those people coming in saying: "Look, we know this isn't everyone's cup of tea or you've got family commitments and you can't make it but for those of you that came, come along." You had the Salvation Army here last weekend so (inaudible) (27:26). You have the other things people can (inaudible) (27:34) but all you can do is have...say 'yes' to as many people who knock on the door asking, obviously it's got to fit into the realms of, you know, child safety and everything else, but who are looking for young people to go and help them.
> KEITH: Absolutely...putting the school out there in the community or bringing the community into the school.
> SUE: Yeah! And again, it's really hard because in high school and any school, teachers are just so time poor, the curriculum is so demanding plus you have to do all of the extra-curricular activities to try and engage every child at school and so to do that, you've got to offer them all these other extra (inaudible) (28:17) activities, you know, the things you do after school; your archaeology group, your (inaudible) (28:21). All those things is trying to engage kids into a group where they're thinking of themselves...yes they enjoy it but they're also looking at what they can achieve as a group. If you get kids starting to achieve things as a group, then they realize that it's not all about me but also then those groups might move onto to other activities and you think: "Well, hang on. I don't want to graffiti that wall because that's where my group meets and I don't like that feel of having graffiti on the wall."
> It then starts to bring in all those other peripheral things because it brings out ownership of you, ownership of a common good that we're doing something as a group and then maybe hopefully, ownership of that area where our group does their activity. And yes, you then have to cope with the downfall when someone does graffiti your area, but then you...if you feel that you've been hard (inaudible) (29:19) then that means good. That means your community's psyche is starting to develop.

Sue offers a powerful contrast to the individualistic ideal of young people as suggested by Nick in the previous excerpt. While Nick argues that young people seem to express citizenship in a self-interested way, Sue (while not necessarily disagreeing with that point of view) argues that it is the role of the school to try and develop a more community minded point of view. She suggests that by involving young people in collective action then it will lead to them thinking about others, as well as themselves: 'If you get kids starting to achieve things as a group, then they realise that it's not all about me.' Sue is also very explicit about the importance of 'doing' citizenship, rather than simply

learning about it. For Sue, and especially for the other students that I spoke to, active citizenship was best encouraged through participation in community or school activities.

Sue, perhaps because of her different perspective when compared to teachers, also recognises the role that community groups play in the development of active citizenship. In particular, Sue argues that young people need to be exposed to as many different kinds of experiences and community groups as possible. In the excerpt above, Sue identifies Relay for Life (a charity that seeks to raise money for cancer research) and the Salvation Army (a Christian charity that seeks to help those in poverty) as examples of groups that work with schools to develop active citizenship. This is a crucial point, and one with which I agree strongly; if students are going to 'do' citizenship, that is, be active citizens rather than simply learn about citizenship, then it is vital that young people are active in real issues in their local communities - which necessitates school-community partnerships.

11.4 Student Accounts of Active Citizenship

The role of the local community is something that was identified by students, too:

> KEITH: What kind of things does a citizen need to know about?
> LACHLAN: They need to know about their area.
> KEITH: Their local community, what about their local community?
> LACHLAN: You need to know, you know the strong aspects; what's wrong with their community and why sometimes their community is good.
> KEITH: Okay.
> LACHLAN: They need to know, what's good for the community as well, so you know things that a make it a better community. They need to know about people in the community as well. So, we don't lead to ignorant people, so you know with immigrants and stuff they don't want...you don't want them being just not aware...because like new formed idiot almost. Where they -
> KEITH: Yeah.
> LACHLAN: They think they know or he's from somewhere, not going to talk about anything. If they know about cultures and the world they will... they will know about – they'll be more tolerant and more patient.
> KEITH: Yeah, okay.
> LACHLAN: So a citizen yeah needs to know those kinds of things.

In the excerpt above, Lachlan's conception of an active citizen is based almost entirely on his or her involvement in their local community, founded on a deep knowledge of what is wrong and what is good about their local community. However, it would be wrong to think that Lachlan's response is simplistic because of his emphasis on the local over the national or international. Indeed,

Lachlan describes the importance of citizens knowing 'about cultures and the world' with the end result of them being 'more tolerant and more patient'. I think this level of understanding is impressive for anybody, but especially for a teenager. Lachlan has effectively linked the need for global knowledge with its effects within local communities - and the importance of such knowledges for civil society.

Lachlan also demonstrates a beginning understanding of a critical consciousness. He specifically references that it is important to know 'what's wrong with their community' as well as the importance of knowing 'things that make it a better community'. In these excerpts, it seems that Lachlan is starting to recognise the causes of injustices in his community but also his - and other citizens - agency to change these issues. In hindsight, it would have been valuable to explore these issues further; I believe it is touching upon a theme that is vital to active citizenship: it is not enough to recognise that there are problems in our communities. Rather, we must envision a future that is more just, and then work collectively to achieve that future.

Other students did actually go further than Lachlan in their descriptions of local issues and how they might interact with them:

> SHANECE: We've discussed some topics for film making...what we could do to...we were making films (inaudible) (14:23) on bullying or discrimination with the one that we're doing. We're doing bullying. So, we're going to try and make one out why people actually do start bullying?" When somebody bullies someone it's just supposed that maybe they've got a bad home or they don't really have much to do. I find out this is a really good subject because it shows how we can kind of deal with it and how we can stop it in some ways. [Interviewer coughing]
> KEITH: And, do you see bullying as an issue related to justice like all the other issues we've talked about?
> SHANECE: Yes, I do, because like for bullying...bullying rates are really high for our age, so that's why I find it...it is part of justice because no one really deserves to be bullied. We all should treat each other equally.
> Keith: Okay, okay. And, making a film is going to do what?
> SHANECE: Making a film will help people understand in a way that 'it's not right to do that'. And then, you can try and see what strategies to use to kind of stop it.
> KEITH: Okay. So, it's creating awareness and providing assistance to people who might be being bullied already.

Shanece wanted to make a film about bullying. However, unlike the rather tepid efforts that such school-led films often are, Shanece took a much more critical approach to the film-making process. Shanece was particularly looking for a way to address root causes of bullying. Rather than leaving it as 'bullying is bad' or that 'bullying is something that just happens', Shanece is suggesting that she has a role to play in working towards a more just school environment.

This is interesting for two reasons: firstly, Shanece is rejecting the role assigned to students in most educational institutions. She is not willing to be an 'object' to be worked upon (to use Freire's terminology) but instead sees herself as a subject - capable of acting against injustices that she identifies. She also recognises that bullying, in this case, is not just a fact of life, but something that can be changed. Secondly, Shanece is also realistic in that she doesn't expect a single film to address bullying at her school, but she recognises that it might contribute towards an awareness and a possible solution sometime in the future.

Another example from the students was helping out in the local church:

> NICK A: I sometimes help out at the church so, say, if we have a big mass or baptism coming up, I stay up at the church and help them prepare for the thingo, and when I was in year 6, at the end of year 6, I was the recipient of the Fr Kevin Hannan award. That's for community service, and I was the second person ever to get the award, so I was real proud of that.
> KEITH: What kinds of things did you do to get that award?
> NICK A: Altar serving for thing, then I helped with my school, which is part of my parish. I helped them with a lot of staff out of school and in school, and also with the church I connected up with, I went to a, last year I went to WYD with my parish, but not actually where it was, in Parramatta. We went to that, as our church. And we were proud of that, me, Bill Riley and Joshua Picones, and just through that year, they were looking at people, and I just helped as much as I can in my parish and at school and that.
> KEITH: And you're not getting anything for doing this are you...
> NICK A: Nah, I just love to altar serve, it's something that I like to do, and hopefully after I finish, I'm going to become an acolyte. So I can keep on helping with the church, so I try and not go away from them.

Nick identified that this was part of being an active citizen, and that he had actually been recognised with an award because of his service. Although the ideas of service are often foregrounded in a Christian community and a Christian school, it is clear that Nick believes that they are applicable to everybody as a model of community service. Nick is also clear that active citizenship often stems from a voluntary basis, and from a passion that is already there. Finally, Nick also identifies the pride that he feels from being of service to the community. All of these factors are, I would argue, central to understanding student and young person discourses about citizenship and therefore they should be included in any program aimed at developing active citizenship.

This is something that Nick returns to, later in the interview. When asked about what a good citizen should do, Nick replies with this:

> NICK A: But I think as many people as possible should go to church and should try and help as much as they can with their community, because there should be more

> volunteers out there, and there's a lot of things to do, especially with homeless people, doing soup kitchens, there's not a lot of volunteers who do that, there's just volunteers, the good thing is that you feel proud of it at the end.

This excerpt shows that Nick is aware of the collective nature of social change. This is a quite sophisticated critique. In a way that is a startling departure from Nick H's (the teacher, above) depiction of teenagers as only being interested in active citizenship when there is an element of self interest, Nick (the student) instead suggests that young people can be active, and they can do it in a selfless way. The only reward that Nick identifies for volunteering is 'that you feel proud of it at the end'.

Another example of active citizenship came from Jaiden, an Indigenous Australian student at McCarthy College. Jaiden critiques the place of young indigenous men in society by referring to the work that his father is undertaking. Jaiden, when asked to identify someone who he thought was an active citizen, spoke about his father and the work he had done to encourage sporting talent amongst local youth:

> JAIDEN: Yeah, my dad and two of his friends.
> KEITH: So they set it up because they realized young Aboriginal people didn't have opportunities...
> JAIDEN: Well, it's cos like... it's for the Mt Druitt kids as well, the ones in trouble and that, try to keep them out of trouble so they have stuff to do, cos most of their families and stuff... That's where my dad used to live back then, and like they didn't have a stable life. And they want to keep them out of trouble, so they have something to look forward too, and keep their skills too. Also trying to raise the money first, trying to raise the money so we can get stuff, to make them feel a part of something, not left out in the world. And like, cos couple of our people in our thing have been like, they're about fourteen and they've been locked up, getting in trouble, getting in fights and that, so we've got to give them something to do, somewhere to go, like we're all family and stuff. And when we're on the streets and that, the kids say hello, so we can all stick together, so when you walk past someone you can say hello.

It would be easy to dismiss this as an example of sport being used as an escape from poverty or crime, which is not necessarily such a bad thing, but Jaiden is very clear that there is more to this project than simply sporting and financial success. While Jaiden acknowledges that there are issues in Mount Druitt ('the ones in trouble and that'), he also recognises the role that belonging to a group or community has upon an individual. His father and his colleagues are attempting to do much more than simply coach a football team; instead, they are trying to build community where previously none might have existed. Not only that, but Jaiden is also capable of identifying ways that communities strengthen the bonds they have with each other: 'so we can all stick together, so when you walk past someone you can say hello.'

Jaiden also had lots of ideas about the ways that he could be an active citizen. Interestingly, they matched some of the examples set by his father. In particular, Jaiden was concerned about everybody getting the chance to have their say - regardless of their ethnic background. This suggests that Jaiden was conscious that schools - and the broader community -were privileging traditional white voices over the voices of indigenous Australians and Islanders:

> JAIDEN: We should have a culture day. Cos culture is a big issue because people get teased and that. They should have festivals or something, bring some culture back, heaps of cultures, just so everyone can get to know each other and that.
> KEITH: Are you talking about in the school or in the whole community?
> JAIDEN: The whole community. Yeah.
> KEITH: So why haven't you organized it?
> JAIDEN: My dad and his other friends were going to like do that, they were going to like, going to have like a multiculture day, and every team from a different culture, with a massive field with all the Fijians, the Samoans, the Cook Islands, and they'd have like all the dance what the culture do. They'd have the food, and like everything like that. The rules and that stuff. Show them how to cook the food and do stuff like that. That's what they were going to do. That's what they're trying to do as well.

However, although Jaiden recognises the way these voices are marginalised, and also how other people (in this case, his father and his friends) might strive to provide a site for those alternative voices, he doesn't see much of a role for himself in this process -and certainly not much of a role at school. When asked why he hasn't organised an event like this, Jaiden avoids the question, and returns to speaking about what his father would do. He uses a 'they' a lot in this excerpt, not, as you might suspect 'we', which perhaps suggests the powerlessness that Jaiden personally feels. This was something that I noticed throughout Justice Citizens: students were aware of the possibility for social change, but they were conscious of their own inability to prosecute it.

Later in the interview, Jaiden returns to his theme of social isolation and its detrimental effects upon young people:

> KEITH: Yeah... Is there enough for young people to do around Penrith?
> JAIDEN: Yeah. Sort of. But everything is kind of too far away.
> KEITH: So it's not close enough really. What happens when people don't feel welcome?
> JAIDEN: All kinds of stuff like suicide and that. Like. People feel left out, sometimes it can make you do bad stuff, cos like, if you're left out...
> KETIH: commit crimes...
> JAIDEN: Yeah, and no one likes you and that.
> KEITH: Yeah, it can. I agree with that. Definitely. Do you know anyone whose felt like that? You don't have to say their name.
> JAIDEN: Um... Some people. Yeah.

In a way that shows a level of sophistication sometimes considered lacking from teenagers views of the world, Jaiden is well aware that feelings of isolation

from communities can lead to anti-social behaviour. In particular, Jaiden highlights suicide, as well as 'bad stuff', which one imagines means committing crimes or something similar. He also explains that he knows some people like that. In the film that Jaiden made, *Indigenous Voices*, he cites some examples of people that he has known and the way that they have been treated by society. He also spent a lot of time researching things like the incarceration rate of young Indigenous men, as well as the way these groups were presented to the media.

In this chapter, I have explained some of the prevailing narratives that are present in discussions about active citizenship. I have also presented data and interpretation from interviews to elucidate the formation of these narratives. In the following chapter, I will explore how students and teachers experience citizenship education, and how that shapes their understanding of what it means to be an active citizen in Australia in the 21st century.

CHAPTER 12 – STUDENT AND TEACHER EXPERIENCES OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

In the previous chapter I focused on the various understandings staff and students expounded of what constitutes active citizenship. In this chapter I shift the focus from conceptualising to delivering and learning education for active citizenship.

12.1 The Classroom Reality of Citizenship Education Being Delivered through Formal Curriculum and Explicit Instruction

The notion of civics and citizenship education as per government directives from ACARA and previously as part of *Discovering Democracy* was one that elicited sobering responses. In some cases, teachers only vaguely acknowledged that there was a requirement for civics and citizenship education across Key Learning Areas (KLAs). Then there were teachers who were aware of how citizenship learning was embedded across KLA's, but only paid lip service to them - seeing them as an 'extra' to core curriculum. Only a small group of teachers were knowledgeable and able to discuss how they tried to draw in civics and citizenship elements into different subjects.

The first group constructed civics and citizenship education as an extra component to their teaching, and one that was often seen as optional.

> NICK H: Not really. It always, to me, felt like just a tack-on to the end. Even when I was going through school, we were never specifically taught civics and citizenship. Our subjects were history and geography. They were never civics and citizenship. It wasn't until we got to these exams that we went, what is civics and citizenship? I remember feeling this when I was a student, oh this is just something that doesn't stand as a separate entity, it must just be a part of it that I would be covering as part of this exam.

The fact that Nick, a teacher, in the excerpt above, reflects back upon his own previous experience as a student - and not as a teacher - is particularly telling. It suggests that, despite his training to work as a *Human Society and its Environment* (HSIE) teacher in NSW, civics and citizenship education has been conspicuously absent. This shows the way that civics and citizenship education,

despite its important status as described by the Melbourne Declaration, has been marginalised.

Ian, an older, more experienced teacher, when asked what he knew about the civics and citizenship education requirements, responded:

> IAN: Very little. If it was just presented as a heading on a page and what it actually entails, umm, but I could imagine I'm involved in um... some small way with developing a lot of elements of what you go in with, know what you mean. I've never had it at a PD, never talked about that, never had it presented as, this is a goal for our school, coming down from the executive.

Ian explains that he has never had any kind of PD (Professional Development) for citizenship education. In fact, as far as he's concerned, it has never been talked about at a whole school level. This clearly shows the gap between the Federal Government's rhetoric about the importance of developing an active and informed citizenry, as announced in the Melbourne Declaration, and the reality at the basic classroom level, where a commitment to civics and citizenship education appears to be optional, at best.

However, this is not to say that teachers are not concerned with developing active citizenship through different projects, and do this in a variety of different ways, regardless of the formal directives. Indeed, both Nick and Ian could describe at length projects involving students that they had undertaken that they felt encouraged active citizenship. Nick described a re-creation of World War I that he had taken part in and directed. He felt that this was an example of active citizenship because it was an effort to encourage students to consider their position on Australia's overseas military involvement. Ian was able to explain how his work regarding sustainability was so important for active citizenship; for him, part of active citizenship was ensuring that the environment's resources were used in a sustainable way.

12.2 Implementing Citizenship Education through Informal Curriculum Strategies and Implicit Instruction

Of course, civics and citizenship education is a broad endeavour, and conceivably teachers might be involved in teaching civics and citizenship education values and knowledge without being conscious of it. Indeed, part of the directives from ACARA suggest that civics and citizenship education should be taught in a variety of different ways that includes both explicit and implicit instruction.

I quote Peter extensively here because this excerpt is a good example of a teacher 'doing' citizenship education through implicit instruction.

> PETER: I am in the classroom to enable these students to see they have civic responsibility. Civic responsibility is about this whole society, and this whole basis of our society, which is the environmental angle, needing to become the best it can be.
> KEITH: Can you unpack that a little bit more? What do you mean by society as a whole becoming the best it can be?
> PETER: I want the students in my class to go out with what I see as truly civic virtues. So, I spend a lot of time emphasising that when someone's breaking the rule, and I don't know who it is, I expect honesty to be the first response. So, if there are a whole lot of people speaking, I ask them to stand up because I am a huge believer in honesty. These guys with the Wivenhoe Dam, honesty is just totally central to any possible civic society. If people can't be trusted, we are nowhere. This is a very big truth that comes through in one of the texts that I teach, because the texts, and this one is Macbeth and Son by Jackie French, she is totally convinced of the importance of the need to trust everybody, because everything breaks down if we can't trust anybody and we've had so many examples, I've quoted a few there, that are so outstanding in the betrayal of trust and people in public positions lying, that that's just got to be, I feel, dealt with in the classroom by the ways that I deal with it, by asking for honesty. But patience – so much of road rage and all the kinds of domestics and all the kinds of other social dislocations and dysfunctions come about because people have not got a peaceful patience about them. So, often in class, when the stress is on, and there's a fair bit of misbehaviour, or a fair bit of frustration, I say to the kids, right, pens down, I am going for a walk. I am going for a walk past the palace of peacefulness in the forest of fun, over the lawn of laughter to the pool of patience and I am going to have a big dip in the pool of patience, I'm in the pool now. It's so good to be in the pool now. I'm going to come out of the pool, dripping with patience, and we're all going to be able to get along better because the stress on teachers and the modeling that they can show when the pressures on, is crucial I think to these students having an idea of a person who actually conducts themselves in a humane way and socially enhancing, socially creative, and I mean creative not just in the sense of bright ideas, but in the sense of creating a society in which people can be themselves and flow into their jobs and produce the best they can. The happiest workers are always the most productive, so these virtues I've mentioned, plus self-control, plus kindness, plus compassion, plus a sense of looking after each other, which is embedded in kindness and compassion, but actually taking steps to be of assistance when there are calls on our... on our best selves. To be our best self.

Peter, a very experienced teacher, is clearly passionate and enthusiastic about the task of teaching young people to be active and informed citizens - or at least what he thinks an active and informed citizen might be. Peter doesn't talk about being an active citizen; instead, he talked about a citizen's civic responsibility and his role as a teacher to develop it amongst the students he teachers. This responsibility, according to Peter is about society 'becoming the best it can be.' Peter then outlines some of the qualities that he thinks are part of this: honesty, self-control, kindness, compassion, assisting each other. Importantly, Peter doesn't just leave these as ephemeral qualities; he clearly identifies that civic responsibility involves working to help others: 'actually taking steps to be of assistance...' This fits in with a lot of the ideas of critical pedagogy that have

previously been explored in this thesis - and also with the principles upon which the project was based. It also sets Peter's work apart from other programs of civics and citizenship education. These programs, especially *Discovering Democracy*, emphasised firstly knowledge, and then action as something to come later, whereas Peter emphasises the need for action to begin now. In Peter's understanding (and, I should add, in mine too), young people can be active citizens from an early age, both within and without the classroom.

Peter also makes a point about trust being at the heart of any kind of civic responsibility. In fact, civic responsibility begins with trust. Peter seeks to develop this trust amongst his students - both in student to student relationships and the relationships students have with their teachers. However, it should be noted that it is trust on Peter's terms. At no point does Peter invite students into any kind of shared decision making or engagement with the content of what he is teaching; those decisions are Peter's alone to make. In this fashion, Peter characterises an older form of civics and citizenship education, in which such education is 'done' to children, for their own good, and they have little say in the matter. I discuss this idea at length in the following chapters.

The final point is that Peter, probably more successfully than the other teachers that I spoke to, was able to successfully link his own practice – implicit instruction - and the curriculum with the development of active citizens. In particular, Peter speaks about the texts that he uses in English - he selected *Macbeth and Son* specifically because of the importance it places on truth, which he feels is vital to the development of civic responsibility. In this way, civics and citizenship education becomes an overarching theme to all the subjects, rather than a single subject jammed into an already busy curriculum. Indeed, Mellor (2003) recommends teaching civics and citizenship in this way.

Here is another teacher's account of teaching citizenship through implicit instruction.

> OWEN: You're teaching Ancient History in Stage 6 - looking at Sparta and Athens, one being democratic and one being kind of totalitarian and militaristic state and looking at and critiquing their version of democracy and critiquing their version of authoritarianism. My thinking would be that even teaching Ancient History, again, that's looking at civics and citizenship. Students learn about those things and then apply them to their world today. This is spoken as a Modern History teacher, but I don't see the information of Ancient History as specifically very useful, but I see the lessons learned from that, about how societies function and misfunction, I think that is very important, as making them better, more active citizens.

Owen is suggesting that the core values and knowledges of civics can be delivered through almost any content - in this case, he identifies the HSC Ancient History Syllabus - which seems odd, because Owen then points out that he is a Modern History teacher! Regardless, Owen feels that, in this case, modern society - and modern democracy - can be contrasted with the ancient societies of Sparta and Athens. It is telling, however, that Owen is vague about the way that this might be done. Perhaps this is an example of the 'osmotic' teaching of civics and citizenship mentioned by Shane in section 12.4.

Ian was positive about the way that a school can act as a 'training ground for society'.

> IAN: Yes, so I sort of see it as a natural training ground for society. Kind of like a microcosm of what goes on outside the school gates and it's a very safe, relatively speaking, relatively safe environment where we deal with their own issues, their own present processes and our own consequences for actions and if they are fair and reasonable and the students learn about our little society here and know, can understand consequences are a result of the greatest good for the greatest number to create a stable environment and safe environment for everyone that's involved in it, if those students learn that here, they can more readily make the transition to be a functioning adult in our society. So our role in that respect is pretty significant as far as I can see.

Ian suggests that schools can provide an opportunity for young people to safely learn the 'consequences for actions'. This is an important analysis of the role of schools - whereas Francis, as quoted earlier, suggests that students are resisting the socialising mission of schools.

12.3 The Contradiction between Teaching about Democracy and the Authoritarian Environment of a School

Another issue that teachers raised, and which has previously been mentioned in this thesis, is the contradiction between teaching about democracy and freedom in the authoritarian environment of a school. Some of the teachers that I spoke to were conscious of the disjuncture between speaking about rights and responsibilities (one element of the prescribed civics and citizenship curriculum), and the way that schools can sometimes work to hinder the rights of young people through rigid rules. For example, Francis, a Religious Education teacher, said (and I quote him at length here, because he makes an evaluation that resonates strongly with one of the starting points of my thesis):

> FRANCIS: Well, I try to make people familiar with their rights and their obligations. So there's an understanding of what I'm capable of doing, so trying to foster a school community of learners, as opposed to having a sage on the stage or teacher-student

> kind of relationship, trying to establish that idea that they are the masters of their educational destiny, whilst at the same time realizing that, as a school, and my one limited experience in other schools would agree with this, we are a almost totalitarian environment, where many teachers and many students feel that the teacher has the power, and the students is a receptacle of knowledge, and they must absorb that knowledge, be that cup that needs to be filled, and if they don't regurgitate that understanding, then they weren't listening, not that they were unable to understand... really, there's massive amounts of sensitivity around criticism of modes of delivery... And I think that affects the pupils understanding of citizenship – Why should I believe the outside world would be any different if my governing body, or the people that are instilled to protect and educate me are controlling me and are establishing methods in which I cannot have a voice.
> KEITH: So, effectively what you are saying there is that schools might talk the talk regarding citizenship, but they don't necessarily walk the walk.
> FRANCIS: I think on a grand scheme, they... a lot of schools do a lot of things to try and make citizenship apparent. They do a lot of charity work, they do a lot of community stuff, they try to create this awareness that seems almost to translate into passive involvement. So, we want people to be aware of what's going on, and we create an environment that says, yes, we do good things and we do good things for people in need, and yet, on a kind of one to one basis, we have students feeling a modified version of the injustice we are fighting against every day – the feeling of being not listened to, the feeling of having their rights taken away, the feeling of being prejudged based on the way they look, speak, think, dance, sing, whatever.

Francis, in particular, seems to be conscious of the challenges faced by teachers when trying to teach students about civics and citizenship education. It is important to note that, despite Francis' not being familiar with Freirean pedagogy (I confirmed this after the interview), he describes Freire's banking model clearly: 'many teachers and many students feel that the teacher has the power, and the student is a receptacle of knowledge, and they must absorb that knowledge, be that cup that needs to be filled...' Francis is conscious of the way that even his attempts to be a liberating force for students is trapped within the institutional oppression created by the systemic schooling system.

Crucially, Francis extends this criticism by linking it to ways that young people might think about their future: 'Why should I believe the outside world would be any different if ... the people that are instilled to protect and educate me are controlling me and are establishing methods in which I cannot have a voice.' This perception of civics and citizenship education was one that I had realised during my own work in education and was one of the primary reasons for the development of *Justice Citizens;* a recognition that, in education, young people often are denied a chance to speak, much less speak about the things that are important to them. In the current model of civics and citizenship education, young people are silenced by having little or no control over the curriculum. Furthermore, in most classrooms, they are denied the choice of how they might learn, and certainly what they are going to learn.

According to Francis, this denial of student voice is not, for the most part, deliberate. Francis gives credence to whole school and informal education activities that do try to generate civic awareness and understanding. In later parts of the interview, he identifies a number of these: fundraising for charitable causes, education 'weeks' like 'refugee week' or 'sustainability week' and school groups like social justice committees and environmental action groups. However, for Frances, at least, these lead to 'passive involvement.' Francis extrapolates why this might be the case: 'one a kind of one to one basis, we have students feeling a modified version we are fighting against every day - the feeling of being not listened to, the feeling of having their rights taken away, the feeling of being pre-judged...' According to his logic, one of the reasons why civics and citizenship programs - whether they are called that or not - often fail is because young people cannot find ways to express themselves within the school environment and hence, they fail to see the purpose of any activity related to civics and citizenship. The experience that students have at school is diametrically opposed to the goals.

12.4 The Challenges of Doing Citizenship Education with the Intensification of Standardised Testing

The school counsellor, Shane, explained other problems that teachers faced when trying to develop active and informed citizens amongst their students:

> SHANE: Where I struggle a little bit with the current educational climate, where there is such a focus on test results, credentialing and measuring gains that are what I see as only a very very small aspect of the person. Um.. That's not to say that I don't think those things are important. I do think... points of exit from school are really important places to be aiming, but we seem to have lost a fair bit of the other part of the discourse, which is around the social emotional, spiritual aspects of development, as a school, we are expected to promote. It's almost as though those things have been relegated where they are going to be learned by osmosis, rather than intentionally. I'm kind of aware that we need to become more intentional about those things, again.

Other teachers I interviewed expressed a similar concern, namely that a lot of their time was taken up by preparing for standardised testing. Since 2000, students in Years 3, 5, 7, and 9 undertake the NAPLAN assessments each May. Schools devote time to preparing for this. Shane says that civics and citizenship is 'part of the discourse' that we have lost since the new testing era. He explains that the 'social emotional, spiritual aspects of development' which schools are expected to promote, have been left behind in the increased focus on

examination results. Shane also recommends teaching civics and citizenship directly, rather than allowing it to happen by osmosis.

12.5 Student Experiences of Learning Active Citizenship

There have been calls (Nicoll et al 2013) for more empirical research on student discourses relating to civics and citizenship education. Student voice has been marginalized by many of the policy makers involved in civics and citizenship education, and also by academics, although there are notable exceptions (see the work of Holdsworth 2007; 2013, for example). It is worth nothing that many of these exceptions have grown out of the demands, like those of Nicoll et al (2013) for more student voice; as such, they are relatively recent phenomenon.

The civics and citizenship experience of the average student is extremely patchy, and reflective more of their own interests and the specific knowledges of their teachers, rather than any ordered or structured program (like *Discovering Democracy*). Students are more likely to represent citizenship as being about 'belonging' or being a part of something, rather than talk in terms of rights and obligations.

For example, Nick, who was slightly older than most of the other students (he was 17 at the time of *Justice Citizens)*, explained that he was a little bit surprised when he saw civics and citizenship on the exam cover sheet of the School Certificate examination:

> NICK: We were never specifically taught civics and citizenship. Our subjects were history and geography. They were never civics and citizenship. It wasn't until we got to these exams that we went, what is civics and citizenship? I remember feeling this... oh this is just something that doesn't stand as a separate entity.

Nick is mirroring some of the feelings described by teachers; specifically, he recognises the fact that, for both teachers and students, civics and citizenship is held in much lower regard than the other subjects like History and Geography, and is often subsumed within those two subjects. This is part of the confusion of civics and citizenship education in New South Wales. Despite it having a syllabus and curriculum, it is usually taught as part of History and Geography, to the extent that students don't even realise that it is a part of the curriculum. The first experience that students have of Civics and Citizenship, as a discrete subject, is often in the examination. In fact, Nick goes even further than that - he struggles to recall any specific incidence of Civics and Citizenship being taught in his school career to that point. This evidence starkly highlights the ambivalent nature of many teachers towards Civics and Citizenship education -

and it is clear, from Nick's response, that this ambivalent approach is mirrored in students' perceptions, too., too.

Nick continues in a similar vein when he is asked to explain what he understands 'active citizen' to mean:

> NICK: I feel that especially knowing a lot of the people that I am friends with who are between the ages of eighteen and twenty-six, there are only a select few - I could count on two hands, maybe one hand, the people that I would consider, to fit this model of active citizenship, and you know, participate in the democratic process in a legitimate, I shouldn't say legitimate but I mean in a ...
> KEITH: Meaningful
> NICK: Yeah, meaningful way.

Although Nick doesn't go on to explain what he means by participating in the democratic process in a legitimate fashion, one might imagine that he is speaking about the more standard models: behaviours like voting and so on, rather than more extreme ideas like civil disobedience or resistance. Rather than define active citizenship, Nick explains that he doesn't know anybody that he would consider to be an active citizen. His stumbling and hesitancy over the meaning of the word 'legitimate' is interesting, too. I believe Nick is at a point in his life where he is beginning to question what he has always been told, and this uncertainty is expressed in doubt over what he has previously considered to be legitimate behaviour. As the interview progressed, Nick actually developed a sophisticated definition of active citizenship, using terms like 'participatory' and 'community involvement' to define what he meant. This suggests that, despite the limited nature of civics and citizenship education that he has experienced in school, he has nevertheless gained a minimal understanding of the democratic process - at least at some level. In addition, he has become more critical of the process, too.

12.6 Even Explicit Citizenship Education is not Foregrounded

Of course, not all students were as descriptive as Nick. Some students, like Maddy, were honest about their ignorance in regards to Civics and Citizenship:

> KEITH: Okay, good. Um. Now, you're in year 9, and you're doing a subject called Australian History and Geography. Did you know that it's actually three subjects, it's actually Australian History, Australian Geography and Civics and Citizenship?
> MADDY: No. I've never heard that.
> KEITH: Not many people do know that, but there's actually three subjects combined into one. What is civics and citizenship?
> MADDY: I have no idea.

Maddy actually felt quite bad during this line of questioning: like she was letting her teachers down by not knowing the answers. Her lack of knowledge about civics and citizenship actually caused her no small amount of embarrassment.

And:

> KEITH: I want to get back to what you said about Australian history. Now, did you know that the course you were doing is actually called Australian History, Australian Geography, Civics and Citizenship?
> LACHLAN: No, I didn't. I knew about the History and Geography.
> KEITH: Never heard of the Civics and Citizenship bit?
> LACHLAN: No.

Other students made valiant efforts to describe what this subject might be about, often in vain:

> KEITH: So, on your school certificate - if we still did that - it would actually be different subjects. Australian History, Australian Geography, Civics and Citizenship.
> TUESDAY: Really?
> KEITH: Yep. Do you remember learning about Civics and Citizenship?
> TUESDAY: Sort of.
> KEITH: What did you learn?
> TUESDAY: Ah... you know. About being a citizen and stuff. Rights and responsibilities.
> KEITH: Can you remember much of it?
> TUESDAY: Not really.

This might seem like a disappointing result, but I feel that it is a telling example of how civics and citizenship education is dominated by other subjects within the school setting. A similar example is shown in the way that, for students at this school, for example, there is no mention of civics and citizenship on their timetable. While Australian History and Australian Geography are allocated a slot, Civics is not even mentioned.

12.7 Despite this, Some Students are Concerned and Active Citizens

In contrast to the above students, with their limited knowledge and experience of Civics and Citizenship Education, one student in particular, Shanece (who was a current student, aged 15, at the time of *Justice Citizens)*, was able to speak at great length about what she had learning about Civics and Citizenship:

> KEITH: It'll appear on your school certificate...not that we do this certificate anymore. Just thinking, you know, so we're almost at the end of term one. Have you learned anything that you would consider to be civics and citizenship? Have you learned anything in History and Geography that might help you to be a better citizen?
> SHANECE: I have learned in history, in Australian history that in federation, if we didn't have federation today, we wouldn't be treated equally. Some girls or women wouldn't even be at school. We wouldn't learn anything, we wouldn't know anything. Yes, I have learned from Australian history that...to be a better person...if we still didn't have federation, we wouldn't be treated equally and I wouldn't have as much knowledge as I do now. So to me, I think to me that explains it a lot.

Shanece's answer in uncharacteristic in many ways, because, unlike other students that I interviewed, she is clearly capable of identifying the links between a subject that she is more familiar with - History - and the Civics and Citizenship content that she is covering within that subject area. In the example presented above, Shanece takes the first unit from Year 9 Australian History (Federation) and connects it with her own life and her own desire to be educated. She is conscious of the fact that Federation, and particularly the suffrage movement that occurred in Australia shortly after it advanced the cause of gender equity, and this has had a direct effect upon her life, even though it is more than a century after that time. This shows a much broader understanding of our present state, and, in a way that the teachers themselves failed to explain in the interviews that I conducted with them, suggests effective ways of integrating the Civics curriculum within other subjects. Regrettably, I did not ask Shanece about why she made these connections - had she been guided by a teacher to reflect upon gender equity in 2012, or was this a conclusion she had reached by herself?

Later in that interview, I presented Shanece with the common depiction of 'ignorant and apathetic' teenagers:

> KEITH: Okay, good. Sometimes young people, people your age are classified as being ignorant or not caring about political issues. Do you think that's true?
> SHANECE: Not really. Because I know for a fact that everyone...a lot of people do care about politics and we do agree and disagree with some people. We actually do talk about who would be better to run our country like Julia Gillard or Tony Abbott or something. And we do put out points "why?" So I think that's actually a wrong statement. So, yeah.

When asked this question, Shanece responded with a fair degree of indignation. I was conscious of her desire to be taken seriously in this regard, and she really struggled to make it clear that she felt that the common depiction of teenagers as being both ignorant and apathetic was incorrect. Shanece was also determined to make it clear that she wasn't alone - she specifically speaks about talking to others about issues that she felt were important.

Although students were, for the most part, limited in their responses about Civics and Citizenship Education in a formal sense, I also asked them about more general topics related to civics and citizenship education. In particular, I asked students what they thought about politicians. Not surprisingly, students were much more verbose about this topic than Civics and Citizenship Education:

> KEITH: Okay and what about politicians in Australia?

SHANECE: I think they also... they should also be in charge as well because they control our country. So, our environmental politician should be taking care of the environment, finding different ways so we don't have so much pollution out there.
Keith: Are they?
SHANECE: Lately, they haven't been... I haven't seen any news about them trying to help out in any way; our country especially.
KEITH: Yeah. Okay. If you have to sum up politicians and politics, what kind of words would you use?
SHANECE: I would say politicians...they are smart in some areas but they lack some areas like they should be helping our country, but then they kind of make it worse in some ways with our economy and everything. It was very bad in some years - some years ago, I think it was. But they're stabilizing it so they're working towards making it better. Politics; I think it is important if you would like to become a politician but if you're not really looking to it, it's alright, but I reckon you do need to know politics sometimes.

Once again, Shanece show a level of knowledge and involvement that shows the error in claiming that young people are ignorant and apathetic. In the excerpt above, Shanece quite accurately sums up the economic situation of Australia, having recognised the destabilising effects of the Global Financial Crisis, but also presents a critical representation of the political scene that would do some adults proud. She clearly identifies the contradictory nature of modern politics - while she recognises that some of the things politicians do are helping the country, she is also critical about other things that they are doing, expressing the opinion that they are making it worse in some way. Furthermore, Shanece doesn't fit the label of the ignorant young person. Although she doesn't profess to have any great interest in politics, she agrees that everybody needs to know a little bit about it. This suggests that Shanece feels that young people, indeed, everyone, should remain informed and aware about the political landscape.

Other students identified particular issues that they felt were wrong, and these issues had often been discussed in the media recently. In particular, the issue of gay marriage was mentioned by students on more than one occasion:

KEITH: Sure, sure, good. One more question: What do you think about politicians?
ELLI: The ones who come out and (inaudible) (15:23) and stuff.
KEITH: No, no, like Julia Gillard.
ELLI: I don't like Julia Gillard. She annoys me.
KEITH: Why is she annoying?
ELLI: She made a law that gay people can't get married. I mean, that's stupid. Who would do that? What if she was gay? She wouldn't be able to get married. That's just mean!
KEITH: So, you think that law is unfair to gay people?
ELLI: Yeah.
KEITH: And if you were a Prime Minister, you would let gay people to get married?
ELLI: Sorry?
KEITH: And if you were a Prime Minister, you'd let gay people to get married?

> ELLI: Yeah, which I'm not going to be Prime Minister because that's just too much weight on yourself.

Although there are some mistakes in Elli's argument (Gillard's government did not legislate against gay marriage, although they did not vote in favour of it when a bill was presented in the house), Elli's comments do illustrate a number of interesting features of her understanding of politics and citizenship. Firstly, Elli is clearly interested in the current events of the day. She is aware of the arguments for and against the issue, and where the different parties stand in relation to that issue, and she has also thought through her own opinion on the matter. This is even more impressive when one considers that Elli is a student in a Catholic school, where the issue of gay marriage is still considered to be unacceptable, so Elli is actually disregarding the prevailing ideology in order to make up her own mind about the issue.

Of course, there are other issues regarding Elli's interview that do not appear as positive. Despite Elli's apparently strong feelings about the issue of gay marriage, she doesn't appear to feel the need to do anything about it. She has no interest in campaigning about the issue, and describes being the Prime Minister as being 'too much weight on yourself'. Perhaps what Elli is describing here is the way less and less young people are involving them in political parties. Instead, young people are more likely to support a particular issue, as evidence here by Elli's support for gay marriage.

Some students, like Nick in the example below, were more ambivalent about politicians:

> NICK: A lot of politicians are really good, but a lot of politicians are really bad. Some politicians are just competitive, and that's all they ever wanted to be, and then there's some politicians who love what they're doing, and they want to help the government. And some politicians are really good, and some politicians are really bad so...
> KEITH: Do you think politicians can actually fix some of these problems?
> NICK: Some politicians can because apparently politicians earn a lot and they can talk to their party and see what's like from each area of the minister, they can talk to what's been a problem around your area, and what can we do to fix that. And they can all team up and talk to everyone about it.

In the example above, Nick is displaying knowledge of the fractured political scene in Australia. While he acknowledges that some politicians are good, he also recognises that some are really bad. At the time of Justice Citizens, there had been a lot of discussion about 'career' politicians - people who had never been anything except a politician in their working life. Nick is trying to delineate between these ones - who he argues are just competitive and bad - and other politicians who 'love what they're doing'.

Nick also, unconsciously it appears, links social change as delivered by politicians with how much money they earn. This is interesting because it seems to suggest that Nick is aware that, in modern Australian society, it is often money that leads to social change in a visible sense, and hence politicians need to earn a lot of money. In addition, Nick identifies that social change requires a collaborative approach. He specifically emphasises the fact that politicians need to work together to improve problems in your area. He also emphasises the need to 'talk to everyone about' problems. This is important because I think Nick is making a claim (and one that would be supported by a lot of scholars) that deliberative communication is essential to civic life and democracy.

As mentioned earlier, the students who were interviewed generally responded more knowledgeably to a particular issue than a political figure. For example, Maddy is capable of talking about Sorry Day (a day of national apology for the mistreatment of indigenous people in Australia), but struggles to identify the party that the local member belongs to:

> KEITH: Fair enough, I understand. Um... Now if I was to ask you, can you think of an example of a person who is an active citizen, doesn't have to be anyone famous, might be someone famous, but someone that you know, that helps out in their community, in whatever way...
> MADDY: Um. I think people like David Bradbury. They help out..
> KEITH: Who's David Bradbury?
> MADDY: Isn't he like the member of parliament, like the local member?
> KEITH: For the current seat. Yeah, you're right.
> MADDY: I think, like, people that work in, like churches, like the priests and stuff are active citizens, and just like the general public.
> KEITH: Yeah, okay. I'm interested, because you brought up David Bradbury. Do you know what party he belongs to?
> MADDY: Lindsay?
> KEITH: That's the electorate, but is he Labor, Liberal, Greens?
> MADDY: I don't know.
> KEITH: Don't know. Let's talk about politicians, in general. What do you think of them?
> MADDY: I think they do lie a lot.
> KEITH: Okay. Are you thinking about any politicians in particular?
> MADDY: I think like Julia Gillard and Tony Abbott. I don't think they are very honest people. They do do a lot of things that help countries, but...
> KEITH: Can you think of any examples of things that they do?
> MADDY: Um... Like Kevin Rudd did the sorry day. For Aboriginals, that made them feel like comfortable. Made them feel secure.

Maddy, who is Indigenous, identifies an issue that she feels strongly about; her political interest is limited to where political affairs intersect with her own context. This is the reason that the parties in Australian politics mean little to her, but Sorry Day is important - even though it happened at least four years before Maddy took part in Justice Citizens.

Some students did exhibit the apathy that is often used to characterise young people's lack of engagement with civic life. In particular, Jade had no interest in politics, and was not aware of the way any decisions that were made by politicians would affect her.

> KEITH: The question's difficult, or they're difficult?
> JADE: They're difficult.
> KEITH: Why are they difficult?
> JADE: A lot of reasons I just can't really answer that, but like, I think when the people get fined if they don't vote for politicians and the things about politics are just difficult for people.
> KEITH: Do you find it interesting? I mean, you see that it's in the papers everywhere, isn't it?
> JADE: Yeah.
> KEITH: Do you...do you care?
> JADE: Not really that much because I've never really been into politics.
> KEITH: Do you...do you think the decisions they make affect you?
> JADE: Not really, not that I know of yet.

It would be interesting to examine whether this was a product of Jade's youth (at the time of the interviews with her, Jade was 14), which meant it would be alleviated as she grew older, as has been noted in other studies (Eckersley, et al 2007) or if her apathy would continue.

12.8 Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the ways that both adults and students spoke about civics and citizenship education. While informative in its own right, this is only a part of my research. I was also interested in how *Justice Citizens* might have altered the view of young people themselves as active citizens. The following chapter (Chapter 13) deals with this topic.

CHAPTER 13 – APPRAISING *JUSTICE CITIZENS*

13.1 Introduction

The excerpts in the previous chapters (Chapters 10-12) from the interviews with students and teachers were held before *Justice Citizens* took place. In order to explore the way *Justice Citizens* interacted with young people's understandings of civics and citizenship, I also interviewed students who participated after the program to appraise if and how their views about civics and citizenship education, and specifically active citizenship had changed. As I discussed in Chapter 2, there are some methodological considerations about me personally performing the interviews; that is, the power relationship between myself and my student might influence their responses. In future research endeavours, I might explore using third party interviewers, but I felt that the rapport I had built with students in this case might allow me to explore some of the themes I wished to pursue in greater depth. This chapter outlines the attitudes of students to *Justice Citizens*, some of the problems that they identified with it, what kinds of skills, knowledges and values they had developed through the program and finally, whether they felt that they had become an active citizen – and what that term actually meant to them.

13.2 Students' Attitudes to Justice Citizens

According to the post-program interviews, for most of the students who took part in the *Justice Citizens* program, the experience was one that was very positive. In addition, students reported feeling that they had learned more in *Justice Citizens* than in other classes. Taken at face value, I recognise that this initial self-reporting by students does not vouch for much. What will provide more insight is to describe and discuss how the students reflected on the nature of the pedagogy – the teaching and learning processes. In fact, the change in both content (closer to the student experience) and learning style (more student-centred) was one of the features most frequently commented on by students. This student feedback was pleasing; it affirmed the research decisions that I had made in the design of *Justice Citizens*.

The decision to alter the content and the pedagogical strategy was a deliberate one that I made when designing *Justice Citizens*. I wanted to embrace a 'thick' citizenship education program. This necessitated that the content had to be situated close to the students' own lived experiences (which might not necessarily include the emphasis on the institutions and mechanisms of government so beloved of previous 'thin' citizenship education programs which students would have completed in other years), and also that the pedagogy I employed was student-centred and not teacher-centred. I deliberately chose to employ a participatory approach to teaching and learning, which led to significant benefits in student engagement, empowerment and learning. The participatory approach that I employed allowed students more choice about what they learnt and how they learned it than they had previously experienced. In contrast, other subjects that students were studying at school were often prescriptive, with limited options for students.

I will now present student's reflections on *Justice Citizens'* benefits. Some students were content to say that it was good and leave their description at that:

> KEITH: And the idea was that you researched an issue and you make a film about it. Did you enjoy it?
> MADDY: Yeah, it was pretty good, actually.

In contrast other students were considerably more descriptive, and acknowledged their own changes in perception as part of *Justice Citizens*:

> KEITH: Okay, so what'd you think?
> SHANECE: I thought it was really good because it kind of gave us an outlook on like the problems in our world, in our society as a community. It kind of got us out there and asking people about racism, discrimination. Getting to know other people, we didn't know who the other people were like the Sudanese that we interviewed and it was like – it was awkward because we didn't know each other but then like it became easy, easier talking to them when we got into the interview a lot more.

Shanece identifies a number of important points in her analysis of the *Justice Citizens* program. Firstly, she acknowledges the relevance of the program to her own life ('it kind of gave us an outlook on like the problems in our world') but also the fact that these problems had relevance to broader contexts ('in our society as a community').

The participatory nature of the program is also highlighted as a good thing by Shanece. Shanece and her group arranged to interview a number of Sudanese students from a different school who had recently arrived in Australia. Doing empirical or first-hand investigation was new to most of the students involved in the program, and caused more than a few nervous moments, but ultimately, as expressed by Shanece, was seen as a good thing

because it was about getting the students 'out there'. This investigation of local issues in the community was an essential part of the program and one of the significant points of difference between *Justice Citizens* and more traditional forms of civics and citizenship education. To encourage the development (or further development) of a critical consciousness, it was important for students to, firstly, engage with some of the issues in their local community, but then to realise that they were capable of working collectively to change these problems. The discussion about whether the young people felt that their work made any short-term or lasting change is discussed later in this chapter.

The students learnt skills related to making films and using software associated with the making of films but some students also mentioned interpersonal skills like facilitating discussion and interviewing:

> KEITH: So overall, impression of Justice Citizens?
> ELLI: Good actually, I learned a lot.
> KEITH: What'd you learn?
> ELLI: That the Nepean River is polluted more than I would think and learned how to interview people and more confidence in myself really.

Here is another example of the differences in *Justice Citizens'* pedagogy and content when compared to more formal citizenship education programs like *Discovering Democracy*. In addition to learning about the Nepean River (the Nepean River runs less than 200m from the back of the school) which showcases the local nature of the content, Elli explains that *Justice Citizens* allowed her to become more confident interviewing people. This is a skill that is not often addressed in formal high school settings but it is an important life skill to develop. This is another justification for this approach used in *Justice Citizens*. Elli developed this skill when she interviewed a member of the local chapter of Nepean Waterkeepers, a volunteer organisation dedicated to raising awareness about the damage pollution does to the Nepean River. As part of this process, Elli was required to make contact with the group, arrange an interview time and location, prepare questions for the interview and then conduct the interview.

Furthermore, there is a third and somewhat related note of interest in the excerpt above: as a direct result of *Justice Citizens*, Elli explains that she felt she had 'more confidence' in herself. It might be easy to ignore this small sentence, but the development of confidence was an important goal of the *Justice Citizens* program. If students are to be able to express their own voice in a

manner which will be listened to by adults, then they need to be confident in doing so, and the program facilitated the development of this confidence.

More than one student expressed similar sentiments to Elli. In particular, Jade, who was in the same group as Elli, felt similarly about the process of interviewing a stranger. I've quoted her at length below to show the way she reflected upon the process of interviewing a person and making her film.

> KEITH: What was your film about?
> JADE: It was about the Nepean River pollution.
> KEITH: And so you interviewed someone about them?
> JADE: Yes
> KEITH: And you had worked on these questions and how did the interview go?
> JADE: I think that the interview went really well because the questions I think were really detailed, I guess about what the person does and how it affects our community and environment.
> KEITH: Have you ever interviewed anyone from outside the school before?
> JADE: No.
> KEITH: No? So, it was a new experience for you.
> JADE: Yes.
> KEITH: A bit nervous, a bit nerve wracking?
> JADE: Yes it was nerve wracking.
> KEITH: Would you feel confident interviewing someone else there now, now that you've done it once?
> JADE: Now that I have done it, I do feel confident in interviewing more people.

Jade recognises that there is more to interviewing people than simply asking the right questions. She is able to reflect upon the way that she had to undertake preliminary research in order to ensure that she asked the right questions, so that she got the right kind of footage for her film, which featured excerpts of the interview with a Nepean Waterkeeper. In this way, Jade is acting as both a researcher but also as a film-maker - she is creatively preparing content about which she is knowledgeable into a package that she thinks will be informative and entertaining for her audience: this requires working and learning at a significantly higher level than other civics-related educational experiences.

This finding has significant implications for civics and citizenship education. Jade has demonstrated that she, and one presumes, other young people, are capable of summarising and synthesising research of a high standard in order to generate new knowledges through her own work. In addition, they can summarise their findings and synthesise them into a new, creative project.

For Jade, taking part in *Justice Citizens* was clearly a positive experience; unlike other subjects which might require a large research component but have

little actual primary or empirical investigation. *Justice Citizens* had a combination of both primary and secondary research. In addition to the research component, Jade had the opportunity to develop valuable skills that are often overlooked in formal educational environments - and Jade becomes conscious of this over the course of the *Justice Citizens* program. For example, Jade is aware that learning to interview people - including the preparation and preliminary research outlined above - is something that sets *Justice Citizens* apart from other subjects. This 'real-world' element increased Jade's motivation.

However, more importantly than the increase in motivation, there appears to have been a shift in Jade's identity. Jade explicitly states that she feels more confident as a result of having interviewed somebody. One imagines that Jade could, in the future, use that newfound confidence to interact with people in other settings. Thus, even something as small as having the opportunity to interview a third party, appears to have had a significant effect upon this particular student's self-concept. There is no reason to imagine that the other, similar experiences of *Justice Citizens* wouldn't have had similar effects on other students.

One of the more common positives mentioned by students about *Justice Citizens* was its difference to other classes. This is linked to my efforts to make *Justice Citizens* student-centred and participatory:

> MADDY: Because it wasn't just like sitting down like any old class and just writing lines. You were actually doing something that is actually happening at the moment and in our community.

Other students matched Maddy's thoughts:

> KEITH: Do you think it was a worthwhile experience?
> JADE: Yes, I did.
> KEITH: Why?
> JADE: Because it was different to what we normally do. Writing and stuff. It was more interactive.
> KEITH: And it's good that that happened?
> JADE: Yeah, because it opened our eyes and gave us more information.

And:

> KEITH: Was it similar or different to what you normally do at school?
> JAIDEN: It is different to what I normally do at school because I usually just do work in class, but in this class we learn more about everything, more about *Justice Citizens* and more about the world.

There are a number of important points raised by students in these excerpts. The first point is that, regarding their normal school work, the majority of students appeared to be quite apathetic about what they were learning and they way they were learning it. Although they don't precisely say it, it is clear from

the words that they use that, for these three students, 'normal' class work is boring. For example, Maddy describes it as 'any old class' where all she does is 'write lines.' This is not the response of a teenager who is enthused about her learning.

In a similar vein, Jaiden suggests that *Justice Citizens* is different because they normally 'just do work in class' (note the 'just'), but in *Justice Citizens* 'we learn more about everything.' I think the difference between 'work' and 'learn(ing)' is important - there is an element of pleasure in Justice Citizens - as if he is learning, but also, he is aware of that learning and its relevance to his life, whereas other examples of learning might be removed from his current experience.

Jade suggests that *Justice Citizens* was good because it 'opened our eyes.' This is an important reflection by Jade: she is saying that as part of the project, she became more aware of the inequality in the world - that is what she is referring to in the section on 'gave us more information.' It is interesting to explore how this 'more information' translated into action by some of the students, and did not lead to action for other students. This is discussed in a later chapter.

I'm going to leave the last word on student attitudes towards *Justice Citizens*, quite appropriately, to one of the students, Lachlan:

> KEITH: Great, great. Well, I don't have much more to say? Do you have any questions for me or anything else that you want to--?
> LACHLAN: Are we doing it next year?

13.3 Problems with Justice Citizens (backhanded compliments)

Students were asked to reflect on their experience with *Justice Citizens* and the way they felt it had shaped their thoughts about active citizenship. The main questions that I asked during these post-program interviews were in relation to their films and the film festival that they had organised; that information has been presented earlier in the research portraits. In this section, I am focusing upon their criticisms of *Justice Citizens.* Of course, as positive as the students were about *Justice Citizens* (in terms of content and pedagogy) and the films that they made, they did also identify a number of problems with the program. Interestingly, most of these problems constitute what I would describe as an essential part of the learning process, and show a capacity for reflection that I was pleased to see. For example, in the excerpts from the

interviews that I have selected and presented below, students explain that they were frustrated with some of their team members, or the fact that they felt that their films might not have the audience or the effect that they were hoping. Rather than being problems, this suggests that students are becoming aware of the limitations of their product and they are capable of reflexively critiquing their work.

When students began to consider what they would do with their films once they were completed, they began to question whether their films would be successful in changing public opinion. A number of groups of students questioned whether the films they made were actually going to successfully engender positive social change. An example of this is in Tuesday's comments:

> KEITH: Do you think your film is going to stop people bullying?
> TUESDAY: It probably won't because people (inaudible) I16:48). People will just think and go, "Oh, yeah. That was a good film. What was it about?" Like they don't really...like, they do...they listen to it, but I don't think it's going to stop bullying.
> KEITH: Okay, yeah. Yeah, that's one of the real challenging issues, isn't it?
> TUESDAY: It's like a miracle.

Tuesday recognised that a single film will probably have only a limited effect upon bullies - indeed, it would be a 'miracle' if a single film did have that effect. However, it is interesting to examine why Tuesday thinks that. She recognises that the film might not have the 'cut-through' necessary to really make people listen to the message - people might be dismissive about it. Tuesday is reflecting upon the cluttered nature of young people's lives, where they are exposed to so many messages that it can be hard for any single message to have a lasting effect.

Maddy expressed similar concerns:

> MADDY: I probably would have shown it to – probably at the school; like the kids in the school. I don't know.
> KEITH: Just the kids at the school?
> MADDY: Yeah.
> KEITH: Why would you have shown it to them?
> MADDY: Because I know people are racist at the school and yeah they're very stereotypical.
> KEITH: And you think the film might have changed their minds?
> MADDY: I don't know if it might have changed their mind but I think they might have thought about it like maybe this is wrong what we're doing and stuff.

Maddy's response is indicative of the growth that she underwent during Justice Citizens. Having made her film, she engages in a process of self-critique of the film, considering whether it has met its intended purpose. Backing this critique is a realisation that combatting issues like racism is not an easy task; instead of a

simple solution, the answer is more likely to be found in an ongoing and protracted educational campaign - and Maddy is clever enough to realise that realising peoples' own actions and the way they contribute to, in this case, racism, is a good starting point for such a campaign. In this excerpt, Maddy is demonstrating a burgeoning understanding of the mechanics of critical pedagogy and social movements.

Jaiden identified some concerns related to the audience of his film. At first, he expressed some hesitancy about showing his film to his peers. In fact, Jaiden was much more enthusiastic about showing the film to older people:

> KEITH: And would you be proud to show that film to other people at school?
> JAIDEN: Yeah.
> KEITH: What about people in the community like people not your own age, people a bit older than you?
> JAIDEN: Yeah, probably more than those people.
> KEITH: Why?
> JAIDEN: They're older.
> KEITH: You reckon they'd appreciate it more because they're a bit older?
> JAIDEN: Yeah.

Despite the fact that Jaiden's film is about the difficulties faced by young Indigenous Australian men, in relation to crime and health, and took the form of an interview with a young Indigenous Australian man, interspersed with statistics about indigenous youth, Jaiden still felt that the film would be better appreciated by an older audience. I'm not sure whether this is a reflection of Jaiden's own insecurity, or his recognition that the people with the power to change some of the societal dangers faced by this group are more likely to be older, and hence they are the ones who should be watching his film.

Unlike Maddy before him, Jaiden might be recognising that, when attempting to address issues of inequality, it is necessary to speak to the people who make decisions. In Jaiden's experience, these people were those who were older than him - and so his intended audience is those people, and not his peers, who are, at least to Jaiden's way of thinking, disempowered from making decisions.

However, Jaiden is also beginning to think if himself as a person who is capable of taking action. In fact, his decision about who to show the film to - and his determination to show the film - suggest that Jaiden is beginning to understand the way that he is marginalised in school, and his intention to be more of an active subject in his own education in the future.

Shanece felt that the whole process of making the film was stressful:

> KEITH: Fair enough, fair enough. What was not so good about the whole Justice Citizens project?
> SHANECE: The stress of making it. The stress of making the film because we had a little bit of time to do it and then it was due like a close timing and then the editing and pulling different things out and trying to figure out what's important and what's not important.

Shanece's comments are illustrative of the serious way she approached the making of the film. Her reference about there being only limited time is valuable (in later iterations of Justice Citizens, the allotted time was actually doubled to two hours per fortnight, although the program itself was shortened to 18 weeks) and helped update and refine the program. However, they also show that, for Shanece and the other researchers, the film-making process was both creative and an opportunity to further develop critical skills of delineating importance. In particular, Shanece mentions that there were decisions that her group had to make about what to include in the film ('trying to figure out what's important and what's not important'). This is one of the key skills that *Justice Citizens* was trying to develop amongst young people. What is actually happening as those decisions are made is young people engaging in collective decision-making processes - a microcosm of democracy. Admittedly, this is only with a small group, and on a small project, but it does demonstrate the scalability of a project like *Justice Citizens* - and the way that the skills required of active citizens can be developed in more effective ways than in traditional teacher-centred units of work. Shanece quite rightly identifies that collaborative decision making is a stressful experience - something with which I'm sure a lot of adults would agree!

Another valuable critique of *Justice Citizens* was raised by Jade. Jade identified that she felt uncomfortable when she discovered some of the issues related to racism:

> KEITH: That's fine, that's fine. Okay, good, good. Let me just make that I've asked all of the questions I want to ask. What wasn't so good about Justice Citizen?
> JADE: The part of it that I didn't like was finding out how people don't feel like they belong in the community or the – like wherever they are, just because of their race, nationality.
> KEITH: And why didn't you like that?
> JADE: I don't like it because if it was me in their shoes, I would hate it. I wouldn't like to be anywhere.
> KEITH: So you felt bad because they were feeling so bad?
> JADE: Yes.

Although, at first glance, this doesn't seem to be a criticism of the program as such, it does highlight a number of points. Firstly, it suggests that previously Jade had not been exposed to accounts of the way racism affects people in her

community. In addition, she hadn't developed any kind of empathy related to those marginalised groups. As part of the *Justice Citizens* project, Jade clearly did both of these things.

Firstly, Jade acknowledges her own feelings of discomfort when she discovers the racism that is evident around her ('I didn't like finding out how people don't feel like they belong in the community'). This would hardly be Jade's first experience (at an intellectual level) of what racism is - throughout primary school and the first two years of high school, there are numerous references to racism in Australia's history. However, what made this particular experience uncomfortable for Jade was the fact that it was linked to her own community - people that she lived with and spoke to regularly. This brought an immediacy to her understanding of racism that a purely textual study of the White Australia Policy (as part of Year 9 Australian History) would be lacking.

Secondly, Jade clearly displays a growing empathy with those marginalised groups that she identifies: 'I don't like it because if it was me in their shoes, I would hate it.' This is as important as her more comprehensive understanding of racism, because it shows that Jade is also developing values and attitudes related to active citizenship (in this case, empathy). One of the primary concerns in critical pedagogy is that knowledge leads to a change in attitude or behaviour. I will discuss behaviours later, but it is clear from this excerpt that Jade's attitudes towards people in her community have changed as part of this program.

Of course, there is the issue that Jade was placed in a challenging position as part of *Justice Citizens*, and this might have caused her some level of anguish. This is a difficult position for educators; I believe that part of the role of a good educator is to challenge preconceived assumptions of their students - in this case, Jade might have felt that racism didn't exist in Penrith - but by doing so, it is possible that this will cause a level of conflict and discomfort amongst students. In *Justice Citizens*, I didn't shy away from this conflict - I encouraged students to work through it and discuss their though processes in a supportive and open environment.

13.4 Making Creative Decisions

All of the Year 9 cohort took part in *Justice Citizens*. This was a group of more than 140 students. However, not all of the groups (students created films

in small groups) finished their films, mostly due to time considerations. I have selected eight films below to give the reader a flavour of the different topics and approaches to film making that the students undertook. These eight films were those selected by the rest of the Year 9 cohort to be shown at the premiere. Students had a chance to watch all the films and then vote for the ones that they felt best communicated a message. The films with the most votes were selected for showing at the film festival. They were also uploaded to YouTube for students to share with other peers. The films are described below and then matched with students discussing their films in order to demonstrate the level of creative and critical thought that was a part of the film-making process.

Students had a lot of freedom when it came to selecting a topic for their films. In the first stages of *Justice Citizens*, we had explored a range of social justice issues, through film and guest speakers. Students had conducted research into topics like homelessness, drug and alcohol abuse, racism and refugees. However, when it came to choosing the films the students had almost completely free rein; the only proviso that I placed on the film-making process was that it had to address the theme of justice - although I carefully allowed students to decide what they meant by justice and how it related to their topic and film. Originally, I had some concerns that students would not be able to find a topic that suited them; this proved to be quite wrong. For some students, the hardest part was choosing only one topic. In the end, a number of students made more than one film because they wanted to talk about different issues, rather than limiting themselves to just one.

The first film shown was *Yadav's Journey*. This film documented the experiences of Yadav, a refugee from Bhutan who was resettled in Australia in 2010. The film took the form of an interview, interspersed with statistics about refugees and footage from refugee camps in Nepal. Yadav spoke about both why he was forced to flee Bhutan and his own experiences in Australia. He also explained what life was like in the refugee camps where he was forced to wait for more than a decade.

The second film was *Teen Pregnancy*. This film was the longest of the films at the premiere. It was a mix of clips from two interviews with mothers who had become pregnant while still very young. The film was particularly wide ranging - it addressed the social impact of being young and pregnant, the way the mother's priorities were forced to change, and also the way that their

pregnancy had limited their educational and career opportunities but also the way that having children had made their lives more meaningful.

The third film was *Nepean Pollution*. This film was different to the previous two in that it was much more overt about the message it was attempting to deliver. The students who had made this film were passionate about cleaning up the pollution in the Nepean River, and so were very definite about the purpose of their film. Elli said:

> ELLI: Okay, my film was about the pollution of the Nepean River and we had this guy come in from Nepean Waterkeepers and he studied for – he was studying the Nepean River for a while and we asked him some questions and he answered them; and then we put them into a movie with some pictures and information. And then it was done, you know, it was actually pretty good.

Jade agreed with Elli:

> JADE: I think so because like if the pollution gets any worse, it will ruin the environment. It will ruin everything and because people actually like the Nepean River. They like swimming in it, going in boats but that can be ruined easily if people don't recycle or don't take part in the community.

Indigenous Stories was the name of the fourth film. Jaiden and Daniel made this film. Jaiden said:

> JAIDEN: It was more like an interview.
> KEITH: With who?
> JAIDEN: Chris.
> KEITH: Okay, who's an Indigenous man a bit older than you.
> JAIDEN: Yeah. He used to come to this school.

In addition to the interview with Chris, Jaiden and Daniel included a number of powerful statistics related to Indigenous youth in Australia, encompassing details about incarceration rates, drug and alcohol abuse and also life expectancy. What was particularly powerful about *Indigenous Stories* was the way that Jaiden and Daniel wove the statistics about young indigenous men into the conversation that they filmed with Chris Miller. This combination of statistic and personal experience made the whole film much more powerful.

Fear of the Unknown was made by a group of four students, and probably was the film that required the most planning and research. The students in question wanted to show their audience what the experience of being a newly-arrived refugee in Australia was like. As part of this, they arranged to meet and interview a number of Sudanese students at a local library. Although the students filmed the interview with the Sudanese students (with their permission), they did not use any of the footage that they shot in the making of *Fear of the Unknown*. Instead, the students tried to recreate some of the events

described by their interviewees, and then overlay their descriptions on top of the film. Shanece explains:

> SHANECE: The film I made with my group was about discrimination and racism and so we interviewed two Sudanese people. I can't remember their names. I think it was –.
> KEITH: Doesn't matter, I don't want you to mention them anyway.
> SHANECE: Yeah, they told us their story and it was quite interesting. It was fairly different and we got to know that people treated them differently because they didn't know English when they came here into Australia. And they did find it hard and people were teasing them and being racist.
> KEITH: Yeah, absolutely. So, tell me about your film.
> SHANECE: My film was, so we just did the interview and they just described how living here is better like some in some ways and how much they missed their home country.
> We also put in bits of ourselves, like in a school area setting and we just kind of made – we kind of put ourselves in their position and –.
> KEITH: Like a recreation kind of thing?
> SHANECE: Yeah, like we recreated their situation that they told us. And so, we kind of learned a lot from it.

The students assert, and I agree with them, that this made their film more powerful than simply an interview, which had been their original plan. This shows a developing aesthetic sense from the students, as well as some evidence of design thinking, in that Shanece's group have made decisions based upon how they feel they can best communicate their message. Nick explicates this in more detail:

> NICK: Oh, well I'm in a group with Shanece, Lachlan, Patrick and we made a film about racism, and that. And Shanece was the – because she's from – her nationality is Samoan, I think. We thought that she'd be a good role for it and the movie was about how she came to Australia. And it was her first day and there was a lot of racist comments going around the classes, in that – and how – then what troubles they found during the first couple of weeks, in that we thought they're not being able to speak English, not being able to communicate with other people. We just wanted to find out – when we interviewed two Sudanese people and Shanece interviewed two people and during our film, we put their voices through it to make it feel more connected to it so that we tried to make each film part connect with the voice and I think we did in the end with Patrick, not being able to communicate with anyone and we put one of the voices through the end and it matched it perfectly.
> KEITH: Yeah, it did, it did. That was really, really clever. I was really impressed by you doing it that way.

Domestic Violence was an unusual film in that it was made by only one student. The student in question, Corin, was determined to make the film from the start of *Justice Citizens*. She had recently heard about the number of children that suffered domestic abuse in Australia, and was determined to do something about it. In this way, *Justice Citizens* dovetailed nicely with Corin's own interests and passions, and provided her with a space for her to speak about issues that she felt were important. *Domestic Violence* is a less than three minutes long but it

certainly carries a significant emotional weight. Corin wanted to tell the story of Michael, a boy who was being abused. Rather than focusing on a sensationalist approach, instead Corin portrayed Michael (played by her nephew) in a room, writing in his diary about the abuse he and his mother suffered. In particular, it was the details present in this film that made it so powerful. For example, to make it look like Michael has been abused recently, Corin had make-up applied around his eye to make it look like a black eye. In addition, in Michael's room, in the background of every shot, there is a collage of articles about domestic violence in Australia. Finally, Corin thought very carefully about the kind of music she wanted to include in her film.

Dirt Bike Safety was a film made by Daniel and Brenton. They had struggled in most other classes, both being constantly in trouble. Both also had quite significant learning needs. However, both students quickly became engrossed in *Justice Citizens*, and, over the course of the program, they produced not one but two films. *Dirt Bike Safety* was an instructional film that provided young riders with tips on how to stay safe while riding on their dirt bikes (this is a common past time, especially amongst adolescent boys in the Penrith region). Daniel and Brenton were interviewed together as this was how they felt most comfortable:

> KEITH: Yeah, yeah. Good. So just tell me a little bit about your film. Pretend I don't know anything about it.
> DANIEL: Well there's my film on dirt bike safety that I made while I was checking my bike. Brenton is in there too; he was checking his bike and then we done some wild stuff like ride around crazy.
> KEITH: And why did you pick that issue?
> BRENTON: Because it's like a serious matter to--especially for Daniel after what happened with his brother.
> KEITH: Yeah, so you know someone who was injured?
> BRENTON: I know people who've been injured twice.
> KEITH: Do you think, let's say people your age who ride dirt bikes and they watch your film, do you think they would think twice now?
> BOTH: Yes.

To explain Brenton's comment: Daniel's brother had been badly injured while riding his dirt bike. Again, like Corin in the example above (*Domestic Violence*), *Justice Citizens* was able to capitalise on events in students' own lives. Although dirt bike safety is probably not an issue that would appear on too many formal citizenship curricula, it is nevertheless something that Brenton and Daniel felt was important -and by demonstrating their commitment to share their knowledge about safety with others, it is clear that they are acting as active citizens.

The final film that was shown at the festival was *Bullying*. Unlike the other films, that were often sombre in tone and subject matter, the makers of this film, Panashe and Tadi, wanted to convince their audience about the detrimental effects of bullying through the use of humour. In a way that demonstrated both an understanding of the way bullying can work in an school environment, and the multilevelled way that young people can interpret bullying, they created a film that had numerous 'funny' occurrences of bullying: the kinds of activities and interactions that they felt were common in their school, and were often treated as 'harmless fun'. They then contrasted these events with a stark image of how bullying, in extreme cases, can lead to teenagers engaging in self harm or even suicide. This film showed quite a significant level of awareness - the boys' acting is deliberately clownish and over the top at the start of the film, and the audience is drawn into laughing at the foolish antics of the boys. However, when the final image is presented, of a boy having killed himself, the audience is left feeling guilty - and somehow complicit - in the actions of the bullying. This is a powerful way of demonstrating to the audience the way that bullying is often a series of small events that can have terrible consequences, and that we, as bystanders are often involved in these incidents, by laughing or even just observing them.

Bullying was a popular topic amongst the students. I believe this is because it is a topic that is probably more closely related - at least at first glance - to their own situation than other topics, although this point of view changed as students explored some of the other topics. Jade was a member of another group who made a film about bullying. She explains her reasons for making the film here:

JADE: It's going to be about bullying.
KEITH: And why did you pick that film – that topic?
JADE: We picked it because bullying is a big issue a lot nowadays and a lot of people just get really depressed from it and almost commit suicide.
KEITH: Almost commit suicide?
JADE: Yes.
KEITH: Sometimes they even do commit suicide, don't they? So, have you seen people being bullied?
JADE: Yeah, I have at my old school.
KEITH: Yeah and have you experienced bullying?
JADE: Yeah, a lot.
KEITH: A lot? Wow, okay and so, that's kind of the reason you decided to, do this film?
JADE: Yeah.
KEITH: So, do you reckon this film is...what do you want to achieve with this film what's the point of doing it? What are you going to get out of it?

JADE: To show people that bullying is actually a really big deal for like, the kids and even adults because it's just like no one really cares it about that much.

13.5 Becoming Active Citizens

One of the key goals of *Justice Citizens* was to explore how such an approach to civics and citizenship education might encourage young people to be more active citizens. This was one of the questions that I asked the students in the follow up interviews at the conclusion of the project. For this reason, I delayed the second round of interviews with students until a month after the conclusion of the project. This was intended to allow the students time to reflect upon *Justice Citizens* and also to engage in any further activism related to their project. The exact nature of my theorising about this activism - and the development of what I have called justice pedagogy will take place Chapter 13 but I have included in this section a few of the students remarks that I felt were indicative of their feeling regarding the project as a whole.

The students expressed a range of thoughts about their own active citizenship. I've quoted Lachlan, below, at length, because he sums up the feelings of many of the students that I spoke to.

KEITH: So, I mean we started off in our first interview. We talked about active citizenship and what is an active citizen? Are you being an active citizen?
LACHLAN: I think I'm making my start towards being an active citizen.
KEITH: And that was brought on in part by *Justice Citizens*?
LACHLAN: Yeah, yeah sure. That's what kind of gave me the first thirst for being involved with issues I feel strongly about.
KEITH: Good, good and refugees is different from the community kitchen, which I think mostly focuses on homelessness.
LACHLAN: Yeah.
KEITH: Any reason why you've changed from--?
LACHLAN: I've got ideas. I want to kind of expand now, I want to--you know, I love working with refugees but I'm not done there. So, I kind of want to grow now a bit more, and then you know eventually to even bigger and better stuff as I get older.
KEITH: I hope you do, I think that's very important. Let me think. Do you think you have a better understanding of how to be an active citizen, I suppose?
LACHLAN: Yes, I know now that you don't, you know, it's not hard at all to be active. You've just got to see your goal that you want to be, that you want to do, what you want to change people's minds about and you just got for it.

In the period following *Justice Citizens*, Lachlan was elected by his peers to the student representative council, where he worked hard to bring more focus to events like Refugee Week. As shown in the extract above, he attributes this, in part, to taking part in the *Justice Citizens* project.

13.6 Conclusion

In the following chapter, I theorise about a new approach to civics and citizenship education: justice pedagogy.

CHAPTER 14 – CONCLUSION: JUSTICE PEDAGOGY

14.1 Introduction

The previous chapters presented an analysis and discussion of teachers', students' and community members' views of the *Justice Citizens* program and more generally about civics and citizenship education. This, in turn, built upon the research portraits presented in Chapter Nine. In this final chapter I will focus on theory-building for citizenship education. I will begin by describing the key theoretical features of the *Justice Citizens* program, including its experiential and student-led nature, its focus on action-oriented learning, the importance of school-community partnerships, critical literacy, and advocacy for systemic change or participation in the public sphere.

But rather than rehearse arguments about how citizenship education will be most effective and profound when it aligns itself closely to the 'correct' version of critical pedagogy, I will instead argue for a fresh approach on two fronts. Firstly, in the future, I propose to replace the terminology of citizenship education with the term 'justice pedagogy.' It is true that I have made a case for thick versus thin citizenship education. But the terminology of citizenship education carries too much baggage and continues to be closely aligned to thin approaches. I think the term 'justice pedagogy' is more direct and powerful than advocating for more thick approaches to citizenship education. This begs the question, why not use the term 'critical pedagogy' which, after all, has a long and rich lineage. This is the second front I think needs refreshing. Critical pedagogy is also tied down with baggage which I will elaborate on shortly. The term 'justice pedagogy' has the advantage of going beyond the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory and being able to align itself with new theoretical perspectives, namely Complexity Theory. I will discuss how three key features of complexity theory, namely emergent learning, self-organising systems and distributed decision making, might be linked to critical pedagogy.

14.2 Features of *Justice Citizens*

In the previous chapters, I have described six features that enabled the higher-level and emancipatory learning that took place in the *Justice Citizens*

program. The features, experiential education, student-led learning, action oriented learning and participation in the public sphere, school community partnerships, critical literacy and advocacy for systemic change are depicted in Figure 13.

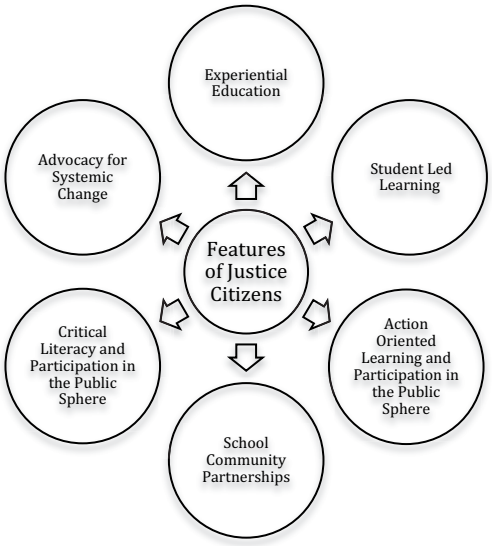

Figure 13: Features of Justice Citizens

14.2.1 Experiential Education

A key feature of *Justice Citizens* was the emphasis placed upon experiential education. Walker and Anthony describe experiential education as 'the process of actively engaging students in an experience that will have real consequences' (1992, p. 1). This is not an original idea in education – progressive educators like Dewey (1938) argued in favour of such an approach to education, suggesting that students are more likely to learn if they are engaged in the subject matter, and one way to do that is by grounding the learning in real-world physical experiences. Experiential education has long had links to the progressive education movement, and is generally (and perhaps stereotypically) understood to mean learning by doing, rather than by passively storing information. As such, it has led to approaches to education like service learning, outdoor education, notably Kurt Hahn and Outward Bound (James 1990), action learning and other examples. What most of these approaches have in common is the idea of students working (often together) on a project or mission with real world implications, and by undertaking this

work, learning the skills and knowledge that is required. Calkins (1991, p. 154) writes:

> If we asked our students for the highlight of their school careers, most would choose a time when they dedicated themselves to an endeavour of great importance... On projects such as these, youngsters will work before school, after school, during lunch. Our youngsters want to work hard on endeavours they deem significant.

A crucial part of experiential learning is the requirement to undertake reflection throughout the process – something that Freire (1970) would describe as praxis. Richard Kraft and Mitchell Sakofs (1988) suggest that it is only through this process that students develop new skills, attitudes and ways of thinking.

This process was important for *Justice Citizens.* Students throughout the course were supported to learn by doing; that is, the learning took place through the means of film-making projects that had application to the students' own experiences and were of value beyond the school context. Within the *Justice Citizens* program, students were required to be active learners. They were, in the first instance, required to make decisions about their projects (this is linked to student-led learning, discussed below), to make contacts with groups outside of the school environment (again, discussed below), to conduct interviews with these groups, and then to create a film about their findings, with the aim of changing community beliefs. This process was quite distant from the traditional day-to-day model of didactic teaching and learning that students had previously experienced in their school lives for two reasons. Firstly, it sought to develop transferable skills amongst students of the kind that can be neglected in formal academic environments. For example, the students making the films about environmental degradation in the Nepean River were required to make contact via telephone with the Nepean Waterkeepers, arrange a meeting and then conduct and film an interview – all of which they had never done before in the course of their schooling. Secondly, the students also chose topics that were grounded in their own experiences and were relevant to their lives in Penrith. This is important because, just like Freire's work with literacy in Brazil, these topics were seen as relevant to the students – as opposed to some of the other material they were required to learn. It is worth noting that some of the topics they chose to explore – domestic violence, racism, teenage pregnancy – are not explicitly included in any great detail in the Australian Curriculum. Didactic teaching strategies – lectures, note-taking,

comprehension activities – were almost completely absent from *Justice Citizens*, and much more emphasis was placed on active learning based on discussion, collaboration and investigation. (This is not to suggest that explicit instruction should necessarily be seen as not valuable). In addition, in a marked difference to almost every other subject studied by the students, there was no formal assessment, nor were there any grades assigned to the course. This was particularly challenging for some of the students who had become inured to seeing grades as the only acceptable measure of learning. Instead, the only requirement of the course was to complete the film and this was a requirement that I didn't need to enforce, as the groups were enthusiastic about both completing and then showcasing the film to a wider audience.

14.2.2 Student-led Learning

A second feature that distinguished *Justice Citizens* from more traditional educational programs was its emphasis on allowing students to make decisions about their learning. Again, this is hardly a new idea in education, but it is an idea that continues to not get much traction in Australian schools. Formal schooling is becoming more, rather than less, heavily regulated by credentialing bodies, including the *Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership* (AITSL), the *New South Wales Education Standards Authority* (NESA), and the *Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority* (ACARA), all of which govern items like school curricula, professional standards for teachers, and teaching and learning materials. These requirements reach down to frontline classroom practices regarding lesson planning and much more. While teachers might, and often do, try to encourage some level of student decision making within the classrooms, this is often a token effort, hampered as they are by external requirements that are imposed upon them. It is not my intention to critique any of these approaches, but it is important to note that such approaches often remove students from the locus of decision making, and place them as subjects within the education equation, rather than equal participants. Although *Justice Citizens* was only able to work at the edges of this over-arching system (by using time that was otherwise unassigned to formal curriculum, as well as students' own time outside of regular school hours), I was conscious that I wanted students to have as much control over their learning as was safe and reasonable – and within the guidelines the school had allowed me. This

was realised through the increased emphasis I placed on student choice and participation. When designing the course, I intently provided opportunities for students to decide how they wanted to proceed. At the most basic level, this was present in the fact that students could choose who they worked with, and also what topic they were going to research. More profoundly, students were also able to make quite complex decisions about how they were going to present their research via film – whether it was to be an interview, a recreation or something else entirely.

This, of course, is not to say that I abandoned any pretence of structure within the classroom. Just as Freire (1970) had structured activities for the teaching of literacy in the culture circles he used, I developed a range of activities that I deployed, especially in the early stages of *Justice Citizens*. This included stimulus material, presentations by visitors and staged debates between groups of students. However, I was alive to the possibilities of the lesson going in a completely different direction to that which I had anticipated, and, rather than attempting to re-direct students back to the lesson plan, I allowed students to pursue this new direction – for a much longer time than I would have in a setting governed by formal curriculum requirements. I was conscious of making the decision to cede much of my authority as a teacher to the students in the classroom, and instead tried to see students as co-participants in the learning process, rather than objects upon which I was to work. This change in mindset meant that students had the right to explore topics and ideas that were of interest to them – even if that meant that the class moved away from my original lesson plan.

14.2.3 Action-Oriented Learning and Participation in the Public Sphere

In action-oriented learning the focus is on taking action as much as it is on learning to take that action. Indeed, the artificial division between doing and learning-to-do is problematic, especially in the domain of civics and citizenship education. For my approach to action-oriented learning I draw on Ethan Zuckerman's (2014) work about young people gaining the capacity to participate in the public sphere or becoming effective civic actors and Putnam's (2001) empirical research and theorising about social capital. Zuckerman writes not only about thick or thin civic engagement but also about instrumental or emancipatory notions of 'voice.' I have discussed this at length in Chapter

Eight, but, briefly, *Justice Citizens* focused on developing the skills that young people required to have more emancipatory voice in the public sphere (and, like Zuckerman, I include the digital realm as part of this public sphere, and foreground its importance to young people). Emancipatory voice, according to Zuckerman, aims to change public perceptions by altering societal norms, and this is precisely what the films that students made were intended to do. For example, the film about teenage pregnancy was intended (and I think, quite effective in its mission) to change the audience's mind about the value of young mothers to society. The film about refugees was meant to show the audience how challenging and scary a young refugee's experiences at an Australian school might be – and thus engender a level of empathy that the students felt was absent from discussion in the public sphere. None of these films, in and of themselves, were about changing particular laws; that is, there was no defined end goal. Rather, they were seeking to strengthen voice; that is, to alter the public's perception about specific topics with the intent of influencing public debate.

Building social capital is key to strengthening capacity in the public sphere. *Justice Citizens* strengthened the school's and student's bridging social capital to create access to other actors within the public sphere; by interacting with these actors (for example, community groups, environmental groups, individuals and families). This had benefits for both the actors and the students. The students were able to leverage these connections in various ways. Firstly, some students, while they no longer had any further interest in the film-making part of *Justice Citizens* still wished to pursue their interest in the subject of their film. For example, the students who made films about the environment went on to join the Nepean Waterkeepers environment action group. This transition was made possible because of the involvement they had with *Justice Citizens* and the social capital they had developed through the program. Other students indicated that they were not particularly interested in doing anything more on their topic, but went on to make use of the skills and connections that they had developed as part of *Justice Citizens* for other purposes, such as becoming leaders in their own social groups, or within the school itself.

14.2.4 School-Community Partnerships

While I had originally not planned much community involvement with *Justice Citizens* (beyond the contribution of Penrith City Council to the film festival) I quickly realised that such involvement was necessary, as I did not have the full spectrum of skills or knowledge to assist students with their research and film-making. For example, some students quickly outstripped my quite meagre talents when it came to film-making (script research and writing, camera work, and editing), and I was fortunate enough to be able to call on the assistance of a local freelance journalist, who led a series of intensive workshops for students. This allowed students to develop their skills in this area, but it also led to students developing connections beyond the school walls, some of which they used in their future endeavours. For example, a number of students, inspired by *Justice Citizens*, set about making their own films, in their own free time, about topics that interested them. While these new films did not have the focus on justice that the original films were required to have, it is possible that their interest in film-making was stimulated and developed through their participation in *Justice Citizens.* These films were shared via YouTube;. Another example of where students utilised community links was with the involvement of the Nepean *Waterkeepers*. This is an environmental organisation that monitors the health of the Nepean River and associated waterways. A number of groups expressed interest in researching the environmental aspects of the local community, and this necessitated student making contact with, then meeting, then eventually filming with members of the *Nepean Waterkeepers* as they discussed river bank degradation. By working with this group, students had access to first-hand knowledge about the waterways, at a much deeper and more authentic level than I could have provided for them or they could have accessed by themselves.

The examples that I have described above are not formal partnerships, but rather loose relationships of mutual benefit. Regardless, I think that they are ways of developing social capital that students can then use in a variety of ways: they can either use it to develop connections beyond the school boundaries, and leverage those connections for future opportunities, or they can translate the social capital they have gained through these partnerships into knowledge capital that they can deploy in different contexts.

14.2.5 Critical Literacy and Participation in the Public Sphere

Justice Citizens was firmly focused on real world problems. I sought a way for young people to enter into discussions taking place within the public sphere about topics that were of importance to them. I have already discussed the public sphere in some detail in Chapter Eight, but I will reiterate a few points here.

While the notion of a public sphere as a space where reasoned debate can inform and help shape public opinion can be traced back to Habermas (1989), the emergence of the internet and the digital age, and especially the ubiquity of mobile digital technologies has enlivened this discussion and led to a re-consideration of the way that people participate in the public sphere. Techno-optimists, like Henry Jenkins (2006) argue that digital technologies in the post Web 2.0 era will offer new opportunities for citizens to take active roles in their democratic institutions, and to wield more power in terms of their cultural and political environment. Techno-pessimists, like Jose van Dijck (2013) are more cautious, suggesting that, much like 'old' media, new media spaces are controlled by mega-corporations. While these debates are important, it remains true that young people in Australia are using digital media in ever increasing numbers, and they are using the media both as consumers and creators. However, I was – and remain - concerned that young people often have little opportunity to develop the required skills to thoughtfully and critically examine the internet, with a special attention paid to the inequality or injustice that is presented in those spaces.

There have been concerted efforts to address young people's behaviour online – but even these messages (often framed as digital citizenship) are limited in their application. They are based on a desire to keep young people safe, and are usually no more than a list of acceptable behaviour or conduct for online exchanges. While this is not necessarily a bad thing, I think that any effective digital citizenship program needs to include, as a central feature, an element of critical literacy; that is, young people need to develop the skills to 'read' the web in a way that allows them to firstly recognise and then challenge the dominant power structures and inequalities that are present across this digital terrain. Via *Justice Citizens,* I was seeking to model and develop a level of critical literacy with the students by encouraging them to confront both the prejudices present within online material and also their own prejudices about

specific topics that they encountered. I have previously discussed this in Chapter Nine. This was a part of *Justice Citizens* that was confronting for many of the students who participated. In particular, some of the students began, through an analysis of different forms of media that they consumed, to consider the way the media presented women, or the lack of Indigenous Australian representation online, and were concerned at the limited opportunities afforded to them.

14.2.6 Advocacy for Systemic Change

While activism is often seen as a word with connotations related to disobedience, violence and disorder (Kennelly 2009), for me it is a word that must be reclaimed by civics and citizenship educators if we are to engage in pedagogies that encourage active citizenship amongst young people. In order to do this, it is not enough to simply encourage young people to take part in causes that only address the symptoms of oppression, rather than the root causes of that oppression. Indeed, there is a requirement to actively campaign for systemic and institutional change. While it might, for example, be a worthwhile and beneficial exercise to make refugees and asylum seekers more welcome in your own community, such an approach will not, in and of itself, challenge the oppression or marginalisation that these groups experience on a systemic and institutional level. In some ways, such exercises might only serve to alleviate the feeling that we, as privileged people, should be doing something, rather than leading to any significant change in the relations of power between these different groups within society. Therefore, if one is going to encourage active citizenship, there is a requirement to help young people learn to challenge those systems rather than simply teaching them how to act within the systems that perpetrate the racism, sexism or other forms of oppression present within society today.

Such an approach is more easily said than done; however, I think that there is potential in some of the ways that social media is being used to build powerful and effective social campaigning mechanisms. The key feature of social media here is what danah boyd (2009) described as scalability – the potential for social media to amplify specific messages far beyond the audience that they would otherwise have been able to access, and to move beyond the old broadcast model of one-to-many to a many-to-many model. These

possibilities for increased audience volume and interaction, and the leverage that comes with it, is a powerful mechanism for encouraging systemic and institutional change. It would be remiss to suggest that such an approach is a panacea to social movement ills; for example, scholars like Zynepi Tufekci (2017) have identified that there are relatively weaker links between participants in social media campaigns than there are between those who have had long relationships and regular face to face meetings. Other scholars have described this approach, somewhat dismissively, as 'slacktivism' (Christensen 2011) or 'clicktivism' (Butler 2011). While there is some truth in their critique, I think a more measured consideration would also take into account of the various social media mediated successes, such as the campaign for people to change their Facebook profile pictures to an equals symbol to indicate their support for marriage equality (Penney 2015). Techno-optimists see potential in the ways that young people can use social media as a platform to shape public opinion and attempt to advocate for systematic change. In *Justice Citizens*, there was a modest attempt to explore what such an approach might look like. The students' films were all published on YouTube, and shared widely from both the students' accounts and also from the school's social media accounts. While none of the films went viral, students' films were exposed to a wider audience than they would otherwise have had the chance. As of October 2017, the total number of views of all the films was more than 1000.

14.3 Justice Pedagogy – A New Term for Critical Citizenship Education

Critical pedagogy has been influential in the development of my approach to civics and citizenship education. The works of Freire, Giroux, McLaren and later generations of critical pedagogues are central to activist approaches to civics and citizenship education. I have described, as part of *Justice Citizens*, a tradition of critical pedagogy that is both centred around the learner and democratic in nature. Critical pedagogy has been drawn upon by other activist citizenship education initiatives, for example, David Zyngier's *RuMAD*? However, critical pedagogy is in need of refreshing, as is the discourse of citizenship education in Australia and around the world. This is, as much as anything else, related to the drift in meaning of the original terms. For example, where once citizenship might have been enough to imply a level of active involvement in the affairs of the state, now politicians and policymakers

speak about active citizenship, or participatory citizenship, or consumer citizenship. Equally, critical pedagogues now engage with a range of terms and conceptual influences, like critical race theory and hip-hop pedagogy, for example, that can often limit discussion to definitional arguments and hinder the effective development of a critical pedagogy. In addition, critical pedagogy has acknowledged early failings in its vision regarding its blindness to matters of race and gender (for example, see Lynn 2004), and newer ideas of critical pedagogy must incorporate intersectional notions of oppression beyond class-based ones. In order to do this, new ideas, new language and new concepts might be carefully deployed in order to enliven a somewhat self-reinforcing conceptual space. While I am not averse to the ambiguity present in discussions about definitions and meaning, and indeed I think there might be benefits to such ambiguity, I am suggesting that by injecting notions of complexity thinking into the discussion about critical pedagogy, it is possible to approach the ongoing project of critical pedagogy with new ideas. In addition, by applying this new understanding of critical pedagogy to the complex problem of developing active citizens via education, one might begin to consider new approaches to civics and citizenship education.

14.3.1 Moving from the Linear to the Organic

In seeking to refresh critical pedagogy through the use of ideas drawn from complexity theory, I am moving away from the linearity that is present in many traditions of critical pedagogy. Instead, I want to embrace creative, organic and improvised approaches to civics and citizenship education, and it is for this reason that I find ideas drawn from complexity theory to be compelling. In this section, I am going to outline how three features of complexity theory (distributed decision making, self organising systems and emergent learning) share conceptual similarities with features of most traditions of critical pedagogy (grassroots organising, learner-centred democracy and naming the world) but also extend and develop them. By linking these two concepts (as shown in Figure 14), I am recognising both the similarities between the ideas, but also acknowledging that the organic nature of the complexity theory concepts can extend the ideas present in critical pedagogy. Having established this, I identify the ways these concepts were present in *Justice Citizens*. Finally, I establish a structure to explain how the six features of critical citizenship

education I described earlier in this chapter (experiential education, student-led learning, action oriented learning and participation in the public sphere, school community partnerships, critical literacy and advocacy for systemic change) are linked to the concepts of complexity theory, in order to explicate justice pedagogy.

In order to facilitate this process, I have drawn on three key ideas of complexity theory: distributed decision making, self-organising systems and emergent learning, and described how they might contribute to the development of a new understanding of critical pedagogy. It is important to note that my use of complexity theory is not intended to be a detailed analysis of the theory, but rather I am engaging in conceptual borrowing in an effort to explore the understandings of critical pedagogy and citizenship education, as well as to explicate what I am describing as Justice Pedagogy. In figure 14 there are two columns. The left-hand column contains concepts that are central to critical pedagogy. The right-hand column indicates concepts that are central to complexity theory.

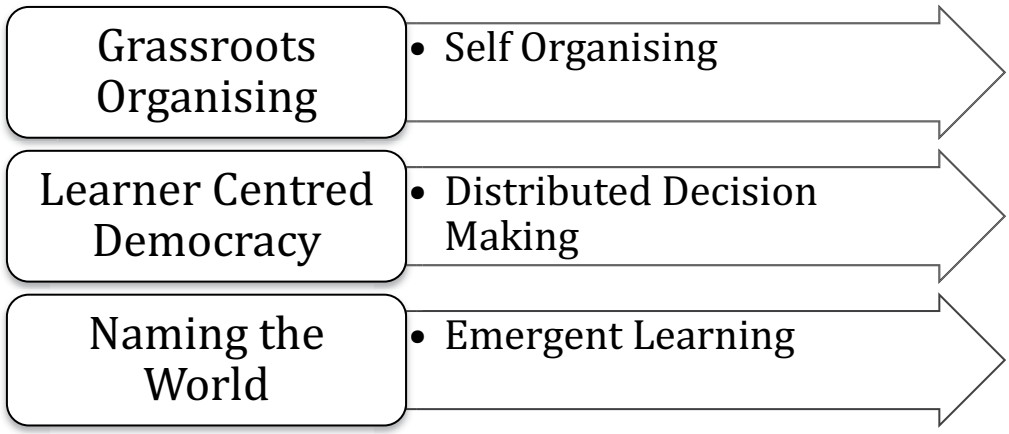

Figure 14: Connecting Critical Pedagogy and Complexity Theory

14.3.2 Distributed Decision Making and Non-Linearity

Complex systems are characterised by distributed decision-making and non-linearity (Byrne 2014). As opposed to simple systems, where best practice is reasonably well established and often involves a hierarchical structure with a clear plan and direction to follow, complexity thinking requires us to conceive of learning spaces in a radically different way. This approach will assist in addressing some of the previous criticisms of critical pedagogy. In earlier

traditions of critical pedagogy, even when it distanced itself from didactic teaching, much emphasis was placed on the role of the teacher, and especially the way she or he led dialogue or enabled participatory forms of deliberation. It is necessary consider that the behaviour of the system will be a result of the actions of a diverse range of actors.

Critical pedagogy has also been criticized for replacing one form of indoctrination with another (Ellsworth 1989; Johnson & Morris 2010). By adopting complexity thinking notions of distributed decision-making and non-linearity, it is possible to move beyond the role of the teacher and instead begin to consider the behaviour of the whole environment, which will be a result of the actions of a diverse range of participants. Thus, classroom learning spaces need to reflect that knowledge and learning does not, as some would suggest, flow directly from the teacher or the instructor to the student (or vice-versa), who passively accepts it. Rather, it is a many-fold and multi-directional process, where learning occurs between the teacher and student, but also student to the teacher, and students to students, and that this process should be acknowledged as part of the learning process. This means that decision making, if it is to be informed and based on all of the participants' understandings, should be distributed and not strictly hierarchical. Although not specifically writing about critical approaches to education, Davis and Sumara describe the role that distributed decision-making plays in complexity theory approaches to education in a way that delocalizes the nexus of power:

> Pragmatically speaking, with regard to shared/distributed work or understandings, the upshot is that a person should never strive to position herself or himself (or a text or other figurehead) as the final authority on matters of appropriate or correct action. Structures can and should be in place to allow students to participate in these decisions. For us, then, an important element in effective educational and research practices is the capacity to disperse control around matters of intention, interpretation, and appropriateness. (2009, p. 42)

Such an approach was evident in *Justice Citizens.* Although I had originally expected students to identify topics that I felt were important – for example, I wanted them to look at topics like homelessness or racism - the students responded by identifying topics for their films which they felt were more relevant to the local communities. Students also had a lot of leeway in deciding how best to approach the task of film-making. Some chose to attend technical training sessions that we provided, while others preferred an 'experiment and see' approach. This is an example of the way that the decision making power

did not rest solely in my hands as the teacher, but was more equally shared between all participants in the class. Furthermore, *Justice Citizens* was different to other traditions of critical pedagogy in that it was less about structured approaches to learning, and instead privileged the idea of being flexible, organic and improvised. This was present in a number of ways in *Justice Citizens*, most obviously in the way that I and the students needed to adapt the focus of their films, as described above, but also in the ways students recalibrated their ideas and expectations in terms of their films and their audiences.

14.3.3 Self Organising Systems

Critical pedagogues emphasise the importance of grassroots organising and activism (for example, see Staples 2012). As such, they reject the top-down, authoritarian overtones that are often present within education, where decisions are made in the best interests of students with little input from the students. By adopting this approach critical pedagogues require students to be organised at a grass roots level, but it also requires a level of activism that is often absent in traditional pedagogical approaches.

Central to many critical pedagogical traditions is challenging oppression and resisting power, in whatever form that is present. This is present in complexity thinking through the idea of self-organising systems. Complexity thinking recognises that systems (or organisms) respond to external stimuli, and this behaviour will change both the organism and the external stimuli (Davis & Sumara, 2009). This has direct links to the idea of challenging the status quo, and the requirement for students to be self-organising.

Many traditions of critical pedagogy are described as student-centered (Freire, 1970). However, it is my contention that this is fundamentally different to an approach to student learning that is self-organising; that is, one that is student-led. Student-centered classrooms might have the needs and the interests of the students at heart, but they can still be places where authoritarian approaches to education, dictated by the teacher and the broader regulatory framework, are practiced. By contrast, a self-organising approach to education would be organised and practiced by the students themselves; in this instance, the role of the teacher would be to provide an environment where such an approach might flourish. Such an approach is different to even 'bottom-up'

approaches to learners, as there is much less emphasis placed on the teacher or facilitator and his or her role, and instead it seeks to provide the environment in which learners can determine their own path of learning, individually and collaboratively with peers. Such an approach privileges the right of the young person in question to pursue those passions which interest him or her, rather than being directed by a teacher – even if that teacher is a well-meaning activist.

This was present in *Justice Citizens*, too. As students underwent the program, they began to think both more broadly about the topics at hand and their involvement, and also beyond the scope of the program and how they might prolong their involvement with these topics of interest after *Justice Citizens* had come to an end. I have drawn on the idea of social capital to explain how they were able to leverage the new capital they had developed through the program into ongoing links and connections with organisations that would allow them to continue their work towards equality and justice. A good example of this is the student who joined the *Nepean Waterkeepers*, an environmental group, during the project as she saw it was directly aligned with her interest in environmental justice.

14.3.4 Emergent Learning

Finally, one of the central tenets of critical pedagogy is the process of 'naming the world', that is, to become literate in the way that power works in society. This idea is closely linked to conscientization, where a person becomes aware of the way that society works to oppress either them or others through covert means. This has links with the notion of emergent learning and transdisciplinarity in complexity thinking (Davis & Sumara 2008), which is used to describe the new learnings that take place within a complex system, usually as a result of the interaction between the disparate elements in the system. This new learning affects both the teacher and students, as much as either of those terms have any meaning in complex system, and is characterized by being unpredictable and student-directed.

In terms of refreshing critical pedagogy, this suggests that educators need to be mindful not only of the content of the learning, or the pedagogical approaches that they adopt, but also the environment provided for that learning to take place in. Speaking more broadly, it suggests that educators need to build partnerships that extend beyond the boundaries of educational

institutions in a real and authentic way, rather than erecting artificial walls between schools and communities.

I think that this feature was perhaps the most obvious one displayed during *Justice Citizens*. The emergent learning took place for both myself and the students – and, I imagine, a number of other people involved in the project. For example, I feel that I became literate in the concerns that young people described as issues in their local communities, and I also became literate in how they felt those concerns might be addressed. The participants, on the other hand, began to explore

learning which [arose] out of the interaction between a number of people and resources, in which the learners organise and determine both the process and to some extent the learning destinations, both of which are unpredictable. The interaction is in many senses self-organised, but it nevertheless requires some constraint and structure. It may include virtual or physical networks, or both. (Williams, Karousou & Mackness 2011 p. 42)

Emergent learning has much in common with constructivist ideas about learning, but it is broader in meaning because there is the recognition that not only is learning co-constructed by the participants in the learning process, but there is also the potential for entirely new and exciting learning to take place, to which all participants, but especially the teacher, must be alive.

14.4 Conclusion

Using the ideas of self-organising systems, distributed decision making and emergent learning within critical pedagogy, one can begin to consider how such an approach might itself reinvigorate debate about civics and citizenship education. It is into this space that I insert Justice Pedagogy, a conception of the way that we might effectively encourage the development of active, justice-oriented young people in Australian schools. Earlier in this chapter, I suggested that the success of *Justice Citizens* was because of six features: school-community partnerships, experiential learning, action-oriented learning, student-led learning, critical literacy and advocacy for systematic change. However, it is my contention, and central to my vision of a justice pedagogy, that in addition to these features, educators must be mindful of the ways that such features might interact with each other, and how these resulting interactions affect the concept as a whole. With this in mind, I think that it is

possible to begin to draw out some interesting notions combining this refreshed version of critical pedagogy and civics and citizenship education. This is depicted in Figure 15 below.

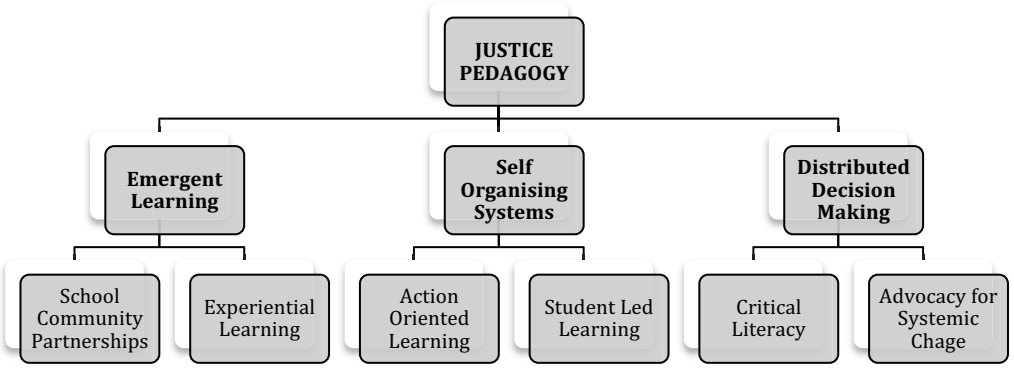

Figure 15: Justice Pedagogy

Emergent learning occurs when transdisciplinary groups are formed and interact with each other. In terms of justice pedagogy, this can be developed through the features of school-community partnerships and experiential learning. In both of these features, there is an emphasis on engaging with people or knowledges beyond the walls of the school. It is through this process that young people will have the opportunity to develop skills and understandings that are new and relevant to becoming active citizens. Action oriented learning and student-led learning are both related to the notion of self-organising systems, in terms of structure and purpose. A self-organising system has the capability to determine its own purpose: this is expressed in *Justice Citizens* through the notion of action-oriented learning, where students were encouraged to engage in taking action about issues of injustice in a practical way. A system also has the capacity to structure itself in the way it sees fit; in *Justice Citizens*, students could do this by determining the way in which they participated in the class, as well as what particular issues they chose to research. Finally, there is the notion of distributed decision making. This finds an expression in *Justice Citizens* through the features of critical literacy and advocacy for systemic change. I've taken a wide view of the notion of distributed decision making, beyond the bounds of the participants of *Justice*

Citizens, and including the way that public opinion is shaped in the (digital) public sphere. To engage with this process of decision making, young people need to develop the critical literacy skills to critique what they are reading and discussing in that space, and they also need to skills to successfully engage in that space in such a way as to build support for their intent to challenge injustice.

Justice Pedagogy offers an exciting insight into fresh approaches to civics and citizenship education. It does this by leaving behind much of the baggage of previous approaches, which emphasised content-based curricula and didactic pedagogy, and instead uses a new vision of critical pedagogy to suggest innovative approaches to civics and citizenship education. By borrowing conceptual constructs from complexity theory, it is possible to imagine new structures and contexts that will encourage the flourishing of a more equitable and empowering pedagogical space.

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APPENDIX: PLAYLIST OF FILMS FROM *JUSTICE CITIZENS* FILM FESTIVAL

Yadav's Journey: https://youtu.be/xQDaJmvzvsI

Dirt Bike Safety: https://youtu.be/luXWymG5t_w

Teen Pregnancy: https://youtu.be/Lg6RIUDCrKg

Domestic Violence: https://youtu.be/zOpdMcealp4

Indigenous Stories: https://youtu.be/4xzRRD-mCEQ

Fear of the Unknown: https://youtu.be/uDdnE50WR8Q

Bullying: https://youtu.be/d4kMk_d7M3g

Nepean Pollution: https://youtu.be/130E0AFBH-g