

Chapter One: Introduction

The Australian Curriculum sets out ‘the core knowledge, understanding, skills and general capabilities important for all Australian students’ (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority [ACARA], 2012). The curriculum’s authors assume that the specific knowledge and skills selected for inclusion are important to and valuable for all young Australians. Though the introduction of the national curriculum has generated considerable media and scholarly debates over organisation and content, less attention has been paid to the extent to which the Australian Curriculum values the different knowledge systems of minority cultural groups. This thesis is born out of a passion to ensure Aboriginal students see themselves reflected in curriculum. This study critically examines the Australian Curriculum and the place of Aboriginal knowledges, histories and cultures within it, using Critical Discourse Analysis to investigate privileged and marginalised Indigenous education discourses within the policy. It then explores the discourses stakeholders in an Aboriginal community draw upon to express their education aspirations for the community’s children, and how they may align with those dominant in policy. This chapter introduces the study.

1.1. Background

Historically, education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in Australia has been oppressive, involving policies and practices of segregation and assimilation (Senate Employment Workplace Relations Small Business and Education Reference Committee, 2000). This has resulted in a legacy of intergenerational alienation and underachievement within education (Bodkin-Andrews & Carlson, 2016). Arguably one of the most significant influences on the education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples was the 1967 Referendum (Price, 2012). Since then, at least, successive governments have been concerned with the effectiveness of schooling for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (Partington, 2012). There is an unacceptable link between educational disadvantage and low levels of achievement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations [DEEWR], 2011). A raft of policies, programs, projects and initiatives have been deployed to address

the significant disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples within education, and more broadly in society. This includes the ‘Closing the Gap’ policy agenda of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), in which three of the six targets relate to improved education outcomes and engagement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (Prout & Biddle, 2016). There is recognition that despite progress however, education systems and sectors continue to fail many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (Garlett, 2012).

Consistent data across all levels (school, state, national and international) demonstrates that inequity in Australian education continues (Klenowski, 2009). In 2009, Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results showed mean outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to be significantly lower than not only non-Indigenous students, but also the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) average (DEEWR, 2011). Progress towards the goal of achieving educational equality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is painfully slow (Beresford, Partington, & Gower, 2012). Despite gains made in recent years, large gaps still remain in areas of early childhood education participation, literacy and numeracy, attendance and retention (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2017; Ministerial Council for Education Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs [MCEECDYA], 2010). These gaps perpetuate intergenerational disadvantage, by limiting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students’ career prospects and life choices with lower educational attainment linked to poorer health, income and employment outcomes (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2016; MCEECDYA, 2010). The *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key indicators 2014 Report* found there had been ‘virtually no change’ from 2008 to 2013 in the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving national minimum standards for numeracy, reading and writing (Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision, 2014, p. 1). Significant improvements have been made in the rate of high school completion, though Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are still less likely to complete Year 12 than non-Indigenous students (Biddle, 2013; Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2016). Geography, socioeconomic status and school sector account for some of this difference, though not all. Other factors impacting the success of this group must be considered.

The research focus upon Indigenous students, their families and communities in determining the causes of educational underachievement has resulted in much policy-informing literature (Whatman & Singh, 2015). Undertaking a comprehensive review of contemporary research on Indigenous education, Mellor and Corrigan (2004) characterised much research as focusing predominantly on ‘problems’ whilst also tending to promote singular solutions. In seeking to improve the educational results and outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, Price (2012) comments that the majority of programs and projects have been directed at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, parents and caregivers – not at the education system comprised of policy makers, principals and teachers tasked with designing and delivering quality teaching and learning programs. Critics however have suggested an undeniable connection between ‘culturally unresponsive curriculum and the largely uninterrupted trajectory of Indigenous student underachievement’ (Lowe, Backhaus, Yunkaporta, Brown, & Loynes, 2014, p. 65). The *Katu Kalpa: Report on the Inquiry into the Effectiveness of Education and Training Programs for Indigenous Australians* (Senate Employment Workplace Relations Small Business and Education Reference Committee, 2000) considers contemporary education systems to still be alienating environments for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, because of the vestiges of assimilation and institutionalised racism that remain, though no longer so overt or deliberate. There is recognition that the system in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are educated needs to be culturally inclusive, actively recognising and validating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and languages and providing a sense of cultural and linguistic identity, if students are to achieve success at school (MCEECDYA, 2010).

A first class education is required for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, which does not require them to compromise their cultural knowledge base (Price, 2012). For children of marginalised cultural groups and those of the dominant, mirrors and windows are needed (Tschida, Ryan, & Swenson Ticknor, 2014). Mirrors provide opportunities for students, who have previously been invisible in the school curriculum, to see themselves reflected in education, to be affirmed and have their experience and identity validated (Price, 2012; Sims-Bishop, 1990a; Tschida et al., 2014). Windows allow children from dominant cultural groups to understand their place in the world, not only as members of just one socio-cultural

group but as global citizens connected to all humans in a multicultural world (Sims-Bishop, 1990a). With only mirrors, these children will develop a dangerous ethnocentrism, where their own value and importance within the world is exaggerated (Sims-Bishop, 1990a). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have historically been provided with a plethora of windows through which they can view life in Australia's dominant culture but very few mirrors (Price, 2012). Conversely, White Australian children have had mirrors but not windows, or that which has been provided from outsider perspectives has communicated stereotypes and derogatory messages. It is not simply a case of providing a mirror or window, but critically examining how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, histories and cultures are represented within and through it. Sims-Bishop writes that 'When children cannot find themselves reflected in the books they read, or when the images they see are distorted, negative, or laughable, they learn a powerful lesson about how they are devalued in the society of which they are a part' (1990b, p. 557). This too applies to curriculum. A culturally inclusive education can have positive effects on the self-esteem and identity formation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and reduce institutional barriers to participation (Senate Employment Workplace Relations Small Business and Education Reference Committee, 2000).

The limitations of the concept of 'cultural inclusiveness' are noted here however, as the notion retains 'a sense of the state allowing something from the margins to be included within the dominant mainstream' (Vass, 2012, p. 89). A more simplistic notion of cultural inclusiveness in curriculum may not solely meet the needs of Aboriginal Peoples. Education must also respond directly to the aspirations of those it serves, and notions of cultural inclusiveness must be expanded and reformed to take account of local context and the needs and desires of individuals and communities. Scholars such as Brayboy and Castagno (2009, p. 32) call for 'culturally responsive schooling', which sees a firm grounding in localised language and culture inform appropriate education practices to 'build a bridge' between schooling and a child's home culture. Examinations of how cognisant education is of the connections between schooling, local community knowledge and aspirations are necessary, in order to ensure the system responds to the wants, needs and values of Aboriginal Peoples (Fogarty, 2010). In recognising learners' identities and aspirations within a localised community context, an education system can develop

which sees everyone belong, rather than a system which insists everyone belong to it (Bat & Guenther, 2013). This study, grounded in a critical paradigm, preferences the concept of culturally responsive education and use of such terminology. Given the widespread usage and acceptance in the Australian education landscape of the term ‘inclusive’ however and its normalisation as an unproblematic good, the Australian Curriculum’s capacity to be inclusive is considered within this study.

The Australian Curriculum claims to offer an education of excellence and equity to all Australian students. It takes measures to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content across the curriculum. The *Melbourne Declaration on the Educational Goals for Young Australians*, from which the Australian Curriculum was developed, states that all Australian students should ‘understand and acknowledge the value of Indigenous cultures, and possess the knowledge, skills and understanding to contribute to, and benefit from, reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians’ (Ministerial Council on Education Employment Training and Youth Affairs [MCEETYA], 2008, p. 9). In the most recent *Closing the Gap Report*, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull spoke of the continued need to walk side by side with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples toward recognition and reconciliation, and a promising future for all in a society built upon opportunity and equality (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2017). There is mutual benefit then in a culturally inclusive curriculum, through which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, histories and cultures are interwoven and Aboriginal aspirations supported. This goal is clearly relevant to all Australians, as the success and future of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is linked to that of all Australians, and in improving educational outcomes for these students, we improve outcomes for all and thus society as a whole (Bodkin-Andrews & Carlson, 2016).

1.1.1. Assumptions of culturally inclusive curricula

It is now largely accepted that curriculum must be culturally inclusive, and provide mirrors and windows: mirrors, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to see themselves reflected in curriculum; and windows, for all Australian students to explore views of the world around them. These mirrors and windows however need careful examination. We cannot assume that the glass has not become

clouded, and that the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, histories and cultures within the Australian Curriculum is a true representation of the 'reality' of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' lived experiences. There is an assumption that cultural inclusion in curriculum is an unproblematic good. There is also an assumption that this inclusion in curriculum policy carries power to impact upon practices and thus student outcomes in a positive manner. Given the recency of Australian Curriculum development, these assumptions as they relate to this particular policy have not been scrutinised in great depth. Indeed, the very nature of curriculum development has rendered such investigations difficult, with fast-paced progression and regular revisions. With the *Review of the Australian Curriculum* (Australian Government Department of Education, 2014b), subsequent *Initial Australian Government Response* (Australian Government Department of Education, 2014a) and the *Australian Curriculum, Version 8.0* released in September 2015, it is timely to consider these assumptions in connection with the nature of representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and their knowledges, histories and cultures within the Australian Curriculum. At the same time, it is also necessary to consider the assumption that a national curriculum is representative of the aspirations of all, and examine its capacity to support localised community aspirations.

In this thesis then, I investigate the Australian Curriculum policy corpus, and particularly challenge the assumption that the inclusion of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures cross-curriculum priority is an unproblematic good. I recognise that this policy corpus, which seeks to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, histories and cultures in schooling, is not designed specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. As part of a much broader trend evident in Anglophone countries to codify and standardise education (discussed in Chapter Two), the Australian Curriculum's primary audience is, in many ways, non-Indigenous educators and students. How the inclusion and representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and their knowledges, histories and cultures within the Australian Curriculum then aligns with the aspirations of Aboriginal people is a primary concern of this study. I investigate this by focussing on one particular community, to explore how community members negotiate their education aspirations for their children in a complex environment. In doing so, my goal is for the Australian Curriculum's framing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, histories and cultures, and its responsiveness to

localised community aspirations and context, to be better understood in order to encourage conversations of critique amongst all stakeholders.

1.2. Research aim and scope

There is a clear need to examine (and re-examine as the policy is continuously evaluated and revised) the Australian Curriculum, to consider not simply the inclusion of ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander’ content within the curriculum but those approaches or discourses mobilised within the policy and the messages they communicate. This study is necessary to reveal the subject positions allocated to Aboriginal students, and the discursive power of curriculum policy. Providing a social context and a platform for Aboriginal people in this critique is also necessary, to examine how those discourses mobilised support localised community wants and needs. The aim of this research therefore is to **explore how the aspirations of Aboriginal people are supported in dominant Indigenous education discourses mobilised within the Australian Curriculum.**

In undertaking this exploration, I have set out the study to have two related and yet distinct components: Part A, the critical discourse analysis of the Australian Curriculum policy corpus; and Part B, the community-based investigation of education aspirations. These components respond to Research Questions 1 and 2 respectively:

1. Which different Indigenous education discourses are privileged or marginalised in the construction of Aboriginal knowledges, histories and cultures in the Australian Curriculum?
2. Which Indigenous education discourses do Aboriginal community members draw upon in expressing their education aspirations for the community’s children?

This framing of the thesis is somewhat unusual, but necessary. In undertaking an analysis of curriculum policy alongside an investigation of a community’s aspirations regarding the role of schooling, I see each component as equally important. Part A situates the Australian Curriculum analysis within contemporary nationalising education policy practices, to investigate its positioning of Aboriginal knowledges, histories and cultures. Part B enables a community to offer their localised perspectives, and articulate the high expectations they hold for education to

equip their children with the knowledges, skills and resources necessary for community revitalisation. Narrative portraits are used in Part B, whereby excerpts from interviews with community members (as a data source for analysis) are embedded within the text, in order to demonstrate diversity and complexity within the high expectations for education that community members hold. A third and final Research Question then brings together the analyses of the Australian Curriculum policy corpus, and the education desires, wants and needs as articulated by a particular community, by asking:

3. How do these two sets of discourses, evident in Australian Curriculum policy and in the education desires of Aboriginal people, align?

In order to respond to each research question (which are explored further in Chapter Three), and bridge a conversation between the analysis of the Australian Curriculum policy corpus and the education aspirations of a community, I developed and deployed an Indigenous education discourse taxonomy (detailed in Chapter Four). In developing this taxonomy, as a synthesis of theory and research literature, I recognise that discourses are ‘terrains of struggle’ (Fiske, 2016, p. xxii) but that a commonality of language within analysis is important, as terms within the field of Indigenous education and policy analysis more broadly are often used without adequate definition. The organisation and cohesiveness of the taxonomy supports the analyses of both the Australian Curriculum policy corpus and the education aspirations of community members, and allows for the findings of Parts A and B to be considered jointly in a much broader discussion of Indigenous justice within curriculum.

This thesis therefore is not concerned with examining ways in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, parents and caregivers can be supported to ‘access’ the system, or with problematising the individual (framing the Aboriginal student as one in need of intervention). It seeks to ‘turn the deficit logic of closing the gap back upon itself, reframing the problem as a gap in the capacity of the curriculum, rather than a gap in the ability of students’ (Lowe et al., 2014, p. 69). It is concerned with how the system responds to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and communities, and society at large, to achieve authentic, respectful inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, histories and cultures in the national Australian Curriculum. It is also concerned with how the

national Australian Curriculum then connects to and supports local community aspirations and needs.

What the thesis finds is that there is a lack of alignment between the Australian Curriculum's framing of Aboriginal knowledges, histories and cultures, and the education aspirations of an Aboriginal community for their children. Though the Australian Curriculum 'includes' the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures cross-curriculum priority, a culturally inclusive education is more than a consideration of 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures' content within curriculum – it is one that allows communities to carve out spaces of agency and hope to respond to their unique conditions and needs. The community focussed on within this study has high expectations for the role of education in improving the trajectory of both their children's lives and the community's future, which are grounded in the localised context. This thesis emphasises the difficulties in the provision of contextually responsive schooling when education is framed by contemporary nationalising agendas and policy practices, and sees it imperative that the intended curriculum provide opportunities to connect to the cultures, backgrounds and aspirations of all students.

1.2.1. Terminology: Aboriginal and Indigenous

Within this study I recognise that language cannot be considered as neutral or impartial, and I take cognisance of the need to use appropriate, culturally-sensitive terminology when discussing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, their knowledges and cultures. 'Aboriginal', 'Torres Strait Islander', and 'Indigenous' are terms commonly seen in the media and within Commonwealth publications (Jamieson, 2012). 'Indigenous' as a term has evolved through international law and is often used by the Australian Government to refer to the two First Nations' Peoples of Australia – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (Australian Human Rights Commission [AHRC], 2012). Some now state it is best to avoid the term, as it is considered reminiscent of the colonial activity of describing First Nations Peoples as part of the flora and fauna (Jamieson, 2012). Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples avoid using Indigenous unless absolutely necessary, as it is too generic (Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies [AIATSIS], 2014). Within this study, I use the term Indigenous when referring to

First Nations Peoples internationally. This is particularly necessary when discussing Indigenous education discourses, as the taxonomy developed (and detailed in Chapter Four) draws upon international literature to identify dominant discourses in the field.

The term ‘Aboriginal’ is commonly interchanged with Indigenous, although the two carry different meanings. Aboriginal (with a capitalised ‘A’) refers to the Aboriginal Peoples of Australia and does not always include Torres Strait Islander Peoples (NSW Government, 2007). As such, within this thesis I use ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples’ when referring to the descendants of the original inhabitants of Australia. I do not abbreviate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples within this thesis or replace the phrase with Indigenous – where it is intended to refer to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, it is written in full. Note the pluralisation of peoples, which serves to acknowledge the diversity of languages and cultural practices of the many Aboriginal nations within Australia (AHRC, 2005), as well as being an important linguistic symbol of the self-determination of Indigenous Peoples (Smith, 2012).

It should be remembered that these terms, as a legacy of colonisation, neglect the diversity of Indigenous Peoples’ languages and cultures and in the Australian context are not the original names Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples used in self-identification (AHRC, 2005; AIATSIS, 2014). Hence, although the use of the terms ‘Aboriginal’ and ‘Indigenous’ is unavoidable when discussing broader Australian First Nations communities, I have used the specific names of Aboriginal nations and language groups within this document where possible.

1.2.2. The position of Torres Strait Islander perspectives

This study, in analysing the Australian Curriculum which identifies Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures as a cross-curriculum priority, focuses on the positioning of Aboriginal knowledges, histories and cultures within that document. The study then explores the education aspirations of stakeholders in an Aboriginal community. Here it does not extend itself to include Torres Strait Islander voices, as it was too great a task (through the use of additional sites in the Torres Strait) to adequately include both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives within the constraints of the study. To then include Torres Strait

Islander Peoples within this thesis through my use of inattentive terminology, because they are also First Nations Peoples of Australia, would do little to acknowledge the diversity in knowledge systems, cultures and languages that exists within and between the groups, and the importance of Torres Strait Islander perspectives as a separate entity (NSW Government, 2015). Whilst connections can be made within this thesis, how the national curriculum reflects education aspirations of Torres Strait Islander Peoples does not fit within the scope of the study, but remains a valuable area for research in its own right. I mention ‘Torres Strait Islander’ then within this study largely when referring to the cross-curriculum priority or content within the Australian Curriculum, as the policy regularly discusses the two First Nations Peoples of Australia jointly.

1.3. Overview of chapters

This introductory chapter presents the broader context of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education in Australia and the continued disadvantage those students face within the system. It discusses the need for a culturally inclusive and contextually responsive curriculum, and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, histories and cultures within curriculum in Australia. It states the aim of this thesis: exploring how the aspirations of Aboriginal people¹ are supported in dominant Indigenous education discourses mobilised within the Australian Curriculum. It also explains key terminology as used throughout this thesis.

Chapter Two discusses the standardisation of education, both nationally and in Anglophone countries more broadly, and provides the social, political and economic context of national curriculum. It then moves to describe the complex historical social relations between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and the colonisers of Australia. This provides the necessary background to contextualise a discussion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies/perspectives within education, and the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures as a cross-curriculum priority within the Australian Curriculum. Following an overview of national curriculum development in Australia, challenges to inclusion

¹ People is in a sense a singular group here, as the study engages with one particular community rather than with many Aboriginal nations.

are identified through a review of the literature including organisational issues, the quantity and quality of content, and the subject positioning of Aboriginal Peoples.

Chapter Three presents the conceptualisation of the study. Locating the study within a critical theory research paradigm, this chapter highlights how I attempt to take cognisance of Indigenous research methodologies and principles. Notions of policy and discourse are explained, including the ‘policy as discursive’ construction and particular model of discourse used within this study. These concepts provide a theoretical basis for the study and frame the three key research questions detailed within the chapter.

Chapter Four focuses on the broader context of Indigenous education, to chart the discursive field. In highlighting limitations in the literature on Indigenous education discourses, the chapter presents my own taxonomy of Indigenous education discourses, developed for this study through an extensive review of literature. This taxonomy provides a conceptual framework for considering Indigenous education discourses, and serves as an analytical tool within this study.

Chapters Five and Six present Part A, the research component dealing with the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of the Australian Curriculum policy corpus. Chapter Five details its research design, and is the first of two chapters which present this study’s research methods (with the second relating to Part B). In Chapter Five, CDA as methodology is discussed and then research methods pertaining to the analysis of the Australian Curriculum policy are presented. This includes procedures (data sources, sampling techniques), data analysis (the use of Leximancer, Fairclough’s 10 Questions and content analysis), reporting of results and ethical considerations relating to the policy analysis.

Chapter Six presents the findings of Part A’s analysis of the Australian Curriculum in answer to the first research question on discourses evident within the policy, and is the first of two results chapters (with the second relating to Part B). An account of the Australian Curriculum is firstly provided. Then, a description and interpretation is provided of the vocabulary, grammatical features and textual structures of each learning area as well as a discussion of ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander’ tagged content within the learning area. The description and interpretation of supporting documentation follows, including *Cross-Curriculum Priorities* and *Student Diversity*. A summary of the analysis concludes the chapter, discussing variances in orientations to education between learning areas and

privileged, marginalised and underlying discourses within and across the policy corpus.

Part B is the research component dealing with the community-based investigation of education aspirations, and is presented in Chapters Seven and Eight. In Chapter Seven (the second of the two chapters dealing with research methods), this study's theorisation of aspiration is firstly presented. The research methodology and methods pertaining to the community-based investigation, informed by advocacy ethnography, narrative portraits and juxta-texts, is then detailed. This includes procedures (data sources, sampling techniques), data analysis, reporting of results and ethical considerations, detailing procedural ethics and ethics in practice. This chapter introduces juxta-text (Petersen, 2015), to disrupt traditional Western research design chapter format and formalised thinking, and offer an explanation of how the timing of data collection within the community necessitated particular ways of being and doing. This section of the study was experienced in community, and the description of the nature of research with Aboriginal people in this community contributes in its own way to contextualise the subsequent results.

Chapter Eight is the second of the two results chapters, presenting the findings of Part B's community-based investigation. It begins with a cultural description of the community, developed jointly by myself and the Community Reference Group, and its material reality to further contextualise community informants' responses. A description and interpretation of the aspirations of community members is provided. Community responses are presented as narrative portraits, framed by three broad thematic questions, in order to privilege informants' voices in the discussion of their aspirations for the education of the community's children.

Chapter Nine is the final chapter and brings together the two analyses. Here, the discourses in each data set (Australian Curriculum policy corpus and community responses) are compared, and findings presented within a discussion of the literature. Within this explanation the social determinants and social effects of discourses are considered. Further research recommendations and implications for stakeholders are reported on.

Chapter Two: National Curriculum and its Inclusion of Aboriginal Knowledges, Histories and Cultures

The introductory chapter discussed the need for a culturally inclusive curriculum, in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students can see themselves reflected in authentic and respectful ways, as well as one which is responsive to their aspirations. This chapter distances the study from conversations around the individual, moving it towards a critique of power relations. This chapter seeks to situate the study in the broader context of national educational policy, specifically national curriculum, which forms part of a global trend to codify and standardise education. In investigating culturally inclusive curriculum within this broader frame, it is important to examine the ways in which power relations between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and non-Indigenous Australians have been exercised in political, social and educative contexts. The development of the Australian Curriculum is discussed, as is the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, histories and cultures within it. The chapter concludes with an explanation of the need for further research.

2.1. Federal interventions in education

Globalisation has had many and varied implications for educational policies and politics of nation-states (Apple, Kenway & Singh, 2005). Competitive global pressures are evidenced in the increasing presence of international comparisons through standardised testing, for example PISA, and fuelling this rise in international comparisons has been the assumption that such test results are indicative of a young person's future capacity to compete in the global economic market (Savage & O'Connor, 2015). With education and skills being necessary for the mass labour force and therefore global economy, the supporting of educational development by the state is imperative (Olssen, 2004). Whilst skill development has always been a central aim of schooling, the post-industrial, knowledge-based economy (or 'new economy') has seen knowledge resources identified as key for economic success and the target of significant capital investment (Burton-Jones, 2015, p. 1). This has resulted in the economisation of education policies, wherein schools serve to produce a workforce equipped with the capabilities, dispositions, and knowledges deemed

necessary for continuous knowledge and skill upgrades anticipated with competing in the global economy, being globally connected and coping with future technological and job market changes (Lingard, 2010; Lingard & McGregor, 2014).

There is now an international trend in education that sees human capital and productivity rationales and economic restructuring as the metapolicy behind education policy reform (Lingard, 2010; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). As a result of increasingly dominant concerns around globalisation and market competitiveness, education reforms of nation-states have attempted to create greater national consistency, resulting in national curriculum, assessment and reporting measures. Sahlberg (2011, 2015) includes these reforms as features of the Global Education Reform Movement (GERM), in which school and system reforms respond to globalisation through the borrowing of market-oriented ideas around school competition and choice, test-based accountability and control, a prescribed curriculum, a focus on core subjects such as literacy and numeracy, and standardised teaching and learning. Within such reforms is the development of a 'new curricula', one built around generic skills, capabilities and key competencies which reframes the purposes of education from what students should learn to what they should become (Priestly & Biesta, 2013, p. 3).

National identity and citizenship has also become an important concern of many national governments in this context of globalisation (Lingard & Sellar, 2014), and here there is a tension between global economic pressures and the economisation of education, and the production of national cohesiveness through schooling. The 'new curricular' focus on generic skills and capabilities being witnessed across the Anglophone world (Priestly & Biesta, 2013, p. 3) is deterritorialised, as it presumes that what is generally necessitated by the knowledge-based economy is transnational. This often generates its counter-current, that is, the reterritorializing push for national identity and cohesiveness in curriculum reform. Federal interventions in education, particularly in curriculum, can often be perceived as a method of contributing to increased national cohesiveness and the consolidation of multiculturalism, strengthening values of loyalty as well as legitimising the current social and political order (Arar & Ibrahim, 2016; Symes & Preston, 1997). Historically, mass education has been intimately involved with the development of a cohesive nation-state, through the transmission of dominant social and cultural norms and political systems to young people (Bromley, 2011; Doherty, 2012) or through citizenship education

the promotion of an ‘imagined consensus’ (Camicia & Franklin, 2011, p. 311). With populations becoming more diverse due to globalisation, nation-states risk losing their identities (Cornbleth, 2000). As both reactive and strategic measures for global challenges, national education systems have placed more effort on the re-energising of a national identity (Doherty, 2012). Gutierrez (1995) has described how education policy facilitated national reconstruction and nation building in Mexico, a trend not limited to that context. The use of education as a tool to ‘remould’ cultures of minority and Indigenous groups within the nation-building project has also been a focus of research (for example Bass (2008) in the Chinese context; Hughes and Stone (1999) in Hong Kong and Taiwan; and Pinson (2007) in Israel). Nationalistic notions of citizenship are increasingly being critiqued for their ineffectiveness however, because of the increased diversity of populations throughout the world alongside increased calls for recognition by marginalised immigrant, ethnic and racial groups (Banks, 2012). There are now calls for schooling to develop in students multicultural citizenship, which recognises students’ needs and rights to maintain connections to their cultural communities and to the nation, in addition to assisting students to develop human connections to the global community (Banks, 2012). Further to this is the notion of global citizenship, or recognition that each person is a member of the global community, individually responsible for impacting upon global social, political, economic and environmental issues (Hartung, 2015). This struggle between global economic pressures and nation-building, and the promotion by educators of critical democracy and multiculturalism for a global community, is evident in competing neoliberal and democratic intents communicated through curriculum (Camicia & Franklin, 2011).

2.1.1. In the West

This rise in federal interventions in education, and the often resultant codification and standardisation of education, is evidenced throughout capitalist nations of the West. As mentioned, global² policy influences have driven national systems toward a similar outlook with an era of ‘policy borrowing’ (Phillips & Ochs,

² Whilst ‘global’ is used, it is recognised that the Western capitalist nations engaging in ‘policy borrowing’ (Phillips & Ochs, 2003, p. 451) discussed here are not wholly representative of the ‘global’. For a discussion on how the viewpoints and perspectives of the global metropole (capital-exporting countries of Europe and North America) are often presented within social science as universal knowledge, see Raewyn Connell’s (2007) *Southern Theory*.

2003, p. 451) developing, whereby nation-states have engaged in the sharing of policy practices (Lingard, 2010; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010) and a 'global education policy field' has emerged, at least across the Anglophone world (Lingard, Sellar, & Baroutsis, 2015, p. 27; Priestly & Biesta, 2013). Comparisons between Australia and the United States of America (Savage & O'Connor, 2015) and Canada, Australia and Germany (Capano, 2015) demonstrate global similarities in the increased national coordination of education, though the actual strategies adopted in each country differ due to their unique policy contexts. National policy reforms, despite being driven by global pressures, are negotiated locally and always determined in a set of circumstances defined by space and time (Wagner, 2008). Moving across transnational and intranational spaces, these rearticulated policies 'change the sites and landscape through which and across they move' (Ball, 2016, p. 563). Savage and O'Connor (2015) contribute to the theorisation of national and global policy spaces as therefore being relational and mutually constitutive – the national is both constitutive of, and constituted by, the global.

International examples of increased standardisation in the education sector are thus varied. In the United Kingdom (UK) there has been a shift towards an increasingly state-directed education system tied to national rules and accountability frameworks, away from an outlook of public education as an autonomous professional practice, largely independent from state intervention (Young, 2006). Top-down, large-scale reform stemming from the *Education Reform Act 1988* has seen a National Curriculum for England legislated for both England and Wales, though Scotland's education system differs significantly, as does Northern Ireland's but to a lesser extent (National Curriculum Board, 2008; United Kingdom Parliament, 2002). Since the Act, there has been much literature produced in the UK examining these reforms (see Barker, 2008 for a review; or Whetton, 2009 for a historical account of the policy). Reviews have examined the impact of national reforms in curriculum and assessment (Wyse, McCreery, & Torrance, 2008) and standards and quality (Tymms & Merrell, 2007) in English primary schools. Whetton (2009) argues that these reviews present a powerful case in opposition to the current national assessment system, which is driven by nationalisation or the political desire to hold schools accountable and regulate education. Successive government policies have continued this reform movement utilising 'a regime of standards, pupil targets [and] school performance tables,' in an ongoing attempt to raise standards (Bates,

2016, p. 191). Whilst others have used terms such as commercialisation and centralisation to describe the situation, Young (2006) comments that while not entirely satisfactory, the term nationalisation dramatises education's increasing compliance with government or regulatory body goals.

In the United States of America (USA), the *No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act 2001* supported standards-based reform, and the implications of the Act on curriculum and testing policies have been the focus for much research (for example Amrein-Beardsley, Berliner, & Rideau, 2010; Hamilton et al., 2007). Some of this research has addressed Indigenous languages and cultures within curriculum, and the implications of standards-based reform. Brayboy and Castagno (2009) comment that following the NCLB, the *American Indian and Alaska Native Education Executive Order (13337)* focussed attention on goals set within that policy, and seemingly moved away from the provision of culturally responsive education for Indigenous students regaled within previous Executive Orders. Tribal communities see federal priorities and the increased pressure of schools to respond to them as overtaking language and culture learning (Brayboy & Castagno, 2009). The over-emphasis on high-stakes testing and standardised instruction stemming from the NCLB is curtailing and eliminating the inclusion of Native languages and cultures, as well as culturally appropriate pedagogies within schools (Beaulieu, Sparks, & Alonzo, 2005; McCarty, 2009). Despite the ideal of the NCLB to educate every child, there is concern that student performance is measured by Western models of success, and Western socio-cultural norms such as individual achievement remain dominant (Weinstein, 2014). In both the USA and the UK, where federally-directed accountability measures such as high-stakes testing have been in place for a lengthy time period, there have been significant impacts on curricula and pedagogies, resulting in a performative distortion of education (Lingard, 2010).

Transnational 'policy players' such as the OECD, European Union (EU) and the World Bank, and their developed frameworks, are also impacting significantly upon education policy reform in this global education policy field (Ball, 2016, p. 550). In Europe, the *European Framework for Key Competencies for Lifelong Learning*, written as a guide for member states of the EU and agreed upon by the Council of the European Union, recognises eight key competencies that 'contribute to a successful life in a knowledge society' (Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council, 2006, p. 4). The development of these key

competencies has seen over the past ten years all member states of the EU revise their curricula (European Commission, 2012). Whilst many unitary systems of government within the OECD such as France, Sweden and Hungary have adopted national curriculum alongside national and international testing regimes and cross-national education frameworks, federated systems (in which education is generally the responsibility of the states) within the OECD including Canada, Germany, Mexico and Switzerland have tended not to (Brennan, 2011; NBC, 2008; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 1998). These nations still participate in cross-national arrangements despite the absence of a national curriculum (Brennan, 2011). The ways in which Western governments have increased and exercised national coordination within education has thus differed significantly, though their goals in improved efficiency and accountability for market competitiveness are shared (Capano, 2015).

2.1.2. Nationally

It is within this broader global socio-political and economic context that the development of a national curriculum has paralleled changes in relationships between state and federal government in Australia, and the way education is related to government. In response to shifting economic, social and political dynamics over time, the nature of the Federal government's relationship with state education jurisdictions has altered. Brennan (2009, p. 341) offers a description of three 'waves of neoliberal effort' within the governance of education that have occurred in Australia over the past four decades. The first wave, beginning in the early 1980s, focused on installing managerialism at the school level. From the mid-1980s the second wave of change saw a shift in focus to the consolidation of a national role in which federal interests in education were legitimised (Brennan, 2009). The third phase, occurring from the 1990s to the present day, is what Brennan (2009, p. 342) terms the 'codification of knowledge', in which the increasing standardisation of knowledge has seen intensified national focus on such things as a national curriculum, standardised testing (such as the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy, or NAPLAN), standards for teacher education programs and standards for teaching professionals (such as the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and Principals).

This growing tendency for the nationalisation of education has seen numerous attempts at the development of a national curriculum over the past thirty-five years, the first being *A core curriculum for Australian schools: What it is and why it is needed*, a document produced by the Curriculum Development Centre (1980). Until recently, attempts had largely failed, in most part due to the refusal of the states and territories of Australia to surrender control of curriculum and lose autonomy, given that since federation in 1901 each state and territory has maintained its own public education system (Brennan, 2011; Briant & Doherty, 2012; Harris-Hart, 2010). With different histories, geographies and demographics to take cognisance of, state cultures within education developed over time and were not easily overridden by federal interests (Yates, Collins, & O'Connor, 2001). Paralleling reforms in other countries however, the national Australian Curriculum has now been developed and gradual implementation has been occurring since 2011, with the curriculum's most recent iteration endorsed by the Education Council³ in September 2015 (ACARA, 2015k).

2.1.3. Development of the Australian Curriculum

The move to establish a national curriculum has been a relatively recent phenomenon (Harris-Hart, 2010). With a change of federal government in 2007, *Quality Education: The case for an Education Revolution in our Schools* (DEEWR, 2008) was released. This report was tied to international testing regime data, the *Future of Schooling in Australia Report* (Council for the Australian Federation, 2007) and the Senate Inquiry into the *Quality of School Education* (Senate Standing Committee on Employment Workplace Relations and Education, 2007) (Ditchburn, 2015). Mirroring global developments, the policy context at the time was characterised by the federal government's increasing involvement in education and a neoliberal policy landscape distinguished by market-driven agendas and international 'policy-borrowing' (Ditchburn, 2015, p. 29). Explicitly stated in Australian Curriculum documents was the economic rationale for education reform (Lingard & McGregor, 2014).

³ Prior to 1 July 2014 the Education Council was known as the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC) (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2011b).

The 'education revolution' began and an interim National Curriculum Board established in early 2008 (Brennan, 2011, p. 262). The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) Board was announced in May 2009 to replace the National Curriculum Board and be responsible for the formation of a national curriculum, national assessment program and national data collection (ACARA, 2011b). ACARA was guided by two key documents in this task, the *Melbourne Declaration on Education Goals for Young Australians* (MCEETYA, 2008) and the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum* (ACARA, 2009). The *Melbourne Declaration* endeavours to support 'all young Australians to become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens' and was endorsed by all Australian Education Ministers (MCEETYA, 2008, p. 8). This vision was further supported by the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum* (ACARA, 2009) document, which guided the formation of the Australian Curriculum: English, Mathematics, History and Science.

The development of the Australian Curriculum was initially set within three broad phases: Phase 1, the development of the Australian Curriculum for English, Mathematics, Science and History; Phase 2, the development of the Australian Curriculum for Geography, Languages and the Arts; and Phase 3, the development of the Australian Curriculum for the remaining areas identified in the *Melbourne Declaration* (ACARA, 2011a; MCEETYA, 2008). ACARA also identified four interrelated curriculum development phases occurring during the process of learning area development: shaping, writing, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation, though it did not specify timeframes for these (ACARA, 2011a). Concurrent to both sets of development phases were the implementation timeframes adopted by each individual state and territory of Australia, which began in 2011.

Implementation of the Australian Curriculum across the nation has therefore occurred alongside continued development. The Liberal Government called for reviews of the curriculum in 2010 and 2013, and in January 2014 the Review of the Australian Curriculum was established by the Australian Government (Australian Government Department of Education, 2014a). As an independent review, led by Professor Ken Wiltshire AO and Dr Kevin Donnelly, it was to 'evaluate the robustness, independence and balance' of Australian Curriculum (Australian Government Department of Education, 2014b). The *Review of the Australian Curriculum Final Report* (Australian Government Department of Education, 2014b)

was released in October 2014, and provided 30 key recommendations. In the *Initial Australian Government Response*, the Australian Government highlighted five themes needing to be addressed: (i) resolving the overcrowded curriculum, (ii) improving parental engagement around the curriculum, (iii) improving accessibility for all students (iv) rebalancing the curriculum and (v) reviewing the governance of ACARA (Australian Government Department of Education, 2014a).

On 18 September 2015, the Education Council endorsed the *Australian Curriculum, Version 8.0*, which included substantial revisions in response to the *Review of the Australian Curriculum Report* (ACARA, 2015k). These revisions focussed on uncrowding and rebalancing the curriculum and included revising content descriptions and achievement standards to reduce volume and improve manageability (ACARA, 2015k). The updated *Version 8.0* also saw the Humanities and Social Sciences learning areas (History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship, Economics and Business) consolidated into one learning area for Foundation to Year 6/7. Its predecessor, *Version 7.5*, continued to be available until the end of 2016, allowing schools to transition to *Version 8.0* (ACARA, 2015k).

In terms of general structure, the Australian Curriculum has been developed as a three-dimensional curriculum, comprised of learning areas, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities. General capabilities encompass ‘knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that, together with curriculum content in each learning area and the cross-curriculum priorities, will assist students to live and work successfully in the twenty-first century’ and include literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology capability, critical and creative thinking, personal and social capability, ethical understanding and intercultural understanding (ACARA, 2013). The cross-curriculum priorities are considered a somewhat novel approach (Salter & Maxwell, 2015). Designed to add contemporary relevance to the curriculum, they include Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia, Sustainability, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. It is intended that general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities are interwoven with learning area content, to respond to the *Melbourne Declaration’s* (MCEETYA, 2008) calls for all Australian students to be successful, confident and creative, active and informed. With young people thus positioned to ‘live fulfilling, productive and responsible lives’, improved educational outcomes arising from this national curriculum reform

are seen as ‘central to the nation’s social and economic prosperity’ (MCEETYA, 2008, p. 8).

2.2. The Aboriginal policy context in Australia

Before reviewing the development of the Australian Curriculum and the incorporation of historically marginalised Aboriginal knowledges, histories and cultures within it, it is necessary to place this study within the broader social policy context as it relates to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Approaches to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policies in general, have always been closely aligned and situated within the social conditions of the time. In what is considered a system-wide failure, the provision of equitable education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is framed by a history of social relations first encapsulated in colonial ideologies and then later assimilation, integration, multicultural, self-determination and reconciliation policies (Burgess, 2009, November; O’Conor, 2010). These shifting policy approaches have been reflected in dominant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education discourses. Specific sets of narratives are drawn upon in each of the discursive traditions within Indigenous education, which arise out of the political and social conditions of the time and incorporate their own particular logics and legitimisation strategies (McConaghy, 2000). It is necessary then, when investigating Indigenous education discourses operating within Australian education, to have an understanding of the policies which have been applied to Australia’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. It is also important to highlight the way in which the policy field over time has evolved in response to strong activism by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

With the ‘discovery’ by Lieutenant James Cook in 1770 of *terra nullius* or ‘empty land,’ the initial approaches to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policy in Australia caused the dispossession, oppression and segregation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (Kaplan-Myrth, 2005). The legal doctrine of *terra nullius* saw lands as uninhabited, not literally but with the existing inhabitants not granted any political recognition due to their ‘primitive’ nature (Gregory, Johnston, Pratt, Watts, & Whatmore, 2009). Martin states it was Captain Cook to first ‘inscribe the discourse of invisibility in declaring the continent ‘terra nullius’ – that the land

belonged to no one' (2007, p. 15). In this 'empty land' Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples were without any rights. What followed was a period in which genocidal and segregation policies were key, with the ultimate aim being to isolate those viewed by the colonists as racially inferior, to allow the population to decline and 'die out' (Quayle, Sonn, & Kasat, 2016; Welch, 1996, p. 206).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples resisted such genocide, and have struggled since then for recognition and their right to self-determination. From the 1920s onwards, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples found strong allies in the radical working class movement and its supporters, which sought to defend 'the rights of peoples they described in their literature as doubly oppressed, a 'super-exploited' section of the working class, and a colonised 'national minority' denied their rights to land and self-determination' (Boughton, 1999, p. 2). With the end of World War II, this perspective became dominant in a growing reform movement. Boughton (1999, p. 5) comments that 'WWII and its immediate aftermath proved a watershed moment in Aboriginal Affairs,' particularly in central and northern Australia. There, many labour movement activists who had completed service in the region witnessed firsthand the oppressive conditions of Aboriginal Peoples working on cattle stations, government settlements and missions, whilst Aboriginal Peoples were exposed to non-Indigenous people with different attitudes and practices to those previously experienced (Boughton, 1999). This led to a 'new and more militant phase' in Aboriginal Peoples' civil and political rights struggles (Boughton, 1999, p. 2). The series of Pilbara pastoral strikes beginning in 1946 was the first organised Aboriginal strike action and a significant historical episode for both the labour movement and Aboriginal rights' activism (Haskins & Scrimgeour, 2015).

Meanwhile, with a change in the broader social climate which saw biological notions of assimilation (White Australia) losing favour, policies shifted from biological absorption of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population to the preservation of British-derived culture (Moran, 2005). With the eventual realisation that the 'Aboriginal problem' would not disappear and in a new post-WWII political context (Moran, 2005, p. 179), a policy of assimilation emerged in the early 1950s, with official adoption in 1951. Moran (2005) comments that assimilation was in fact predominant from the 1930s to the 1960s, but in various guises informed by different notions of settler nationalism, with biological and then cultural assimilation.

Alongside the change in official policy and the labour movements, support grew for constitutional change in regard to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs in the years immediately following the war. The late 1940s saw Aboriginal organisations such as the Australian Aborigines League and the Aborigines Progressive Association advocate for Aboriginal affairs to be federally controlled, as well as for Aboriginal citizenship rights (Attwood & Markus, 2007). In these post-war years, up to the referendum of 1967, intimately linked to these broader campaigns for political and industrial rights were demands for reform in Aboriginal education (Boughton, 1999). With momentum increasing in the late 1950s, education too came into focus as a site of struggle, with the first independent Aboriginal adult education institution, Tranby College, established in 1958 (Boughton, 1999).

In calls for constitutional change, there was an unprecedented level of organisation amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples across Australia. In the late 1950s the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (FCAATSI) mobilised a range of organisations, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, to collaborate on leading the reform campaign (Bourne, 2016). With the 1967 Referendum to alter the 1901 Australian Constitution to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as a part of the Australian nation, the plight of Aboriginal Australians was highlighted in a campaign whereby,

Voting 'Yes' to the referendum question was promoted as a broad affirmation of Aborigines, a vote against discrimination, a public statement in support of racial equity, the first step in proactive advancement of Aboriginal affairs and a recognition that things were different now (Clarke, 2008, p. 202).

The altering of the Constitution heralded a new social and political environment, departing from past exclusion and assimilation policies and enabling the development of national policies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (Vass, 2012).

After 1970 was a period in which liberal democratic policy, which emphasised self-determination and community self-management by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, gradually replaced the controlling, oppressive systems previously inflicted by church and state (Sutton, 2009). A change in government in 1972 saw the official policy approach change to that of self-determination. The Whitlam Government's reform agenda saw issues of social justice given high priority, and the continued activism of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples for social justice

came to be supported by a more racially diverse and flexible population (Burridge, 1999).

Aboriginal community-controlled organisations (such as health services, legal services and land councils) began to form in the early 1970s, and played a major role in shaping policy (Boughton, 1999). In the field of education, there were strong moves from a section of the Aboriginal rights movement who, along with their focus on land rights, were uncompromising in their position on self-determination (Boughton, 1999). This included the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to control their own education. The Black Community School was established in 1973 by Eddie Koiki Mabo and Burnam, and operated until 1985 as a vital community-controlled education centre for Townsville's Torres Strait Community (Loos & Mabo, 2013). Yipirinya School was established in 1978, as an initiative of Elders of the Alice Springs Town Camps who formed a community-controlled independent school to cater for language-speaking children in a language and culture-rich environment (Yipirinya School, n.d.). At a federal level, the National Aboriginal Education Committee (NAEC) was established in the 1970s with their work contributing greatly to the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Education Policy*, released in 1989 (Vass, 2012).

At the same time the concept of reconciliation was emerging, with the National Aboriginal Conference (an Aboriginal advisory board to the federal government) in 1979 calling for the Australian government to sign a treaty or *Makarrata* (Botsman, 1999). The purpose of the *Makarrata* was to 'protect Aboriginal languages, restore Aboriginal land, regulate mining on Aboriginal land, compensate for loss of lands and way of life, and control Aboriginal affairs' (Kaplan-Myrth, 2005, p. 71), though the movement lost momentum as scepticism over what a *Makarrata* would actually achieve grew (Burridge, 1999). Evolving into an 'understanding' or a 'compact', this Aboriginal rights movement led to then Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke entering into a process of reconciliation in the 1980s, and signing the *Barunga Statement* on 12 June 1988, which affirmed a commitment to the negotiation of a treaty or compact (Botsman, 1999; Burridge, 1999). Resulting from this developing sense of reconciliation and directly from the recommendations of the *Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody*, the *Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation Act* of 1991 was passed (Craven, 1999). Policymakers in varying

government departments gradually began to form partnerships to further the causes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (Kaplan-Myrth, 2005).

A period of reaction took place in the 1990s, paralleling processes in the UK and USA, in which the liberal reform agenda was attacked by conservative forces (Boughton, 1999). After a decade-long battle, June of 1992 saw the handing down of the Mabo Decision by the High Court, which recognised that Australia was never *terra nullius* and that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have unique connections with country and rights to lands (AIATSIS, n.d.). In response, the mining lobby deployed a strategy of resentment against land rights in rural Australia, derailing previously-won agreements on national land rights legislation (Boughton, 1999). With the ‘economic rationalist squeeze’ and a redefinition of equity into notions of statistical equity and equality of opportunity within mainstream systems, rather than social justice and the recognition of rights for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (Boughton, 1999, p. 29), self-determination was increasingly overshadowed in the broader public and political sphere.

The discourse of reconciliation continued, with the *Bringing Them Home Report*, on the separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, released in 1997. Receiving widespread attention at the Australian Reconciliation Convention the day after its release, it was public recognition of the forced removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families and their traditional lands, and the subsequent forced adoption of those children into White families from the late 1800s to the 1960s by the Commonwealth (Exley & Chan, 2014; National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families, 1997). As a recommendation stemming from the report, National Sorry Day was commemorated on 26 May 1998, one year after it was tabled (Australian Government, 2015).

In 2004 a new whole-of-government policy was announced for the administration of Aboriginal affairs by then Prime Minister John Howard (Sullivan, 2011). Sullivan (2011) labelled this new period normalisation (though not the official policy term), as a move toward a new form of assimilation that was justified by the apparent failure of self-determination. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) was abolished in 2004, which had since 1989 been the national representative body responsible for resource allocation, resulting in the reallocation of these responsibilities to mainstream government departments (Sutton,

2009). The *Little Children are Sacred* report, or *Report of the Northern Territory Board of Inquiry into the Protection of Aboriginal Children from Sexual Abuse* (2007), then prompted dramatic developments in Aboriginal affairs with the Northern Territory Emergency Response (the NTER, commonly referred to as the Northern Territory Intervention) (Sutton, 2009). Considered to be the most radical intervention by government into the lives of Aboriginal Peoples since the 1960s, the Intervention generated controversy and was criticised for impinging on the rights of Aboriginal Peoples (Proudfoot & Habibis, 2013). Opponents believed the NTER to be an opportunity for the government to re-engage in control of Aboriginal land and open it up for development and mining purposes, seeing Aboriginal control over land and self-determination as no longer acceptable (Harris, 2013).

Most recently, on behalf of Parliament in 2008, then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd delivered an Apology to Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, for the forced removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families and communities as part of past assimilation policies (Rudd, 2008). Auguste (2010) believes that this apology signalled a new stage in the process of reconciliation, but that a major challenge remains with the non-existence of a treaty in Australia. With extensive support for constitutional recognition submitted to the Expert Panel on Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in 2011 by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and organisations, there were pleas for recognition and self-determination (Davis & Langton, 2016). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples continue to fight for recognition of their rights, continuing difference, greater control of their lives and greater statistical equality in Australia (Chaney, 2016).

2.3. Inclusion of Aboriginal knowledges in curriculum

As a result of this history, content related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, their knowledges, histories and cultures has been excluded in Australian curricula for longer than it has been included (Maxwell, 2014). Aboriginal Peoples however have long advocated for their rights in education. Two dominant approaches to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander inclusion in curriculum have presented over the past four decades in Australian education within the above policy context – Aboriginal Studies and Aboriginal perspectives (Rigney, 2011). Both

approaches have their own strengths and weakness and are closely tied to historical developments within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education (Rigney, 2011).

It was in the 1970s in a climate advocating self-determination, that the school of thought first emerged that considered Aboriginal Studies should be included in the curriculum. By the mid-1960s, Aboriginal education (as a result of the successful Aboriginal rights movement which advocated for equal citizenship rights, including unrestricted access to public education) had moved inside the theoretical and practical concerns of mainstream education (Boughton, 1999). The field of what is now known as Aboriginal Studies experienced rapid growth, and academic research in Aboriginal education was expanded (Boughton, 1999). In 1973 the Northern Territory Department of Education commissioned a report to examine bilingual education nationally as well as the inclusion of Aboriginal Studies in the curriculum, which was seen to be traditional arts, crafts and skills (Watts, McGrath, & Tandy, 1973). Later, in a report commissioned by then Minister of Education Kim E. Beazley on bilingual education in Australian schools, Mills (1982) advocated the recognition and respect of the language and culture of communities within educational programs. Mills (1982) proposed the inclusion of Aboriginal Studies in curriculum, to be taught in the traditional language of the local community, as well as the development of literacy through the child's first language. Both of these reports advocated bilingual education alongside the inclusion of Aboriginal Studies in the curriculum, and whilst bilingual education was implemented in some parts of Australia, Aboriginal Studies took its place as a stand-alone subject in most curricula in the 1980s. Aboriginal Studies as a distinct subject or learning area was the dominant methodology in Aboriginal education before the rise in popularity of the perspectives-based approach (Groome, 1995).

In 1989 the *Common and Agreed National Goals of Schooling*, or the *Hobart Declaration on Schooling*, was ratified by the Australian Education Council (AEC). The first agreement on educational aims at a national level by the Commonwealth and states and territories, it was also the first recognition of the importance of and need for school curricula to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures by all governments (Craven, 1999). Aboriginal perspectives as a cross-curriculum priority emerged in the mid-1990s, with the Department for Education and Children's Services releasing for the first time a guide for the inclusion of Aboriginal perspectives across the curriculum, in order to allow students the

opportunity to ‘broaden and deepen their understanding of Aboriginal cultures and ways of being’ (Department of Education and Children’s Services, 1995). As a cross-curriculum priority, it is an approach that integrates Aboriginal perspectives into all learning areas rather than treating Aboriginal Studies as a stand-alone subject. This is the approach currently in favour, with the Australian Curriculum including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives through a cross-curriculum priority labelled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.

In creating a culturally inclusive Australian Curriculum, which considers Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures in meaningful and respectful ways, challenges have arisen within a growing body of literature devoted to the priority (Maxwell, 2014). Comment on the Australian Curriculum by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders in particular, including academics, educators and advocacy groups, is mixed. What follows is an overview of Australian Curriculum research, and review of three key issues highlighted within the literature around the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.

2.3.1. Inclusion from an organisational perspective

Organisational or technical aspects of the Australian Curriculum, including the design, detail and non-assessable nature of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures cross-curriculum priority, appeared as concerns within the literature. Firstly, the perceived relevance of the cross-curriculum priority was questioned by many in light of curriculum design processes and decisions. The Australia Curriculum, in stating that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures cross-curriculum priority will have a strong presence, then adds that its presence will vary depending on its relevance. Maxwell asked, ‘When is culture not relevant?... Cultural influences are all through the rest of the curriculum, they are so constant that we fail to notice them. That Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures are not considered to be constantly relevant suggests double standards’ (2014, pp. 35-36). The way in which ACARA approached the task of curriculum design contributed to a perceived lack of relevance of the priority. It is recognised that curriculum design was underway before mention of the cross-curriculum priorities appeared, with the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum* released in May 2009 featuring the first mention of something resembling the priorities, after

consultation had begun (ACARA, 2009; Maxwell, 2014). Burgess (2009, November) questioned whether a truly inclusive curriculum, which incorporates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and viewpoints, could in fact be developed after the very decision to develop a national curriculum and the groundwork for such had already taken place. Despite the opportunity provided to deconstruct a traditional curriculum hierarchy, it was noted that ACARA did not allow the interdisciplinary elements of the Australian Curriculum (including general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities) to inform initial learning area curricula selection and organisation (Bleazby, 2015). Interdisciplinary elements are ‘an afterthought, even a distraction, tacked on disparately to learning area content’ (Reid, 2011, p. 37). Included not as specific Content Descriptors but as icons in learning area content where there may be apparent links to a general capability or cross-curriculum priority, Gilbert (2012) went further to argue they are often questionable, bordering derisory. Nakata (2011) agreed that with the learning areas being initially developed without Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content, and with the main concern being the development of a national curriculum that will be acceptable to all stakeholders, there remains a double message in regards to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures priority. It was considered somewhat paradoxical that whilst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges were considered significant in the design of the curriculum, they have been treated as a separate entity or adjunct, rather than as a part of the foundational knowledge base (Casinader, 2016).

A lack of detail on the cross-curriculum priority in terms of its rationale, intentions or what is expected of teachers was another organisational feature considered within the literature. Perhaps attributable to the above development processes, Lowe et al. (2014, p. 84), in a conversation on the Australian Curriculum between five Indigenous scholars, characterised the curriculum as having a ‘deeply flawed rationale and framework’ to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures cross-curriculum content. In an earlier assessment of the curriculum, Nakata (2011) offered a cautionary viewpoint, stating though he viewed change positively and recognised inclusionary statements within the policy, gaps remained in the Australian Curriculum. The absence of an explicit strategy as to how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives were to be included in the curriculum was also highlighted by Rigney (2011), who offered practical solutions

for teachers until ACARA could further clarify this aspect of the curriculum. More recently, in a qualitative study interviewing pre-service teachers to examine perceived intentions of the cross-curriculum priority, Maxwell (2014) found many pre-service teachers' beliefs were not supported by curriculum documents – including the belief that social justice was a primary driver of cross-curriculum priority inclusion. Maxwell (2014) asserted there was insufficient information provided by ACARA regarding the intentions behind this priority's inclusion, and called for further scrutiny of the issue. Limited evidence of a social justice agenda driving the design and development of the cross-curriculum priorities could be found, and the lack of a clear rationale has been echoed (Salter & Maxwell, 2015).

Lastly, it was also noted that due to the structure of the curriculum, with no reporting or assessment aligned to cross-curriculum priorities, accountability is minimal (Maxwell, 2014). This further confuses the positioning of the cross-curriculum priorities and demonstrates their precarious nature, in which they are simultaneously seen as priorities and as optional electives with no requirements to teach or assess through them (Salter & Maxwell, 2015). The cross-curriculum priorities do not constitute the 'real' curriculum that is required to be taught and assessed – tagged content is largely a recommendation but not part of the central core content (Ditchburn, 2015, p. 36). This is also witnessed in the lack of alignment between NAPLAN and the cross-curriculum priorities, with the annual national testing program assessing the skills 'that are essential for every child to progress through school and life', and include the domains of reading, writing, language conventions (spelling, grammar and punctuation), and numeracy (ACARA, 2016b). Whilst cross-curriculum competencies and capabilities are an important educational intention, they do not necessarily translate to a programmatic learning reality (Dellit, 2001). This is particularly the case if teachers are not required to assess and report on cross-curriculum priority learnings, or if they are not assessed within larger-scale assessment programs.

2.3.2. The quantity and quality of content

It terms of the quantity and quality of 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' content within the Australian Curriculum, there were numerous viewpoints presented in the literature. Firstly, the need for clear distinctions between perspectives and

content was made apparent. The *Shape of the Australian Curriculum* (ACARA, 2009) spoke of Indigenous perspectives, as a cross-curriculum perspective to include in curriculum design. In the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum, Version 2.0* (ACARA, 2010), the term ‘perspectives’ was absent and the now-common language around cross-curriculum priorities was established. Some still hold to the idea of perspectives, though ACARA’s position (or at least language) appears to have shifted. Perspectives, which presume content but extend beyond it, ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander views and lived experiences are represented within that content (Nakata, 2011). Particular learning areas have continued this inclusion of perspectivism, with Kleeman (2012, p. 28) asserting that the Geography curriculum contains ‘not only the opportunity for students to gain a knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and heritage but also the opportunity for them to investigate a range of issues and phenomena from an Indigenous perspective or point of view’. With the above mentioned absence of an explicit rationale and framework for teachers, the nature of the priority – as perspectives and/or content – is ambiguous.

Secondly, the quantity of content tagged as ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander’ was a feature in the literature. In speaking of the quantity of content, Lowe et al. (2014) asserted that though the Australian Curriculum contains plenty of content, quantity has never been an issue with the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. The location of that content was questioned by Maxwell (2014, p. 31), who stated that the cross-curriculum priority appears ‘more aspirational than actual’ with most learning areas suggesting content rather than requiring it (through Content Descriptors, rather than Elaborations), with History and Geography as the only exceptions to this. In an analysis of the *Australian Curriculum: English*, Exley and Chan (2014) agreed that the embedding of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures cross-curriculum priority is more implicit than explicit, and the space in which to exercise a reconciliatory agenda is ambiguous.

Thirdly, the quality of tagged content was highlighted in numerous spheres. In the media, particular learning areas (such as Mathematics) were criticised for their tokenistic inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content and limited opportunities for students to engage in meaningful explorations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures (Ferrari, 2014; Mundine, 2014). In

academia, the quality of content was also critiqued. In a multi-layered analysis of the Australian Curriculum content tagged by ACARA as ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander,’ Lowe and Yunkaporta (2013) completed a cultural analysis, mapping of the content to Bloom’s revised taxonomy, and finally an analysis of learning opportunities for students. Lowe and Yunkaporta (2013) asserted that ACARA has neglected to fully engage with the potential of the national curriculum to embed and integrate high-quality learning relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. Many of the Content Descriptors were found to be at the ‘understanding’ level of Bloom’s revised taxonomy, not requiring students to deepen their cognitive engagement or extend their learning (Lowe & Yunkaporta, 2013). Advocacy groups have also contributed to discussions around the quality of content, and what should be presented in the curriculum. The Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) recommended an extended Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cross-curriculum priority descriptor which acknowledged the need to include the impacts of colonisation within the curriculum (AHRC, 2011a). The AHRC submission suggested that whilst it is vital to include positive representations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures within the Australian Curriculum, it is just as critical ‘to explicitly acknowledge in the priority, the historic and contemporary impact of colonisation and discrimination against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities’ (AHRC, 2011a, p. 4). This recommendation was actioned with *Version 8.0* (released in September 2015) including an updated description of the cross-curriculum priority, demonstrating whilst processes are perhaps slow moving, the Australian Curriculum is a policy under continued revision.

2.3.3. Subject positions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

Welcome revisions have been made to the way in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples were represented within the curriculum, as a result of attention and feedback from varying advocacy groups. The National Sorry Day Committee Inc. (NSDC) stated the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures as one of the three cross-curriculum priorities ‘came as such welcome news’ but they were then disappointed by the inadequate inclusion and

representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in the Australian Curriculum's first draft (National Sorry Day Committee [NSDC], n.d.). The NSDC campaigned for and achieved a number of revisions and alterations particularly in the History curriculum, including having the Year 4 History curriculum altered so as not to group Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples with flora and fauna in the analysis of the impact of British colonisation (NSDC, n.d.). There was agreement that curriculum content was of a socio-anthropological nature, developed to provide information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to non-Indigenous students by examining, dissecting and viewing the culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as artefacts (Lowe et al., 2014). Buckskin stated that the initial draft of the Australian Curriculum in 2009 presented Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples 'from an anthropological point of view; it sees us as museum pieces' (Ferrari, 2009). Such an approach was seen to require little of the curriculum in developing content representing the perspectives and reality of the lived experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (Lowe et al., 2014).

The subject positioning of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, their knowledges, histories and cultures within the curriculum was also discussed in connection with the economic rationalist agenda driving curriculum reform (Burgess, 2009, November). With the reasoning behind the cross-curriculum priority being linked to Australia's global competitiveness, Maxwell (2014) asserted that a focus on closing the gap means that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have been consistently situated in deficit positions in the foundational curriculum documents. In an analysis of all three cross-curriculum priorities through spacio-temporalities and space-time constructions, Peacock, Lingard, and Sellar (2015) contended that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures were largely constructed according to the past and present, in comparison with the Asian future (in reference to the Asia-focussed cross-curriculum priority). This conceptualisation of the two priorities seemingly at odds with one another was discussed elsewhere in the literature (Salter & Maxwell, 2015). With Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures tied to the notion of a reconciled nation-state, the documents did not position Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as contributors to future socioeconomic or political development (Peacock et al., 2015). They furthered that, 'to the extent that the curriculum and its cross-curriculum priorities have been designed to "close the gap" between educational outcomes for Indigenous and non-

Indigenous peoples, there is almost a negative correlation in the curriculum' between the globalised economy and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (Peacock et al., 2015, p. 383).

2.4. Research need

A clear research need surfaced from the above examination of literature. Firstly, there is opportunity for increased research around the Australian Curriculum and its inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, histories and cultures, given the recency of the policy and its continued development and revision processes. Whilst there has been comment by stakeholders including academics, advocacy groups and the media on this aspect of the curriculum, few empirical analyses have been undertaken. Developmental processes certainly create challenges for analyses. Of those few Australian Curriculum studies that have been undertaken in connection with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, histories and cultures, there tends to be a focus on one specific learning area (such as Exley and Chan's (2014) analysis of the English curriculum in connection with a Reconciliation agenda) or the cross-curriculum priority/s in isolation to other curriculum elements (such as Peacock, Lingard and Sellar's (2015) textual analysis of the three priorities as framed within the *Cross-Curriculum Priorities* document). Position papers reviewed were largely the same (such as Kleeman's (2012) discussion of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cross-curriculum priority in the Geography curriculum). There is a clear research gap in analyses that cover the broader policy, rather than parts of the whole, when investigating the positioning of Aboriginal knowledges, histories and cultures within it. The lack of a clear rationale for inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, as identified in the literature, in combination with developmental processes of the curriculum also necessitates broader analyses – there is a need to identify congruencies (or lack of) in approaches to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, histories and cultures across the Australian Curriculum policy corpus.

As suggested in Chapter One, it is not simply the inclusion of content (or quantity) that has the potential to impact upon Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' outcomes. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have historically been oppressed and marginalised within the broader social and educational policy

context, but a history of activism has also seen them advance their causes. The complex nature of historical social relations of the colonised and colonising cultures in Australia means inclusion in education is framed by broader social discourses, and inclusion can carry empowering or marginalising messages. Policy reform is tied to complex social relations of dominant and oppressed groups which render analyses of mere curriculum content, in terms of quantity, inadequate. There is a need to reveal the broader discourses operating within the inclusion of curriculum content.

Thirdly, there is a clear need for research that sheds light on the representations of Aboriginal Peoples contained within this national policy, as embedded in these discourses. A critical assessment of the curriculum, and the subject positions it assigns to Aboriginal students, and Aboriginal Peoples generally, is necessary to engage in the continued development of a truly culturally inclusive curriculum. Stakeholders, including Aboriginal communities and students, policy makers, principals and teachers, need guidance about the Australian Curriculum policy context in order to achieve the shared goal of educational equality for Aboriginal students.

In order to respond appropriately to these research needs, it is imperative that researchers engage in meaningful dialogue with Aboriginal Peoples and communities. Studies that seek to examine the representation of Aboriginal Peoples within policy struggle to do so respectfully without direct involvement of those implicated in such work. As a non-Indigenous scholar (see Chapter Three for a discussion on my position within the research), it is critical to consider the perspectives of Aboriginal Peoples within the study. Extending this work further, it is necessary to examine how the national Australian Curriculum is inclusive of the wants, needs and values of Aboriginal Peoples, and supportive of their aspirations. The second component of this study, Part B, therefore engages in dialogue with an Aboriginal community, to strengthen discussions of inclusive curriculum with the voices of those at the centre of the research.

2.5. Conclusions

This chapter situated the study within the broad policy context in which the global economic climate is a driving force behind federal interventions in education, and argued that within the Australian context the national Australian Curriculum is a

resultant product. It discussed how educational policy relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples has been closely tied to historical social relations between the colonised and colonising cultures, and that inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, histories and cultures within curriculum has mirrored broader policy positions. It identified research gaps regarding analyses of the national Australian Curriculum undertaken thus far, in exploring multiple elements of the Australian Curriculum policy corpus to examine the representation of Aboriginal Peoples, their knowledges, histories and cultures within it. It recognised that the nature of curriculum development, and lack of clear rationale or framework as identified in the literature, means that documents within the policy corpus may include different forms of representation of Aboriginal Peoples, their knowledges, histories and cultures. It also recognised that inclusion of content is not an unproblematic good, and the subject positions allocated to Aboriginal Peoples within the Australian Curriculum through the framing of that content, may marginalise rather than empower them. The research needed was clear; a study grounded in scrutinising how Aboriginal Peoples are represented within Australia's national curriculum, through an analysis of content across the policy corpus with a focus on discourses operating within and through it that position Aboriginal Peoples, their knowledges, histories and cultures in particular ways. It is critical that such a study is extended to include the perspectives of those implicated. A second component, related yet distinct, is necessary in order to provide a platform for Aboriginal people to discuss their representation, positioning, and aspirations in relation to the national curriculum and broader education landscape. Formulating such a study necessitates the conceptualisations of policy and discourse, as well as Indigenous research methodologies and principles, all of which will be explored in depth in the next chapter.

Chapter Three: Conceptualisation of the Study

Chapters One and Two referenced terms such as ‘policy,’ ‘discourse’ and ‘subject positioning’. Before proceeding, it is necessary to explain these terms as they are framed in this study. The preceding chapters also called for a culturally inclusive and responsive curriculum, and situated the call for such a curriculum within a critique of unequal historical power relations. This chapter describes the conceptualisation of the study and how it is grounded within a critical theory paradigm, which at its core aims to confront injustice. The chapter seeks to highlight considerations of Indigenous research methodologies and principles, and the positioning of the researcher within the study. It then presents the chosen methodology, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Conceptualisations of policy, discourse and subjectivity are considered and detailed as used within this study, including the construction of ‘policy as discursive’ and the particular model of discourse employed. Finally, concluding research questions are presented.

3.1. Conceptualisation

At its core this study is grounded in critical theory. Critical theory, in a narrow historical sense, refers to the body of social theory and philosophy of the Frankfurt School, written in the mid-twentieth century by thinkers associated with the Institute for Social Research in Germany (Yates, 2010). Those connected to the Frankfurt School recognised the existence of oppression that was perpetuated by the hegemony of certain groups in society through language, knowledge and value systems, and their writings focused on the analysis of culture and hegemonic power (Yates, 2010). From its initial beginnings based in Marxism and Freudian psychoanalysis, the influence of the ‘post-discourses’ of the late 20th century and early 21st century (including postmodernism and post-structuralism) have brought about a continued evolution of critical theory, whereby critical researchers seek new ways of understanding the individual and their construction within the world (Kincheloe, McLaren, & Steinberg, 2011; Popkewitz & Fendler, 1999). With multiple critical theories now within the qualitative research paradigm, the term is so general it is considered by some as somewhat meaningless (Rasmussen, 2015), denoting many critical approaches including (but not limited to) postcolonialism, feminism, post-

structuralism, and critical pedagogy (Brincat, Lima, & Nunes, 2012; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005b). Critical theory as a constantly evolving tradition cannot be treated as static or singular (Kincheloe et al., 2011). As such it can be problematic to speak of similarities within the tradition - the diversity of critical theories, the evolving nature of the field, and the aversion to specificity should be noted, to avoid suggesting a false consensus (Kincheloe et al., 2011; Rowe, Baldry, & Earles, 2015). A general understanding requires a broad definition however, to situate this research within the field.

The critical theory tradition is concerned with addressing unequal relations of power and marginalisation, and questioning the truth positions of the dominant group in society. Commonality in critical theories is found in the end goal, in social transformation through forms of empowerment and emancipation although these terms may differ in meaning from one critical scholar to another (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Research claiming to be critical must try to confront injustice, either of a particular societal group or public sphere (Kincheloe et al., 2011), or both in redistributive or recognitive senses (Fraser, 1997). The mere contribution to a knowledge field, therefore, is not a primary aim of critical research – in being a necessarily political endeavour, critical research seeks to instigate political action in order to redress the injustices identified through the research (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005).

In the field of curriculum studies, education theorists undertaking critical curriculum work have challenged state hegemony and social inequality as operationalised within curriculum (Yates, 2010). Educational theorists drawing on the critical theory tradition have examined the way in which curriculum can contribute to the dominance of a particular social group and the marginalisation of others, by functioning as an ideological apparatus of the state (Yates, 2010). As a social construction, curriculum is seen as producing ‘ways of thinking and distributions of opportunity’ which allocate power to some social groups and marginalise others (Yates, 2010, p. 494). Undertakings of education research drawing on critical theory have increased over the past decade, particularly in decolonial and Indigenous arenas (Grande, 2015). Postmodern-influenced theoretical orientations drawing on a range of lenses including feminism, cultural studies and post-structuralism have also developed that attend to the positionality of knowledge

and subjectivity of educational actors, and strive for a more equitable curriculum that is inclusive of various perspectives (Au, 2012).

Situated in a critical theory paradigm, this study draws on a postmodern approach to achieve its aim. It seeks to investigate how knowledge is produced and power maintained by those dominant in society, in this case through national curriculum, to disrupt the grand metanarrative of national curriculum as an unquestionable good (Lyotard, 1984, p. xxiv). Indigenous research methodologies and principles are considered within this critical project that seeks to reveal the cultural constructions that are designated as truth. The study employs critical discourse analysis, specifically Fairclough's model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which draws upon post-structuralist theory and particularly Foucault, to deconstruct the discursive field's vocabularies, grammar and structures (Leitch et al., 2001). Whilst critical discourse analysis generally describes a wide array of approaches including the likes of Gee's (2009), Critical Discourse Analysis (or CDA, distinguishable by capitalisation) is normally associated with Norman Fairclough's approach and particularly the text *Language and Power* (1989). In using Fairclough's model of CDA within this research however, distinctions are made between it and post-structural analyses (Rogers, Malancharuvil-Berkes, Mosley, Hui, & O'Garro Joseph, 2005).

In sharing a critical theory focus on critiquing the status quo, addressing unequal power relations and in turn contributing to more just forms of education, this research considers the representation and positioning of Aboriginal Peoples, their knowledges, histories and cultures within the national Australian Curriculum, and how such representation is reflective of the desires of Aboriginal people. It questions the status quo, rather than accepting the assumptions underpinning the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures within the curriculum, and the current state of affairs as an unproblematic good. It addresses unequal power relations by critically examining the inclusion of Aboriginal content within the Australian Curriculum, in light of the socio-historical context of Aboriginal inclusion within curriculum more broadly. In subscribing to the political nature of critical theory this research seeks to contribute to a more just form of education, by adding to those conversations of critique I feel necessary around national curriculum, the framing of Aboriginal knowledges, histories and cultures within the Australian

Curriculum, and how closely the curriculum aligns to aspirations of Aboriginal people as embodied in discourse.

In seeking to achieve the above, the seemingly contradictory epistemological and ontological positions that I assume between Parts A and B of the study must be noted here. I admit there is a tension within this study between Part A, where I utilise qualitative data analysis software within CDA, and Part B, where I draw upon advocacy ethnography, narrative portraits and juxta-texts and use writing as a method of inquiry (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). In approaching the writing process and writing product as deeply intertwined, I place myself within the text to explore new ways of knowing (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). In this way I have taken an overall eclectic stance to the study, drawing on differing epistemological and ontological premises and engaging in an act of bricolage myself to achieve my overall research aim. This was not initially intentional, but as I engaged in the community-based investigation (Part B) and wrestled with its data, I struggled with finding an appropriate methodology (described in Chapter Seven). I shifted to a different methodological and philosophical position, using alternative ways of writing to represent the data and experiences of people I have been and remain connected to. In doing so, I prioritised the critical and political ends of this research over epistemological and ontological purity, so as to not allow methodological rigour to overpower ways ‘to address deep and troubling questions about how to live a meaningful, useful, and ethical life’ (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 747). My various methodological and philosophical positions, choices and the justification for each are detailed in Chapters Five and Seven.

3.1.1. Critical theory and Indigenous research methodologies

In exploring how the aspirations of Aboriginal people are supported in Indigenous education discourses mobilised within the Australian Curriculum, I take cognisance of the valuable work done in the field of Indigenous methodologies, and include principles that guide research with Indigenous Peoples. I am acutely aware of the difficult ground on which I find myself. Research, as a term linked to imperialism and colonialism, has been exploitative of Indigenous Peoples, their knowledges and cultures (Smith, 2012). Aboriginal Peoples in Australia and First Nations Peoples globally have arguably been the most researched people in the world (Rigney, 1999). Indigenous Peoples, historically positioned as the subject of research as ‘natives’

under the gaze of Western science and academia, recognise that they live with the legacy of the 'business' of Indigenous research having been firmly established for non-Indigenous researchers (Worby & Rigney, 2002, p. 26). It has been stated that 'The word itself, 'research,' is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world's vocabulary' (Smith, 2012, p. 1), and quite unsurprisingly due to this exploitative history a deep mistrust of research by Indigenous Peoples developed.

Having long voiced concerns about the problem of research, a growing number of Indigenous Peoples have more recently actively sought methods to disrupt the history of misunderstanding, suspicion, intolerance and exploitation by becoming researchers themselves, to question Western research and tell more liberating stories (Kaomea, 2016; Rigney, 1999). With the reassertion of political activism in the 1970s, Indigenous Peoples' critique of research was voiced in the public sphere, and Indigenous researchers sought to develop research methodologies and approaches 'that privilege[d] indigenous knowledges, voices, experiences, reflections, and analyses of their social, material and spiritual conditions' (Smith, 2012, p. 87). Alongside this movement was the development of feminist and critical race theories and their firm establishment within critical curriculum theory from the 1970s on (Yates, 2010). These additional conceptual agendas have allowed what is considered to be a critical theory perspective to be challenged and reshaped in critical curriculum studies (Yates, 2010), and more broadly have also influenced conceptualisations of Indigenous research. Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars have worked to establish connections between Indigenous and critical research approaches across a range of disciplines, to further a decolonising research agenda (Rowe et al., 2015).

Within much Indigenous research, critical theory is embraced (Nakata, 2012). It is critical theory's emphasis on research as a form of social criticism, and its critique of social constructions of power and knowledge, which resonates with researchers working for, in and with Indigenous communities, as well as embedded notions of resistance, struggle and emancipation (Smith & Reid, 2000). These foci tie in to a decolonising research agenda, in which prevailing discourses of social power are addressed for transformative action (Bermúdez, Muruthi, & Jordan, 2016). As such, critical approaches are often used by Indigenous researchers to address social issues (Smith, 2012). Rigney (1999, p. 118) states that critical theory seeks 'to free individual groups and society from conditions of domination, powerlessness, and

oppression that reduce control over their own lives,' making it ideal for an Indigenous liberatory epistemology through which oppression can be treated. Their shared commitment to emancipation or liberation see critical theory and Indigenous epistemologies overlap (Denzin, 2005).

Engaged in the appropriation and reworking of Western methodologies over the past three decades, a new generation of Indigenous scholars have emerged as has an explosion of critical approaches (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). With many falling under a broad category of Indigenous methodologies, these are defined as being 'by and for indigenous peoples, using techniques and methods drawn from the traditions of those peoples' (Evans, Hole, Berg, Hutchinson, & Sookraj, 2009, p. 894). Rigney (1999) offers what he terms Indigenist research, adapting critical and feminist theories in the conceptualisation of his Indigenous research methodology. Seeking to liberate individual groups and society from oppressive conditions, Indigenist research is grounded in three interrelated principles: resistance as the emancipatory imperative; political integrity; and privileging Indigenous voices (Rigney, 1999, p. 116). These principles ensure that research is carried out by Indigenous Australians, with Indigenous Australians as informants, and responds to the Indigenous liberatory struggle for recognition of self-determination (Rigney, 1999). Rigney (1999) does not claim that Indigenist research is characterised by specific strategies or methods, but rather it provides a theory to suit the emancipatory agenda of Indigenous research.

In the Aotearoa New Zealand context, Kaupapa Māori research has developed as a form of Indigenous inquiry. As it is built upon a Māori worldview and each iwi (tribe) has a variation of this, Kaupapa Māori is not singular and there are numerous approaches (Jackson, 2015). In drawing upon critical theory and cultural studies to conceptualise her version of Kaupapa Māori, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012, p. 185) comments that at its core Kaupapa Māori research is an approach that allows Māori people to retrieve space and 'engage in a dialogue about setting new directions for the priorities, policies and practices of research for, by and with Māori people'. Whilst some scholars have described the theoretical base of Kaupapa Māori in English terms, others have used Māori cultural terms that are not directly translatable or immediately understandable to those outside of the culture, as resistance to Western domination (Eketone & Walker, 2013). Graham Hingangaroa Smith initially highlighted six integral elements of Kaupapa Māori within the context of educational

intervention and research as principles of: tino rangatiratanga (self-determination), taonga tuku iho (cultural aspirations), ako Māori (culturally preferred pedagogy), kia piki ake i ngā raruraru o te kāinga (socio-economic mediation), whānau (extended family structure) and kaupapa (collective philosophy) (Rautaki Ltd & Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga, n.d.; G. H. Smith, 2003, October). The contribution of other Kaupapa Māori theorists such as Smith (1997; 2012), Pihama (2001) and Pohatu (2005) have seen the principles expanded to also include the Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Treaty of Waitangi) and atā (growing respectful relationships) (Rautaki Ltd & Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga, n.d.). How these principles are enacted however through research sees different sets of ideas and issues prioritised (Smith, 2012).

Smith, in surveying the field of Indigenous research comments such research may implicitly or explicitly: be committed to changing the status quo; be a transformative project that is active in the pursuit of social change; make space for Indigenous knowledge; have a critical view of power relations and inequality; and enable people to reclaim and tell their own stories in their own ways (2005, p. 89). The often shared commitments of critical theory and Indigenous methodologies do not mean these theorisations are not without conflict however, and despite a shared discourse there exist incompatibilities (Rata, 2012). American Indian scholar Sandy Grande draws attention to the issue of revolutionary critical theory, as a Western paradigm, necessarily being in tension with Indigenous thought-worlds, particularly in constructions of subjectivity, Indigenous sovereignty and property (Grande, 2008, 2015). Viewed as tensions and not as deficiencies, these elements assist in the formulation of Grande's (2008, 2015) Red Pedagogy and highlight its distinctive nature, which is grounded in traditional Indigenous knowledge and praxis. Critical theory and Indigenous methodologies and pedagogies, when engaged in dialogical contestation, can each be deepened and diversified (Grande, 2015).

Much like critical theory, there is no singular Indigenous methodology or universally accepted set of principles for conducting Indigenous research. Rather, some consider it is a localisation of critical theory (in whatever form most appropriate to context). Smith states of Kaupapa Māori research, it is a 'local theoretical position that is the modality through which the emancipatory goal of critical theory, in a specific historical, political and social context, is practiced' (2012, p. 188). Indigenous research must be situated, and as seen above the examples of evolving methodologies (Indigenist, Kaupapa Māori and Red Pedagogy) are

connected to a particular Indigenous group, their knowledges, cultures and customs (though it is recognised of course there is diversity within and amongst such groups and methodologies). Indigenous methodologies are unique to each Indigenous community, as a strategy of resistance to the particular struggles they face (Denzin, 2005).

In the undertaking of this research, it was imperative I consider the history of ‘the research problem’ for Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous methodologies that seek to address it and my researcher position as I attempted to undertake this critical curriculum work. Whilst Indigenous methodologies have drawn upon the critical theory tradition, and this research has claimed to be grounded in critical theory in its concerns for Aboriginal representation in curriculum, I myself have not developed an Indigenous research methodology. Steinhauer (2002), Dumbrill and Green (2008) and Wilson (2008) agree that Indigenous research methodologies should be developed by Indigenous people and I accept this. Nor do I name this research Indigenist. Indigenist research as described by Rigney (1999) is research undertaken by Indigenous Australians. This, I am not. I cannot alter my identity, but I can endeavour to find ways to engage in respectful research with the topic at hand, through consideration of the above and my positioning as a researcher.

3.1.2. My positioning as researcher

Let it be clear that I have approached this study from an Anglo middle-class background. Raised in semi-rural Victoria and later Brisbane by parents of English and Irish heritage, my views of education have been shaped by my own [Western] schooling experiences. The country on which the majority of my schooling took place is Yuggera country, though throughout my primary, secondary and tertiary education I admittedly had very little knowledge or understanding of the history and contemporary lived experiences of the Aboriginal Peoples of the area. Upon graduating from university with a teaching degree, I took my first teaching position in an Aboriginal community in the Northern Territory. Here, as a classroom teacher and later curriculum leader, I became closely acquainted with the Australian Curriculum and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures cross-curriculum priority, as I worked with staff to implement the policy alongside the cultural programs already in place at the school and well-supported by the

community. My journey was a slow awakening: the realisation of how my Whiteness impacted upon my beliefs and assumptions, my day-to-day practices and ultimately the students in front of me, and that the role I was undertaking may have been making me complicit in the continued colonisation of Indigenous Peoples through education. I say this not to simply ‘navel-gaze’ but to situate myself within the research (Aveling, 2013). The experience was formative in my thinking, and has led me to this somewhat uncomfortable place of being a non-Indigenous researcher conducting research within an Indigenous frame.

Much has been written on the role of the non-Indigenous researcher engaged in critical research with Indigenous Peoples. Atkinson (2002) notes that research within Aboriginal communities, if not informed by Aboriginal Peoples and built upon ethical knowledge and procedures, can be problematic. Others are more definitive – that Indigenous research must be undertaken by Indigenous Peoples. In discussing the role of Pākehā in Kaupapa Māori for example, some Maori scholars such as Mead (as cited in Jones, 2012, p. 101) emphasise that ‘being Māori, identifying as Māori and as a Māori researcher’ is critical; suggesting by definition that non-Māori cannot legitimately involve themselves in such work. Bishop (2011) provides an alternative view, drawing attention to the problematic nature of considering the researcher as either insider or outsider. He suggests that by invoking a discursive repositioning of scholars into functional roles in service of Indigenous self-determination, these concerns may be addressed (Bishop, 2011). Some see the involvement of non-Indigenous people in educational research as necessary for creative educational change, given that in many education systems there is a current power imbalance in favour of non-Indigenous people (Hotere-Barnes, 2015). Rigney (1999) affirms that critical research by non-Indigenous Australians may still be carried out, if that research is based in a genuine desire to contribute to the self-determination of Indigenous Australians.

Perhaps I can consider myself an ally (Aveling, 2013), change agent (Kendall, 2013), or White critic of White scholarship (Rowe et al., 2015) as others working in this space in solidarity (Land, 2015) with Indigenous Peoples have done. For Land (2015), developing a moral and political framework is key for non-Indigenous people working with Indigenous Peoples in their struggles. To bring about meaningful social change, non-Indigenous supporters must act politically with self-understanding and engage in a process of interest reconstruction, whilst confronting their complicity

with colonialism (Land, 2015). It is the broader understanding of and focus on a social change agenda, not only on Indigenous Peoples, that gives non-Indigenous people a basis for supporting the struggles of Indigenous Peoples (Land, 2015).

Throughout this study, I have often questioned whether I should be undertaking research in this space. This study is primarily a critical curriculum work, which in its attempts to give voice to Aboriginal Peoples whilst assessing their representation within that curriculum, has localised the research through a relationship with one particular community. As a non-Indigenous researcher, it was not ethical to use Indigenous research methodologies – as defined above, these are grounded in the lived experiences of Indigenous Peoples. To appropriate them for this research would have been to make myself complicit in the traditionally exploitative nature of the colonial endeavour. These methodologies could be drawn upon however to inform my approach to the task. In conceptualising this study and highlighting the issues of my position though, am I at all comfortable with where I find myself? Throughout the research journey I have wandered in circles, questioning whether I am on ‘the well-intentioned road to hell... [with other] Western scholars dedicated to the best interests of indigenous peoples [but] often unwittingly participating in the Western hegemonic process’ (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2008, p. 141). I remain continually self-critical, and hold to the original critical aim of the work in addressing unequal power relations as manifested through curriculum. I do hope that this study contributes and serves in some way to inform the struggles of Aboriginal Australians in achieving authentic and respectful recognition within the field of education, and particularly the Australian Curriculum, and that it may be used for empowering and transformative purposes. Philosophically, Indigenous research principles have informed the way in which I have approached this study, the paradigm it is placed within and methodologies it draws upon. In attempting to pull critical discourse analysis (more generally) and Indigenous research principles together in dialogue, I hope to have contributed to theoretical and methodological development in the field. In practicality, my approach has manifested largely in ethical considerations and research methods, detailed in Chapters Five and Seven, and in the community-based investigation, detailed in Chapter Eight.

3.2. Critical discourse analysis as methodology

Critical discourse analysis, with its ties to critical theory, was employed as the methodology for the research. Drawing upon critical discourse analysis research relating to Indigenous struggles to engage this methodology in dialogue with Indigenous research principles, I sought to extend the conceptualisation of the study to the most culturally appropriate possible. In speaking generally of its theoretical background, critical discourse analysis is described as being critical in two ways, the first in being based on the philosophies of the Frankfurt School and the second in its shared tradition with critical linguistics (Titscher, Meyer, Wodak, & Vetter, 2000). Critical discourse analysis aims to highlight the discursive features of inequality and disparity in society by detecting the linguistic means used to maintain inequality, by those privileged in society (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). In increasing consciousness of the role of language in the domination and subordination of social groups, the first step towards emancipation may be realised (Fairclough, 2001). There is an impetus within critical discourse analysis towards critiquing and ultimately changing society.

Given its preference for critique to be located where language and social structures intersect, critical discourse analysis has been widely used within domains such as political and economic discourse, ideology, media language, advertisement and promotional culture, institutional discourse, gender, racism and education (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000, p. 450). Studies in critical discourse analysis, though multifarious, all have commonalities: approaches are problem-orientated; there is a common interest in de-mystifying ideologies and power through semiotic data investigation; and critical discourse analysis researchers make known their own interests and positions whilst remaining self-reflective throughout the research (Wodak & Meyer, 2009, p. 3). It is thus an appropriate methodology to apply to this study of the Australian Curriculum, to de-mystify its embedded ideologies and power in order to contribute to the improvement of education for Aboriginal students (and indeed all students) within national policy.

In conceptualising this research, I looked toward studies in this transdisciplinary space where critical discourse analysis and Indigenous research methodologies have engaged in dialogue, as a means of theoretical and methodological development (Fairclough, 2009; Jackson, 2015). Māori researcher Anne-Marie Jackson (2015) offers a critique of the intersections between critical

discourse analysis and a Kaupapa Māori approach. With its focus on contemporary processes of social change, Jackson sees Fairclough's approach (CDA) to critical discourse analysis in particular as the most useful to apply alongside and within Kaupapa Māori (2015), citing four connecting points between CDA and Kaupapa Māori theory: it focuses on social change; there is a shared alignment to critical theory; research is transdisciplinary; and tino rangatiratanga (the principle of self-determination). Tino rangatiratanga in Kaupapa Māori gives Māori people control and can be utilised as a resistant strategy against hegemonic domination (Smith & Reid, 2000). Jackson (2015) believes CDA offers a complementary framework that strengthens analyses grounded in Kaupapa Māori theory and methodology, contributing rich analytical tools and a way of operationalising the research process to further a transformative Indigenous research agenda. Despite this usefulness, there are very few examples of Indigenous research approaches utilising CDA (Jackson, 2015) or critical discourse analysis more generally.

This is perhaps due to the ways in which those with an interest in discourse analysis and cultural studies have developed new approaches to research in this space. There are now an array of critical culturally-inclusive approaches for analysing discourse, including Shi-xu's Cultural Approach to Discourse and Carbaugh's Cultural Discourse Theory (Scollo, 2011). These approaches critique Western-biased theories and methods, and the problematic nature of the universalised discipline of critical discourse analysis (Scollo, 2011; Shi-xu, 2014). Shi-xu (2009, p. 31), as founding editor of the *Journal of Multicultural Discourses*, has advocated for the advancement of culturally-inclusive discourse research and the development of Eastern paradigms, which focus particularly on Asian, African and Latin American theories and methods, communities and interests, to transform 'Westcentric' scholarship. Cultural Discourse Studies has recently emerged as a critical culturally-conscious paradigm manifested in: participation by researchers from the Developing World in significant proportions; the development of locally grounded, globally minded research frameworks; and a growing multicultural awareness in the discipline (Shi-xu, 2014, p. 360). The development of these new paradigms sits within and alongside the critical discourse analysis tradition, allowing space for non-Western values, concepts, theories and methodologies to be developed and thrive.

In returning to critical discourse analysis in particular, there is also relatively little work by Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers applying critical discourse

analysis to Indigenous struggles. A survey of research found critical discourse analysis had been applied to political apologies or addresses by Prime Ministers regarding Indigenous issues and/or Peoples (Anderson, 2012; Augoustinos, Hastie, & Wright, 2011; Luke, 1997); media representations of Indigenous Peoples (Harding, 2006; Love & Tilley, 2013; Proudfoot & Habibis, 2013); the representation of Indigenous women in health information sources (Ritcey, 2010); and classroom textbooks (Stanton, 2014). Framed by a range of conceptualisations including critical Whiteness theories, postcolonial theory, discursive psychology and rhetorical psychology research traditions among others, these analyses drew upon the likes of Fairclough, van Leeuwen and van Dijk to articulate the selected critical discourse analysis methodology employed. This range of analyses offer examples of critical discourse analysis being applied to ‘mainstream’ discourse, with the texts (as data) analysed within this literature (political speeches, policy documents, health materials, media coverage and textbooks) largely constructed by the dominant group in society, either containing information about or for Indigenous Peoples. The media analyses represented what Harding referred to as ‘dominant society’s intragroup discourse about a minority group’, in that Indigenous Peoples were the subject of media coverage directed to non-Indigenous audiences (2006, p. 205). Others, such as the political apologies, could be similarly categorised – for example, though Indigenous Peoples were the recipients of each political apology, these apologies were highly mediated public events designed for a much wider audience (Augoustinos et al., 2011). This is not to propose that critical discourse analysis should be used differently here – utilising Western theories to analyse non-Western data is often unproductive, and Indigenous theories and means should be used whenever possible (Scollo, 2011), though in the above cases, critical discourse analysis as a Western methodology was used to examine ‘mainstream data’.

In examining critical discourse analyses undertaken in relation to Indigenous struggles, I used conceptualisations of Indigenous research methodologies as a lens through which to view them. A number of the studies reviewed above provided historical and sociocultural context to the object of analyses (for example Anderson, 2012; Proudfoot & Habibis, 2013). Anderson (2012), in drawing on Fairclough’s approach to CDA, situated his analysis of Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s 2008 apology to victims of residential schools in Canada within a historical context of the conflict from which the apology emanated. This mapping of the ‘social matrix of

discourse' was necessary, as a more complete understanding of the discourse is gained through an examination of the social practice in which it is embedded (Anderson, 2012; Fairclough, 1992, p. 237). This localisation of the research in its specific historical and sociocultural context served to situate and support the call for social change foundational to an Indigenous research agenda.

Epistemologically valuable in Indigenous research is the naming of the location from which the researcher's voice is positioned (Aveling, 2013). This critical engagement with issues of subjectivity and reflexivity are seen as key in research with a decolonising agenda (Bermúdez et al., 2016). The naming of one's position establishes relationships and 'is an Aboriginal way of ensuring that those who study, write, and participate in knowledge creation are accountable for their own positionality' (Absolon & Willett, 2005, p. 97). For non-Indigenous researchers engaged in critical discourse analysis they too should make explicit their positionality, having recognised that they are subject to structures and societal hierarchies of status and power, rather than situated outside of these (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Critical discourse analyses however have been critiqued for showing little reflexivity (Rogers et al., 2005). In much of the above critical discourse analysis literature, researchers generally did not self-identify as Indigenous or as non-Indigenous or explicitly state their position and interests, with exceptions such as Love & Tilley (2013) signalling their Māori and non-Māori identities; and Stanton (2014) her privileged position as a White scholar. Stanton (2014), in applying van Leeuwen's (2008) tools for critical discourse analysis to five widely used history textbooks in the USA to confront the biases of curricular agents towards Indigenous Peoples, discussed her options for participation in the project and the inherent tensions of working in a decolonising space, satisfying the need for reflexivity and responsiveness to Indigenous standpoints.

Considered imperative in Indigenous research methodologies is the privileging of Indigenous voices (Aveling, 2013). Proudfoot and Habibi's (2013) analysis included Aboriginal populist print media alongside mainstream print media, to reveal the different propositions and assumptions operating within each and a racialised divide in the representation of issues confronting Aboriginal Peoples during the time of the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER). This inclusion of Aboriginal media within the analysis provided voice for Aboriginal perspectives of Aboriginal issues in an attempt to overcome the identified issue of media analyses

ignoring Aboriginal media and focusing almost solely on mainstream media outlets (Proudfoot & Habibis, 2013). Other studies were all too aware of the limitations of having excluded Aboriginal voices from the analysis. Connelly (2004, November), in applying CDA to narratives of White women's experiences of teaching in Indigenous schools, later recognised the possible cultural insensitivity of such a study and problematic nature of such an analysis that did not include Indigenous voices⁴. This highlighted an issue in much critical discourse analysis work not extending itself to include Indigenous voices, when Indigenous struggles or issues were at the heart of the analysis.

One of the few works by a non-Indigenous researcher to explicitly do so, Stanton's (2014) study of history textbooks in the USA drew upon Indigenous values and theory to apply Indigenous-determined guidelines to develop implications for curriculum change. This was considered by Stanton (2014) to be a means of extending the critical methodology beyond the analysis of data, in support of her project of advancing social justice. I found this to be a powerful example of how researchers engaged in such projects can, despite their positioning as a non-Indigenous researcher, engage with Indigenous critical methodologies and perspectives in order to advance conversations in the decolonisation of curriculum. It is perhaps unsurprising that few others mentioned drawing on critical Indigenous theories in their applications of critical discourse analysis, given discussions on the nature of Indigenous research methodologies being 'by and for' Indigenous Peoples and the role of the non-Indigenous researcher in this space, in addition to the nature of critical discourse analyses discussed here largely dealing with data collected from non-Indigenous sources. This signals an opportunity however to extend such analyses to include Indigenous perspectives and voices within such research dealing with Indigenous struggles and/or issues.

I acknowledge that critical theory and critical discourse analysis, and indeed myself as researcher of this study, are essentially Western constructs. Reviewed in light of the scholarship on Indigenous research methodologies, the above literature allowed for particular aspects of critical theory and critical discourse analysis that complement Indigenous research methodologies to be revealed, as well as ways in which critical discourse analysis research could be more responsive to such

⁴ Though this issue was not discussed in the paper, the abstract questioned the cultural sensitivity of the research and value of the findings.

methodologies. With numerous approaches to critical discourse analysis available to draw upon, I took particular interest in Fairclough's CDA, given its widespread use and Jackson's (2015) comments on its worth. Before proceeding to speak in detail of the model of critical discourse analysis selected however, some explanation of concepts are firstly required.

3.2.1. Construction of 'discourse'

Within critical discourse analysis generally and in social and political theory more broadly, definitions of discourse are manifold (Bacchi, 2000). The term 'discourse' has its origins in the Latin *discursus*, meaning 'to run to and fro,' though has been prescribed significantly different definitions over time, with no singular conception acknowledged amongst critical scholars (Rogers et al., 2005, p. 369). Influential in the field has been Foucault, who even in completing seminal work on discourse commented,

Instead of gradually reducing the rather fluctuating meaning of the word 'discourse', I believe I have added to its meanings: treating it sometimes as the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualizable group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a number of statements (Foucault, 1972, p. 80).

Common within social theory and analysis, Foucault provides a conceptualisation of discourse that refers to the different ways in which areas of knowledge and social practice are structured (Fairclough, 1992). In this sense, discourses are manifested in distinct uses of language and symbolic forms (including visual images). They not only reflect social relations and entities however, but also constitute or construct them. As social effects of discourse, the manner in which different discourses position people as social subjects in various ways, and constitute key entities in various ways, are the focus of discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1992). Fairclough (1989) built upon the work of Foucault, drawing on this social-theoretical framing of 'discourse' with that of 'text-and-interaction,' utilised in linguistically-oriented discourse analysis. In the 'text-and-interaction' sense, a text (written or spoken) is simply one dimension of discourse, or what is communicated in a piece of discourse (Fairclough, 1992). In combining social theory and more linguistically-oriented analysis, Fairclough (1992) simultaneously sees discourse as instances of text, discursive and social practice. This study adopts Fairclough's model of discourse, which is expanded below.

I recognise that those working to expand perspectives on discourse within cultural approaches to discourse analysis, to include Indigenous discourse theories, broaden the field further (Scollo, 2011). As mentioned, critical culturally-inclusive approaches for analysing discourse seek to disrupt the universalised discipline of critical discourse analysis, to transform ‘Westcentric’ scholarship (Shi-xu, 2009, p. 31). Such work necessitates non-Western constructions of discourse to be explicated. For Shi-xu (2014), in his conceptualisation of Chinese Discourse Studies, discourse is a semiotic activity based in social interaction, where people use language (as well as other means) in communicative events that are based in particular historical and intercultural contexts. Within his theoretical conceptualisation, Eastern wisdom is mobilised and ‘equilibrium’ is seen as the most important principle, which is ‘to strive for humaneness in relation with others and with the environment’ (Shi-xu, 2009, p. 38). This equilibrium is seen as just one fundamental difference between Western and Eastern cultures (and thus discourses), highlighting the differing holistic worldviews encompassed in Cultural Discourse Studies (of which Shi-xu’s Chinese Discourse Studies is an exemplar) (Shi-xu, 2009, 2014). Shi-xu (2009) calls for the development of Eastern paradigms (which for convenience refers to Asian, African and Latin American societies) that reflect the richness of these societies’ philosophical ideas and cultural-intellectual heritages, thus being diversified in their properties and procedures. He comments that it is possible for culturally critical researchers everywhere to shift the monological discipline of critical discourse analysis, to one that is more culturally diversified (Shi-xu, 2009). In being more sensitive to and reflexive upon local cultural discourses, culturally critical researchers will be aided in becoming more successful in their own socio-cultural environment as well as increasing understanding of Eastern discourses within international communities (Shi-xu, 2009).

Though I cannot draw upon Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies as my own to embed in a cultural approach, Shi-xu’s work (2009, 2014), and that of the field of critical culturally-inclusive approaches to discourse analysis in general, provides a number of considerations for this study. Firstly, by considering alternative paradigms that exist alongside Western, and being cognisant of Indigenous research methodologies and principles, this study can contribute to culturally diversified research in discourse studies. Secondly, concerted effort can be made to be sensitive to local cultural discourses, realising that by working in this space I must work to

deconstruct ethnocentrism. Shi-xu comments that this can all be done with ‘a view to enhancing human cultural coexistence, harmony and prosperity’ (2014, p. 360).

In addition to culturally-inclusive theorisations being reflective of ontological and epistemological foundations, it could be said that researchers within this space, in similarity to those categorised as policy-as-discourse theorists discussed below, have a change agenda and thus theorise discourse in ways that will work to accomplish their goal (Bacchi, 2000). These activities are necessarily locally grounded in specific cultural and historic contexts.

3.2.2. Construction of ‘policy’

This study adopts a view of policy as discursive. Now widely used in our vocabulary, the concept of policy can be considered within such realms as personal or organisational (Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard, & Henry, 1997). The concept within this study is of course concerned with educational policy, and more specifically public educational policy, that is ‘those policies made on behalf of the state by its various instrumentalities, to steer the conduct of individuals...and organisations’ (Taylor et al., 1997, pp. 1-2). Within this, educational policy can be conceptualised in multiple ways, and is largely dependent on the perspective of the researcher (Ozga, 2000). It has been noted that the term is often used with little clarification as to which conceptualisation is being drawn upon (Ball, 1994; Ozga, 2000). To address this issue and provide clarity, Jones (2013) offers an outline of four key constructions of policy within the field: policy as text, policy as value-laden actions, policy as process and policy as discursive.

Policy as discursive is a theoretical view of policy that understands it as ‘mobilising specific ‘discourses’ within or across its various texts and processes’ (Jones, 2013, p. 10). Policy is seen as a social text constituted by language, which interacts and combines with social conventions to define and therefore produce realities (Jones, 2013; Liddicoat, 2013). Policies, as textual interventions into practice, are formed within and then re-enter existing social conditions and structural inequalities (Ball, 2006). Responses to these textual interventions are recontextualised, with complex mediations taking place at each stage of the policy process (formulation, distribution and implementation) (Apple, 2001). As such the effects of policy cannot be predicted or guaranteed in every circumstance and are the

consequence of struggle and conflict between policy interests in context (Ball, 1994). Ball (2015), in conceptualising policy in an interrelated way as both text and discourse, suggests that ‘policy as text’ highlights the ways in which policies are mediated, contested and differentially represented by various actors in various contexts whilst ‘policy as discourse’ highlights how policies are produced and framed at the same time by embedded assumptions and knowledge about ourselves and the world.

In adopting this construction of policy it could be said that the Australian Curriculum, as a textual intervention into practice, has been developed within a particular socio-historical context. The reading of the curriculum policy may differ based on the reader and the context in which it is received, and the policy is recontextualised through its distribution and implementation. Thus the official policy document is just a part of the policy process, which involves the text itself, text production, implementation, revision and evaluation processes (Taylor et al., 1997). This policy as a discursive event is shaped by and contributes to shaping the situations, institutions and social structures that surround it (Wodak, 1996). The ways in which discourse is determined by and effects social structures can therefore contribute to social continuity or advance social change (Fairclough, 2001).

On a broad scale, policy is increasingly being critiqued for the ways in which marginalised groups are framed within it to support the neoliberal political project. The increased focus on accountability and measurement within the governance turn sees socially-constructed categories (such as Indigenous) used to underpin evidence-based policy, and as targets of policy intervention (Lingard, Creagh, & Vass, 2012; Martino & Rezai-Rashti, 2013). Data-driven jargon around outcomes is seen by Cherubini (2012) as being reflective of normative values based upon Western means, and places Indigenous Peoples in a predicament of self-identification and space of conceptual tension. Such evidence-based policy moves have led to ‘gap talk’, a discursive strategy which focusses attention on improvement or ‘closing the gap’ whilst diverting it away from the social, economic and historical factors leading to such educational disadvantage and disparity (Lingard et al., 2012; Martino & Rezai-Rashti, 2013; Singh, Martsin, & Glasswell, 2015). Lingard, Creagh and Vass (2012) comment that gap talk ignores the continued practices of (post)colonisation. Accountability-based policies and practices such as NAPLAN are assimilative, requiring Indigenous students to ‘close the gap’ in their education achievement by

‘demonstrating suitable quantities of ‘White’ cultural capital’ (Lingard et al., 2012, p. 329). Such policies and practices are powerful in the reproduction of social structures and biases, highlighting the way in which policy as discursive can act as a tool of colonisation.

3.2.3. Construction of the ‘subject’ and ‘subject positioning’

In considering the uses and effects of discourse, Fairclough (1989, 2001) theorises the subject as a social construction. The ways in which individuals use text (spoken or written) are not individually determined, but rather socially determined – the social identities of people interacting, their socially defined roles and the social setting will result in variances in language use (Fairclough, 2001). By occupying recognised ‘social roles’, subjects participate in discourse (for example in the school setting, as a social institution made up of discourse types, subject positions or roles include principal, teacher, student etc.). It is through occupying these positions that individuals, in a sense, become so (Fairclough, 2001). In occupying these positions however, subjects also reproduce them, as positions only remain part of social structure through being occupied (Fairclough, 2001). Discourse therefore determines and reproduces these positions and social structures.

Discourse can be further understood as action as it is constitutive of reality, and not only reproduces social structures, norms and power relations but can contribute to transforming them (Titscher et al., 2000). Social subjects are in a sense both passive and agentic: they are passive in that they are constrained by discourse types, though Fairclough (1992) contends that it is through being constrained that people are enabled, to be active and creative social agents. Rather than being mechanically implemented, discourse types are drawn upon in varying combinations to reproduce subject positions, as a creative response to the ever-changing conditions and demands of social situations (Fairclough, 2001). In the production or interpretation of discourse, individuals draw upon their previous experiences and social relations (what Fairclough terms member’s resources or MR) to be constantly recreated – it is through being drawn upon and created anew that they are reproduced. The effects of this can vary however, as in being reproduced there may be relatively little change to social structures. A shift in power relations however may result in transformative orders of discourse being reproduced.

3.3. Model of discourse used

In conceptualising policy as discursive, this study draws upon Fairclough's model of discourse. This model sees discourse manifesting in the policy text itself, the social conditions which stimulated production of the text, production processes, interpretation and implementation of the policy and the context in which implementation takes place. The text, interactions and social practices are considered at the local, institutional and societal level (Rogers et al., 2005). Fairclough offers this three-dimensional model of discourse, in which any instance of discourse (or a discursive event) is 'simultaneously a piece of text, an instance of discursive practice, and an instance of social practice' (1992, p. 4). The text element of Fairclough's model of discourse deals with language analysis of texts, which can be verbal, written, visual imagery or a combination of such. Discourse practice identifies the nature of the processes of production and interpretation of texts, for example the identification of discourses and how they are combined. Sociocultural practice deals with how institutional and organisational circumstances have shaped the nature of discursive practice, as well as the constitutive effects of discourse (Fairclough, 1992). Linked to this three-dimensional model of discourse is Fairclough's three-dimensional model of discourse analysis, which is taken up within this study and further explored in Chapter Five.

As mentioned previously, Fairclough's model of discourse built upon Foucault's contributions to the field, particularly his socio-theoretical framing of discourse. Fairclough however notes a major contrast between Foucault's more abstract approach and his own, which is characterised as a linguistically or textually-oriented discourse analysis (TODA) (Fairclough, 1992). Central to TODA is an analysis of texts (written and spoken), which is not included in Foucault's analysis of discourse. Thus Foucault's work cannot simply be applied in discourse analysis, rather it is a matter of 'putting Foucault's perspective to work' within TODA (Courtine, 1981, as cited in Fairclough, 1992, p. 38). Of course, to speak of Foucault's 'perspective' is problematic, as his work can be considered in three sequential phases representing significant philosophical shifts, from archaeology to genealogy and then to the care of the self in his final years (Scheurich & McKenzie, 2005). The important contributions of Foucault's work in terms of 'the relationship of discourse and power, discursive constructions of social subjects and knowledge,

and the functioning of discourse in social change' can be synthesised with TODA to form a theoretically sound and methodologically useable approach (Fairclough, 1992, p. 38). Fairclough's work therefore synthesises Foucault's ideas with texts, providing a more linguistically or textually-oriented discourse theory.

Fairclough (1992) comments that in conceptualising power, superior to Foucault's conceptualisation is Gramsci's view of power and the concept of hegemony. It is the third dimension of Fairclough's (1992) three-dimensional model of discourse which relates to ideology and power (central interests in CDA), and locates discourse within an understanding of power as hegemony. In seeking to reveal hegemonic power and unmask ideologies, CDA takes interest in the type of ideology that encompasses more underlying and hidden everyday beliefs (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Ideology, as a 'conception of the world that is implicitly manifest in art, in law, in economic activity and in the manifestations of individual and collective life' (Gramsci, 1971, p. 328), is backgrounded and taken for granted as an 'implicit philosophy' in the everyday happenings of social life (Fairclough, 2001, p. 69). These everyday beliefs become naturalised, not through coercion but the generation of consent (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). Hegemony is conceived not as a force of total domination but as an 'unstable equilibrium' built upon the incorporation of subordinate groups through alliances and consent, whose instabilities form the focus of struggle (Fairclough, 1992, p. 58). These struggles may be overcome but are never fully eliminated, hence its instability – hegemony is constantly struggled over and re-won (Fiske, 2011). It is when dominant ideologies appear as natural, and as common sense, that we see hegemonic power being exercised, and common sense assumptions contributing to the production, reproduction or transformation of power relations (1992; 2001).

Within a hegemonic model, Foucault's 'tactical polyvalence' of discourses is valuable in developing an understanding of the processes of ideological struggle as they occur within discourse (Fairclough, 1992, pp. 59-60). Fairclough (1992) admits however that Foucault was resistant to the concept of ideology, which suggests Fairclough's particular reading of Foucault in a more neo-Marxist way. In theorising education policy as 'a multiplicity of discursive elements,' discourses can be considered 'tactical elements or blocks operating in the field of force relations' (Foucault, 1981, p. 101). There does not exist a single discourse of power with another running counter to it. Texts (as a product of the process of production) are

often sites of struggle, in which discursive differences are negotiated and traces of differing discourses contend and struggle for dominance (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Foucault (1981) asserts that there can be different, and perhaps even contradictory, discourses operating within the same strategy or conversely, unchanged discourses circulating in opposing strategies. Alongside Fairclough's threefold model of discourse and framed by a Gramscian conceptualisation of power as hegemony, this concept offers consideration of not only dominant discourses but also those operant, dormant or absent that run alongside or in counter to others in educational policy and social practice. In considering dominant, operant, dormant and absent discourses within the Australian Curriculum and those discourses drawn upon by community members in the articulation of their aspirations then, it is necessary to have a comprehensive Indigenous education discourse framework or taxonomy on which to base such investigations and use as a discourse analysis tool (detailed in Chapter Four).

Adding another layer of complexity to this model of discourse is the acknowledgement that not all discourses are equally accessible to all members of society, and the inaccessibility of some Aboriginal knowledges and perspectives as discourses within this study is noted. As a researcher engaged in work with Aboriginal people, I occupy subject positions that place certain restrictions on the kinds of discourses that are made accessible and knowable to me as a non-Indigenous female researcher. My race, gender and age for example see me positioned outside of specific discourses. Aboriginal knowledges, particularly those considered sacred, have accessibility criteria and the sharing of such knowledges is normally restricted to particular people within Aboriginal societies, for example Elders or initiated men or women (Battiste, 2008). Gender is critical in the sharing of certain cultural knowledges, with it strictly differentiated between men and women (Smith, 2005). Land (2015) cites age as another important feature of difference in Indigenous and non-Indigenous solidarity relationships, complex due to the differing prominence of it in colonising and colonised cultures. These intersecting elements of my identity mean I 'remain only partially able to hear and see' and am restricted by the access to knowledge (Jones & Jenkins, 2008, p. 479). My discursive construction as a social subject (a non-Indigenous, younger female) thus likely positions me in ways that make particular discourses accessible or inaccessible to varying degrees.

Such discourses are unlikely to be circulating in education policy, but remain an important consideration for the community-based investigation (Part B). My particular subject positioning may restrict me from accessing certain discourses, but it is the aim of the community-based investigation to seek out those marginalised discourses which may be mobilised by community members in expressing their education aspirations. The discourses mapped within the Indigenous education discourse taxonomy, to be used in the analyses of Parts A and B (and detailed in the following chapter), are found not only within the Australian Curriculum but circulate widely. They also constitute the broader discursive field within which Aboriginal Peoples attempt to articulate their education values and desires. Community members may draw on a range of competing discourses to develop a unique discourse of Aboriginal Education, which partly draws on prevailing discourses but also reflects the specificities of the local context. The community-based investigation (Part B) of the study then is crucial to analyse the ways in which the discursive field is drawn upon by the community to articulate their aspirations, providing space for marginalised views to be expressed.

To conclude and return to conceptualisations of policy, this study conceptualises policy as discursive, whereby policy mobilises particular discourses within and across its textual forms, production and interpretation processes, and contextual social conditions. The tactical polyvalence of discourses may see different Indigenous education discourses operating within a single policy (in this case the Australian Curriculum policy corpus), or one discourse may operate in opposing policies without changing its form. Exploring discourses through textual, interactional and contextual policy features allows for an increased understanding of the relationship between language and power within policy. Such an understanding makes visible the workings of ideology and hegemony, potentially disrupting power inequalities.

3.3.1. Justification of conceptualisation and methodology

I am aware of the problematic nature of using a Western methodology to undertake research with Aboriginal people, whilst having claimed earlier in this chapter to have considered Indigenous research methodologies and principles. I recognise the challenges in applying critical discourse analysis (and CDA in

particular) to this study, but also the opportunities to create an approach that may contribute fresh insight to the field, responding to the call of Rogers et al. (2005) to draw upon critical discourse analysis' multidisciplinary nature (and detailed in Chapters Five and Seven). Critical discourse analysis' objectives are grounded in revealing discursive aspects of social inequality and as stated earlier, the de-mystification of ideologies and power (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Critical discourse analysis is highly applicable to a study of a national policy constructed by those dominant in society, and more particularly the extent to which the Australian Curriculum aligns with the aspirations of a marginalised social group.

Researchers in critical discourse analysis are required to explicitly state their own positions and interests, complementing the need for any research guided by Indigenous principles to acknowledge the researcher brings their subjective self to the work (Atkinson, 2001, as cited in Wilson, 2008). As I have done in this chapter, I will continue to locate myself within the study and explain my subjective position, particularly in Chapters Seven and Eight where the community-based element of the study is detailed. Critical discourse analysis researchers are also required to be self-reflective of the research process (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). As a principle of Indigenous research too, Webber-Pillwax believes that 'The source of a research project is the heart/mind of the researcher, and 'checking your heart' is a critical element in the research process' (2003, pp.49-50, in Wilson, 2008, p. 60). At the centre of the heart/mind needs to be respectful and reciprocal motives. My motivations stem from my experiences teaching and learning from the Mudburra and Jingili Peoples of Elliott, in the Northern Territory (as described in Chapter Seven). It is these elements of critical discourse analysis, subjective positioning and the maintenance of self-reflexivity, that I feel compliment Indigenous research principles and methodologies if applied authentically by the researcher. An assessment of this study in relation to principles of Indigenous research and ethical considerations is discussed in Chapter Seven, with more critical notions of reflexivity considered and responded to.

3.4. Conclusions and concluding research questions

In this chapter and the preceding two I have attempted to present the conceptualisation and theoretical underpinnings of the study whilst highlighting my

own identity and background. As a critical researcher, I have thus far entered into what Kincheloe and McLaren describe as an ‘investigation with their assumptions on the table, so no one is confused concerning the epistemological and political baggage they bring with them to the research site’ (2005, p. 305). In viewing policy as discursive and employing Fairclough’s threefold model of discourse, this study is suitably positioned to undertake an analysis of Australian Curriculum policy. Framed by the above conceptualisation, three key research questions emerged from the aim of this study to explore how the aspirations of Aboriginal people are supported in dominant education discourses mobilised within the Australian Curriculum:

1. Which different Indigenous education discourses are privileged or marginalised in the construction of Aboriginal knowledges, histories and cultures in the Australian Curriculum?
2. Which Indigenous education discourses do Aboriginal community members draw upon in expressing their education aspirations for the community’s children?
3. How do these two sets of discourses, evident in Australian Curriculum policy and in the education desires of Aboriginal people, align?

The first research question explores the prevalence of Indigenous education discourses within the Australian Curriculum, recognising the complexity of the policy as discursive. This chapter put forward a model of discourse in which it is just as significant to explore ‘what is’ as ‘what is not,’ in order to illuminate and interrogate hegemony. The first research question considers multiple complementary or competing discourses that are dominant, operant, dormant and absent within the Australian Curriculum’s textual forms and processes, and seeks to map this policy’s discursive field. The second research question explores the discourses drawn upon by stakeholders, in particular members of an Aboriginal community, to express their education desires for the community’s children. As highlighted in this chapter, limitations in accessing certain Aboriginal knowledges are likely for any researcher who could be potentially positioned outside of them due to race, gender, culture, social positioning or other. For me particularly, this is understood in relation to my Whiteness, womanhood and age. Thus again, multiple complementary or competing discourses may be dominant, operant, dormant and absent within those communicated aspirations (as spoken text), though the inaccessibility of some discourses is acknowledged. The third research question examines the alignment of

both sets of discourses, to explore divisions and confluences. In moving forward and exploring Indigenous education discourses within the Australian Curriculum and community aspirations, it is necessary to identify and frame these within the discursive field through an examination of relevant literature, which follows in Chapter Four.

Chapter Four: Indigenous Education Discourses

In Chapter Three I highlighted the need for a comprehensive Indigenous education discourse framework or taxonomy on which to base the investigation of the research questions. In this chapter I firstly present existing categorisations and presentations of discourses in the field, particularly in the Australian landscape, and their limitations. I then present the taxonomy of Indigenous education discourses developed specifically for this study, from an extensive review of the literature relating to Indigenous education. Using an orientation-based framework to categorise the multiple discourses presented, the taxonomy offers a thorough description of each discourse, with a focus on Indigenous involvement and subjectivities. Finally, I consider how this taxonomy will be used to guide the study.

4.1. Existing Frameworks

Much has been written and reported on in the field of Indigenous education. Beresford and Gray (2006) state that in Australia however, the official Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education discourse (as reflected in government policies, reports and inquiries) has a limited understanding of the various approaches operating within Indigenous education and their theoretical underpinnings. Absent too from the corpus of literature on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education are attempts to critically conceptualise the numerous approaches in this field, and draw them together into a cohesive framework to guide policy development (Beresford & Gray, 2006). Analysis of policy becomes difficult if no such conceptual framework exists. Very few have reported on numerous approaches or discourses, and the field of Indigenous education is further limited by a lack of commonality of language when discussing various approaches.

Before moving forward, the question of what exactly is ‘Indigenous education’ must be addressed, though a definitive answer is not offered here. Others have highlighted the disparities, complexities and contested ways of conceptualising Indigenous education (McConaghy, 2000; Vass, 2012). Vass (2012, p. 86) positions the issue of ‘Indigenous education’ as a ‘regime of truth’, where homogenising forces have constructed a broad and generic understanding of it. As something distinct from mainstream education, and seen as a ‘problem’ when compared with

mainstream schooling, Vass (2012) raises concerns about the construction of Indigenous education being entrenched within a deficit landscape. He calls for an 'increased critical awareness on the part of those contributing to Indigenous education discourses' and of the ways in which policy 'problems' are socially constructed (Vass, 2012, p. 93). Nakata (1995, p. 56) too raises concerns with the conceptual framing of Indigenous education, questioning the 'cultural agenda' in connection with Indigenous education since the early 1990s. Seeing culture as a 'predominant source for educational representation and educational reform' which fails to address the mainstream institutions and practices that continue to marginalise Indigenous students, Nakata (1995, p. 44) highlights the discursive power of anthropological notions of culture. Notions of culture and cultural difference operate as 'disciplinary and disciplining practices' (Nakata, 1995, p. 56), and as a means of legitimating, managing and perpetuating the marginalisation of Indigenous Peoples in education and society more broadly (McConaghy, 2000).

McConaghy (2000) in part builds on Nakata's (1995) concerns to investigate the disciplinary and ideological problems inherent in the Indigenous education field in Australia. McConaghy (2000) offers an overview of what she identifies as the four main discursive traditions within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education in Australia. These traditions all fall under what McConaghy sees as culturalism, a way of knowing that uses 'ideologies and discursive regimes of universalism, cultural racism, and cultural incompatibility to construct and perpetuate a 'two-race' binary' (2000, p. xi). This two-race binary sees Indigenous and Western cultures as indisputable and in direct opposition, and penetrates education at every level from policy to classroom (McConaghy, 2000). Seeking to move beyond culturalism, McConaghy states her critique of such signals a need for 'postculturalism,' to transcend the 'intractable problems' with culturalism within Indigenous education (2000, pp. xi-xii). In examining manifestations of culturalism, McConaghy (2000) identifies four traditions as Pastoral Welfarism, centring on Indigenous incapacity; Assimilationism, the re-making of the Indigenous person into the image of the self; Cultural Relativism, the institutionalising of colonial tolerance; and Radicalism, which centres on the inversion of colonial relations.

Theoretically, McConaghy's (2000) work has been critiqued by scholars in the field of Indigenous education, with Sarra (2011) arguing McConaghy's (2000) post-structuralist theorisation as applied to Indigenous education, and its refusal to engage

with ontology and truth, is a debilitating weakness. Sarra comments that McConaghy ‘comes very close to denying the lived experience of the very people, Aboriginal Australians, whose cause she has espoused’ (2011, p. 44). Alongside this criticism, the value to be found in her work is in challenging one to consider, question and defend their own position (Sarra, 2011). For the purposes of this study, McConaghy’s framework is not well suited, not only because of its post-structural underpinnings. Whilst potentially valuable at the macro-level, McConaghy’s (2000) description of the major traditions does not adequately drill down to differentiate between discourses. Bilingual education and bicultural education, for example, fall under the Cultural Relativism tradition. This study differentiates between these two approaches within Indigenous education, and recognises that liberal and more critical manifestations of such approaches exist. Whilst their underlying philosophy may be similar (based, according to McConaghy (2000) on narratives of Indigenous cultural decay and the need to save or maintain Indigenous cultures), the way in which these approaches manifest within Indigenous education can be markedly different. To situate them within one major tradition is to use too broad a framework for this study, one which does not adequately capture the differences in discursive practices surrounding varied approaches to language and culture education.

Alternatively Beresford and Gray (2006) offer a categorisation of models of policy development within Aboriginal education in Australia. In devising this framework, Beresford and Gray (2006) drew on an extensive corpus of policy and literature to identify seven program delivery models within current practice in Aboriginal education: the social justice model; the community development model; the enhanced coordination model; the elitist model; the cultural recognition model; the school responsiveness model; and the compensatory skills model. The models, and what Beresford and Gray (2006) identify as the current discourses underpinning them, offer a way in which Aboriginal education policy can be analysed to develop and improve upon the official policy discourse. Whilst valuable in the categorisation of various models of Aboriginal education within Australia, Beresford and Gray (2006) recognise that these models often work in tandem and are not mutually exclusive. Therefore, they could be found within one or some of the multiple broader discourses identified in this study’s literature review.

The above Australian literature offered a starting point for reviewing approaches to Indigenous education and the discursive field. Both nationally and

internationally, it was found that much of the literature focusses on the manifestation of just one discourse, whether it be in teacher and school practices or policy design and implementation (for example Gordon-Burns and Campbell's (2014) research on attitudes to biculturalism amongst preservice teachers). The discourse focused upon is often due to the researcher's personal experience in that arena (for example Dei and Asgharzadeh (2003) who use their own education experiences to investigate monolingual discourse and the place of Indigenous language education in Ghana and Iran). Whilst powerful in its own right, such research narrows the field considerably and does not often consider alternative discourses running alongside or in opposition to the focus. A particular locality or Indigenous group too is often discussed in relation to the manifestation of a discourse (for example García and Velasco's (2012) examination of multilingual education for Indigenous children in Chiapas, Mexico; Dinero's (2004) work on assimilative education in rural Alaska and Yukon Village; and Marker's (2006) examination of multiculturalism, using the Makah tribe whale hunt as illustration). Certainly research in and with Indigenous communities is often intimate, focussed on a particular community or nation, which serves to highlight the diversity of those nations and the multifarious issues confronting them. For the purposes of policy analysis however, it is useful to have a succinct conceptual framework that is still able to span across such localisations, to allow the exploration of multiple views of policy (Jones, 2013). This lack of such a framework necessitated the need for the development of the author's own Indigenous education discourse taxonomy.

Addressing these limitations and drawing on both Australian and international literature, the literature review and mapping work saw the following discourses identified and a taxonomy created specifically for this study: Intercultural Both-ways, Critical Multicultural, Multilingual Multicultural, Human Rights, Empowerment, Liberal Multicultural, Inclusive, Neoliberal Assimilationist and Assimilative Monolingual (Table 4.1, Appendix A). The identification of these discourses occurred through a systematic review of the literature: first, ProQuest was used to locate peer reviewed articles on education discourses or approaches (e.g. multicultural; bilingual; monolingual), pairing each type with Indigenous, First Nations, Aboriginal and Native in separate searches. This yielded an incredibly large number of search results. These results were scanned and relevant articles (based on content, locality of study and colonial context) were selected, read and notated.

Google Books was also used to search for selected texts written by leading scholars in the field, which had been identified through the review of journal articles. On occasion, leading scholars were identified through the literature but not in search results of ProQuest or Google Books (for example Nieto (2000), due to the titles of works not containing key search terms). These works were also investigated. During this review, each discourse was described according to the following:

Origin/historical context; key assumptions and function; presence of Indigenous knowledge and culture; Indigenous participation; pedagogical methods; and evaluations and critique.

It is recognised that these discourses may not be all that exist in the field or uncontested – discourses are ‘terrains of struggle’ in their very nature (Fiske, 2016, p. xxii). The identified discourses however are those dominant in the field and offer conditions of possibility or constraint for values, beliefs and actions that influence our social world (Fairclough, 2003; Pacini-Ketchabaw & Armstrong de Almeida, 2006). The identified discourses are considered ‘official,’ so include those that may present as official policy adopted at national, state or local levels, or a school-wide adopted approach or philosophy.

4.2. Framing the discourse taxonomy

The taxonomy is framed by Jones’ (2013) ‘Four Education Orientations’ framework. This framework offers a common conceptual framing that can be used in education policy analysis, detailing the orientations to education which underpin much policy analysis yet are ‘rarely used directly, with accuracy or in much detail’ (Jones, 2013, p. 22). Too often, terms such as ‘conservative’ and ‘liberal’ are used in discussions of education policy with no prior established definition, and with the assumption that the meaning of these terms are both known and widely accepted (Jones, 2013). The framework therefore offers a way in which policy can be analysed using a commonality of language, thus increasing consistency in the field and overcoming issues of rigour and reproducibility. Jones’ framework draws on three orientations to education (conservative, liberal and critical) as discussed by Kemmis, Cole, and Suggett (1983) with the expansion and addition of a fourth (postmodern). This framing of the dominant Indigenous education discourses I have identified draws together the underlying common characteristics of each to categorise

according to orientation. This method of classification also aligns with what I have identified in the taxonomy as ‘levels of Indigenous involvement in knowledge construction’ which ranges from control (postmodern) to non-participation (conservative). Beginning with the postmodern, I present the taxonomy and discourses in order from what I aspire to, to the most removed from my position.

4.3. The Indigenous education discourse taxonomy

4.3.1. Postmodern

The postmodern orientation emerged in the 1980s, and has had increasing impact within education fields since the 1990s. Postmodernist education seeks to address particular issues left unresolved by modernism’s straightforward approach to power, authority, patriarchy, identity, ethics, and the (re)production of cultural patterns within the ‘consecrated’ dominant discourse (Boboc, 2012, p. 144). Centred on critiquing notions of reality, social values and practices are deconstructed to reveal their underpinning discursive assumptions (Jones, 2009, 2013). The very notions of power, authority and identity are called into question, and grand narratives (which reproduce relations of domination, subordination and inequality) are rejected (Boboc, 2012; Giroux, 1992). It embraces a democratic dialogic pedagogy, in the hope of provoking a meeting of consciousness whereby the teacher and student can create new ontological possibilities (Matusov, 2014). Numerous realities and perspectives are taught, and the teacher acts as deconstructor and facilitator for the student to develop ‘a critical oppositional position in relation to the dominant order’ (Jones, 2013, p. 45). Postmodernism thrives on ‘plurality, difference and multiple narratives that constantly regenerate and recharge themselves’ (Boboc, 2012, p. 144). Culture and identity are explored and opened up, providing opportunities for creative change and re-organisation (Jones, 2013). This orientation allows the student to deconstruct and recreate norms, and co-construct knowledge.

Postmodern Indigenous education discourses see control in the hands of Indigenous people. This is necessary for the opening up of this cultural space and authentic engagement with multiple theoretical perspectives, where the dominant culture does not reinforce traditional structures. Schooling is directed by Indigenous Peoples, and they are involved in developing schooling structures, learning

frameworks, curriculum, and learning materials. Teachers and assistant teachers may work together to facilitate the co-creation of knowledge. There is strong community involvement in schooling, and education is seen as serving two purposes – allowing students the opportunity for mainstream success as well as the maintenance of Indigenous language, culture and identity, in a way that allows for multiple and shifting identities to be explored. Indigenous and Western knowledges are treated equally, alongside each other with neither presuming dominance, allowing numerous realities to be taught. Postmodern Indigenous education discourses include the Intercultural Both-ways Discourse.

Intercultural Both-ways

Culturally responsive schooling has long been called for by Indigenous Peoples, with First Nations in North America for example advocating for improved, culturally responsive schooling since at least the early twentieth century (Brayboy & Castagno, 2009). Intercultural education extends to not only generate understanding of and respect for diversity and the inclusiveness of diverse knowledge and cultural traditions, but also promotes equality in education for marginalised groups (Cummins, 2016). In Australia, a form of intercultural education emerged as a model in the late 1980s, with two-way education (Harris, 1990). Evolving over the past three decades, two-way or both-ways teaching and learning is now seen not as two distinct cultural domains as per Harris, but rather as a cultural interface which allows two cultures to look both ways (Purdie, Milgate, & Bell, 2011). The Intercultural Both-ways (or two-way) discourse in Indigenous education infers a relationship between two cultures – Indigenous and Western – as they work together in equal partnership where neither presumes dominance and both are equally valued within school settings (Jorgensen, 2015; Purdie et al., 2011). It can be described as an education philosophy through which Indigenous knowledge traditions and Western academic disciplines and cultural contexts can be brought together in a respectful and ethical manner (Ober, 2009). Frawley and Fasoli (2012) comment that both-ways education, the favoured term used by Aboriginal Australians, is intercultural in essence. They further that intercultural education is primarily concerned with the intersection of cultural worlds, and the space in which they converge and overlap (Frawley & Fasoli, 2012). Moving beyond notions of cultural incompatibility and universalism suggested through this convergence of two seemingly separate worlds,

the postmodern Intercultural Both-ways Discourse challenges notions of culture and identity, and seeks to position them beyond the two-race binary. In this space, teachers and students work together to de-construct and co-construct knowledge, reality, and cultural truths (Jones, 2013). Ontological possibilities are created (Matusov, 2014).

Ober (2009) states that balance is a key concept within a both-ways education philosophy, and uses Marika's (1999) *Ganma* metaphor of incoming salt water from the ocean (Western knowledge) meeting a fresh water stream coming from inland (Indigenous knowledge) at the *Ganma*, a still lagoon⁵. Balance is seen in the swirling together of fresh and salt water, representing 'complimenting bodies of knowledge so that both knowledge systems are still distinguishable not hidden or dominated by the other, both are respected and preserved in their own right' (Ober, 2009, p. 36). This metaphor demonstrates how new knowledge is formed through the meeting of these knowledge systems, in the lines of foam which circulate across the surface of the lagoon where salt and fresh water meet (Frawley & Fasoli, 2012). The new knowledge and understandings formed by the two different knowledge systems meeting in this balanced way enrich the whole knowledge field (Ober, 2009). Whilst again, the literature speaks of two knowledge systems, others can be formed through these interactions. Matusov (2014) comments that the postmodernist approach hopes that both teacher and student can 'transcend their ontologically trapped being,' so that knowledge and culture can be opened up for new ontological possibilities.

Harris (1990) recognised that the many different models of two-way education developing needed to satisfy the following criteria in order to be authentic: initiation of two-way schooling must be by Aboriginal people; Aboriginal people must be in control of the two-way school; and the reproduction and maintenance of Aboriginal languages and cultures must be a planned and deliberate purpose of schooling. Indigenous knowledges, histories and cultures are therefore valued in an Intercultural Both-ways Discourse, not to be dominated by Western knowledge, and Indigenous people have equal control of education. Students, teachers and community have equal rights in the co-construction of knowledge (Boboc, 2012). Local Indigenous knowledges and Western academic disciplinary knowledge are explored in schooling, equipping students with the necessary skills and knowledge to thrive in

⁵ This metaphor for both-ways education appears elsewhere in the literature (Bat & Guenther, 2013; Frawley & Fasoli, 2012).

multiple worlds (Agbo, 2012). Through this approach, the knowledges, skills, languages and understandings Indigenous students bring with them to school are utilised, rather than having students leave those knowledges at the school gate when they enter (Cahill & Collard, 2003). This strengthens and preserves one's identity, enabling students to be proficient in Western worldviews and allowing them the freedom to pursue their own aspirations (Ober, 2009). Such preparation for multiple worlds requires explicit teaching of the 'culture of power' (Delpit, 1988). This exploration of how implied rules and codes operate through the culture of power allows students from marginalised social groups, who are not socialised into the culture of power at home, to more easily function in multiple worlds (Delpit, 1988). Matusov (2014) comments that the goal of postmodernist education is not to shape students' skills, attitudes, knowledge and perception into a pre-known curricular endpoint, but instead to have students engage critically in discourses about targeted practices and issues. This leads students to be more informed and engaged, but of course, if and how they action such informing and engaging will depend on their agency, responsibility and conscience (Matusov, 2014). There is little criticism of an Intercultural Both-ways Discourse. Instead, a recurring theme within the literature is mutual benefit for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, teachers and communities (Frawley & Fasoli, 2012).

4.3.2. Critical

The critical orientation to education has its roots in the foundational theoretical work of the Frankfurt School of Critical Social Theory (Foley, Morris, Gounari, & Agostinone-Wilson, 2015). It took hold in the 1970s, within and alongside social reform movements of the 'post-civil-rights' era, class system reforms, feminism and gay liberation (Jones, 2013). At the same time there was the emergence of the field of cultural studies which drew upon post-colonial theory, queer studies, ethnic studies and other critical orientations to call forth a critical lens (Foley et al., 2015). Jones (2013, p. 40) cites examples of linked policy movements including civil rights and ethnic revival movements in the USA, socialist moves in education policy in Germany and Soviet Russia, and various feminist, anti-discrimination and inclusive education reform movements. The critical orientation to education broadly seeks to reveal relations of power and inequality as manifested in education (Apple, Au, &

Gandin, 2009). Redressing the marginalisation of particular social groups in necessary whole-school reform approaches, the critical education orientation is based on the premise that students be educated to be active citizens and agents for social change (Eisner & Vallance, 1974; Foley et al., 2015). It aims to build critical social awareness and engage students in action for social improvement (Kemmis et al., 1983). Students are asked to critically evaluate the structures, social orders and values of our society and to undertake activism to bring about equality. In this way the critical orientation to education challenges inequitable social structures and can be used to empower and emancipate traditionally marginalised groups in society (Jones, 2013; Kemmis & Fitzclarence, 1986).

It is recognised there is considerable overlap amongst the identified orientations, particularly postmodern and critical, in where control is situated. In critical discourses, Indigenous Peoples have control over knowledge construction or opportunities for strong participation. Students may still be situated within what could be termed mainstream education settings, though Indigenous cultures and knowledges are valued and a space is created for the examination of these alongside Western knowledge, and the critique of power structures positioning such knowledges. In critical Indigenous education discourses, the marginalisation of Indigenous Peoples within education and wider society is addressed through the critical examination of power structures and the dominance of particular groups. Increasingly rights-based, critical Indigenous education discourses include Critical Multicultural, Multilingual Multicultural, Human Rights and Empowerment.

Critical Multicultural

Critical multiculturalism has emerged in recent years in response to the limitations seen in traditional forms of multicultural education (Maniatis, 2012), and what is described within this study as a Liberal Multicultural Discourse. Multiculturalism, according to Maniatis (2012), stems from a static, invariable view of culture – difference is codified according to cultural differences as determined by the dominant group. McDonough (2008) furthers that liberalism’s notion of ‘culture’ has been used to identify and categorise individuals as members of historically recognisable groups which share certain values and beliefs, customs and traditions. The perceptions of the dominant group, in defining cultural difference using this static view of culture, reinforce and perpetuate stereotypes and ‘us’ and ‘them’

binaries (Asher, 2007; Maniatis, 2012). Asher comments that multicultural education then, 'Framed thus, by the White man's gaze...does not, ultimately, shake the patriarchal foundations of 'the master's house', much less dismantle them' (2007, p. 65). Liberal multiculturalism has been criticised as a discourse which reifies cultural difference whilst failing to adequately address concerns of racism, discrimination, disadvantage and inequality (May, 2009). Critical multiculturalism seeks to address this.

There is no agreement for a uniform approach to critical multiculturalism, though all approaches draw on critical social theory to advocate a shared aim of marginalised or excluded groups pushing back against institutionalised forms of ranking and domination (Maniatis, 2012). May has identified essential components in a critical multicultural education paradigm: theorising ethnicity; acknowledging unequal power relations; critiquing constructions of culture; and maintaining critical reflexivity (2009, pp. 41-44). Through these essential elements critical multiculturalism goes beyond liberal multiculturalism by deconstructing power dynamics, privilege and oppression in order to provide students with strategies of resistance against and transformation for schooling and societies' oppressive social arrangements (Brantmeier, Aragon, & Folkestad, 2010). Here its emancipatory nature is evident.

The question of whether Indigenous students are indeed included within multicultural discourses is discussed below in relation to liberal multiculturalism. If we suppose that they are, then critical multiculturalism asks both the Indigenous student and non-Indigenous student to question tradition, in terms of traditional relations of power and authority (Maniatis, 2012). Fean (2012) states that a simple injection of multiculturalism into a curriculum can reinforce the static notion of culture and be tokenistic, and that in order to address the fundamental questions needed to debate the role of Indigenous knowledges in societies, relationships of power must be made explicit to students. Questions of hegemonic epistemology need to be addressed, to open a space for debates around the authentic inclusion in education of Indigenous knowledges (Fean, 2012). Thus concerned with equality and justice, critical multiculturalism 'interrogates Eurocentric bias, investigates social/structural group relations, promotes equity-oriented pedagogy, and fosters critical, democratic citizenship' (Boyle-Baise & Gillette, 1998, p. 20). In a Critical Multicultural Discourse, the differentiated cultural knowledge students bring to

school is acknowledged, and dealt with by examining the structures and operations of power that privilege particular cultural capital (Maniatis, 2012). It has been applauded for its aim to radically transform education, and its emancipatory nature (Maniatis, 2012).

Multilingual Multicultural

In Australia, and across other settler nations where Indigenous languages were suppressed through attempts to assimilate Indigenous Peoples into Euro-Western culture, the impact of colonisation on those languages has been catastrophic⁶ (Antone, 2000). These languages form a significant part of the identity and culture of Indigenous Peoples (McKay, 2011). Language, as the mechanism through which culture is transmitted to each generation, reproduces and maintains the values, beliefs and cultures of Indigenous Peoples (Antone, 2000). With language strongly connected to culture, it as an essential element in multicultural and intercultural education, although some models of multicultural education have neglected the issue of language within their conceptual framework⁷ (Nieto, 2000). Where the Multilingual Multicultural Discourse is engaged, content is learnt through both the Indigenous first-language/s and English. In its purest form multilingual or bilingual education is critical in that an alternative set of languages are brought into the schooling environment, redressing linguistic and cultural marginalisation.

Bilingualism fits within the multilingualism model, which uses two or more languages of learning and teaching subject matter⁸ (Banda, 2010). Hornberger (2009) describes the multilingual education ideal, in which there are three key elements: it uses and values multiple languages; it recognises and values intercultural understanding; and it builds upon students' prior knowledge to build toward full participation in society. This approach is viewed as not only a means of preparing students for success in mainstream society but also to be active participants in the maintenance of their minority Indigenous language/s and culture (Usborne et al., 2009). In order to be successful in both tasks, students are required to have critical

⁶ There once may have been approximately 250 languages across Australia pre-settlement and now there may be half this number, with only 20 considered strong across all generations within the community (McKay, 2011). Such troubling statistics are also common across North America (Usborne, Caouette, Qumaaluk, & Taylor, 2009).

⁷ This neglect can be seen in the lack of terminology relating to linguistic diversity, with terms more commonly emphasising race and ethnicity (Nieto, 2000).

⁸ Definitions vary – bilingual education according to Chimbutane (2011) has been used in the past as a broad term for a wide variety of education provisions including those that use only one language.

social awareness about the power of language and modes of use. This requires explicit teaching of sociocultural awareness, or sociocultural rules and normative patterns of behaviour, and exposure to the whole social context of the second language being taught in order to develop an understanding of social contextual, stylistic appropriateness, cultural and non-verbal communicative factors necessary for competent communication (Celce-Murcia, Zoltan, & Thurrell, 1995). Whilst these are similar ideals to that encompassed within Intercultural Both-Ways Discourse, a key point of difference is the very reconstituting of the culture of power around which hierarchical relations are organised, made possible through the use of multiple languages. The power of the dominant language is destabilised, and linguistic capital is reconceptualised to encompass both or many language backgrounds. Multilingual or bilingual education is an act of resistance, which highlights (either explicitly or implicitly) the need to struggle against submission and domination (Giroux, 2006). In many Indigenous communities advocating for bilingual education, this resistance is to the dominance of English, and the continuing decimation of Indigenous languages as a consequence of colonisation.

Multilingual or bilingual education is based on the premise that the home language/s and culture of students are an asset that should be leveraged in their education (Nieto, 2000). Students' prior knowledge is recognised, used and built upon for new learning (Nieto, 2000). With two languages used as languages of teaching and learning (LoTL), the students' first language, culture and experiences are built upon in meaningful ways (Banda, 2010; Nieto, 2000). Indigenous Peoples thus have a high level of participation in knowledge construction when a Multilingual Multicultural Discourse is mobilised.

Multilingual or bilingual education is often a site of controversy as it represents the interests of traditionally disempowered groups (Nieto, 2000). The positive impacts of strong multilingual or bilingual approaches have been documented, in terms of greater academic and post-schooling success as well as increased self-esteem and positive identity formation (Hinton, 2016; Usborne et al., 2009). For the individual, greater educational success will mean a person is more able to overcome disadvantage – they will have better health outcomes, higher incomes and improved employment prospects (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2016). This can be transformative for the individual, but also results in the improved economic, social, physical and emotional wellbeing of communities (Department of the Prime

Minister and Cabinet, 2016). When Indigenous traditional knowledges, cultures and values are incorporated into schooling through language, the Aboriginal voice is lifted up (Antone, 2000), in both individual and collective ways. Strong multilingual programs thus contribute to individual and social transformation. It is a highly contested approach, and there exist those critics who see multilingual education as detracting from proficiency in English despite research on multilingual education suggesting Indigenous language development and English literacy are complementary, and not in competition (McKay, 2011). Multilingual education involving Indigenous languages is a field of complexity in which issues around language learning on and off country, who holds the right to teach Indigenous languages, and provisions for the teaching of languages that are in use, being reclaimed, revitalised or revived need to be addressed by and with Indigenous Peoples (Scarino, 2014).

Human Rights

First affirmed in *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (United Nations, 1948), education as a human right gained increasing acceptance and is now a universal goal (Babaci-Wilhite, Geo-JaJa, & Lou, 2012). The second half of the twentieth century then saw a demand for the recognition of human rights and dignity take place within a vibrant Indigenous movement (Stavenhagen, 2008). The Human Rights Discourse in Indigenous education gained currency with the global recognition in 2007 of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, following thirty years of negotiation (Enn, 2012). Although not legally binding, it holds significant moral authority as a declaration, and for Indigenous Peoples remains a highly relevant human rights document (Enn, 2012). Article 14 of the *Declaration* specifically deals with education:

14.1. Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.

14.2. Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination.

14.3. States shall, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, take effective measures, in order for indigenous individuals, particularly children, including those living outside their communities, to have access, when possible, to an

education in their own culture and provided in their own language. (United Nations, 2008)

The Human Rights Discourse considers the above *Declaration* but in action occurs along a continuum, with debate and ambiguity in the distinction between rights *to* education and rights *in* education. The right to education involves the accessibility and availability of education, whilst rights in education involve protecting, respecting and responding to students' needs, cultures, languages, values and beliefs (Babaci-Wilhite et al., 2012). In its more liberal form, rights to education means Indigenous Peoples are free to participate in all levels of education without prejudice or discrimination (be it as students or in leadership, policy, curriculum, teaching, as support workers etc.). In this sense, Indigenous Peoples are equal to all other peoples and individuals, enjoying the same right to access education as all others, without discrimination. Rights in education brings this discourse into the critical realm. Rights in education considers the quality of the education received, and how it caters to the individual's needs – accessibility is not always ideal if rights in education are lacking. Within this approach, 'The task of ensuring rights in education is the end rather than the means of schooling, with its multiple learning outcomes – linguistic, cultural and educational self-determination rights' (Babaci-Wilhite et al., 2012, p. 626). Self-determination in and of itself may not be considered critical, as minority populations can have their own education systems without challenging the culture of power (Delpit, 1988) which continues to inscribe inferior status to marginalised groups. Babaci-Wilhite et al. (2012) comment however, that rights in education challenge dominant norms and Europeanisation. This is through enhancing the quality of education – not only for an individual but also for communities, by responding to the localised interests of those it is to serve. When self-determining and locally-based outcomes for self-development are the focus, the power of education to combat social disadvantage and improve communities is unleashed (Babaci-Wilhite et al., 2012).

The continuum within the Human Rights Discourse therefore sees the presence of Indigenous knowledges and cultures, and Indigenous participation, vary. In its most progressive critical form, where rights in education are considered, education that encompasses Indigenous systems of knowledge is seen to assist in the achievement of self-determination and an empowering transformation of society for Indigenous Peoples (Gayman, 2011). Indigenous Peoples having strong participation

in an education system that seeks to redress marginalisation. Pedagogy is rights-based, with learning occurring in a rights-respecting environment. This enables students to learn about human rights and through human rights (AHRC, 2011b). Inquiry, debate, cooperative learning and evaluation are also pedagogies commonly engaged to allow the exploration and critical examination of issues and the advancement of the rights of all (AHRC, 2011b).

Much of the literature relating to this discourse focuses on linguistic human rights, and the place of Indigenous languages within education (Musau, 2003; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2009; Watson, 2007). Skutnabb-Kangas (2009) goes as far to state that education delivered to Indigenous children through submersion programs in a dominant language violates the human right to education because of the barriers it creates linguistically, pedagogically and psychologically. Despite the recognition of rights to and in education, many obstacles still remain for Indigenous Peoples to have full enjoyment of these rights within education systems traditionally based on assimilationist models (Stavenhagen, 2008). The Human Rights Discourse in education attempts to address this.

Empowerment

Empowerment education developed in response to the disabling of minority students within traditional assimilationist schooling constructs and the recognition that education should affirm and validate individuals, communities and their cultures (Goddard & Shields, 1997). Antone (2000) asserts that positive self-identity is vital for academic success and that in the past, these traditional schooling systems failed to promote a positive identity for Indigenous students. Low self-esteem of students is an issue related to colonisation and the legacy of residential schooling where students were denied their identity through assimilationist practices (Goulet, 2001). In response to these failings, the empowerment education movement sees identity as the 'keys for liberation,' with identity closely linked to culture (Meyer, 1998, p. 28).

Within Indigenous education, empowerment education benefits the individual student whilst subscribing to the social reconstruction agenda. Firstly, empowerment education is based upon concepts of self-belief and positive self-esteem, and fosters students' self-belief and positive identity formation to develop their ability to overcome barriers to success. Common themes in the literature on empowering education for Indigenous learners is the idea of working together and meeting half-

way (Bissett, 2012; Davenport & Gunn, 2009) and raising up the voice of Indigenous Peoples (Antone, 2000; Davenport & Gunn, 2009). Empowerment Discourse recognises that formal education and the learning process should not be divorced from a student's identity and cultural upbringing, and that an acknowledgment of a student's cultural identity within the teaching and learning process is vital to their empowerment and educational success (Kennedy, 2013). Students are educated in an environment in which difference is actively sought and valued, and where they can be proud of their culture (Stronger Smarter Institute Limited, 2014). Empowerment in Indigenous education however is more than improving upon self-esteem, as it also involves social change at organisational and community levels. As Brazilian educator Paulo Freire conceptualised it, empowerment education targets individual, social and systemic change (Bergsma, 2004). Empowerment education offers possibilities for self and social change through critical-democratic pedagogy, as students are not only invited to become skilled and critical thinkers, but also change agents and social critics (Shor, 1992). To be critical in a democratic curriculum is to broaden and deepen students' understanding of historical and social issues; to encourage them to consider how power, inequality and academic knowledge relates to their experience; and to question the status quo (Shor, 1992).

Higgs (2008) calls for an educational discourse that goes beyond a traditional colonising one, where the vision and practice of education reaches beyond schooling. In being about empowerment, the foundation is laid for 'people to participate in mastering and directing the course of change and fulfilling the vision of learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together as equals with others' (Higgs, 2008, p. 455). In going beyond schooling, community participation is key in an empowering discourse. Parents, carers and community members need to collaborate and work together as partners in the education process, which contradicts the 'teacher knows best' axiology seen to be prevalent in traditional schooling and the Anglo-conformity model (Goddard & Shields, 1997, p. 20).

Empowering pedagogy is student-centred and negotiated (Shor, 1992). Goddard and Shields (1997) associate a reciprocal-interaction pedagogical model with an empowering education, whereby a genuine dialogue exists between students and teacher, and where students have greater control in the learning process. The teacher leads democratically, creating a negotiable openness (Shor, 1992). Shor (1992) proposes an agenda of values within empowerment pedagogy: participatory;

affective; problem-posing; situated; multicultural; dialogic; desocialising; democratic; researching; interdisciplinary; and activist. In aspiring to a model of empowerment education, paternalistic partnerships may un/intentionally disempower Indigenous Peoples. In mobilising an Empowerment Discourse, a commitment by both parties (those from the marginalised culture and those acting in support) to self-determination is needed, to avoid the dominant culture maintaining a power imbalance (Perso, 2012).

4.3.3. Liberal

Popularised in education policy in the 1960s, liberalism is closely tied to the development of the modern world (Bittick, 2010; Browning, 2000). Tracing its intellectual origins back to the seventeenth century, political theorists Thomas Hobbes and John Locke (and those who followed) articulated a conception of society that maximised an individual's freedom and exercise of rationality in pursuing their goals (Browning, 2000). Later liberal theorists including John Stuart Mill argued for individual freedoms as crucially important (Browning, 2000). Philosophical liberalism, characterised by diverse actors including Mill, Immanuel Kant, and John Rawls, emphasised and attempted to balance ideas of liberty, equity and social responsibility (Alnes & Toscano, 2014). Today, contemporary liberal thinking has been characterised as four 'liberalisms': Personal, Political, Economic, and Social Liberalism (Bittick, 2010). Personal liberalism focuses on personal liberties (such as freedom of speech); Political liberties focus on the rule of law; Economic liberties focus on property rights; and Social liberties focus on social equity and equal opportunity (Bittick, 2010). Different liberal ideologies may emphasise different liberties (Bittick, 2010; Laws, 2004).

The liberal orientation to education, as popularised in the 1960s, sees the goal of education as being to prepare the 'whole' student for life, as opposed to more traditional and conservative views of education as preparation for work (Kemmis et al., 1983). Education is a holistic endeavour, developing the whole person as an autonomous being (Kemmis & Fitzclarence, 1986). The liberal dream is to create 'daring, self-asserting, self-confident and self-reliant humans' (Bauman, 2005, p. 49). Drawing on educational theorists such as John Dewey and Joseph Schwab, Jones (2013) characterises the liberal orientation to education as one which focuses on

nurturing students' intellectual, emotional, social and living skills, as well as their ability to choose their own values and beliefs. The individual excellence of each student is promoted. Teachers facilitate the development of knowledge and skills in students, and their ability to participate effectively in society's improvement. Indeed, the liberal orientation to education sees society as in need of improvement, though students are engaged in less-radical methods than those found in the critical orientation. The critical orientation engages students in the critical evaluation of societal structures, orders and values, and in activism for social improvement (Kemmis et al., 1983), whilst the liberal orientation engages students in identifying social structures in need of reform without addressing questions of radical change (Jones, 2013).

In liberal education discourses, with their denouncement of social and economic inequality, there are numerous focus groups identified in the struggle to assist any student vulnerable to marginalisation (due to their race, gender, sexuality, social or economic status, special needs or other characteristic). Indigenous Peoples are therefore grouped with all 'vulnerable' persons, and have minor participation in knowledge construction in mainstream schooling contexts. Liberal Indigenous education discourses include Liberal Multicultural and Inclusive.

Liberal Multicultural

Many trace the beginnings of multicultural education back to the USA's civil rights movement of the 1960s. The 1970s saw what McCray and Beachum (2010, p. 2) call the 'apex of school integration,' where the focus was on content integration within curriculum to better represent the increased diversity of learners. Multicultural education promotes educational equality for all students regardless of ethnic, racial or cultural characteristics. Embedded in cultural pluralism, multicultural education intends for all students to become caring, knowledgeable and active citizens (Banks, 2006). The ideal vision of multiculturalism within schooling is one that recognises and celebrates cultural, ethnic and racial diversity. It creates equitable opportunities for all students, regardless of difference. It also seeks to reduce prejudice and discrimination. Whilst Banks (2009) believes there is consensus in the fundamental goals of multicultural education, it is a highly contested concept. Many labels have been ascribed to differing forms of multiculturalism, including conservative, liberal, benevolent and critical (Banks, 2009; May, 2009; Miller-Lane, Howard, & Halagao,

2007). The Liberal Multicultural Discourse is liberal in the sense that this form of multiculturalism accentuates cultural pluralism and diversity (Miller-Lane et al., 2007).

Marker (2006) has discussed multiculturalism as not necessarily being inclusive and tolerant of Indigenous Peoples and cultures⁹. In Finland, Holm and Londen (2010) found that the Indigenous population was seen as being outside of multicultural education, and that cultural diversity was viewed in narrow terms as ethnic, immigrant language and religious diversity. Many believe that diversity refers to something produced by migration (Hausman, 2003). Some Indigenous groups do not want to be included in a multicultural framework, and have suggested that ‘multiculturalism is a form of colonialism and works to distract from the recognition and redress of Indigenous rights’ (St. Denis, 2011, p. 308) and undermines Indigenous sovereignty. This is because of the ahistorical nature of liberalism, which fails to give special recognition to Indigenous Peoples and their experiences, and the dependence of multiculturalism on colonial discourse structures including historical, political and educational thought and practice (St. Denis, 2011).

Multiculturalism within a Liberal Multicultural Discourse can at times be interpreted as an add-on to curriculum, where the celebration of difference manifests as special days, weeks or months, for example ‘Black History Month’ (Boyle-Baise & Gillette, 1998, p. 20). Miller-Lane, Howard and Halagao (2007) state that in using the term ‘liberal’ an openness and broad-mindedness are suggested, although multicultural education of this nature can manifest in varying degrees, with safe practices and a ‘feel-good approach’ to the attainment of tolerance and self-acceptance being advocated by moderate liberalists. Liberal multicultural pedagogy largely focuses on safe and supportive practices that value diversity. The Liberal Multicultural Discourse within education for Indigenous Peoples however can often be tokenistic, with schools attempting to ‘relegate indigenous people to a mere splash of colour on the multicultural mural’ (Marker, 2006, p. 496).

The Liberal Multicultural Discourse has been critiqued in being limited in exploring meaningful considerations of culture, as the hegemonic context of schooling obstructs the creation of a ‘critical comparative vocabulary’ (Marker, 2006, p. 489). The challenges facing this form of multiculturalism include idealistic

⁹ Multicultural learning experiences may often include ethnic food festivals, but Marker (2006) presented an example where the tasting of whale meat (legally hunted and killed by the Makah tribe) was unacceptable in a North American school.

conceptions of culture which have plagued the approach and a longstanding naivety that the simple recognition of cultural differences will make the attainment of a harmonious multiethnic society more easily achievable (May, 2009). It is this view of culture and cultural difference that has been a cause of criticism by radical critics or critical multiculturalists (Boyle-Baise & Gillette, 1998). Richards goes as far to state that ‘multicultural policies and discourses are frequently assimilationist in their effects... It is tantamount to recognising diversity without doing anything about the power inequalities that racial structures entail’ (2010, p. 65). The Liberal Multicultural approach precedes the Critical, in that it seeks to achieve cultural pluralism but does not go as far to question unequal power structures within society and how these construct identity, difference and otherness.

Inclusive

Over the past decades since the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (United Nations, 1948), there has been an increased interest in issues of equity, rights and inclusion with several declarations on human rights and inclusion created¹⁰. According to Rambla, Ferrer, Tarabini, and Verger (2008), inclusive education emerged approximately three decades ago, initially focusing on special education but now with the basic tenet of achieving equal education for all. There remain discrepancies in the idea of inclusive education, with some individuals and nations continuing to think of the approach as related specifically to students with disabilities¹¹ (Ainscow & Miles, 2008). Internationally however the gradual expansion of the movement has seen other marginalised groups included, and it is now generally considered a reform that supports the diversity of all learners (Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Rambla et al., 2008). A greater emphasis has been given to inclusive education in recent years, with the recognition that inequalities are still present within education systems despite economic growth (Rambla et al., 2008).

Inclusive education is human-rights inspired, and its aim is the overcoming of inequalities present in education (Du Toit & Forlin, 2009; Rambla et al., 2008). Inclusive education can be considered a project of educational reconceptualisation,

¹⁰ For example *Declaration of the Rights of the Child 1959*; *Declaration of the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons 1971*; and *Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons 1975* (United Nations, n.d.; Vlachou, 2004).

¹¹ Ajuwon for example, citing Bryant, Smith, and Bryant (2008), Lipsky and Gartner (1997), Rogers (1993) and Salend (2001), defines inclusive education as ‘the philosophy and practice for educating students with disabilities in general education settings’ (Ajuwon, 2008, p. 11).

seeking to transform the ways in which present forms of education routinely practice exclusion and deny human rights on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexuality, socio-economic status, ability or other personal characteristics (Vlachou, 2004). Essentially, an Inclusive Discourse celebrates and values the diversity of learners, seeking to remove any existing exclusionary policies and practices and seeing individuals as equally valued members of society (Bevan-Brown, 2013). An Inclusive Discourse thus is a child-centred approach, where the focus is on assisting individuals to achieve their full potential, to facilitate their development as an active and essential member of society (Vlachou, 2004) and where self-worth is promoted in every learner (Ismailova, 2004).

Some would expect that Indigenous Peoples would be supportive of the Inclusive Discourse, with its focus on the valuing of diversity, but conceptualisations of inclusive education are embedded in the values and norms of the dominant culture (Bevan-Brown, 2013). Indigenous Peoples are included within this discourse along with all others deemed vulnerable to marginalisation, and are supported to participate within mainstream schooling environments. There are specific attempts to make education inclusive of Indigenous knowledges (Botha, 2012), and internationally there are approaches of cultural inclusiveness (Fettes, 2013), though these begin to fall outside of the Inclusive Discourse. Within an Inclusive Discourse, an understanding and appreciation of the diversity of Indigenous Peoples (along with other minority groups) does not necessarily demand challenging dominant norms or that Indigenous Peoples play a role in knowledge construction.

Pedagogy within an Inclusive Discourse focuses on the creation of safe and supportive learning environments. Zevenbergen, Mousley, and Sullivan (2004) suggest open-ended tasks that allow learners to answer with varying quality and quantity depending on their prior knowledge, thus not intimidating or disempowering students. Criticism of inclusive education varies, with Du Toit and Forlin (2009) stating that within the movement there has been a failure to move beyond rhetoric and make genuine and long lasting progress. Operti, Brady and Duncombe (2009) further that when action has occurred, priority in policy planning and resourcing has been given to particular marginalised or vulnerable groups, when in fact inclusive education should not target groups in this reductionist manner but rather broaden its scope and provide quality education and opportunities for all diverse learners. Inclusive education, in its general sense, whilst valuing and celebrating the diversity

of all learners, fails to critically examine specific issues of marginalisation for Indigenous Peoples.

4.3.4. Conservative

Prior to the 1960s the conservative orientation to education dominated, and whilst the above orientations have since emerged it is still apparent today. As a distinct perspective on society, formed by the class divisions and political struggles of the post-medieval state, conservatism can be considered a reaction to modernity, or the belief in the liberation of communities through social engineering on a grand scale (Eccleshall, 2003). Conservatism is largely based in a romantic evaluation of the past, where people 'knew their place' within stable communities directed by a 'natural order,' in which 'real knowledge' and 'morality' based on traditional Western structures reigned supreme (Apple, 2005, p. 279). It calls for a return to a common culture and traditional values (as conceptualised by the Western tradition) (Apple, 2005). It is recognised however that serious conceptual difficulties are posed by the ideology of conservatism (Eccleshall, 2003), and multiple and contradictory tendencies may operate within the 'rightist turn' (Apple, 2005, p. 272).

Apple (1993) calls attention to the conservative restoration, later termed conservative modernisation, where the goals of schooling are increasingly based on the needs of business and industry. In this context, the conservative orientation to education is steeped in tradition, standardisation, productivity and industrial needs (Apple, 1993). This conservative modernisation sees an alliance made up of competing groups including neoliberals, neoconservatives, authoritarian populists and a fraction of the new middle class, whose aims in part contradict each other (Apple, 2005). Neoliberals, who emphasise a weak state, are guided by privatisation and a vision of students as human capital. Neoconservatives, who emphasise a strong state, are guided by a revivification of the 'Western tradition,' particularly around issues of knowledge, values and the body (Apple, 2005, p. 272). Authoritarian populists, often religious-based movements, see commonality in a return to traditional values though again, do not sit completely comfortably within the alliance (Pedroni, 2007). The professional and managerial fraction of the new middle class see gains in social mobility through the expertise it is able to provide in standardisation, measurement and management matters (Pedroni, 2007). Apple

(2005) acknowledges that within this hegemonic alliance there is considerable tension among cultural conservatives and economic rationalists - conservatism in its truer sense of the term sits uncomfortably with economic rationalism, the subordination of education to economic necessities. The conservative modernisation is thus underpinned by a constant tension.

Within the conservative orientation then, education is seen as a reflection of the principles of society, or at least those of the dominant group in society. Education thus maintains the status quo by instilling in students dominant ways of being and social practices (Jones, 2009). Schools and teachers take on authoritative roles, whilst students are passive recipients of this dominant knowledge. This conservative position is threatened by the move towards cultural pluralism, as it 'rests on the assumption that there is a clearly defined set of values or norms that can be transmitted' (Miller, 1983, p. 182). Ganesin and Bonaker (2003) further that conservative actors uphold that students' skills and knowledge be developed to enable them to participate in the shared national culture, and that a curriculum aimed at reducing racism takes valuable time away from traditional academic disciplines such as Mathematics, Science and reading, thus impacting their ability to do so. Conservative education discourses therefore focus on the shaping of students to fit current social, civic, religious and vocational conventions (Jones, 2013). Education is seen as the training of students into appropriate social roles (Connell, 2013) and as preparation for work, whether it be skilled or semi-skilled with varying education systems catering for both (Kemmis et al., 1983). It is apparent in the rise of mass education, which was linked to modern industrial state's project of development and the need for skilled labour (Kemmis & Fitzclarence, 1986). Within and alongside this, students are seen to be needing to develop normative skills and behaviours necessary to compete effectively in society and in the economy (Apple, 2005).

In conservative Indigenous education discourses, the Indigenous student is like any other, needing to develop the necessary skills and knowledge (those considered valuable by the dominant group in society) to enable their participation in the shared national culture (Ganesin & Bonaker, 2003). Removed from their cultural and historical context, Indigenous students and the wider community have no opportunities to be involved in knowledge construction and there is no recognition of the marginalisation experienced by Indigenous Peoples in the education system.

Indigenous languages and cultures are not valued, and are seen as an impediment to success, both in schooling and wider society. Conservative Indigenous education discourses include Neoliberal Assimilationist and Assimilative Monolingual.

Neoliberal Assimilationist

Conservative assimilationist education policies continue to morph as globalisation increases and market-demands shift. The 1990s saw a growing interest in the promotion of English-language and Anglo-European perspectives, alongside increased standardisation in education, despite an increasingly strong movement toward multiculturalism (Forbes, 2000). Indeed, standardisation is a driving force in current education policy changes across the globe, with GERM seeing schools respond to globalisation through the increased borrowing of market-oriented ideas, standardised teaching and learning, prescribed curriculum and test-based accountability and control (Sahlberg, 2011, 2015). National education policy and reform is increasingly being underwritten by federal concerns around globalisation and market competitiveness (Savage & O'Connor, 2015). Neoliberals, with their focus on markets and the student as human capital, are a powerful element in Apple's (2005) uncomfortable alliance supporting the conservative modernisation of education, and the reforms above. Calls for standardisation, underlined by a fear of the 'Other', are also supported by neoconservatives in their bid to revive the 'Western tradition' and 'return' to higher standards and traditional values (Apple, 2005, p. 279).

The Neoliberal Assimilationist Discourse frames the Indigenous student as any other, needing to be instilled with the knowledge, skills, values and disposition deemed important by those dominant in society. This will enable the student to function effectively, as citizen and as part of the future workforce. This discourse removes the student from historical and geographical influences, ignoring the context in which Indigenous students are situated and the marginalisation they experience in education (Godlewska, Schaepli, & Chaput, 2013). The status quo is maintained, or strengthened. There is a focus on preparation for employment, with the underlying colonial goals of assimilation and the economic improvement of the individual (and thus their increased contribution to the national economy) continuing to feature in education (Antone, 2003).

In the mobilisation of this discourse, Indigenous knowledge and cultures are largely absent in the curriculum, as they are not deemed relevant for future participation in the shared national culture and civic life. Such inclusion of different knowledges and perspectives within the curriculum would take valuable time away from the traditional Western disciplines such as Mathematics and Science (Gianesin & Bonaker, 2003). There is limited or no room for community and parent involvement in knowledge construction. The curriculum is standardised, as are means of assessment. Pedagogy reverts to what is considered 'traditional' teaching.

Critiques of assimilationist policies and practices abound. In critiquing the Neoliberal Assimilationist approach to education, Godlewska et al. state 'it is the lack of a Freire-inspired critical education...that allows assimilationist policies to find new neoliberal clothing and continue to undermine cultural wealth and integrity' (2013, p. 277). Despite criticism however this discourse continues to pervade educational settings internationally. In Australia persists the notion that achievement of socio-economic equity is not possible alongside the maintenance of Indigenous culture, and it is essentially a case of assimilation versus self-determination (Dockery, 2010). Supporting this oppositional idea is the view of some Indigenous parents, who see Western education and the acquisition of Western values and dispositions as necessary to ensure their children's future¹² (Dinero, 2004).

Assimilative Monolingual

Continuing on from many of the ideals and assumptions within the Neoliberal Assimilationist Discourse is the Assimilative Monolingual Discourse. A legacy of colonialism has been the continued economic and social currency that was attached to dominant languages (Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2003). Many argue there is now a global Anglophonic hegemony, where globalisation is seeing English become the *lingua franca*, to the detriment and possible extinction of minority and Indigenous languages (Cleveland, Laroche, & Papadopoulos, 2015; Harper, 2011; Mohamed, 2013). Schooling systems designed by the dominant (settler) culture privilege English as the global language, necessary for educational and economic success (Andrade, 2016; Hornberger, 2009; Soto & Kharem, 2006). Li, Singh, and Robertson (2012) argue however that English can no longer be relied on or assumed to be the

¹² Dinero (2004, p. 412) sees this as the 'surrender' of Indigenous Peoples 'to the successful conquest and dominance of white values and priorities'.

lingua franca. In the ‘Asian Century’, education systems utilise language education and the teaching of Asian languages as an instrument in which the power of Asian economies can be harnessed (Li et al., 2012). In Australia, this has led to the focus on Asia within the national curriculum and the teaching of Asia literacy, as well as Asian languages (Halse, 2013; Li et al., 2012). This approach privileges not the singular focus on English, but rather the learning of languages deemed valuable by those dominant in society, which in the current climate are Asian languages largely because of national economic interests (Scarino, 2014). This points not to the lack of compatibility between neoliberal conservatism and multilingualism, but rather a perceived lack of the ‘utility value’ of Indigenous languages by dominant society.

Monolingual and monocultural education systems dominated by colonial (or postcolonial) governance sit within a historical macro-level deficit discourse (Harris, 2009). Historically, Indigenous languages, cultures and knowledges have been marginalised within Western formal education systems (Ortiz, 2009), and normative language practices and English-only policies have been used as a tool for nation-building (Smolicz & Nical, 1997). The Assimilative Monolingual Discourse within a postcolonial context sees the dominant (settler) culture’s language privileged over Indigenous languages, with Indigenous language backgrounds viewed from a deficit standpoint and as an impediment to achieving not only educational success but success within wider society. Indigenous varieties of English too are seen from a deficit standpoint, where they impede upon a student’s ability to acquire literacy skills and mastery of the subject matter (Sterzuk, 2010). This discourse may be more overt than the Neoliberal Assimilationist Discourse, where there has been a concerted effort within policy to privilege English (and any other foreign languages that are deemed valuable by those dominant in society) over Indigenous languages¹³. In particular contexts, there still exist punitive orientations to students’ first languages, or a mode of ‘benign neglect’ (Cummins, 2016, p. 458).

Indigenous languages and cultures are absent in the curriculum, ‘dismissed by exclusion through silence’ by the dominant group (Ortiz, 2009, p. 95). ESL (English as a Second Language) programs may be deployed as pedagogical methods within this discourse, and are at times incorrectly characterised as bilingual¹⁴. ESL programs

¹³ For example, in the Northern Territory of Australia an ‘English only’ language policy was implemented between 2009 to 2011, which demanded that the first four hours of the school day be taught in English (Devlin, 2011).

¹⁴ Whilst ESL can be an essential component of bilingual education, as a stand-alone program it is not bilingual as the language of instruction is English, and not the student’s first language (Nieto, 2000).

may have aides to assist students in their first language, but the purpose of the program is to teach English language skills so the student may function within the English-language curriculum (Nieto, 2000). These forms of language education, despite at times being characterised as bilingual education, have assimilationist overtones with the end goal being English-language proficiency for success (Usborne et al., 2009).

The critiques of this discourse can be damning. Seeing monolingual policies (or those practices that exclude Indigenous language/s from schooling) as educational violence, Soto and Kharem state that ‘Children are systematically stripped of their integrity, independence, freedom, and voice in this form of linguistic colonisation’ (2006, p. 25). Subtractive schooling, which represses student identities by restricting the inclusion of Indigenous languages in schooling through monolingual education practices, sustains assimilationist ideals and is a denial of human rights (Hinton, 2016; Nicholls, 2005).

4.4. Conclusions

This chapter has provided an explanation of dominant discourses in the field of Indigenous education. These discourses, placed within a framework of orientations to education, form the Indigenous education discourse taxonomy. I based my taxonomy on discourses in and of themselves, as represented in their ideal form. In practice of course, within policy and its productive, interpretive and sociocultural practices, these discourses may overlap or impact how each play out. There may also be complimentary or competing discourses within the same policy. As discussed, discourses are, in their very nature, sites of struggle. Importantly they create conditions of possibility for, or constraint upon, our understandings, values, beliefs and practices. These influence and are influenced by our social world. The taxonomy therefore offers a methodological tool to utilise in the analysis of policy, to map traces of potential competing and complimentary discursive practices within the Australian Curriculum as an instance of social practice. It will also be used in the analysis of community responses in Part B of the study, the community-based investigation of education aspirations. In the following chapter I describe the research design of Part A of this study, the CDA of the Australian Curriculum.

Chapter Five: Research Design

In Chapter Four I introduced the taxonomy of Indigenous education discourses developed as a part of this study, to be used as a methodological tool for data analysis. This chapter, as the first of two that detail the research design, relates primarily to the first Research Question (Part A): which different Indigenous education discourses are privileged or marginalised in the construction of Aboriginal knowledges, histories and cultures in the Australian Curriculum? In this chapter I firstly explain the study's methodology relating to the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of the Australian Curriculum. The methods are then detailed, including data sources and collection methods, data analysis and the reporting format, before I finally discuss ethical considerations as they apply to the analysis of the Australian Curriculum policy corpus.

5.1. Methodology: Critical Discourse Analysis

This study's conceptualisation was introduced in Chapter Three, as a critical paradigm that draws on a postmodern approach and in which the methodology, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is based. A discursive model of policy as text, interaction and context was presented which allows for explorations of privileged and marginalised discourses within the Australian Curriculum, whilst also contextualising the policy and providing insight into socio-historical power relations impacting upon the inclusion of Aboriginal knowledges, histories and cultures in curriculum. Critical discourse analysis broadly, and CDA in particular, was considered to be the most applicable methodology to foreground issues of ideology and power concealed in curricular discourses as they relate to Aboriginal representation within the Australian national curriculum, by investigating the (re)production of socio-cultural biases in content valued in the curriculum (Lim, 2012).

Critical discourse analysis generally describes a wide array of approaches including the likes of Gee's (2009), whilst Critical Discourse Analysis (or CDA, distinguishable by capitalisation) is normally associated with Norman Fairclough's approach and particularly the text *Language and Power* (1989). Initially informed by scholars including Fairclough, van Dijk, Kress, van Leeuwen, Hodge and Wodak,

CDA is a systematic investigation of semiotic data and social practice relations (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Compared with other approaches, it is the combination of social analysis with linguistic analysis which makes CDA particularly useful in analysing policy (Taylor, 2004). In combining social theory and discourse analysis, CDA provides a framework for systematic analysis and allows for detailed investigation into the workings of language in unequal power relations in society, and its relationship to broader institutional and societal practices (Lim, 2012; Taylor, 2004). Very suited to education policy analysis, and particularly valuable in the analysis of not only dominant discourses but multiple, competing and marginalised discourses in policy texts (Taylor, 2004), Fairclough's (1989; 1992) approach was considered most appropriate for this study given its aim, conceptualisation and model of discourse underpinning it (as described in Chapter Three).

5.2. Approach to CDA

In employing Fairclough's three-dimensional approach to CDA (1989; 1992), the study utilised a theoretically sound and methodologically useable textually-oriented discourse analysis (TODA). Linked to Fairclough's three-dimensional model of discourse is his three-dimensional method of discourse analysis. Within Fairclough's three-dimensional model of discourse, the text element deals with language analysis of texts, which can be verbal, written, visual imagery or a combination of such. Discourse practice identifies the nature of the processes of production and interpretation of texts, for example the identification of discourses and how they are combined. Sociocultural practice deals with how institutional and organisational circumstances have shaped the nature of discursive practice, as well as the constitutive effects of discourse (Fairclough, 1992). With discourse simultaneously seen as text, interaction (discourse practice) and context (sociocultural practice), the three analytical stages comprise of:

- Description: which concerns the formal properties of the text (vocabulary, grammatical and textual structures);
- Interpretation: which concerns the relationship between text and interaction (discourse practice), in which the text is a product of the processes of production and a resource in the process of interpretation; and

- Explanation: which concerns the relationship between interaction and context (sociocultural practice) (Fairclough, 2001, pp. 21-22).

In this approach to discourse and analysis, the text and sociocultural practice dimensions are mediated by discourse practice, or the productive and interpretive discursive processes. The production or interpretation of a text will draw upon particular discourse practices and conventions, which depend on the broader social context in which it is situated. These discourse practices form the text, leaving ‘traces’ in its features, and will also determine the interpretation of such surface features (Fairclough, 2010, p. 132). Thus this division of labour (into description, interpretation and explanation) operates only at an analytical level (Lim, 2012). Figure 5.1 (below) demonstrates the way in which Fairclough’s dimensions of discourse and dimensions of discourse analysis are connected.

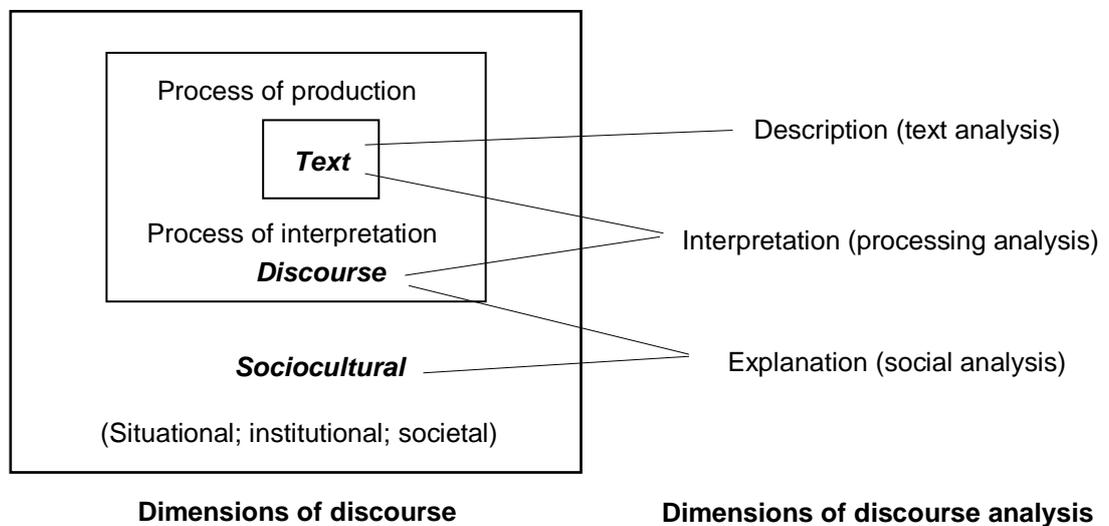


Figure 5.1: Fairclough's three-dimensional approach to CDA (2010, p. 133).

In going beyond speculation through a systematic analysis to demonstrate how policy texts work within power relations (Taylor, 2004), policy documents are not considered simply as a text (as per the view of policy as discursive discussed in Chapter Three). The study therefore focused on an analysis of Australian Curriculum policy documents, considering processes of production and interpretation (including conditions impacting upon its creation, development, implementation, evaluation and revision processes), and the sociocultural practices in which the policy and its discursive practices are situated (with particular interest in the societal level of

sociocultural practice and the national context impacting upon Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander inclusion in educational policy).

5.2.1. Culturally-appropriate adaptations of CDA

Those working in spaces where Indigenous and cultural approaches to CDA are being operationalised call for diversity rather than ethnocentrism in discourse studies (Gavriely-Nuri, 2012; Scollo, 2011; Shi-xu, 2009). I heeded warnings about implementing CDA in a mechanical way that neglected the advantages that can come with different approaches (de Melo Resende, 2010) or blindly applying CDA without critical cultural reflection (Shi-xu, 2009). Recognising the need for studies in CDA to ‘pull from a hybrid set of approaches’ to avoid homogeneity in the field, as well as the parameters defined by my own positionality, this study attempted to view CDA through a lens via which Indigenous methodologies and principles could be considered (Rogers et al., 2005, p. 386). As discussed in Chapter Three, the adoption of an Indigenous methodology would have been inappropriate given my non-Indigenous identity. Key considerations were identified however as necessary in this study’s approach to CDA if it were to be cognisant of Indigenous research methodologies and principles: researcher positionality and the privileging of Indigenous voices.

The study contributes an Indigenous education discourse taxonomy to be utilised as a tool within policy analysis. In developing the discourse taxonomy, I was cognisant of the need to privilege Indigenous voices within its construction, to draw on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academics and educators here in Australia, and First Nations Peoples globally, in the discussion of approaches to Indigenous education. Indeed, concerted efforts were made throughout the study to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or Indigenous dialogue more broadly on theoretical and contextual matters, including critical theory and its interconnectedness with Indigenous methodologies, cultural adaptations of critical discourse analysis and its application to Indigenous issues, the socio-historical context in Australia, and inclusion of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cross-curriculum priority in the Australian Curriculum. The challenges of being self-reflective in holding to this aim, as well as notions of reflexivity, are discussed in Chapter Seven.

The most significant attempt to include Aboriginal perspectives in this study was the development of the community-based investigation (Part B, detailed in Chapters Seven and Eight). This was considered to enhance the corpus by being added to it, providing supplementary data as further discourse samples (Fairclough, 1992). Such an addition to the study attempted to avoid the danger of utilising a Western methodology to analyse Western data relating to Aboriginal Peoples, without engaging in dialogue with those implicated in such a study. This also responded to criticism of CDA not conducting in practicality its interdisciplinary nature discussed at the theoretical level (de Melo Resende, 2010), by drawing on a core CDA approach complemented (as much as I felt comfortable) by Indigenous research principles.

The self-reflexive nature of CDA and constant awareness of my positionality allowed me to respond to another criticism – that CDA analysts project their political and social ideologies onto data, and essentially interpret the data according to preconceived ideas (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000; Flowerdew, 1999; Rogers et al., 2005). In order to address this concern I used a computer-based software tool for analysing text (Leximancer), which served to verify (or refute) my identification of key concepts against those identified by the software. In addition, I engaged in a continuous process of self-questioning my own assumptions of the curriculum, framed by critical self-awareness of my Whiteness.

These considerations and concerns allowed a core CDA approach to be enhanced. The consideration of Indigenous methodologies and principles in this study, development of the Indigenous education discourse taxonomy and enhancement of the corpus with the community-based investigation has contributed a new approach to CDA.

5.3. Research procedures

Data sources and collection methods for the analysis of the Australian Curriculum and the community-based investigation have been presented separately. This is necessary as the methodology of the community-based investigation contextualises its subsequent results and the methodology and results chapters should be read in conjunction with one another. Research procedures relating to the CDA of the Australian Curriculum policy corpus are discussed below.

5.3.1. Data sources and collection methods

The data source used in the analysis of the Australian Curriculum was the suite of curriculum policy documents (Source One). Whilst only data from the identified source, the Australian Curriculum policy corpus, was analysed using CDA techniques, it is important to note that a range of contextual material contributed to my understanding of the policy. As a part of the ‘archive’ (the whole of the discursive practice falling within the research project’s domain), this material also allowed me to make a ‘sensible decision’ on the data source to be analysed (Fairclough, 1992, p. 227). Contextual material, as supplementary information, was often that referred to in the policy (mentions of other policy documents, websites etc.) or available on the Australian Curriculum website, and additionally included media coverage, academic articles, reports, websites etc. It should be noted that my previous experience is entwined with such contextual material. Having been involved in the piloting of the *Australian Curriculum: Maths and English* whilst a teacher in a Northern Territory school, I brought to the study knowledge of developmental timelines and earlier drafts of the curriculum. I took both personal and professional interest in the development of the Australian Curriculum and the dialogue playing out nationally, following progress via media (online and print news), through professional associations (namely the Australian Curriculum Studies Association) and attendance at national conferences. This means that my ‘member resources’ were such that I had pre-established conceptions of the curriculum prior to beginning this study, both theoretical and practical in nature. Fairclough (2001) explains that in the analysis of discourse, the analysts draw upon their own interpretive procedures (member resources or MR) to provide an explanation of how participants draw upon their own, and it is only through self-consciousness that the analyst and participant are distinguishable. I was self-conscious of my previous engagement with such contextual material, mentioned here to maintain transparency.

5.3.2. Source One: Australian Curriculum policy documents

The data source for textual analysis was the Australian Curriculum, as the aim of the study was to explore how the aspirations of Aboriginal people are supported in the dominant Indigenous education discourses operating within it. Drawing on my

knowledge of the 'archive', I paid particular attention to those learning areas considered 'core' and the first to be developed and endorsed by the Education Council. I also considered the two supplementary sections, *Student Diversity* and *Cross-Curriculum Priorities*, to be important for analysis as these additional policy sources pay attention to Aboriginal students and/or Aboriginal knowledges, histories and cultures.

These documents were downloaded in PDF format from the Australian Curriculum website, and re-downloaded whenever updated versions were released. As a curriculum under continued development during this study and published in an online format, it was certainly never considered a static set of documents. Revisions were expected, and updated versions were read 'for changes'. An extended curriculum version history is also published on the ACARA website and lists the revisions to Content Descriptors, Achievement Standards and other, which assisted in mitigating the difficulty in monitoring what changes, if any, were made to the policy corpus during the study (ACARA, n.d.-b). It was also expected that during the study additional learning areas would be endorsed and published. Given the gradual nature of Australian Curriculum development and continued revisions, it was not within the scope of this study to wait for a 'complete' curriculum, nor likely that given its format, a complete version will ever truly exist.

For these reasons, the following seven documents were considered core to the study and the analysis:

- *The Australian Curriculum: English, Version 7.4*
- *The Australian Curriculum: Mathematics, Version 7.4*
- *The Australian Curriculum: Science, Version 7.4*
- *The Australian Curriculum: History, Version 7.4*
- *The Australian Curriculum: Geography, Version 7.4*
- *Student Diversity, Version 7.4*
- *Cross-Curriculum Priorities, Version 7.0*

These documents were analysed using Leximancer and CDA techniques described below in the data analysis section. Further close readings were undertaken to identify revisions from *Version 7.4* to *Version 8.0*, which was released during the data analysis stage of this study.

5.3.3. Sampling: Source One

As CDA relies mainly on existing texts, sampling procedures are not explicitly recommended (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Whilst Fairclough (1992) comments that CDA can be used on a whole corpus, it is particularly relevant to detailed analysis of smaller samples of discourse, or text segments. Sampling in CDA can thus refer to this selection of smaller samples within a whole corpus. As the seven curriculum documents in the corpus totalled some 700 pages and were too large for detailed analysis using CDA techniques, it was indeed necessary to select smaller samples for analysis. Smaller segments from each were considered for selection using Fairclough's strategy of focussing on 'cruces' or 'moments of crisis' in text, where there is evidence of repetitions, corrections, hesitations, silences or sudden shifts of style (1992, p. 230). Certainly, repetitions and shifts of style were found in repeated readings of each curriculum document. Specific sections or paragraphs were also noted due to their (repetitive) mention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures or focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Though still considerable in size, the following segments were finally selected for close analysis (CDA's more detailed description, interpretation and explanation) and are appended (Appendix B):

- The *Rationales* of the *English, Mathematics, Science, History* and *Geography* learning area documents (Cruces #1; #2; #3; #4; and #5), selected due to (varying) mention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples/identity/culture/knowledge/traditions/experience etc. and to ascertain discourses evident in the justifications of each learning area.
- The *Overview* (Cruce #6) and *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures* section (Cruce #7) of the *Cross Curriculum Priorities* document, selected due to shifts of style and direct focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures respectively.
- The *Introduction* (Cruce #8) and *EAL/D* (Cruce #9) sections of the *Student Diversity* document, selected due to the positioning of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students as EAL/D learners, and as such a part of one of three identified diversity groupings.

5.4. Data analysis

Data analysis within CDA, as discussed earlier, involves description, interpretation and explanation. In order to achieve such an analysis a number of analytical tools were used including the use of Leximancer, application of Fairclough's 10 CDA questions to the cruces, and application of Fairclough's interpretive and explanatory procedures to the policy documents. The description stage required an exploration of the linguistic features of the text, to demonstrate how language features (vocabulary, grammar, and textual structures) provided ideological structures for participants' knowledge/beliefs, social identities and social relations in discourse (Lim, 2012). The first two analytical tools (Leximancer and Fairclough's 10 CDA questions) largely relate to the description stage of CDA. The interpretation and explanation stages then went beyond the description stage to focus on how these ideologies are embedded within broader societal and institutional practices, and the nature of discursive processes and power relations (Lim, 2012).

5.4.1. Leximancer analysis

Analysis began with all seven curriculum documents in the corpus being analysed using Leximancer. Leximancer is a software tool designed for analysing text data, focusing on automatic thematic analysis. Leximancer can be used by researchers to determine a text's main themes or topics and illustrate how topics are related within a text (Angus, Rintel, & Wiles, 2013). Leximancer's popularity in qualitative research has been steadily growing in recent years, with its use in research projects involving large quantities of qualitative data increasing (Sotiriadou, Brouwers, & Le, 2014). There is agreement that whilst computational methods such as Leximancer are a powerful tool for coding and analysing structural features of text, they do not replace the human analyst as manual methods are still required to give careful attention to the socio-cultural contexts surrounding the texts (Angus et al., 2013; Lewis, Zamith, & Hermida, 2013). It was therefore appropriate to use this tool in conjunction with Fairclough's 10 questions and apply it to the Australian Curriculum policy corpus in the initial description stage of analysis.

Leximancer has the capacity to extract semantic and relational information from text (Sotiriadou et al., 2014). Using statistics-based algorithms to analyse text automatically, Leximancer extracts major conceptual and thematic content directly

from text by counting word occurrence and co-occurrence, generating its own concept lists and conceptual relationships (Angus et al., 2013). Leximancer then provides visual displays of results as concept maps, network clouds and concept thesauruses. In the interactive concept maps, individual concepts are represented by nodes, with node size reflecting the prominence of the concept within the text and groupings of nodes reflecting concept similarity. Groupings of nodes/concepts into themes are represented by large coloured circles enveloping them. Connecting lines also link those nodes/concepts according to conceptual similarity. Thus a visual display of the thematic analysis is generated and supplemented by the concept lists, thesaurus and thematic summary.

Thomas (2014) comments that in qualitative research, limiting researcher subjectivity in data analysis and interpretation often involves extensive time and cost. Manually-created lists of concepts in context analysis require checking for validity and coding reliability (Angus et al., 2013), and efforts must be made to ensure the analysis is ‘unfettered by a priori assumptions’ of the researcher (Thomas, 2014, p. 236). Leximancer mitigates these challenges by automatically generating its own concept lists and relationships, offering statistically reliable and reproducible data. This gives credibility to research involving interpretive analytical methods and ensures themes (or instances of discourse) are not read into the data based on the researcher’s assumptions or prior expectations. In addition, the automated creation of concept lists may allow more subtle or unusual relationships to emerge, more so than if manually created by the researcher (Angus et al., 2013). Thus Leximancer offered a way in which the Australian Curriculum policy corpus could be computationally analysed in the first instance, to reveal themes and relationships, before subjecting the text to further manual analytical techniques.

To carry out the Leximancer analysis I purchased a subscription to Leximancer Desktop Academic Edition v4.0. Phases of processing in Leximancer include Load Data, Generate Concept Seeds, Generate Thesaurus and Run Project stages, and at each stage the researcher may edit or alter the way in which Leximancer processes the text. Each policy document was uploaded to a separate project file, rather than as a singular whole (Load Data stage). This was considered important, as whilst Leximancer is most suited to large volumes of text due to the statistical nature of algorithms, each document (sufficiently large enough) had the potential to be mobilising different sets of discursive practices within and thus required separate

analysis. Following the steps advised in the user manual, these project files were processed (Generate Concept Seeds and Generate Thesaurus stages). Concept seeds were generated using automatic settings, then edited only minimally (for example merging plural and singular concept seeds into one). The projects were then run on automatic settings to produce concept maps (Run Project stage). The reproducibility of these maps was checked by repeating these steps numerous times for each of the policy documents and comparing the data produced for consistency. Satisfied that the concept maps were highly stable and reproducible, for each policy document I downloaded a concept map image, concept cloud image and thematic summary. Ranked concept lists and full document summaries were made accessible within the Desktop Edition throughout the entire data analysis process.

5.4.2. Fairclough's three dimensional approach to CDA

As described above, Fairclough's model of discourse analysis involves description, interpretation and explanation. The description stage deals primarily with text analysis, and so following the application of Leximancer to the policy corpus, Fairclough's 10 Questions was applied as an analytical tool. The selected policy document samples or cruces were analysed using Fairclough's 10 Questions (2001, pp. 92-93 and detailed pp. 94-116) which relate to vocabulary, grammar and textual structures (see Figure 5.2 below). Under Fairclough's 10 questions sub-questions are listed, however only those relevant to the study and cruces as particular text types were considered and extended. The questions asked of the text in terms of vocabulary and grammar relate to the experiential, relational and expressive values of text features. In considering words as a cue to the way in which a person's (text producer's) experiences, knowledge and beliefs are represented, the experiential values of words can reveal particular ideologies (Lim, 2012). Relational values concern the social relationships enacted through the text, whilst expressive values concern subject roles and social identities (Fairclough, 2001, p. 93).

| FEATURES | QUESTIONS |
|---------------------------|---|
| Vocabulary | 1. What experiential values do words have? What classification schemes are drawn upon? Are there words which are ideologically contested? Is there rewording or overworking? What ideologically significant meaning relations (synonymy, hyponymy, antonymy) are there between words? |
| | 2. What relational values do words have? Are there euphemistic expressions? Are there markedly formal or informal words? |
| | 3. What expressive values do words have? |
| | 4. What metaphors are used? |
| Grammar | 5. What experiential values do grammatical features have? What types of process and participant predominate? Is agency unclear? Are processes what they seem? Are nominalisations used? Are sentences active or passive? Are sentences positive or negative? |
| | 6. What relational values do grammatical features have? What modes (declarative, grammatical question, imperative) are used? Are there important features of relational modality? Are the pronouns we and you used, and if so, how? |
| | 7. What expressive values do grammatical features have? Are there important features of expressive modality? |
| | 8. How are (simple) sentences linked together? What logical connectors are used? Are complex sentences characterised by coordination or subordination? What means are used for referring inside and outside the text? |
| Textual Structures | 9. What interactional conventions are used? Are there ways in which one participant controls the turns of others? |
| | 10. What larger-scale structures does the text have? |

Figure 5.2: Fairclough's 10 Questions (2001, pp. 92-93).

The analysis of vocabulary (Questions 1-4) offered investigations into the experiential, relational and expressive values of words, to uncover the ways in which discussion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures and related subject roles were worded. The vocabulary of each cruise was examined for classification schemes, ideologically contested wording, rewording and overwording,

ideologically significant word relations, relational and expressive values and metaphors. Leximancer-generated data was used to support these examinations of vocabulary. The analysis of grammar (Questions 5-8) also investigated the experiential, relational and expressive values of grammatical features in the text. The analysis focussed mainly on modes (e.g. declarative) and the types of processes represented in sentence construction (such as actions, events and attributions), and the way in which this positioned participants, particularly in action processes as subjects (agent or patient) in relations of power. The use of pronouns, modal auxiliary verbs and nominalisation was also examined as well as other features such as expressive modality. The analysis of textual structures (Questions 9-10) examined interactional processes such as turn-taking, and larger-scale textual structures. The analysis of each cruce involved constant reading and re-reading of the text itself, the larger document from which it was sampled and the Indigenous education discourse taxonomy (in Chapter Four), so that as these features were uncovered comparisons to discourses in the taxonomy could be considered. Each policy document was assigned a separate Word document in which the data relating to Fairclough's 10 questions could be tabulated, and mapped to discourses from the taxonomy.

In moving beyond the description of the text, an interpretive and explanatory examination was undertaken as per Fairclough's model of discourse analysis. Noted here is the way in which these stages do not necessarily progress sequentially, as Fairclough admits that 'description presupposes interpretation' (2001, p. 91). The way in which a text is 'read' and what is described of a text is dependent on the reader's interpretation and wider understanding of the sociocultural practice of which the text is a part (Lim, 2012). Concerned with processes of text production and interpretation, Fairclough (2001, p. 118) uses the term interpretation in the research design stage to stress the similarity between what the analyst does and what discourse participants do in the interpretation of texts. In seeking to understand the surface of the text, its meaning, coherence and the overall structure and 'point' of the text, Fairclough's model offers questions on context, discourse types and difference and change:

1. Context: what interpretation(s) are participants giving to the situational and intertextual contexts?
2. Discourse type(s): what discourse type(s) are being drawn upon (hence what rules, systems or principles of phonology, grammar, sentence cohesion,

vocabulary, semantics and pragmatics; and what schemata, frames and scripts)?

3. Difference and change: are answers to questions 1 and 2 different for different participants? And do they change during the course of the interaction? (Fairclough, 2001, pp. 134-135)

These questions were considered concurrently to the description stage of analysis. Fairclough states that in interpretation, the analyst draws upon their MR (the member resources one brings to the text, or their interpretive procedures) in order to explain the nature of discursive practices and how participants draw upon their own MR within these. It is recognised however that participants may draw upon different MR and thus arrive at different interpretations, particularly with situational context. My own readings of the policy corpus were supplemented by those referred to in the analysis of curriculum content, and the interpretation stage was also carried into the community-based investigation, where participants (whom I refer to as informants) were questioned about the nature of desired curriculum content against a backdrop of national curriculum policy.

The explanation stage of analysis aims to show discourse as a part of social practice, determined by social structures and as such a part of social struggles framed by power relations (Fairclough, 1992). Fairclough's advice on the explanation stage of the analysis was followed, with questions around the social determinants, ideologies and effects of discourse considered:

1. Social determinants: what power relations at situational, institutional and societal levels help shape this discourse?
2. Ideologies: what elements of MR which are drawn upon have an ideological character?
3. Effects: how is this discourse positioned in relation to struggles at the situational, institutional and societal levels? Are these struggles overt or covert? Is the discourse normative with respect to MR or creative? Does it contribute to sustaining existing power relations, or transforming them? (Fairclough, 2001, p. 138)

Fairclough, in commenting that this stage is difficult to reduce to a checklist, recommended the general objective in the analysis of sociocultural practice is to specify 'the nature of the social practice of which the discourse practice is a part, which is the basis for explaining why the discourse practice is as it is; and the effects

of the discourse practice upon the social practice' (1992, pp. 237-238). Again, this stage occurred not in isolation to others but in tandem. In analysing data I read, reflected and reported on findings in a cyclical manner, remaining self-aware of my own interpretive and explanatory procedures throughout.

In tabulating and interpreting this data against the Indigenous education discourse taxonomy, instances of discourse were tallied as they occurred within each cruce's textual features (vocabulary, grammar and textual structures). This allowed 'occurrence statuses' to be allocated to each identified discourse within a cruce:

- Dominant status: the discourse is evidenced in all three features
- Operant status: the discourse is evidenced in one or two features
- Dormant status: the discourse is evidenced only through intertextual references
- Absent status: the discourse is not present in any features of the text

This data was then represented in a table, presented in the reporting of results. The occurrence statuses were then also used to illustrate broader findings, with dominant and operant orientations to education (corresponding to the discourses privileged) evident in the Australian Curriculum documents tabulated. Finally, the discourses evident and corresponding orientations (per document) was represented in a table and presented in the reporting of results.

5.4.3. Curriculum content analysis

The way in which the learning areas were constructed did not lend the documents to full analytical procedures (using Leximancer and Fairclough's 10 Questions). As noted earlier, a limitation of Leximancer is the inability to recognise graphics or imagery. Within the Australian Curriculum documents, under Content Descriptors for each subject, links to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures are highlighted by a symbol. The tagging of cross-curriculum priorities in Australian Curriculum learning areas with particular icons therefore necessitated further close reading. Content was also listed in point form, rendering the use of Fairclough's 10 Questions in its entirety inappropriate. Examining content however was necessary to scrutinize if the discourses evident in learning area *Rationales* were carried through the entire learning area document. The frequency or lack thereof of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content was considered to contribute greatly to

the study, in terms of the implications of the quantity of links and in which learning areas of the curriculum they were present or absent.

I read the Australian Curriculum documents in totality, recording tagging to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cross-curriculum priority within each year level and exporting tagged Content Descriptors into a Word document (one per learning area). This was necessary as a simple search of key terms (e.g. Aboriginal) was inadequate, as some tagged Content Descriptors or Elaborations did not rely on such terminology but communicated a range of ideas around country, Dreaming, kinship etc. The tagged content was read and re-read, with instances of discourse noted and cross-checked with that evidenced in cruces. The tagged content was read for experiential, relational and expressive features of vocabulary and grammar, drawing on Fairclough's methods of text description. Wider contextual literature was also reviewed that placed the content analysis of learning areas within broader debates of the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, knowledges, histories and cultures within each learning area, as a part of the interpretation and explanation stages of analysis.

5.5. Reporting of results

The results of the CDA of the Australian Curriculum policy corpus is provided in Chapter Six, and compared to community aspirations in Chapter Nine. In following Fairclough's model of discourse analysis, Chapter Six firstly deals with description and interpretation of the Australian Curriculum policy corpus. This chapter describes the policy corpus, and details the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures within it, drawing on data from the above analytical techniques. The dominant, operant, dormant and absent discourses evidenced within the policy's text and processes are identified. Chapter Eight offers an examination of the discourses drawn upon by community members to express their education aspirations for the community's children. The explanation is dealt with largely in Chapter Nine, as the concluding chapter, where the discourses in each data set (Australian Curriculum policy corpus and community responses) are compared and set within a discussion of the capacity of national curriculum to be responsive to localised contexts. The social determinants and social effects of discourses are considered. Implications for stakeholders are then reported on.

5.6. Ethical considerations

This section of the study (the CDA of the Australian Curriculum) was considered to cause no harm to persons in the collection or analysis of Australian Curriculum policy documents (Source One). Publicly available online, the analysis of the policy documents required no ethical approvals. Ethical considerations were seen as being fundamental to community-based element of the study, and are discussed in detail in Chapter Seven.

5.7. Conclusions

In this chapter I provided reasoning for the chosen methodology, CDA, and discussed how a culturally-appropriate adaption which considers Indigenous research principles contributes to its further development. The policy documents within the Australian Curriculum suite selected for analysis were justified, as were cruces within them to be subjected to analytical methods. The combination of Leximancer, Fairclough's 10 Questions and Fairclough's interpretive and explanatory procedures as analytical methods were shown to be practically sound, and highly applicable for answering the first Research Question: Which Indigenous education discourses are privileged or marginalised in the construction of Aboriginal knowledges, histories and cultures in the Australian Curriculum? In the following chapter I report on the research findings of the CDA of the Australian Curriculum.

Chapter Six: Description and Interpretation – Discourses in the Australian Curriculum

The investigation into the Australian Curriculum policy corpus revealed the extent to which Aboriginal knowledges, histories and cultures were considered within this national education directive. In this chapter I discuss these findings to address the first research question: which Indigenous education discourses are privileged or marginalised in the construction of Aboriginal knowledges, histories and cultures in the Australian Curriculum? The first section of the chapter provides a description of the policy corpus. The second section reports on the results of the analysis by presenting privileged and marginalised discourses within each of the selected Australian Curriculum policy documents. Interspersed within the analysis are comments on points of difference as they relate to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures between the version analysed (*Version 7.4*) and the more recent version of the Australian Curriculum (*Version 8.0*) released during the completion of this thesis. I then present conclusions on the nature of the policy corpus overall.

6.1. The Australian Curriculum as policy corpus

The Australian Curriculum, as the national curriculum policy endorsed by all state and territory ministers responsible for education, has claimed from the outset to set consistent national standards to improve the learning outcomes of all young Australians (ACARA, n.d.-a). In undertaking this mission, the Australian Curriculum (*Version 7.4*) attempted to present itself as a cohesive framework, firstly through organisation and presentation of the learning areas in a similar format. Beginning with the *Overview*, this section detailed the *Rationale, Aims, Content structure, [Learning Area] across Foundation to Year 12, Achievement standards, Student diversity, General capabilities, Cross-curriculum priorities, Links to other learning areas* and *Implications for teaching, assessment and reporting*. The curriculum documents then attended to *Curriculum F-10*, before ending with a *Glossary* and *Scope and sequence charts*.

A number of the above sections were consistent across learning areas and the information provided in the *Overview* served to describe elements later detailed in

the *Curriculum F-10* section. For example, the *Achievement standards* text was uniform across each learning area. *Student diversity* was relatively stable across learning areas with only minor adjustments between documents. Much of the *General capabilities* and *Cross-curriculum priorities* were also consistent across learning areas, with additional learning area specific paragraphs added to each general description. At first glance then, the learning area policy documents appeared uniform. It was noted during the *Review of the Australian Curriculum* (Australian Government Department of Education, 2014b) however that the *Content structure* across learning areas was in fact inconsistent. Apparently due to discipline-specific approaches, the Queensland Studies Authority (QSA) argued that ‘The inconsistencies in curriculum organisation, grain size, terminology and style do little to assist schools and teachers, especially primary teachers to implement the curriculum’ and did not support teachers by providing a familiar scaffold (2014, p. 2).

The updated version of the *Australian Curriculum (Version 8.0)* saw alterations to the layout and presentation of the curriculum documents, particularly the *Overview* of each learning area (though not the inconsistencies criticised above). In order to present a more streamlined curriculum with reduced volume, supporting information was removed and placed within a consolidated *F-10 overview* (ACARA, 2015a). As such, the *Achievement standards*, *Student diversity*, *Cross-curriculum priorities*, *General capabilities* and *Implications for teaching, assessment and reporting* sections within each learning area were removed. For *General capabilities* and *Cross-curriculum priorities*, this meant learning area specific considerations were also removed.

In both versions of the Australian Curriculum, *Version 7.4* and *Version 8.0*, learning areas were colour-coded, and their designated colour used for title pages, headers and headings in particular sections of the document. *English* was allocated blue, *Science* green, *Mathematics* orange, and *History* and *Geography*, both belonging to the *Humanities and Social Sciences* (along with *Version 7.4*’s yet-to-be-endorsed learning areas *Economics and Business* and *Civics and Citizenship*) were red. Particular learning area documents included graphics or diagrams, though these were limited and served to illustrate the organisation of content or interconnected ideas within the learning area. The visual elements of the learning area documents, in

terms of formatting, font and size were relatively consistent, contributing to the overall notion of an interconnected, cohesive policy.

6.2. Indigenous education discourses in the curriculum

The way in which the Australian Curriculum was produced and continues to be revised, and the possibility for differing discourses to be mobilised within each section of the curriculum policy, necessitated the analysis of individual learning areas and supporting materials. Analysis of learning area *Overviews* (with cruces being the *Rationales* of five learning areas), *Student Diversity* and *Cross-Curriculum Priorities* documents revealed discourses operating within different sections of the Australian Curriculum could be considered dominant, operant, dormant or absent, and that the discourses allocated these statuses varied between learning area and supplementary policy documents (see Table 6.1). What follows is the results of CDA analysis of each learning area (*English, Mathematics, Science, History* and *Geography*), with additional analysis of learning area content, and then *Student Diversity* and *Cross-Curriculum Priorities* analyses.

Table 6.1: Discourses evident in the Australian Curriculum documents analysed.

| Document | Status allocated to discourses | | | |
|---|--|---|---|---|
| | Dominant | Operant | Dormant | Absent |
| <i>Australian Curriculum: English</i> | Neoliberal Assimilationist Inclusive Liberal Multicultural | Assimilative Monolingual | Empowerment Human Rights | Critical Multicultural Multilingual Multicultural Intercultural Both-ways |
| <i>Australian Curriculum: Mathematics</i> | Neoliberal Assimilationist | Inclusive Liberal Multicultural | Assimilative Monolingual Empowerment Human Rights | Critical Multicultural Multilingual Multicultural Intercultural Both-ways |
| <i>Australian Curriculum: Science</i> | Inclusive | Neoliberal Assimilationist Liberal Multicultural Empowerment | Assimilative Monolingual Human Rights | Critical Multicultural Multilingual Multicultural Intercultural Both-ways |
| <i>Australian Curriculum: History</i> | Liberal Multicultural | Neoliberal Assimilationist Inclusive | Human Rights Assimilative Monolingual Empowerment | Critical Multicultural Multilingual Multicultural Intercultural Both-ways |
| <i>Australian Curriculum: Geography</i> | Empowerment Liberal Multicultural | Neoliberal Assimilationist Critical Multicultural | Assimilative Monolingual Inclusive Human Rights | Multilingual Multicultural Intercultural Both-ways |
| <i>Cross-Curriculum Priorities</i> | Neoliberal Assimilationist Inclusive Liberal Multicultural | Empowerment Human Rights | Assimilative Monolingual Critical Multicultural | Multilingual Multicultural Intercultural Both-ways |
| <i>Student Diversity</i> | Inclusive | Assimilative Monolingual Neoliberal Assimilationist Liberal Multicultural Human Rights | Empowerment | Critical Multicultural Multilingual Multicultural Intercultural Both-ways |

6.3. Australian Curriculum learning areas

6.3.1. English: Cultural inclusion through literature

Of the Indigenous education discourses operating within the *Australian Curriculum: English Overview*, Neoliberal Assimilationist, Inclusive and Liberal Multicultural Discourses were mobilised in all three features (vocabulary, grammatical and textual) of the text and thus were allocated ‘dominant’ status. Assimilative Monolingual Discourse was allocated ‘operant’ status (evident in one or

two of the features). Empowerment and Human Rights Discourses were allocated 'dormant' status, as they were evident only through intertextual references. 'Absent' discourses, not present in any features of the text, included Critical Multicultural, Multilingual Multicultural and Intercultural Both-ways Discourses. An analysis of content tagged as having relevance to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures cross-curriculum priority supported these findings, with Liberal Multicultural and Assimilative Monolingual Discourses being most prevalent.

Vocabulary

Assimilative Monolingual, Neoliberal Assimilationist, Inclusive and Liberal Multicultural Discourses presented in the experiential, relational and expressive values of vocabulary within Cruce #1, the *Rationale of the Australian Curriculum: English*. Neoliberal Assimilationist Discourse was evidenced in the experiential values of vocabulary within Cruce #1, with the opening paragraph speaking of students 'who will take responsibility for Australian's future,' and Australia's future being tied to the economy (as evidenced in the need for young people to develop those skills considered necessary for education, training and the workplace), ideas typical of Neoliberal Assimilationist ideology. Assimilative Monolingual Discourse was mobilised through expressed beliefs of the dominance of Standard Australian English (SAE) and it being 'invaluable globally', and its value in both nation-building and internationalisation. Inclusive Discourse was evident in the classification of a learner of English as 'confident communicator' and 'ethical, thoughtful, informed and active member of society', and in 'all young Australians' and 'individuals' being synonymous with student. Liberal Multicultural Discourse was evident in ideas of the curriculum assisting students to expand the scope of their experience, by valuing, respecting and exploring the contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to society and literature. Leximancer data showed however that 'cultural' as a concept was not afforded high-status within the Overview document, appearing 16 times with 10% relevance, embedded within the overall theme of 'texts' (see Figure 6.1).

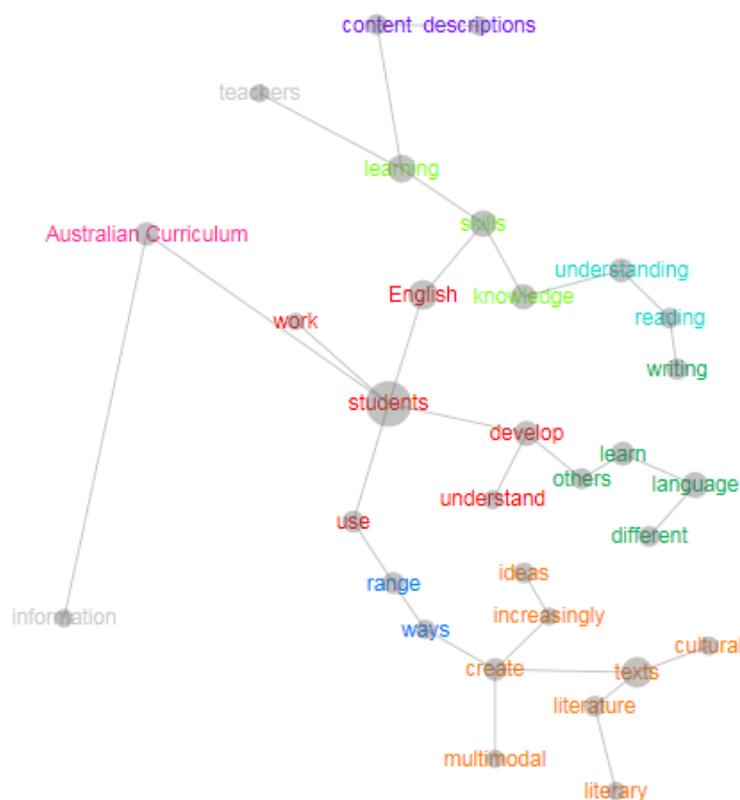


Figure 6.1: Leximancer concept cloud for *Australian Curriculum: English*.

The relational values in the Cruce supported both Neoliberal Assimilationist and Inclusive Discourses, in social formulations of the student as a future member of the workforce and as an individual learning to communicate and build relationships with those around them. Expressive values of vocabulary further supported Neoliberal Assimilationist Discourse, in positively framing students as those responsible for the development of the nation. There was also support for the valuing and respecting of cultural diversity (specifically that of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples), central to Liberal Multicultural Discourse.

Grammatical features

Inclusive, Liberal Multicultural and Neoliberal Assimilationist Discourses were evident in the experiential, relational and expressive grammatical values of the text. Declarative sentences dominated the Cruce in action processes, with Subjects (that held power/acted) and Objects (without power/receivers of action). Subjects were typically discipline or curriculum-based (e.g. the study of English; *The Australian Curriculum: English*; proficiency in English), whilst Objects were students (presented as confident communicators, imaginative thinkers and informed citizens;

young people; and students). In the curriculum (as Subject) acting upon students (as Objects) however, it did not control or dominate but rather helped, signifying the supportive nature of the process and Inclusive Discourse. Deviating from this curriculum/student action process was an instance of Liberal Multicultural Discourse in the final paragraph, where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples were designated Subjects, acting upon (contributing to) Australian society as Object. Mobilising Neoliberal Assimilationist Discourse was the nominalisation of ‘nation-building’ (the process of constructing a national identity) featured in the Cruce, when speaking of the contribution of the curriculum to this effort. By combining the nominalised phrase with an inanimate Subject (*The Australian Curriculum: English*) causality and responsibility (and thus the role of curriculum producers) in this process of nation-building were obscured.

The relational values of grammar reinforced the student as an active member of society (Inclusive) and future member of the workforce (Neoliberal Assimilationist) through the use of the modal auxiliary verb ‘will’, in reference to students as responsible for Australian’s future. A structural aspect of grammar of note was the use of subordinate conjunction and clause (Although + Australia is culturally and linguistically diverse) placed before the main clause (the importance of English for participation in society). Whilst what was stated (vocabulary) could be an instance of Liberal Multicultural Discourse, the grammatical structuring of this sentence mobilised an Assimilative Monolingual Discourse through the main clause privileging of the importance of English.

Textual Structures

The textural structures of Cruce #1 and *English* learning area document as a whole were typical of the Australian Curriculum policy corpus with simple formatting and consistency in layout and presentation. The *Rationale* and *Aims* were presented first, to communicate the fundamental purpose and principles of the learning area before addressing content and organisation of the curriculum. Within Cruce #1 there was a reasonable structure, with the opening sentence explaining the essential purpose or reasoning for the discipline before then speaking of the *Australian Curriculum: English* specifically. This pattern applied generally to most *Rationales* (Cruces #1, #3, #2 and #4), again demonstrating consistency in the Australian Curriculum policy corpus. Cruce #1 made intertextual reference to Goal 2

of the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (MCEETYA, 2008) through use of alike language, particularly in the opening paragraph (e.g. all young Australians; confident; informed citizens), thus activating elements of numerous discourses including Inclusive Discourse (p.7: personalised learning), Empowerment (p.9: self-worth, self-awareness and personal identity), Human Rights (p.7: access to high quality schooling that is free from discrimination), Liberal Multicultural (p.10: the development of partnerships between schools and Indigenous communities based on cross-cultural respect) and Neoliberal Assimilationist (p.4: equipping students with the knowledge, understanding, skills and values to compete in the global economy, and ensuring national economic prosperity). In mentioning two of the three focus areas for the cross-curriculum priorities, Cruce #1 made connections to that document. The *Overview* also included brief sections on *Student Diversity* (directing the reader to the more detailed advice available in the *Student Diversity* document) and *Cross-Curriculum Priorities*. Through intertextual references to these, Assimilative Monolingual, Neoliberal Assimilationist, Inclusive, Liberal Multicultural, Empowerment and Human Rights Discourses were thus also mobilised (see the analysis of *Student Diversity* and *Cross-Curriculum Priorities* documents for dominant and operant discourses within each, as evidence of these intertextual references).

Content

The *Australian Curriculum: English* claimed to value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and perspectives, stating,

It articulates relevant aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages, literatures and literacies.

All students will develop an awareness and appreciation of, and respect for the literature of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples including storytelling traditions (oral narrative) as well as contemporary literature. Students will be taught to develop respectful critical understandings of the social, historical and cultural contexts associated with different uses of language and textual features.

Students will be taught that there are many languages and dialects spoken in Australia including Aboriginal English and Yumplatok (Torres Strait Islander Creole) and that these languages may have different writing systems and oral traditions. These languages can be used to enhance enquiry and understanding of English literacy (ACARA, 2015d, p. 17).

An examination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures content within the *English Curriculum* supported the analysis of the Cruce in revealing dominant Assimilative Monolingual and Liberal Multicultural Discourses (largely through the treatment of language and use of texts to promote intercultural understanding respectively). Whilst Aboriginal languages were mentioned in the above description, the way in which they were framed (as enhancing enquiry and English literacy) did not definitively lend such inclusion to critical or postmodern orientations.

Twenty-eight Content Elaborations were tagged as having relevance within twenty-five Content Descriptors, with the majority of these within the Literature strand (eighteen), followed by Language (five) and Literacy (five). Liberal Multicultural Discourse was mobilised predominantly through the Literature strand, and the use of texts from different cultural contexts to promote intercultural understanding. In *Year Level Descriptions*, the range of literary texts used for the Foundation to Year 10 Curriculum (with the same paragraph appearing from F-10) comprised:

... Australian literature, including the oral narrative traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as well as the contemporary literature of these two cultural groups, and classic and contemporary world literature, including texts from and about Asia (ACARA, 2015d, p. 21).

This inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander literature within every year level was significant, as the selection of texts by teachers that allow students to identify themselves within them has been seen as vitally important in the process of students imagining and negotiating their place in the world, in developing understandings of self (Davies, 2008). Davies commented that ‘for Indigenous Australians, and other groups marginalised by the dominant culture, it is imperative that this form of cultural mediation be made possible’ (2008, pp. 48-49). Traced through to Content Elaborations however, rather than Content Descriptions, the inclusion of such literature was not necessitated by the curriculum, as Content Elaborations ‘are not intended to be comprehensive content points that all students need to be taught’ but rather ‘illustrate and exemplify content’ (ACARA, 2015d, p. 6).

Of the Content Descriptors in the F-10 *English Curriculum*, just one was tagged with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures cross-curriculum priority icon. This was found within the Literature strand of the

curriculum, and required Year 8 students to ‘explore the interconnectedness of Country and Place, People, Identity and Culture in texts including those by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors’ (ACELT1806). Directly above this Content Descriptor was that exploring ‘the ways that ideas and viewpoints in literacy texts drawn from different historical, social and cultural contexts may reflect or challenge the values of individuals and groups’ (ACELT1626). Together, this inclusion of viewpoints and reflecting or challenging values, and the interconnectedness of Country and Place, People, Identity and Culture could allow for the mobilisation of a Critical Multicultural Discourse should a teacher be so inclined or have the resources to do so.

Consistent with a multicultural approach, when included in Content Elaborations, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander connections were at times offered alongside those to Asia in a broad sense or particular cultures. For example, of the two Content Elaborations tagged within Creating Literature sub-strand (in Years 1 and 3), students were asked to create texts, and the Elaborations offered them to be scaffolded on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or Asian literary texts and cultures (furthering multicultural possibilities). Teachers were thus offered choice in the extent to which they drew upon Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives. In their own analysis of the *Australian Curriculum: English (v5.0)*, Exley and Chan (2014) cautioned that the embedding of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures cross-curriculum priority was more implicit than explicit, and rather than giving students access to more reconciliatory forms of knowledge, supported a liberal view of multiculturalism that promoted learning ‘about’ cultures (Hattam & Atkinson, 2006, p. 695).

The treatment of language within the *Australian Curriculum: English* content mobilised both Assimilative Monolingual and Liberal Multicultural Discourses. Content Elaborations tagged as relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures included five within the Language Variation and Change sub-strand Content Descriptors (in Foundation, Year 2, 4 and 6), which promoted an understanding of the diversity of languages within Australia. In Years 2 and 4 Language Variation and Change Descriptors included Content Elaborations relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Asian cultures, taking a Liberal Multicultural approach (through understanding, identifying and recognising). Year 6 Content Elaborations included recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

language groups, and that all languages and dialects are of equal value. Underpinning these understandings however were Assimilative Monolingual views, in that language variation in Australian ‘can be used to enhance enquiry and understanding of English literacy’ (ACARA, 2015d, p. 17). There was mention in a Foundation Content Elaboration of acknowledging the home languages of students, but use of the term ‘home’ rather than ‘first’ thus placed it firmly outside of schooling contexts. The content did not necessitate the use of home languages, but rather recognition and understanding of them. The dominance of English was also communicated in content, skill level of the Content Descriptors and phrasing. For example, students were to identify the influence of other languages on the development of English (ACELA1487); understand English is one of many languages spoken in Australia; and recognise that whilst all languages are valuable, ‘we use different ones in different contexts, for example the use of Standard Australian English, Aboriginal English and forms of Creole...’ (ACELA1515) thus privileging Standard Australian English (SAE) through phrase construction.

Overwhelmingly Liberal Multicultural Discourse was mobilised within the *Australian Curriculum: English* content. In developing students’ awareness, appreciation and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures (as well as others) through literature, cultural inclusion and intercultural understanding were promoted. Implicit in the Language strand was Assimilative Monolingual Discourse and the privileging of SAE, operant alongside Liberal Multicultural views of appreciating language diversity.

6.3.2. Mathematics: From absence to tokenism

Of the Indigenous education discourses operating within the *Australian Curriculum: Mathematics Overview*, Neoliberal Assimilationist Discourse was present all three features (vocabulary, grammatical and textual) of the text and thus was allocated dominant status. Allocated operant status (evident in one or two of the features) were Inclusive and Liberal Multicultural Discourses. Dormant discourses, only evident through intertextual references included Assimilative Monolingual, Empowerment and Human Rights Discourses. Absent discourses, not present in any features of the text, included Critical Multicultural, Multilingual Multicultural and Intercultural Both-ways Discourses. The findings of operant and dominant discourses

were supported by the analysis of content tagged as being relevant to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures cross-curriculum priority, which showed inclusion to be limited and potentially tokenistic.

Vocabulary

Neoliberal Assimilationist, Inclusive and Liberal Multicultural Discourses presented in the experiential, relational and expressive values of vocabulary within Cruce #2, the *Rationale* of the *Australian Curriculum: Mathematics*. Inclusive Discourse was evidenced in the experiential values of vocabulary within the Cruce by both the discipline and curriculum being said to create opportunities, enrich the lives of and be beneficial to all students (with ‘all’ appearing multiple times). Leximancer data (see Figure 6.2) showed ‘students’ to be the central theme of the *Overview* document, counted 130 times with 100% connectivity and 100% relevance to other themes. Alongside the central placement of the student within the Cruce, the very technical nature of the document was revealed through repetitive mentions of mathematics and its manifestations; the classification schemes of essential mathematical skills and knowledge, and mathematical capabilities; and Leximancer data of ranked concepts privileging mathematical understanding, skills, content etc. Neoliberal Assimilationist Discourse was evidenced in this traditional framing of the discipline as universally essential and valued knowledge, with its clearly defined areas of importance: Number and Algebra, Measurement and Geometry, and Statistics and Probability (the only text to be bolded within the *Rationale*). The *Rationale* used language such as essential and fundamental to describe the discipline. Neoliberal Assimilationist Discourse could also be evidenced in numeracy capabilities being those that ‘all students need in their personal work and civic life,’ pointing to the notion of an agreed-upon set of skills, knowledge and understanding necessary for future participation in society and the common culture. Liberal Multicultural Discourse was evidenced in the acknowledgement of all cultures having developed mathematical ideas, though Leximancer data showed ‘cultures’ as a concept was not afforded high-status within the *Overview* document, appearing 10 times with 8% connectivity, connecting to students through ‘understanding’.

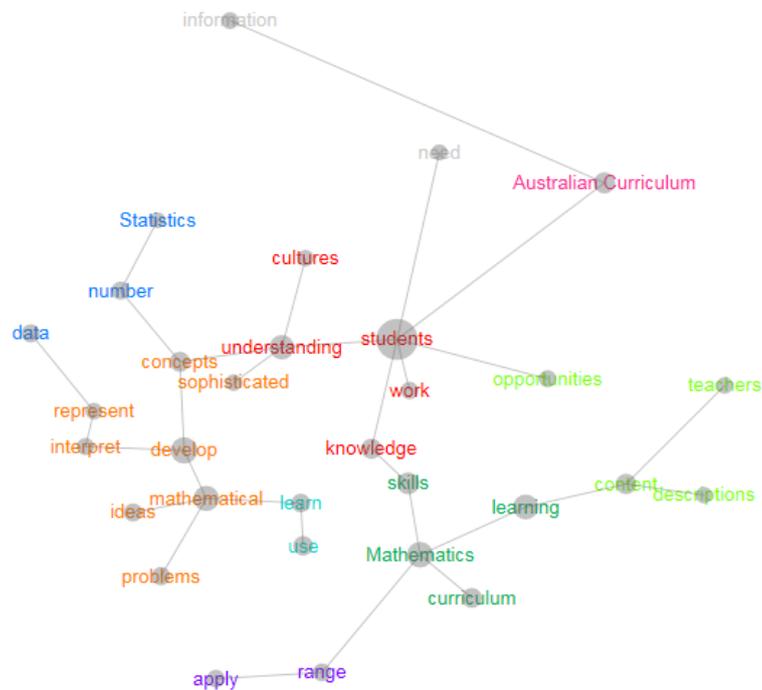


Figure 6.2: Leximancer concept cloud for *Australian Curriculum: Mathematics*.

Relational values in the Cruce extended Neoliberal Assimilationist Discourse through the establishment of hierarchical social relations typical of conservative education models, with the curriculum positioned as providing the necessary content, knowledge and skills for schools and teachers to then deliver to students. In using language such as essential and fundamentals to describe mathematics (*The Australian Curriculum: Mathematics provides students with essential mathematics skills and knowledge...it develops the numeracy capabilities that all students need in their personal, work and civic life, and provides the fundamentals on which specialities and professional applications of mathematics are built*), the expressive values of the Cruce further support Neoliberal Discourse. Alongside enriching, these expressive terms were used in the opening paragraph of the Cruce to state the need for studying mathematics and connected it to personal, work and civic life and future professions. Students were framed as benefiting from mathematical knowledge the curriculum provides, not only within the discipline area but ‘beyond the mathematics classroom’ as well. Expressive values in the text also supported Inclusive Discourse, through support for creating opportunities for and enriching all students’ experiences.

Grammatical features

Neoliberal Assimilationist and Inclusive Discourses were evident in the grammatical features of Cruce #2. In the experiential grammatical features of the Cruce a combination of action and attribution processes, through declarative sentences, dominated and in nearly all of these the Subject was mathematics as a discipline, the *Australian Curriculum: Mathematics* or an element of it. Objects included opportunities; students; numeracy capabilities; mathematical understanding; schools; and teachers. The ways in which the Subject acted upon the Object was typically directive (creates; provides; develops; instils; focuses on; ensures; anticipates) and signified the hierarchical nature of the Cruce and document, consistent with conservative policy and the nature of standardisation within Neoliberal Assimilationist Discourse. Nominalisation within the Cruce created a technical document in which people (and thus responsibility) were removed from processes and agency obscured, though Subjects were understood to be those policy producers asserting control.

The relational values of grammar furthered this notion of the power of curriculum through the use of ‘will’ as a modal auxiliary verb to communicate the expectations the curriculum had of schools: ‘The curriculum anticipates that schools will ensure all students benefit from access to the power of mathematical reasoning...’. It used this power of ‘will’ however to push an Inclusive agenda in that expectation being equitable access for all students.

Textual Structures

The textural structures of Cruce #2 supported the Neoliberal Assimilationist Discourse dominant in the vocabulary and grammatical features of the text. The textural structures of the Cruce and *Mathematics* learning area document as a whole were typical of the Australian Curriculum policy corpus as described previously (simple formatting; consistency in layout and presentation; *Rationale* and *Aims* presented first before addressing content and organisation of the curriculum). Within Cruce #2 the opening sentence explained the essential purpose or reasoning for the discipline before then speaking of the *Australian Curriculum: Mathematics* specifically, again demonstrating consistency in the Australian Curriculum policy corpus (this pattern applied very generally to all *Rationales* analysed). Cruce #2 differed however to other *Rationales* in that the final paragraph presented the

hierarchical construction of the policy, making connections between the curriculum, schools, teachers and students in a fashion typical of top-down conservative policy (with no other *Rationales* mentioning schools). It thus became the responsibility of schools and teachers to further the *Rationale's* agenda in which Neoliberal Assimilationist Discourse was most dominant. As discussed in the analysis of *English*, intertextual references within the *Overview* through the inclusion of *Student Diversity* (with directions for the reader to review the more detailed advice available in the *Student Diversity* document) and *Cross-Curriculum Priorities* sections mobilised Assimilative Monolingual, Neoliberal Assimilationist, Inclusive, Liberal Multicultural, Empowerment and Human Rights Discourses (see the analysis of *Student Diversity* and *Cross-Curriculum Priorities* documents for dominant and operant discourses within each, as evidence of these intertextual references).

Content

The *Australian Curriculum: Mathematics* claimed to value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, stating,

It provides opportunities for students to appreciate that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies have sophisticated applications of mathematical concepts. Students will explore connections between representations of number and pattern and how they relate to aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. They will investigate time, place, relationships and measurement concepts in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander contexts. Students will deepen their understanding of the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples through the application and evaluation of statistical data (ACARA, 2015i, p. 14).

The above indicated that there was potential within the *Mathematics Curriculum* for Intercultural Both-Ways Discourse (for example in investigating Aboriginal conceptualisations of mathematical concepts). An examination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures content within the *Mathematics Curriculum* however supported the results of the Cruce analysis, revealing limited inclusion and potentially tokenistic expressions of culture, and the dominance of Neoliberal Assimilationist and Liberal Multicultural Discourses.

As with any student, it is important that Aboriginal students are provided with experiences of mathematics that encourage the development of their abilities and interests (Sternberg, 2013). In response to the need to consider Aboriginal perspectives in Mathematics to foster such interests and abilities, often suggestions

for integration have been offered to contextualise mathematical learning (Stereberg, 2013). Whilst the cross-curriculum priority was considered a tool to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives throughout the Australian Curriculum, the presence of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures priority within the *Mathematics Curriculum* was very limited. Of all Content Descriptors in the F-10 *Mathematics Curriculum*, none were tagged with the cross-curriculum priority icon. Minimal tagging was evident in Content Elaborations, though the curriculum for Years 7, 8 and 9 had no tagging to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures priority at all. In 2014 it was reported that Mathematics was the only learning area in which the cross-curriculum priorities were not tagged within mandatory content (Content Descriptors) due to their inappropriateness to the learning area (Ferrari, 2014). That Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander contributions to mathematical knowledge and understanding were dismissed through absence in the *Australian Curriculum: Mathematics* spoke to notions of cultural irrelevance found within conservative discourses.

In total, eleven Content Elaborations within eleven Content Descriptors were tagged to signify a suggested relevant connection between mathematical and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content. For those year levels where Content Elaborations were tagged, the inclusion of Aboriginal ideas or artefacts at times appeared tokenistic. In contextualising mathematics to assist Indigenous students in making connections to the curriculum, Russell and Chernhoff cautioned against cultural contexts, ideas, places and artefacts becoming ‘merely objects of mathematical thinking and knowledge, abstracted from their culture and contexts’ (2013, p. 114). Such approaches have portrayed Aboriginal understandings of mathematics in tokenistic ways, where there has been no recognition of cultural understandings and practices and limited contemporary relevance (Stereberg, 2013). One of the two *Australian Curriculum: Mathematics* Year 2 Content Descriptors with Content Elaborations linking to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures priority was an example of this: students, when learning to ‘group, partition and rearrange collections up to 1000’ (ACMNA028) were provided with suggested materials including linking blocks, sticks in bundles, place-value blocks and Aboriginal bead strings. Simply replacing a material used in learning to group, partition and rearrange with something ‘Aboriginal’ did little to promote deep understandings of Aboriginal knowledges and cultures, and was criticised in the

media for its tokenism (Ferrari, 2014). Similarly, one of the two Year 4 Content Descriptors linking to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures priority suggested when teaching students to ‘count by quarters, halves and thirds... [and] locate and represent these fractions on a number line’ (ACMNA078), to examine ways of managing Country, ‘for example taking no more than half the eggs from a nest to protect future bird populations’. Again criticised in the media, Mundine (2014) commented, ‘This is a political statement. And frankly, as an Aboriginal man, I find it insulting that learning about Indigenous cultures, history and society is reduced to a tokenistic example in a fractions lesson’. Overall these attempts signalled Liberal Multicultural Discourse, in attempting to promote cultural pluralism but reducing it at times to tokenistic examples.

A number of Content Elaborations offered suggestions for educators to use examples ‘such as’ those from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander contexts and/or other cultures. For example, in Year 4 when students ‘create symmetrical patterns, pictures and shapes’ (ACMMG091) stimulus examples included ‘motifs in Central Asian textiles, Tibetan artefacts, Indian lotus designs and symmetry in Yolngu or Central and Western Desert art’. In providing such examples educators were thus allowed choice, in a Liberal Multicultural approach, rather than a singular and direct focus on Aboriginal knowledges, histories and cultures.

The spread of the tagged Content Elaborations further demonstrated a lack of commitment to promoting a depth of understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. Nine of the eleven Content Elaborations tagged were found in Foundation to Year 6, with only two in the upper levels of schooling (Year 10). In an analysis undertaken by Lowe and Yunkaporta (2013), many were also found to be at the ‘understanding’ level of Bloom’s revised taxonomy and thus did not require students to extend their learning or broaden cognitive engagement. Of the two Content Elaborations linking to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content in Year 10, students were to compare Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander age distributions and life expectancy to that of the Australian population as a whole, through comparing data sets and evaluating statistical reports (ACMSP249 & ACMSP253). Lowe and Yunkaporta commented that there was ‘no embedded expectation on teachers to provide an opportunity for students to engage in any critical analysis that would lead to an informed understanding why such a statistical discrepancy exists between data sets for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians’

to thus carry out the curriculum's originally stated intention of deepening student understandings of the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (2013, p. 8). However, the fact that this discrepancy was chosen to be the focus of a Content Elaboration is noteworthy and has radical potential – teachers, should they have the resources to do so, could engage students in a deeper analysis of this population data.

Overall, the *Australian Curriculum: Mathematics* offered limited opportunity to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, communicating its perceived irrelevance and Neoliberal Assimilationist Discourse. When relevance to the cross-curriculum priority was tagged, it offered at times tokenistic examples of embedding culture, grouped Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander examples with those from other cultures, or offered limited depth to also cement Liberal Multicultural Discourse within the document. If teachers had the necessary resources to do so, some of these liberal examples within the Content Elaborations could be used as a platform for more radical or critical approaches.

6.3.3. Science: Visible inclusion and hidden conservatism

Of the Indigenous education discourses operating within the *Australian Curriculum: Science Overview*, Inclusive Discourse was allocated dominant status (having been mobilised in the vocabulary, grammatical and textual features of the text). Neoliberal Assimilationist, Liberal Multicultural, and Empowerment Discourses were allocated operant status (evident in one or two of the features). Dormant discourses, only evident within intertextual references, included Assimilative Monolingual and Human Rights. Absent discourses, not present in any features of the text, included Critical Multicultural, Multilingual Multicultural and Intercultural Both-ways Discourses. An analysis of content tagged as having relevance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures showed a Liberal Multicultural approach based on understanding and exploring science as a human endeavour, though the absence of tagged content pointed to underlying conservatism.

Vocabulary

Neoliberal Assimilationist, Inclusive, Liberal Multicultural and Empowerment Discourses presented in the experiential, relational and expressive values of

vocabulary within Cruce #3, the *Rationale* of the *Australian Curriculum: Science*. The experiential values of Cruce #3 supported Liberal Multicultural Discourse through the promotion of the social nature and value of science. There was a focus on the world, with Leximancer data showing ‘world’ as a concept was counted 28 times with 16% relevance (see Figure 6.3), with science presented as a ‘collaborative and creative human endeavour’ which can help us to ‘make sense of our world,’ impact ‘decisions about local, national and global issues’ and lead to action in ‘our personal, social and economic lives’. The references to culture and the contribution of and to it further supported Liberal Multicultural Discourse. Empowerment Discourse was mobilised through the sense of action in the Cruce, with science being a reliable basis for action, supporting students to make informed decisions at local, national and global levels; as well as offering students critical thinking skills, investigative capabilities and opportunities to challenge themselves. The practical, real-world orientation and applications communicated aligned with pedagogies typical of Empowerment Discourse. Neoliberal Assimilationist Discourse was evident in the experiential values of vocabulary in the construction of science as a discipline comprised of six ‘common approaches to a scientific view of the world’, and one that provides ‘empirical’ methods for answering questions which produce knowledge that ‘has proved to be a reliable basis for action in our personal, social and economic lives’. ‘Science’ was positioned as one universally accepted discipline, valuable to students ‘in its own right’ as well as the foundation for potential science-based careers.

The relational values in the Cruce supported an Empowerment Discourse through the sense of action communicated in the *Rationale*, with students framed as having critical and creative thinking skills, being capable of investigating local, national and global issues, and using scientific knowledge to inform decision-making and action-taking. Also evident was Inclusive Discourse, in social formulations of the student as one receiving support, the nurturing of their natural curiosity, and having future career choices dependent on their interest (signifying a more individualised construction of the student). Expressive values of vocabulary further supported Inclusive Discourse, in communicating support and this future choice positively with ‘if they so wish’.

the student and a more personalised view of their engagement with the world, rather than a broader view of the world articulated for example in Liberal Multicultural Discourse. This was owing to the singular notion of culture, as evidenced in the phrase ‘our culture and society’, as well as solidarity in it being ‘our’. Liberal Multicultural Discourse would recognise multiple cultures, not reducing it to the singular.

Textual Structures

The textural structures of *Cruce #3* and *Science* learning area document as a whole were typical of the Australian Curriculum policy corpus as described previously (simple formatting; consistency in layout and presentation; *Rationale* and *Aims* presented first before addressing content and organisation of the curriculum). Within *Cruce #3* the opening sentence explained the essential purpose or reasoning for the discipline before then speaking of the *Australian Curriculum: Science* specifically, again demonstrating consistency in the Australian Curriculum policy corpus. As with other learning areas described previously, the inclusion of sections on *Student Diversity* and the *Cross-Curriculum Priorities* within the *Overview* mobilised Assimilative Monolingual, Neoliberal Assimilationist, Inclusive, Liberal Multicultural, Empowerment and Human Rights Discourses through intertextual references (see the analysis of *Student Diversity* and *Cross-Curriculum Priorities* documents for dominant and operant discourses within each, as evidence of these intertextual references).

Content

The *Australian Curriculum: Science* claimed to value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, acknowledging that,

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have longstanding scientific knowledge traditions.

Students will have opportunities to learn that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have developed knowledge about the world through observation, using all the senses; through prediction and hypothesis; through testing (trial and error); and through making generalisations within specific contexts. These scientific methods have been practised and transmitted from one generation to the next. Students will develop an understanding that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have particular ways of knowing the world and continue to be innovative in providing significant contributions to development in science. They will investigate examples of Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander science and the ways traditional knowledge and western scientific knowledge can be complementary (ACARA, 2015j, p. 17).

The Science Curriculum appeared to mobilise Liberal Multicultural Discourse, rather than more critical or postmodern discourses such as Intercultural Both-ways. The above statement spoke of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as having practiced 'science', or that based on rational-positivist premises of Western science. In doing so, the attempt to recognise the scientific achievements of Aboriginal Peoples (Liberal Multicultural Discourse) obscured the different ontological and epistemological premises that underpin Aboriginal science and the Western model of science. The statement then reduced this difference to a distinction between 'traditional knowledge' and 'scientific knowledge', reverting to a more conservative standpoint. What presented through the content, in similarity to the above aim, was Liberal Multicultural Discourse. Different ways of knowing were understood and explored, but it was the way in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures content was absent or underrepresented however, that revealed underlying conservative views of science education.

Science, or rather 'Western' science, is considered to be 'the system of knowledge which relies on certain laws that have been established through the application of the scientific method to phenomena in the world around us' (Living Knowledge, 2008). Named 'traditional knowledge' within the *Australian Curriculum: Science* excerpt above, Indigenous knowledge systems present different worldviews to Western science and 'comprise the understandings, skills and philosophies that span the interface between ecological and social systems, and intertwine nature and culture' (Nakashima, 2010, p. 1). A range of terms with broadly overlapping definitions have been used to describe Indigenous knowledge systems, including Indigenous knowledge (IK), Indigenous environmental knowledge (IEK), traditional knowledge (TK) and traditional ecological or traditional environmental knowledge (TEK) (Expert Working Group on Indigenous Engagement with Science, 2013). Indigenous knowledge systems have made a significant contribution to research in Australia and continue to do so, though this 'is not always acknowledged or valued appropriately as a 'scientific' contribution' (Expert Working Group on Indigenous Engagement with Science, 2013, p. vi).

As recognised by ACARA, whilst they at times contrast, Western scientific knowledge and traditional knowledge can be complementary. The extent to which

this was recognised within the *Science Curriculum* however when content was analysed is questionable. The *Science Curriculum* provided thirteen Content Elaborations (within twelve Content Descriptors) tagged as having relevance to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures cross-curriculum priority. The majority of these (eleven) were within the Science as a Human Endeavour strand (with the two remaining strands being Science Understanding and Science Inquiry Skills). In the early years of schooling, students explored how people use science in their everyday lives (Use and Influence of Science sub-strand) and scientific predictions, patterns and relationships (Nature and Development of Science sub-strand). Content Elaborations within these tagged as relevant to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures priority included considering technologies used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; how they use science to meet their needs, including food supply; astronomy; and knowledge of the local natural environment. From Year 5 onwards, a largely Liberal Multicultural Discourse was dominant as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content was found within and alongside ‘a range of cultures’. In Years 5 and 6, the only tagged Elaborations were under the Content Descriptor ‘Important contributions to the advancement of science have been made by people from a range of cultures’ (ACSHE082 & ACSHE099). Tagged Elaborations either included or sat alongside Asian and other regional content and contexts. The only exception to this in the secondary years of schooling was a Content Descriptor in Year 7, where students examined how ‘science understanding influences the development of practices in areas of human activity such as industry, agriculture and marine and terrestrial resources management’ (ACSHE121). Elaborations included investigating how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge is used to inform scientific decisions (for example the care of waterways).

Of the *Science Curriculum* strands, there was no Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content tagged within Science Inquiry Skills, and only two Content Elaborations within Science Understanding (which included sub-strands of Biological; Chemical; Earth and Space; and Physical Sciences). The first was in Foundation, under the Earth and Space Sciences Content Descriptor ‘Daily and seasonal changes in our environment, including the weather, affect everyday life’ (ACSSU004), where students could learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander concepts of time and weather. The second was in Year 7, under a Biological Sciences

Content Descriptor, with ‘Interactions between organisms can be described in terms of food chains and food webs; human activity can affect these interactions’ (ACSSU112). The tagged Elaboration suggested students research ‘specific examples of human activity, such as the use of fire by traditional Aboriginal people’. The framing of this example appeared somewhat anthropological. With these two limited examples within Science Understanding then, under Biological and Earth and Space Sciences, and complete absence in the Chemical and Physical Sciences sub-strands, the *Science Curriculum* appeared to take a conservative view of the place of Indigenous knowledges within Western science, or at best tokenistic inclusion.

In addition to the absence or underrepresentation of Indigenous knowledges in particular strands of the *Science Curriculum*, there was no tagged content in Years 9 and 10. Additionally, all Content Elaborations targeted cognitively low levels with students required to ‘understand’ (with Elaborations using such language as learning, finding out, researching, investigating, and recognising), rather than engage in higher-order thinking. Lowe and Yunkaporta criticised this, stating, ‘The weakness of this content is that it provides little opportunity for teachers to extend student learning... [or] explore with students both the social context in which knowledge is developed, and the possibility that Indigenous knowledge has its own ontological validity that is independent of that of the ‘hard’ sciences’ (2013, pp. 7-8). The level of cognitive engagement asked of students further promoted Liberal Multicultural notions, rather than a more critical orientation to science through the examination of the place of Indigenous knowledges within or alongside it.

The *Australian Curriculum: Science* thus offered Liberal Multicultural views of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, where they were tagged as being relevant to scientific content. The absence and underrepresentation of Indigenous knowledges within the curriculum however (and therefore perceived irrelevance) presented a conservative view of the place of what ACARA termed ‘traditional knowledge’ within it.

6.3.4. History: Promoting civic nationalism

Of the Indigenous education discourses operating within the *Australian Curriculum: History Overview*, Liberal Multicultural Discourse was allocated dominant status (having been mobilised in the vocabulary, grammatical and textual

features of the text). Discourses allocated operant status (evident in one or two of the features) included Inclusive and Neoliberal Assimilationist. Assimilative Monolingual, Empowerment and Human Rights Discourses were allocated dormant status as they were mobilised through intertextual references. Absent discourses, not present in any features of the text, included Critical Multicultural, Multilingual Multicultural and Intercultural Both-ways Discourses. Analysis of the *History Curriculum* content revealed a dominant Liberal Multicultural Discourse, with Human Rights and Critical Multicultural also evident.

Vocabulary

Neoliberal Assimilationist and Liberal Multicultural Discourses presented in the experiential, relational and expressive values of vocabulary within Cruce #4, the *Rationale* of the *Australian Curriculum: History*. Liberal Multicultural Discourse was evidenced in the experiential values of vocabulary within the Cruce, in the recognition of global diversity and diverse societies and cultures as well as in the continued value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. Leximancer data showed 'Aboriginal' present as a distinct theme, connected directly to students, though only with 4% connectivity (see Figure 6.4). There was repetition of the term 'understanding' as well as 'world' and variations of human, global and appreciate, again evidencing Liberal Multicultural Discourse.

Relational values in the Cruce promoted Liberal Multicultural social relations, with students encouraged to understand themselves and others and to consider human values. Students of history were framed as future informed and active participants in Australia's diverse society, immediately following notions of Australia's economic and political development and position within the Asia-Pacific region, pointing to both Liberal Multicultural and Neoliberal Assimilationist ideologies. Expressive values of vocabulary in the Cruce assigned positive value to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and their continuation, further supporting Liberal Multicultural Discourse.

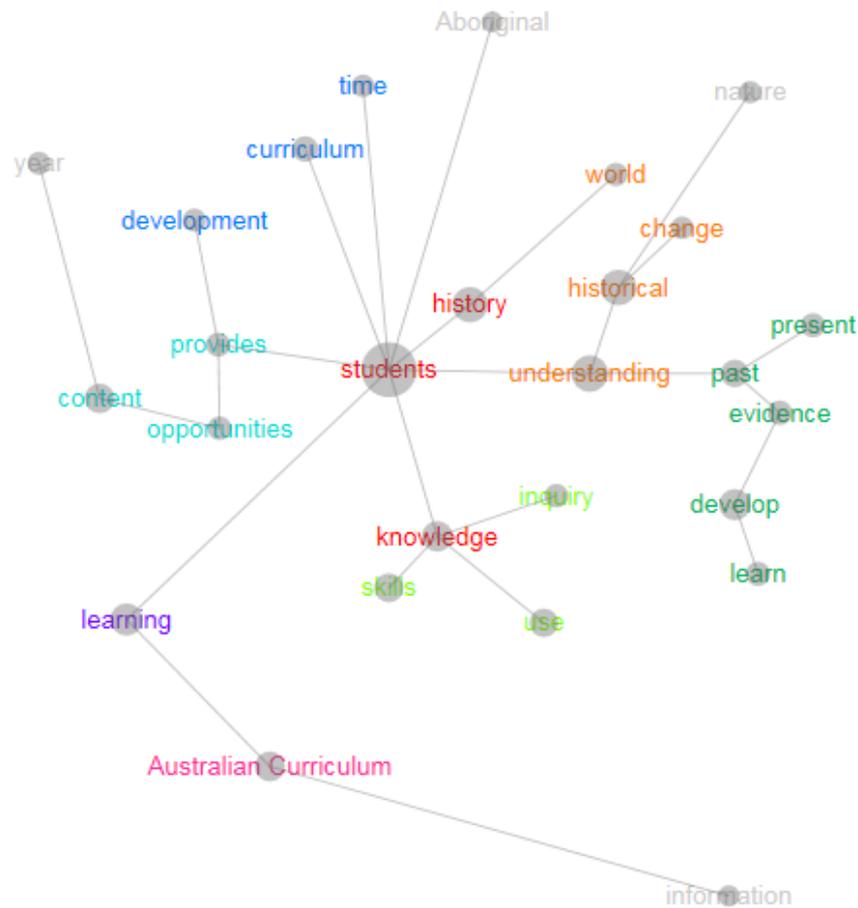


Figure 6.4: Leximancer concept cloud for *Australian Curriculum: History*.

Grammatical features

Neoliberal Assimilationist and Inclusive Discourses were privileged in the experiential and relational grammatical features of the Cruce. A combination of action and attribution sentences were used, though when speaking of the curriculum action processes (with Subject acting upon Object) generally dominated. Subjects included the curriculum (mentioned directly or indirectly as a pronoun) and historical knowledge and understanding. Objects included students, thinking, and transferrable skills. Every Subject, no matter as an action or attribution process, was history as a discipline, the curriculum or an element of it, and signified the hierarchical nature of the Cruce and document, consistent with conservative policy and the nature of standardisation within Neoliberal Assimilationist Discourse. Some of the ways in which Subjects acted upon Objects also signalled an Inclusive Discourse however, through notions of encouragement and support.

Relational values of grammar signalled a Liberal Multicultural Discourse, through the use of ‘ourselves’ as a reflective form of the pronoun ‘we’ in promoting understandings of ourselves and others at a societal level.

Textual Structures

The textural structures of Cruce #4 and *History* learning area document as a whole were typical of the Australian Curriculum policy corpus as described previously (simple formatting; consistency in layout and presentation; *Rationale* and *Aims* presented first before addressing content and organisation of the curriculum). Within Cruce #4 the opening sentence explained the essential purpose or reasoning for the discipline before then speaking of the *Australian Curriculum: History* specifically. Cruce #4 made intertextual reference to the *Cross-Curriculum priorities* document in mentioning two of the three focus areas of the priorities. As with other learning areas discussed previously, intertextual references also mobilised Assimilative Monolingual, Neoliberal Assimilationist, Inclusive, Liberal Multicultural, Empowerment and Human Rights Discourses through the inclusion of sections on *Student Diversity* and the *Cross-Curriculum Priorities* within the *Overview* (see the analysis of *Student Diversity* and *Cross-Curriculum Priorities* documents for dominant and operant discourses within each, as evidence of these intertextual references).

Content

The *Australian Curriculum: History* claimed to value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, stating that,

It celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories as part of the shared history belonging to all Australians.

Students will examine historical perspectives from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander viewpoint. They will learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples prior to colonisation by the British, the ensuing contact and its impacts. They will examine key policies and political movements over the last two centuries. Students will develop an awareness of the significant roles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australian society (ACARA, 2015g, pp. 20-21).

The *History Curriculum* offered different degrees of inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content from Foundation to Year 10, with Human Rights and

Critical Multicultural Discourses evident and Liberal Multicultural approach dominating overall.

The *History Curriculum* offered promise, with much greater mandated content (Content Descriptors) tagged with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures priority than those learning areas previously presented, with thirteen Content Descriptors and forty-seven Elaborations tagged across F-10. The curriculum began with a personal examination of history, connecting to family. Some Content Elaborations in the early stage of schooling (F to Year 2) offered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and ‘other cultures’ or ‘Asian’ examples (Liberal Multicultural). Other Elaborations were exclusively ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander related’, however they were just that – elaborations. If the implementer of the curriculum deemed the Elaborations dealing with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures not relevant to personal, family and local histories then there would be limited inclusion of these within the enacted curriculum.

Years 3 to 6 promised that the curriculum focus would seek ‘to target the distinct nature of learners in Years 3-6 by including content about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies, democratic concepts and rights, and the diversity of Australian society’ (ACARA, 2014). Content was placed within themes of ‘Community and remembrance’ (Year 3); ‘First contacts’ (Year 4); ‘Australian colonies’ (Year 5); and ‘Australia as a nation’ (Year 6). Areas of study within these themes included importance of Country and Place; days and weeks celebrated and commemorated; the diversity of Australia’s First Peoples; the nature of convict or colonial presence; the impact of a significant event on a colony; roles significant individuals or groups played in shaping a colony; experiences of Australian democracy and citizenship; and the contribution of individuals/groups to the development of Australian society.

In Years 5 and 6 however, all Content Descriptors tagged with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures priority ‘included’ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples with others as potential societal groups of focus, or included a range of issues/events. Content Descriptors included phrasing such as ‘for example, frontier conflict, the gold rushes, the Eureka Stockade...’ (ACHHK095); ‘for example, explorers, farmers, entrepreneurs... and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples’ (ACHHK097); ‘including the status and rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, migrants, women and children’ (ACHHK114); and

‘including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and migrants’ (ACHHK116). Whilst the *History Curriculum* then offered possibilities for inclusion, it presented a largely Liberal Multicultural approach in that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples were grouped or included with others, rather than having exclusive content focussing on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and/or issues. When dealing with democracy, citizenship and rights, this grouping was with other minority groups or those subjected to marginalisation (for example migrants). Human Rights Discourse was mobilised through this investigation of ‘Australian democracy and citizenship, including the status and rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples’ (ACHHK114), as students potentially examined the lack of citizenship rights, past controls on movement and residence, the forcible removal of children and the Stolen Generations, the 1962 right to vote and 1967 referendum within Content Elaborations.

From Year 2, content was also found in the Historical Skills strand of History, in sub-strands Analysis and Use of Sources; Chronology, Terms and Concepts; Perspectives and Interpretations; and Historical Questions and Research. Only ever in Content Elaborations however, it would most likely be connected to content selected to be taught within the second interrelated History strand, Historical Knowledge and Understanding. There was inconsistency in this approach, for example in Year 5 there was no inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures in Content Descriptions or Elaborations within the Historical Skills strand despite Historical Knowledge and Understanding including the theme of ‘The Australian colonies’. The inclusion of the priority within the Historical Skills strand Elaborations thus appeared somewhat tokenistic.

With the majority of Content Descriptors tagged as relevant to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures priority being located within the Foundation to Year 6 curriculum, there were limitations on cognitive engagement with the identified themes/issues, as it is in the secondary years of schooling that students develop more criticality and higher-order thinking skills (Lowe & Yunkaporta, 2013). In the senior years of schooling the *History Curriculum* offered depth studies, each including up to three electives, of which one could be selected. Content Descriptors tagged as relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures within these depth studies included one in Year 7 under ‘Investigating the ancient past’, one in Year 9 under the elective of ‘Making a nation’

in the 'Australia and Asia' depth study; and four in the Year 10 depth study 'Rights and freedoms (1945 – the present)'. Thus, in much of the secondary curriculum there was limited mandated inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. The Year 10 depth study offered Human Rights possibilities (in either a critical or more liberal sense, depending on the teacher's resources) through investigations of rights and freedoms, activism, and the continuing struggle to secure civil rights in Australia. More critical possibilities could be explored through the Content Description focusing on 'methods used by civil rights activities to achieve change' or the Content Elaborations investigating 'areas of focus for continued civil rights action', if the teacher had the resources to do so. Critical Multicultural Discourse could also be mobilised through this content and examinations of oppression and resistance to structural inequality.

Overall, the *History Curriculum* presented numerous opportunities to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures within the curriculum, though much was not mandated and were rather possibilities offered in Elaborations. Critical Multicultural and Human Rights Discourses could be mobilised in particular year levels through content dealing with rights and oppression, but just how critical they were would depend on the teacher's resources. A consistent Liberal Multicultural Discourse dominated curriculum content tagged as relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.

6.3.5. Geography: Empowerment through Country/Place

Of the Indigenous education discourses operating within the *Australian Curriculum: Geography Overview*, Empowerment and Liberal Multicultural Discourses were mobilised in all three features (vocabulary, grammatical and textual) of the text and thus were allocated dominant status. Neoliberal Assimilationist and Critical Multicultural Discourses were allocated operant status (evident in one or two of the features). Dormant discourses, mobilised through intertextual references included Assimilative Monolingual, Inclusive and Human Rights. Absent discourses, not present in any features of the text, included Multilingual Multicultural and Intercultural Both-ways Discourses. These findings were largely supported by the analysis of content tagged as having relevance to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander histories and cultures cross-curriculum priority, with Empowerment, Human Rights and Liberal Multicultural Discourses evident.

Vocabulary

Neoliberal Assimilationist, Liberal Multicultural, Critical Multicultural and Empowerment Discourses were present in the experiential, relational and expressive values of vocabulary within Cruce #5, the *Rationale* of the *Australian Curriculum: Geography*. Liberal Multicultural Discourse was evidenced in the experiential values of vocabulary, in the classification scheme of world (places, peoples, cultures and environments). Students, set within the idea of the interconnected world, were central to the Cruce and *Overview*. Leximancer data from the *Overview* showed ‘students’ as a concept was counted 157 times with 100% relevance, and was grouped with places, environments, people, different and cultures as a theme with 100% connectivity (see Figure 6.5). Repetition in the Cruce of the terms ‘world’ (6 uses) and ‘environments’ (8 uses) as well as mentions of people, human, social, global, cultures and diversity further supported Liberal Multicultural Discourse through the recognition of cultural pluralism. Neoliberal Assimilationist Discourse was also evident, though only minimally, in the final sentence of the Cruce with mention of geography skills being applied in everyday life and work (promoting the notion of education for employment). Critical Multicultural Discourse was mobilised through Geography allowing students to ‘question’, ‘reflect’ and ‘propose actions designed to shape a socially just and sustainable future’, along with mentions of investigative pedagogies, appreciation for different perspectives and critical thinking being developed. Though the experiential values of the Cruce did not go so far as to explicitly direct the redressing of marginalisation, the highly unusual absence of the curriculum in the Cruce (there was no mention of ‘the *Australian Curriculum: Geography*’ or ‘curriculum’, only geography as a broad concept or discipline area) when combined with the power assigned to students in questioning and proposing action, pointed to a critical construction of curriculum in which traditional power relations were interrogated.

(including geography; students; concepts of place and change; skills) acting upon Objects (including scales; knowledge; relationships and responsibilities; students; places; problems; explanations; possible futures). Students were by far given more agency as Subjects in this Cruce than in Cruces #1, #2, #3 and #4 (*English, Mathematics, Science and History Rationales*), counted thirteen times (with multiple counts in compound and complex sentences). The processes in which they engaged with as Subjects (learn; reflect; propose; examine; explore; forecast; develop) furthered the notion of their power in examining and overcoming issues (Empowerment Discourse).

Relational values of grammar, through using ‘our’ as a possessive pronoun for ‘world’ when combined with notions of diversity reinforced a Liberal Multicultural Discourse (in conveying a sense of solidarity within a pluralistic world). Expressive values of grammar again pushed back against assigning power to geography (as discipline area or curriculum), with the use of the modal verb ‘can be’ relating to skills being applied to everyday life and work. Immediately following discussion of thinking (using adverbs) critically and creatively, this left some sense of option with students having a choice in whether those skills will be applied (Empowerment).

Textual Structures

The textural structures of the *Geography* learning area document as a whole were typical of the Australian Curriculum policy corpus as described, though Cruce #5 differed in significant ways. Whilst in other Cruces the opening sentence explained the essential purpose or reasoning for the discipline before then speaking of the Australian Curriculum: [Learning area] specifically, *Geography* deviated from this pattern. The term ‘curriculum’ was not mentioned in the Cruce at all. Rather, the Cruce provided reasons for the discipline area in general. This lack of crediting responsibility (of the curriculum as inanimate object) supported the pervading Empowerment Discourse, as when combined with vocabulary and grammatical features it signalled a deviation from the typical construction of the policy to one that assigned power to students. As with other learning areas discussed previously, the *Overview* once again included *Student Diversity* and *Cross-Curriculum Priorities* sections, mobilising Assimilative Monolingual, Neoliberal Assimilationist, Inclusive, Liberal Multicultural, Empowerment and Human Rights Discourses through intertextual references (see the analysis of *Student Diversity* and *Cross-Curriculum*

Priorities documents for dominant and operant discourses within each, as evidence of these intertextual references).

Content

The *Australian Curriculum: Geography* claimed to value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and perspectives, stating that,

The Australian Curriculum: Geography emphasises the relationships people have with place and their interconnection with the environments in which they live. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures priority provides the opportunity for students to develop a deeper understanding of these concepts by investigating the thousands of years of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander connection to land, water and sky and the knowledge and practices that developed as a result of these experiences. Students will examine the effects of European colonisation on people and environments. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures priority also contributes to an understanding of spatial inequalities in human welfare, sustainable development and human rights.

The Australian Curriculum: Geography curriculum also enables students to learn that there are different ways of thinking about and interacting with the environment. It integrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' use of the land, governed by a holistic, spiritually-based connection to Country and Place, with the continuing influence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples on Australian places, and in environmental management and regional economies.

In including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and practices, and engaging with communities and local and regional environments, students develop a wide range of critical and creative thinking skills. Students explore ways of experiencing landscapes by conducting fieldwork with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and reading, listening to, or performing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' explanations of the origins of particular landforms (ACARA, 2015e, p. 23).

By far the most detailed account of how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures were to be embedded within the curriculum, the analysis of *Geography* content saw these aims and dominant discourses revealed within the *Rationale* carried through the curriculum document. To begin, the content analysis of the *Geography Curriculum (Version 7.4)* showed flaws and inconsistencies in the document when compared to the manner in which other learning areas tagged cross-curriculum priorities. It had thirty-three Content Descriptors (and no Content Elaborations) tagged as having relevance to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures priority. When reviewed and checked against *Version 7.5* (which had updated tagging), a much fairer representation of the presence of the

priority within the *Geography Curriculum* was confirmed – in nine Content Descriptors and forty Content Elaborations (ACARA, 2015f). This still showed a range of content exceeding that within most other learning areas, demonstrating the *Geography Curriculum*'s commitment to 'giving explicit recognition to the perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' (Kleeman, 2012, p. 24). Liberal Multicultural, Empowerment and Human Rights Discourses were privileged within the *Geography Curriculum* content.

Liberal Multicultural Discourse was evident in the grouping of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples with others considered culturally diverse to promote intercultural understanding. A number of Content Descriptors considered 'people' (pointing to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in the Elaborations) or 'different cultural groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' (ACHGK006). Content Elaborations promoted global understandings, for example examining the similarities and differences between places locally, nationally and internationally (ACHGK019) or the similarities and differences in perceptions of places using local (sacred site), national (national park) or international (World Heritage site) examples of place (ACHGK018).

A more liberal variant of Human Rights Discourse was mobilised in the promotion of a rights-respecting learning environment through ethical research methods in Years 5 to 10. Within Content Elaborations, students were to find out about, apply, conduct and collect data using 'ethical research methods, including the use of protocols for consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities' (ACHGS048; ACHGS056; ACHGS064; ACHGS073). Considering that Ethical Understanding was a General Capability within the Australian Curriculum, to be embedded across learning areas, it was significant that *Geography* was the only learning area to consider (and include within Content Elaborations) ethical research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Critical mobilisations of this could see students examining this issue, and the history of research on Aboriginal Peoples, in greater depth in an attempt to rectify past colonising procedures.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples were given some degree of voice within the *Geography Curriculum* content, mobilising Empowerment Discourse. Elders were proposed as possible sources of information (in Elaborations for ACHGS008 & ACHGS014). In Year 10 when examining human wellbeing, an

Elaboration asked students to identify action ‘including ways proposed by [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander] communities’ thus considering their perspectives (ACHGK081). These constructions were again unique to the *Geography* learning area.

It was through the construction of place within the *Geography Curriculum* and its connections to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples that the Empowerment Discourse dominated. Country/Place and Place were terms explained in the *Glossary*, each having particular connection and relevance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and their Identity and spirituality. These connections were considered within content in a range of ways, including how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples represent the location of Country/Place; local Countries/Places and their importance; Dreaming stories that identify natural features of Place; ways of describing weather/seasons of Countries/Place; custodial responsibility; the influence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples on environmental characteristics of Place; liveability of Places, dispossession and relocation; aesthetic, cultural and spiritual value of landscapes and landforms; the protection of significant landscapes; and spatial variations in human wellbeing. The way in which Place was approached in a diversity of ways represented the complexity and interconnectedness of Country/Place, Culture and Identity. Such recognition within the curriculum can assist in building Aboriginal students’ self-worth and positive identity formation. In giving voice to Aboriginal Peoples and their experiences in such diverse ways, the status quo is also questioned – there were possibilities for this particularly when examining dispossession and relocation, and spatial variations in human wellbeing.

It was considered that Critical Multicultural Discourse could also be mobilised through alternative readings of the *Geography Curriculum*, in questioning unequal power structures in society – particularly around content in the secondary years of schooling. In Year 8 content which dealt with ‘changing nations’ and internal migration (with an ACHGK056 Content Elaboration ‘explaining that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples’ population mobility reflects attachment to a number of places through family, Country/Place, dispossession, relocation and employment’) provided Critical Multicultural possibilities, should the teacher have the resources to explore ideas of structural inequality within society and how these continue to impact upon Aboriginal Peoples. This was also the case in Year 10 where students examined

geographies of human wellbeing – content included examining different measures of human wellbeing and development, reasons for and consequences of spatial variations in human wellbeing and the role of international and national government and nongovernment organisations in improving wellbeing, with Content Elaborations suggesting examining these issues in connection with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations/communities. In examining power relations and inequality within these examples, critical social awareness could be built to engage students in action for social improvement.

Overall, the *Geography Curriculum* content reflected a critical orientation to Indigenous education, in recognising the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples through emphasis on the local ('local area'; 'local Language Group'; 'local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples'). It considered their rights (through ethical research; inclusion of voice) and took a holistic approach to the study of Place (considering the cultural and spiritual value of Country/Place and as a source of identity). Liberal Multicultural, Human Rights and Empowerment Discourses were evident within the content, with Critical Multicultural Discourse available through alternative readings.

6.3.6. Reframing the humanities: HASS, Version 8.0

The Australian Curriculum (*Version 8.0*) saw substantial revisions to the Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) learning areas. Previously *Version 7.4* offered *History*, *Geography* and the then yet-to-be-endorsed *Economics and Business* and *Civics and Citizenship* as four separate learning areas. HASS as a single Foundation to Year 6/7 learning area replaced the four (ACARA, 2015h). ACARA stated that 'This change has resulted in a significant reduction in the volume of content descriptions and an improvement in the manageability of the primary curriculum' (ACARA, 2015a). The *HASS Curriculum*, as a newly developed learning area, had its own *Rationale*, *Aims*, *Structure* and *Curriculum*.

The *Rationale* of the *HASS Curriculum* presented a range of Indigenous education discourses evidenced within the previous versions of *History* and *Geography* (*Version 7.4*). Neoliberal Assimilationist Discourse was evidenced in the inclusion of economics and business, and students of HASS becoming 'well-placed to contribute' to Australia's 'productive economy'. Liberal Multicultural Discourse

was mobilised through a diversity classification scheme (social, cultural & religious) and construction of students as members of a ‘culturally diverse and dynamically interconnected’ world. Students were also considered in a more personalised manner, with the *HASS Curriculum* aiming to equip them with the capacity to face challenges (both personal and collective), teach them to value their place in the world and enhance their ability to make a positive contribution to society (Inclusive Discourse). Empowerment Discourse was mobilised through two direct mentions of students being empowered, to ‘actively shape their lives’ and ‘shape change’. Critical Multicultural Discourse could be accessed through an alternative reading, with students encouraged to consider and understand different perspectives, and ‘key historical, geographical, political, economic and societal factors involved’.

The content within the *HASS Curriculum*, tagged as having relevance to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures cross-curriculum priority remained largely the same as that tagged within the preceding versions of *History* and *Geography* in which Liberal Multicultural, Critical Multicultural, Human Rights and Empowerment Discourses were evident. A small amount of content tagged as relevant to the priority was removed or compressed, with the most disappointing example being that related to kinship. The Year 1 Content Descriptor related to ‘differences in family structures and roles today, and how these have changed or remained the same over time’ (*Version 7.4*: ACHHK028; *Version 8.0*: ACHASSK028) originally included an Elaboration ‘discussing kinship as an important part of relationships and family structures in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies’, whilst the updated compressed Elaboration simply spoke of a ‘range of family structures (for example, nuclear families, one-child families...) as well as kinship groups, tribes and villages’. Such a minor amendment to compress the *HASS Curriculum* resulted in no specific Content Descriptor or Elaboration dealing exclusively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples’ kinship systems. Alternatively, notable inclusions were terms not presented within *Version 7.4*, particularly ‘resistance’ (related to Year 4 investigations of early contact of Aboriginal Peoples with the British e.g. the Black War) and ‘bilingual’ (related to Year 7 proposals of strategies to enhance the liveability of places, e.g. bilingual signage or Indigenous garden projects). Whilst not explicit in their critical orientation, these minor inclusions presented opportunities for alternative readings of the curriculum and more critical approaches to the Humanities and Social Sciences.

6.4. Supporting documentation

The Australian Curriculum offered a number of supporting documents that could be accessed with or separately to learning areas, including *Cross-Curriculum Priorities* and *Student Diversity*. No matter the learning area, these documents were to guide educators on specific issues or aspects of the curriculum. Each privileged varying Indigenous education discourses (presented in Table 6.1).

6.4.1. Cross-Curriculum Priorities

The *Cross-Curriculum Priorities* document provided an overview of the priorities embedded within the Australian Curriculum: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures; Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia; and Sustainability. Beginning with the *Overview*, it communicated the general purpose of both the Australian Curriculum and priorities and included a brief explanation of how teachers were to read and understand the inclusion of the priorities within the Curriculum. The five-page document then gave a description of each priority and their organising ideas.

Of the Indigenous education discourses present in the *Cross-Curriculum Priorities* document, conservative and liberal discourses were privileged, with Neoliberal Assimilationist, Inclusive and Liberal Multicultural being most prevalent. These discourses were evident in all three features (vocabulary, grammatical and textual) of the document and were thus allocated dominant status. Operant discourses (evident in one or two of the features) included Empowerment and Human Rights. Critical Multicultural Discourse was allocated a dormant status as it could be operationalised in alternative readings of the document. Assimilative Monolingual Discourse was also allocated dormant status as it too could be operationalised through using the *Cross-Curriculum Priorities* document in combination with others, where the discourse was dormant or operant, and was considered underlying. Absent discourses, not present in any features or alternative readings of the document included Multilingual Multicultural and Intercultural Both-ways.

Vocabulary

Neoliberal Assimilationist, Liberal Multicultural, Inclusive and Empowerment Discourses were evident in the experiential values of vocabulary within Cruces #6,

#7 and document as a whole. In using the classification scheme of the student as contributing citizen in Cruce #6, Neoliberal Assimilationist Discourse was evidenced in the construction of students as future contributing members to the nation's capital. A synonymic relationship of young Australians and students was set up in the opening paragraph to assist with this construction, which was carried through to the Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia priority where 'students' and 'Australian students' were discussed. There the classification scheme of student as contributing citizen was reinforced with similar if not repetitive vocabulary. It was in this section of the document that the Neoliberal Assimilationist Discourse was most pervasive, with the priority and the understanding it builds in students designated as being 'vital to the prosperity of Australia'. Also prominent within the experiential values of vocabulary was Liberal Multicultural Discourse, evident in Cruce #7 with a diversity classification scheme which viewed diversity in terms of cultures, peoples, belief systems and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nations. This classification scheme was expanded throughout the document to include diversity of religions, ethnic backgrounds, traditions and between the countries of Asia, thus cementing the Liberal Multicultural Discourse throughout the text. Inclusive Discourse was operant in Cruce #6 where it was presupposed that all young Australians/students will gain the personal and social benefits expounded in the *Overview*, and later in the document in the valuing of diversity, social justice, local and global equity and values of care, respect and responsibility. Empowerment Discourse was operant in Cruce #7 in classifying identity as being unique, central, and linked to strong, rich, diverse communities, deep knowledge traditions and holistic world views. Rather than speaking to the development and empowerment of student identity however, it was presented as a content element to be understood, with a conceptual framework based on identity developed as a structural tool for embedding the priority within the curriculum. A critical discourse was mobilised in the vocabulary's experiential values in the Sustainability priority, with overwording of 'action' in the description of the priority and in five of the nine organising ideas. Whilst the Sustainability priority was not a Cruce, this overwording is significant. The presence of this terminology was absent in the rest of the document, and this priority deviated in style and focus to emphasise a more critical/activist approach connected to social justice, not evidenced elsewhere. In doing so, the marginalisation of critical discourses within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures priority was

starkly apparent. Thus, a Critical Multicultural Discourse could be operationalised through alternative readings of the text, if stakeholders (teachers) had the resources to do so.

The relational values of vocabulary within the text supported the Neoliberal Assimilationist Discourse operating within the document. In using ‘our nation’ within Cruce #6, a social relation was set up between the producer and reader, that communicated the message that all have a stake in student development and will benefit from the contribution students will make to the ‘social, intellectual and creative capital of our nation’. Teachers were framed as responsible for carrying out the document’s intentions, in a hierarchical model typical of conservative discourses. A social relation of mutual benefit, social inclusion and cohesion was established in regards to deepening students’ cultural knowledge (Liberal Multicultural).

The expressive values of vocabulary evidenced Liberal Multicultural and Inclusive Discourses, in positively characterising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities as ‘strong, rich and diverse’, ‘living, learning’, and ‘the world’s oldest continuous living cultures’ within Cruce #7 and through support for enriching all students’ understanding and therefore ability to participate (Inclusive). Neoliberal Assimilationist Discourse was also evidenced in the positive value assigned to students’ contribution to the building of the nation’s capital and prosperity.

Grammatical features

Neoliberal Assimilationist and Liberal Multicultural Discourses were most apparent in the experiential, relational, expressive and structural grammatical features in the text. The processes and participants within the text, expressed within the experiential grammatical features, clearly communicated the power of the Australian Curriculum and a conservative hierarchical model of education. In Cruce #6 a combination of declarative action and attribution sentences were used. When discussing the nature of the priorities and how they were to be utilised, action processes dominated in which Subjects (including curriculum, cross-curriculum priorities, content descriptions, tagging, elaborations) acted upon Objects (special attention, learning areas, icons, need and opportunity, advice). In just one sentence, the second half of a compound sentence appearing at the very end of Cruce #6, were teachers given agency as the designated Subject. In Cruce #7, there was a

combination of action and attribution processes. Cruce #7 opened with an attribution, a definition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities as ‘strong, rich and diverse’. The progressive tense in this opening sentence supported a Liberal Multicultural view of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Later, the Cruce used action processes to discuss the priority, reasserting the power of the curriculum as the agent acting upon learners. Nominalisation was used within the opening sentence of Cruce #6 to transmit Neoliberal Assimilationist ideals – by nominalising ‘knowledge’ and ‘understanding’, the process of ‘becoming known’ or ‘becoming understood’ was represented as a noun (then able to be accepted as a real entity and no longer arguable). It was thus understood that there was a specific set of skills, knowledge and understanding that would enable students to engage and prosper. That particular set was presupposed and unquestioned, transmitting the dominant idea of skills, knowledge and understanding being a fixed entity that all students must be equipped with in order to succeed.

The relational values of grammar signalled the authority and power relations within the text, and a Neoliberal Assimilationist Discourse. The Australian Curriculum (or an element of it), as the agent in most declarative sentences, held power, was the giver of information and addressed the receiver. Through the use of the modal auxiliary verb ‘will’ the authority of the Curriculum was asserted in communicating a certainty in the purpose of the Curriculum and what it provided to teachers and students. ‘Must’ was only used once, in Cruce #6 where the ‘Australian Curriculum must be relevant...’, in other words be able to deliver on the statements that set out the purpose of the Curriculum. The formality and sense of obligation communicated again signalled the power of the curriculum in an implicit authority claim. The use of ‘will’ also reinforced Inclusive Discourse, with the curriculum [will] enriching students’ ability to positively participate in the development of Australia.

Expressive values of grammar within the text again left little possibility for questioning the Curriculum and what it purported to do. Through using verbs in simple present tense form, (for example ‘the curriculum gives’; ‘the tagging brings’) the document presented an unquestionable view of what it offered and did, as well as the contemporary issues confronting students that the priorities addressed. These expressive values mobilised Neoliberal Assimilationist Discourse (‘an understanding of Asia underpins the capacity of Australian students to be active and informed

citizens'... and build the nation's capital), Liberal Multicultural Discourse (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are 'strong, rich and diverse' and 'central'), and Inclusive Discourse (the curriculum 'provides opportunities for all learners').

Textual Structures

Neoliberal Assimilationist Discourse saturated the textural structures of the *Cross-Curriculum Priorities* document, particularly through the Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia priority, which linked strongly to Cruce #6 and appeared to be privileged within the document. The priority's dominance was evident in Leximancer-generated data, with Asia (following Australia at 100% connectivity) appearing as a concept (68%), preceding Aboriginal (47%) (see Figure 6.6). On closer inspection it was revealed that the Asia priority was lengthier (463 words including organising ideas) in comparison to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures priority (325 words) and Sustainability priority (356 words) which could account for the greater Leximancer concept rating. The intertextual reference to the *Melbourne Declaration* in Cruce #6 served to further enhance links within and between the texts, with ideals being traced from the *Melbourne Declaration*, through the *Overview* (Cruce #6) to the Asia priority. Many similarities between the Preamble of the *Melbourne Declaration* and the Asia priority were evident, including ideas of economic prosperity, social cohesion and Asia literacy, as well as between Cruce #6 and the *Melbourne Declaration*, in ideas of contemporary issues/challenges, globalisation and development, and making sense of the world. In comparison, links to the other two priorities were much less apparent. The commonality and repetition of language between Cruce #6, the *Overview* of the document, and the Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia priority signified the dominance of this priority and its Neoliberal Assimilationist ideals. In Cruce #6, students 'make an important contribution to building the social, intellectual and creative capital of our nation', and in the Asia priority this was reinforced with students being 'active and informed citizens working together to...build Australia's social, intellectual and creative capital'.

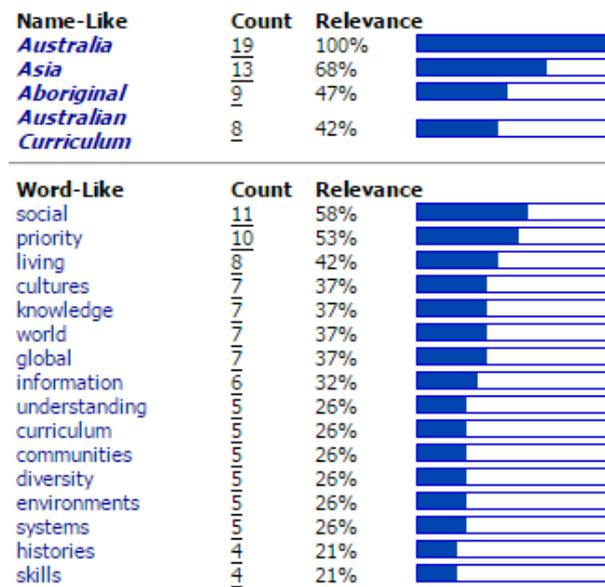


Figure 6.6: Leximancer ranked concepts for *Cross-Curriculum Priorities*.

The Asia priority was where the Neoliberal Assimilationist Discourse was most prevalent, with the priority and the understanding it provides being considered ‘vital to the prosperity of Australia’. The priority went as far as to list regions of importance to Australia: ‘while [Asia] includes West and Central Asia, in Australian schools studies of Asia will pay particular attention to...’ North-east, South-east and South Asia. It could be assumed these regions were those that offered the most economic benefit to Australia, to enhance the nation’s prosperity. In each of the priorities students were also termed differently and this served to further enhance the connections between Cruce #6 and the Asia priority. Cruce #6 (the *Overview*) used the terms ‘young Australians’ and ‘students’. This framing continued in the Asia priority, with the terms ‘Australian students’ and ‘students’ being utilised. Deviating from this was Cruce #7, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures priority, which mentioned only ‘learners’ and the Sustainability priority which mentioned ‘people’ and ‘individuals and communities’, with student or learner being completely absent. Thus, whilst the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures priority was placed first of the three priorities following the *Overview*, it appears the placement was more a case of political correctness than the priority being privileged above others or having significant connections to the *Overview*.

A number of discourses were activated through the intertextual reference to the *Melbourne Declaration* mentioned previously, and the way in which the cross-curriculum priorities built upon that document. This included Inclusive Discourse (p.7: personalised learning), Empowerment (p.9: self-worth, self-awareness and personal identity), Human Rights (p.7: access to high quality schooling that is free from discrimination), Liberal Multicultural (p.10: the development of partnerships between schools and Indigenous communities based on cross-cultural respect) and Neoliberal Assimilationist (p.4: competing in the global economy, skilled jobs and ensuring national economic prosperity).

The *Cross-Curriculum Priorities* overall thus presented as a disjointed document, with discrepancies in terminology and tone. Numerous Indigenous education discourses were mobilised, though this varied within and between sections (priorities). Where the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures priority was explained, liberal and conservative discourses were dominant with some critical discourses operant.

6.4.2. Cross-Curriculum Priorities, Version 8.0: Significant revisions

The *Cross-Curriculum Priorities* document, *Version 8.0*, had substantial revisions to that presented in *Version 7.0*, analysed above¹⁵. A discussion of the key alterations and implications for this study follows here. Overall, it presented as a positive amendment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, with revised organising ideas and recognition of the continued impacts of colonisation. Other sections however continued to push competing conservative discourses, particularly within the Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia priority.

The *Cross-Curriculum Priorities Overview* was rewritten as an *Introduction* in *Version 8.0*. Greater in length, it took a less authoritative tone in detailing the basis on which the priorities were developed and their organisation. This softer approach was evidenced for example in vocabulary (more inclusive in speaking of individuals and needs) and grammatical features (reduced number of modal auxiliary verbs 'will')

¹⁵ Whilst the Learning Areas analysed were *Version 7.4*, the *Cross-Curriculum Priorities* document had not been updated by ACARA since *Version 7.0*, dated Monday 21st July 2014

and ‘must’). There was also a reduction in the textual connections to the Asia priority.

The description of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures priorities was revised, named as the *Overview*, and began with:

The Australian Curriculum sets consistent national standards to improve learning outcomes for all young Australians. ACARA acknowledges the gap in learning outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their non-Indigenous peers. It recognises the need for the Australian Curriculum to provide every opportunity possible to ‘close the gap’.

Therefore, the Australian Curriculum is working towards addressing two distinct needs in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education:

- that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are able to see themselves, their identities and their cultures reflected in the curriculum of each of the learning areas, can fully participate in the curriculum and can build their self-esteem
- that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures cross-curriculum priority is designed for all students to engage in reconciliation, respect and recognition of the world’s oldest continuous living cultures (ACARA, 2015b).

This inclusion was notable for a number of reasons: its recognition of the challenges faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and the role of the Australian Curriculum in improving education outcomes for those students (mobilising Inclusive Discourse); the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identities and cultures being embedded in the curriculum for positive identity formation (mobilising Empowerment Discourse); and the role of the priority in reconciliation (mobilising Liberal or Critical Multicultural Discourses, depending on the reader’s resources). Reconciliation was a term not mentioned in *Version 7.0*.

Likewise, colonisation was a term not mentioned in *Version 7.0* but presented in the *Overview* and *Organising Ideas (OI)* of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander priority in *Version 8.0*, with the statement ‘Students will understand that Identities and Cultures have been, and are, a source of strength and resilience for Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander Peoples against the historic and contemporary impacts of colonisation’ and OI.6: ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples live in Australia as first peoples of Country or Place and demonstrate resilience in responding to historic and contemporary impacts of colonisation’ (ACARA, 2015b). This change can be attributed to the AHRC, who in a consultation paper submitted to ACARA on 1st September 2011 recommended an

extended descriptor (near uniform to that inserted into *Version 8.0*) which acknowledged the need to include the impacts of colonisation within the curriculum (AHRC, 2011a). At the time of submission, the AHRC suggested that whilst it was vital to include positive representations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures within the Australian Curriculum, it was just as critical ‘to explicitly acknowledge in the priority, the historic and contemporary impact of colonisation and discrimination against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities’ (AHRC, 2011a, p. 4). Although colonisation was included in *Version 8.0*, the term ‘discrimination’ was not written into the *Organising Ideas* or Content Descriptors.

Further revisions to *Organising Ideas* (with additions underlined) included:

- OI.1: Australia has two distinct groups, Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and within those groups there is significant diversity
- OI.3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have ~~unique~~ holistic belief systems and are spiritually and intellectually connected to the land, sea, sky and waterways
- OI.8 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples ~~have sophisticated family and kinship structures~~ family and kinship structures are strong and sophisticated
- OI.9 ~~Australia acknowledges~~ the significant contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people locally and globally in the present and past are acknowledged locally, nationally and globally

These somewhat minor updates included positive amendments: recognising the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples; recognising intellectual as well as spiritual connections to Country/Place; and recognising past and present contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. On the whole however, these amendments did not signify any great variation to the Australian Curriculum, as it is the Content Descriptors and Content Elaborations that were the basis of inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures content within the curriculum, and what stakeholders would use as a point of reference.

Contrasting the potential for increased liberal and critical ideals, the following was also added to the *Introduction* of Asia and Australia’s Engagement with Asia cross-curriculum priority, demonstrating a conservative orientation through the continued significance of a national economic agenda in education policy:

The Asia region exerts enormous influence globally and in Australia. Asia is the most populous region in the world, being home to two-thirds of the world’s

people. Some of the world's most dynamic, varied and complex societies are in the Asia region. It will soon also be both the largest producer and consumer of goods and services in the world.

In 2014, 11 of Australia's top 15 export markets (goods and services) were in the Asia region, making up nearly 71 per cent of all exports. As well, approximately 58 per cent of Australia's two-way trade occurred with countries of the Asia region. The economic importance of successful Australian engagement with Asia is undeniable.

Australia is increasingly looking to Asia strategically, politically and culturally as well as economically. Correspondingly, Asia literacy is going to be a key requirement of our young people, as Australia seeks to strengthen its ties in the Asia region and be an effective contributor to the wellbeing of the region as a whole. For this, young people will need broad insight into the histories of the countries of the Asia region, including their shared history with Australia, its complex and diverse cultures and an understanding of the contemporary challenges and opportunities that exist for the region. By knowing something of Asian societies, cultures, beliefs and environments, they will deepen their intercultural understanding, enrich their own lives and increase the likelihood of successful participation in the 'Asian century', for themselves and Australia as a whole (ACARA, 2015c).

To speak of exports and markets as a rationale for the inclusion of the Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia priority showed an overt Neoliberal Assimilationist Discourse, in which students as active and consumer citizens will contribute to the national economic agenda. In speaking of intercultural understanding, Liberal Multicultural Discourse was also evident, though this followed the information on trade and markets. What was reflected then in the revised *Cross-Curriculum Priorities Version 8.0* was a very diverse set of priorities and ideologies, with certain discourses privileged within one priority but marginalised in another. Positive amendments were noted in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures priority *Introduction*, though alongside this the amendments to the Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia priority showed a pull back towards a conservative orientation to education.

6.4.3. Student Diversity

The *Student Diversity* document (identical in *Versions 7.4* and *8.0*) provided advice on three identified areas of diversity: students with disability; gifted and talented students and students for whom English is an additional language or dialect (EAL/D). Beginning with *Student Diversity Advice* that applied generally to the three identified areas, the document explained the purpose of the materials, provided

advice on the three-dimensional nature of the Australian Curriculum, provided advice on meeting the needs of the three identified groups and provided illustrations of practice for teachers. The *Student Diversity Advice* section ended with an embedded video, linking to online illustrations of practice. The document then addressed each of the three identified aspects of diversity in subsections, each building on the general advice.

Of the Indigenous education discourses present in the *Student Diversity* document, Inclusive Discourse was most dominant. Mobilised in all three features (vocabulary, grammatical and textual) of the document, it was allocated dominant status. Operant discourses (evident in one or two of the features) included Assimilative Monolingual, Neoliberal Assimilationist, Liberal Multicultural and Human Rights. Dormant, accessed only through intertextual reference was Empowerment Discourse. Absent discourses, not present in any features of the document, included Critical Multicultural, Multilingual Multicultural and Intercultural Both-ways Discourses.

Vocabulary

Inclusive Discourse saturated the experiential values of vocabulary within Cruce #8 and the document as a whole. The repetition of ‘all students’ and emphasis on inclusion featured in Cruce #8, with five out of eight sentences using ‘all students’ or ‘all Australian students’. There was also overwording and repetition of ‘needs’. A diversity classification scheme typical of Inclusive frames (disability; gifted and talented; students for whom EAL/D; differing types of needs e.g. learning, cognitive, physical etc.) was used within Cruce #8 and the document as a whole. There was also repetition of ‘age-equivalent learning area content’ throughout the document, the importance of which was stressed to provide meaningful, respectful, dignified learning experiences whilst maintaining the integrity of the learning area content. These experiential values of the document served to emphasise the individual needs of students as well as equitable access to a high-quality learning program, the foundation of an Inclusive discourse. This was evidenced in Leximancer data, with ‘students’ as a theme (which included concepts of students, content, teaching, area, needs, general) having 100% connectivity and 100% relevance to other themes (see Figure 6.7). Human Rights Discourse was also present in the experiential values of vocabulary within the notion of all students being entitled to a high-quality

education, as well as Liberal Multicultural Discourse in ideas of cultural and linguistic resources of EAL/D students being shared in classrooms for the benefit of all students, and the diversity of the backgrounds of students being an asset in the classroom. Also dominant in Cruce #9, alongside the continuation of the Inclusive discourse, was the Assimilative Monolingual discourse, which was not mobilised elsewhere in the experiential vocabulary of the document. Firstly, a hyponymic relationship was established in the Cruce, with EAL/D students positioned as those whose first language is a language other than English AND who needed support to learn English, with the acronym EAL/D foregrounding their English language learning needs. The need for support was reinforced through repetition. A synonymic relationship was established between Standard Australian English and English, with English then characterised and reinforced as the dominant language in Australian and one necessary for participation and success (through such statements as ‘participation in many aspects of Australian life depends on effective communication in Standard Australian English...’). Later, in the EAL/D sub-section, the cultural and linguistic resources of EAL/D students were mentioned, however these resources were immediately characterised as those that ‘can be used to build EAL/D students’ English language learning’. They could also be ‘shared in the classroom for the benefit of all students’ as ‘an important resource in developing the language awareness of all students in the classroom’. In alternative readings, a Liberal Multicultural Discourse could be mobilised through the recognition of language and cultural backgrounds within the classroom; or Assimilative Monolingual Discourse, if Asian students’ cultures and languages were to be used as resource to enhance students’ Asia literacy as part of the conservative neoliberal agenda. Despite the discussion of these ‘resources’, the document presented the overall view of bridging to English being prioritised. There was only one mention of the maintenance of home language, with no advice for teachers as to how to support it – relegating it through absence to students, parents and communities, and a responsibility outside of the formal schooling context.

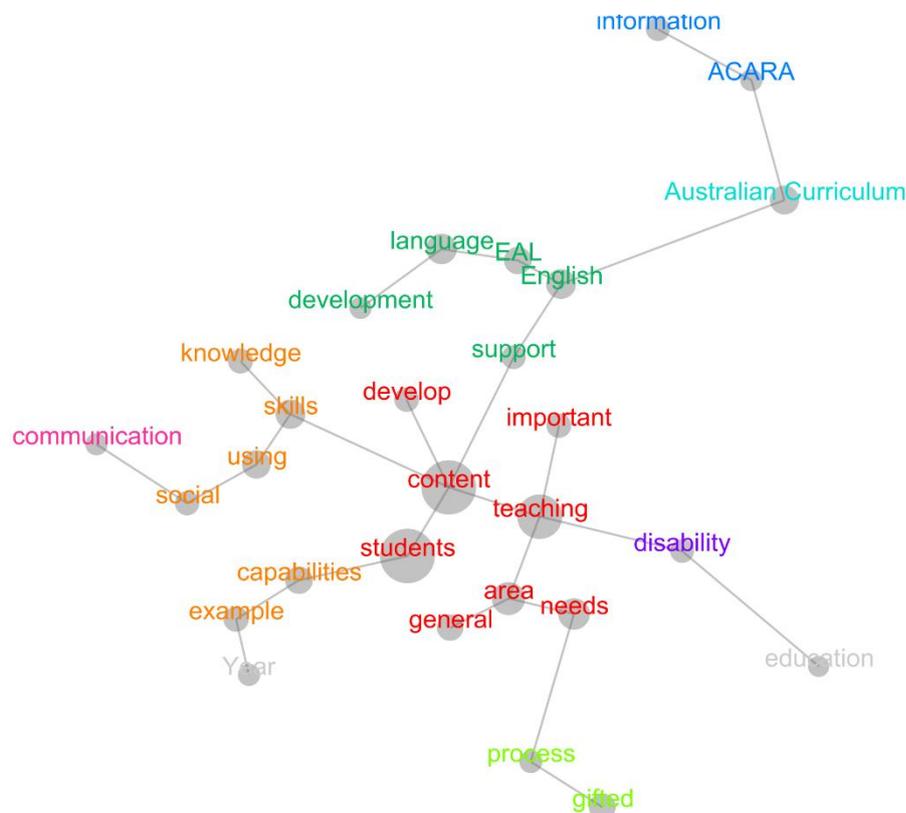


Figure 6.7: Leximancer concept cloud for *Student Diversity*.

The relational values of vocabulary throughout the document supported an Inclusive discourse. Cruce #8 and the document as a whole spoke largely to the teacher as the responsible agent for carrying out the document’s intentions of equity in regards to building on students’ interests, strengths, goals and learning needs, and addressing their needs, particularly through the flowchart which detailed ‘the process teachers follow to meet their obligations’. There was an assumed commonality of values and understanding with the reader (educator), in the positive framing of meeting needs/equity common in current education policy. Though the teacher was framed as the responsible agent to follow the advice of ACARA, they were to develop individualised learning programs, positioning them as the person most able to respond to individual students’ needs, interests and strengths and design appropriate learning programs. Equitable relations were encouraged throughout the document when discussing making adjustments to student learning following consultation, firstly between the school, student, and parents/carers and then extended to professional expertise and community service providers. The student,

parents/carers, teacher and school were framed as working together to provide equitable access to education for the student, common of an Inclusive Discourse.

Inclusive, Assimilative Monolingual and Liberal Multicultural discourses were evident in the expressive values of Cruce #8 and the document. Carrying through the Inclusive nature of the document, the student was framed as an individual, with their own interests, strengths, goals and learning needs, who was entitled to a high-quality, equitable education. Mobilising an Assimilative Monolingual discourse, the term 'support' was highly valued in the text in connection to bridging to English to increase students' ability to participate in schooling and society. Also evident was Liberal Multicultural in Cruce #9, in speaking of the cultural and linguistic resources EAL/D students bring to the classroom as assets to be shared.

Grammatical features

Inclusive and Neoliberal Assimilationist Discourses were each mobilised in a number of the experiential, relational, expressive and structural grammatical features of the document. In the experiential grammatical features, 'personalised learning,' was nominalised within the document (representing the process of tailoring learning to suit individual needs). This nominalisation was repeatedly used throughout each specific advice sets for the three identified aspects of diversity and signified a strong Inclusive Discourse.

Through the relational values of the grammatical features of the document, authority and power relations were signalled throughout Cruce #8 and the document by declarative mode and relational modality. In Cruce #8 under Purpose, the producer of the document (ACARA), in the position of giver of information, addressed principals, schools and teachers as receivers. The manner of top-down educational policy was clear, with ACARA providing resources and advice for principals, schools, and teachers to use and act accordingly. In Cruce #8, 'Teachers will use the Australian Curriculum...' Here, the use of 'will' signalled certainty through relational modality. 'Must' was also used extensively in the document, and quite often it was the teacher that 'must' act or there was a consideration that 'must' be taken into account by the teacher. Other modal auxiliaries were used throughout the text, including should and can. Again, it was teachers that 'should', demonstrating the power of the document (and ACARA as the producer) in directing teachers and signalling obligation. Despite this typically conservative approach and

hierarchical top-down policy model, teachers were given agency to develop individualised learning programs, as seen through relational vocabulary and other features. In a number of cases ‘must’ was used to emphasise the importance of the integrity of learning area content being maintained and students’ entitlement to progress through the curriculum. In this way, the use of the ‘must’ modal auxiliary often enforced an Inclusive discourse (e.g. as part of a process to personalise learning consultation must occur), with the need for consultation appearing in each of the three identified diversity sections: students with disability, gifted and talented and students for whom EAL/D.

There was one instance of relational modality that signalled a Neoliberal Assimilationist undertone to the document, found within the EAL/D section: ‘Teachers must be mindful that students schooled in one culture may take years to ‘retrain’ themselves to different conventions of gesture and body language. Explicit and sensitive assistance in this area is recommended.’ The Neoliberal Assimilationist ideal communicated here was of teachers being mindful of and providing assistance to students ‘assimilating’ themselves within the dominant culture, in order to effectively communicate and participate in the Australian community.

Once again saturating the document through the expressive values of grammatical features, particularly expressive modality, was Inclusive Discourse. ‘Are’ as a verb in its simple present tense form signalled a categorical commitment of the producer to the truth of the proposition that ‘all students are entitled’. The mention of entitlement in this form appeared five times in the document, along with statements such as ‘the needs of every student are important’. ‘Might’ was used to present examples of practice, as to how the Australian Curriculum might be used to address the needs of every student, as well as ‘may be’: ‘the Australian Curriculum may be used to address the learning needs...’ This signalled possibility and (though lower in modality) the producer’s evaluation of the truth, that the Australian Curriculum and *Student Diversity* document particularly provided teachers with the capacity to address the individual learning needs of all students.

An instance of complex sentence construction revealed Assimilative Monolingual Discourse operant in Cruce #9. Opening with the sentence, ‘Although Australia is a linguistically and culturally diverse country, participation in many aspects of Australian life depends on effective communication in Standard Australian English,’ the producer used a subordinating (concession/contrast) conjunction

(‘although’) to link clauses (subordinate + main clause). The construction of this sentence thus privileged the content of the main clause, with Assimilative Monolingual ideals presented through the grammatical structure of the sentence privileging the importance of English for participation in society over an individual’s cultural and linguistic diversity.

Textual Structures

The saturation of Inclusive discourse throughout the features of the document was notable and no doubt impacted upon the ordering of the three identified aspects of diversity (students with disability first, followed by gifted and talented and finally students for whom EAL/D). Intertextual references continued to mobilise Inclusive discourse throughout the document as well as others. Intertextual references to *Disability Standards for Education 2005* and the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* within the opening paragraphs and then further sections of the Students with Disability sub-section activated Inclusive and Human Rights Discourses. The opening sentence of Cruce #8 drew upon the *Melbourne Declaration* through commonality of language, in discussing a curriculum ‘that promotes excellence and equity’. The *Melbourne Declaration* was then discussed under the heading ‘An Australian Curriculum for all students’ (following Cruce #8), with Goals 1 and 2 of the *Declaration* listed (MCEETYA, 2008). In stating that the *Melbourne Declaration* provided the policy framework for the curriculum, this intertextual reference activated numerous discourses including Inclusive Discourse (p.7: personalised learning), Empowerment (p.9: self-worth, self-awareness and personal identity), Human Rights (p.7: access to high quality schooling that is free from discrimination), Liberal Multicultural (p.10: the development of partnerships between schools and Indigenous communities based on cross-cultural respect) and Neoliberal Assimilationist (p.4: competing in the global economy, skilled jobs and ensuring national economic prosperity).

The *Student Diversity* document was unsurprising in its privileging of Inclusive Discourse as the only dominant discourse, given the current education climate for students with disability as well as others considered diverse (in this case gifted and talented and students for whom EAL/D). Operant discourses presented in different sections of the document, representing conservative, liberal and critical orientations to education.

6.5. Conclusions

The results of the analysis of *English, Mathematics, Science, History* and *Geography* learning area documents, *Cross-Curriculum Priorities* and *Student Diversity* documents demonstrated the diversity of approaches to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, histories and cultures underpinning each separate policy document. The Australian Curriculum, despite presenting itself as a cohesive framework, privileged and marginalised the full range of Indigenous education discourses to varying degrees across policy documents. The following are key points as summary of the analysis.

Variances in orientations to education between learning areas

What presented through the analysis of learning area *Overviews* were predominantly conservative and liberal orientations to education, framing Indigenous education discourses within the *Australian Curriculum* policy corpus (see Table 6.2).

Table 6.2: Dominant and operant orientations evident in the Australian Curriculum documents analysed.

| Orientation | Learning Area | | | | |
|-------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|----------|--------------|
| | Maths | English | History | Science | Geography |
| Dominant | Conservative | Liberal | Liberal | Liberal | Critical |
| | | Conservative | | | Liberal |
| Operant | Liberal | Conservative | Liberal | Critical | Critical |
| | | | Conservative | Liberal | Conservative |

Conservative and liberal orientations (with Assimilative Monolingual, Neoliberal Assimilationist, Inclusive and Liberal Multicultural Discourses) were dominant or operant within the *English, Mathematics* and *History Curriculum* documents. In each of these three learning areas, critical and postmodern orientations and therefore discourses were marginalised, with discourses assigned either dormant or absent status. The *Science Curriculum* document privileged a liberal orientation to education, with Inclusive Discourse dominant. Operant were Neoliberal Assimilationist, Liberal Multicultural and Empowerment Discourses, thus framing the curriculum with conservative, liberal and critical orientations. The *Geography Curriculum* document privileged critical (Empowerment) and liberal (Liberal Multicultural) orientations with both discourses assigned dominant status.

Conservative (Neoliberal Multicultural) and critical (Critical Multicultural) orientations were operant. *Geography* then was the only learning area to offer a dominant critical discourse.

An analysis of the content within each learning area tagged as having relevance to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cross-curriculum priority reinforced the analysis of the learning area *Overviews* to some extent, but also presented interesting discrepancies in particular learning areas. *Mathematics* and *English* showed consistency between the *Overview* (and *Rationales* as Cruces) and content of the learning area (see Table 6.3). *History*, despite the *Overview* presenting liberal and conservative orientations, then evidenced critical and liberal orientations within the content. Alternatively *Science* presented liberal and critical orientations within the *Overview*, though content then evidenced liberal and conservative orientations. Finally *Geography* evidenced critical and liberal orientations in both *Overview* and content, as well as conservative in *Overview* only. These discrepancies were not considered unusual, given that the content analysed was that only tagged with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cross-curriculum priority, though demonstrated the different levels of consistency between *Overviews* (which included the learning area's *Rationale*) and content.

Table 6.3: Discourses evident in the content of Australian Curriculum learning areas analysed.

| Learning Area | Discourses Evident Within Content | Orientation |
|---------------|---|--------------|
| Mathematics | Liberal Multicultural | Liberal |
| | Neoliberal Assimilationist | Conservative |
| English | Liberal Multicultural | Liberal |
| | Assimilative Monolingual | Conservative |
| History | Critical Multicultural | Critical |
| | Human Rights | Critical |
| | Liberal Multicultural | Liberal |
| Science | Liberal Multicultural | Liberal |
| | Neoliberal Assimilationist | Conservative |
| Geography | Human Rights | Critical |
| | Empowerment | Critical |
| | Critical Multicultural (<i>through alternative reading</i>) | Critical |
| | Liberal Multicultural | Liberal |

Marginalised critical and postmodern discourses

Postmodern discourse (Intercultural Both-ways) was absent in all Australian Curriculum policy documents analysed. The critical Multilingual Multicultural discourse was also absent in all Australian Curriculum policy documents analysed. Certainly in the *Student Diversity* document in the sub-section where language and culture may have been seen to be most relevant, ‘Students for whom EAL/D’, evidence found within grammatical features of the text demonstrated the marginalisation of the value of linguistic and cultural diversity, with English language learning and participation in society being prioritised. Despite the linguistic and cultural background of students being seen as a resource to be shared and used in the classroom in the vocabulary features of the document, the maintenance of first language was not seen to be within the realm of formal schooling (Multilingual Multicultural) and no mention was made of the co-construction or interrogation of the different knowledge systems those students may bring into the formal schooling environment (Intercultural Both-ways). Such a view of resources could be representative of Assimilative Monolingual Discourse, in which students’ cultures and languages are used as a classroom resource to enhance others’ intercultural literacy (for example Asia literacy) if they are seen as having economic or societal value.

Critical Multicultural Discourse was absent in five of the seven Australian Curriculum policy documents analysed (*English, Mathematics, Science, History & Student Diversity*). *Geography* was the only learning area in which Critical Multicultural Discourse was operant. In none was it dominant. As with *History*, Critical Multicultural discourse was dormant in the *Cross-Curriculum Priorities* document, only accessible through an alternative reading (of actions within the sustainability priority).

Human Rights Discourse was dormant in all five learning areas, accessible only through intertextual reference to the *Student Diversity* and *Cross-Curriculum Priorities* supporting documentation where it was operant. Similarly, Empowerment Discourse was dormant in *English, Mathematics* and *History*, accessible again only through intertextual reference to the *Cross-Curriculum Priorities* supporting documentation where it too was operant. Empowerment Discourse was operant within *Science* and dominant within *Geography* (and as mentioned previously the only critical discourse dominant within a learning area).

Assimilative Monolingualism as an underlying discourse

Assimilative Monolingual Discourse was operant within *English* and *Student Diversity* documents. Though not evidenced explicitly in all documents analysed, it was understood that the Australian Curriculum was to be delivered, assessed and reported on in Standard Australian English (SAE). The importance of English was detailed in particular sections of the Australian Curriculum (for example *Student Diversity*). When first languages were mentioned, this was in relation to improving English literacy. The presence of Assimilative Monolingual Discourse in particular documents, the nonexistence of bilingualism in all Australian Curriculum policy documents analysed and therefore marginalisation through complete absence of Multilingual Multicultural Discourse was significant. When read as a whole, the Australian Curriculum thus featured an underlying Monolingual Assimilationist Discourse.

The above CDA analysis presents the description and interpretation of the Australian Curriculum policy corpus. In the following chapter I describe the research methods relating to the community-based investigation, before the results of the investigation are presented in Chapter Eight. They are then used as a point of comparison to the above results in Chapter Nine, in order to discuss how the discourses evident in the Australian Curriculum align to the education aspirations of Aboriginal people.

Chapter Seven: Research Design

Chapter Six provided a description and interpretation of the Australian Curriculum policy corpus, and the discourses privileged and marginalised within it. This chapter, as the second of two that detail the research design, departs from Part A (the textual analysis) and relates primarily to Part B and the second Research Question: which Indigenous education discourses do Aboriginal community members draw upon in expressing their education aspirations for the community's children? In this chapter I introduce the overall methodological approach to Part B, informed by advocacy ethnography, narrative portraits as methodology and juxta-texts, and detail the methods used to explore this research question, including data sources and collection methods, data analysis and reporting format. Ethical considerations as they apply to the community-based investigation are discussed in detail. Ethical considerations of interactions with Aboriginal Peoples were particularly important to this section of the study, and I have justified specific protocols throughout this chapter. Limitations of Part B of the research are also considered.

7.1. Methodology: Supplementing Critical Discourse Analysis with narrative portraits as method

As discussed in Chapter Five, the community-based investigation was designed to include Aboriginal perspectives within the study, and to enhance the policy corpus under investigation by adding supplementary data as further discourse samples (Fairclough, 1992). It has been said that this addition to the study attempted to engage Aboriginal people in the research, to avoid the danger of utilising a Western methodology to analyse Western data relating to Aboriginal Peoples, without dialogue with those implicated in such a study. The interdisciplinary nature of CDA, discussed at the theoretical level but criticised for not being conducted in practicality, is also addressed by such an addition, by drawing on a core CDA approach complemented by Indigenous research principles (de Melo Resende, 2010).

CDA as method (in terms of text description, interpretation and explanation) was not considered wholly appropriate to use in the analysis of interview responses, given the way in which it generally utilises analytical frameworks based on 'standard' linguistic models such as Standard Australian English (Kettle, 2005). Well

before data collection took place, I recognised that the interview responses may be a blend of languages, including ‘standard’ and ‘non-standard’ forms of English such as Aboriginal English, as well as Aboriginal languages. These forms of communication, producing hybrid texts in blending English forms and other languages, required more effective ways of analysing communication (Kettle, 2005). The description techniques of CDA, as used in the analysis of the Australian Curriculum policy corpus, could not practically or ethically be applied to interview responses. I was also uncomfortable with the nature of such a task, and considered in depth the ethical concerns of interpreting interview data and re-presenting the perspectives of Aboriginal people. The issue was around how to treat the data and analyse interview responses, to reveal the discourses drawn upon by informants¹⁶, in a way that was grounded in values of care and respect. I was stalled while I grappled with a way of interpreting and re-presenting the data, whilst not smothering the informants’ voices with my own.

The use of narrative offers ways in which space can be created for informants’ voices. Stories or narratives are prominent in research that strives to hear the voices of those considered less powerful (Waterhouse, 2007). Barone (2009) argues that although at times imperfect, the telling of the stories of marginalised people is necessary through research to document non-White experiences. Narratives within research also provide ways in which new questions and modes of thinking are created, rather than it resulting in a singular answer (Martin, 2014). This offered potential for the research, as the community-based investigation did not seek one singular answer but instead sought to understand and present the complexity of the research topic. In doing so, the researcher is tasked with questioning their privileged position and their standpoint (Martin, 2014). There are dilemmas to wrestle with in such use of narratives within research, which require active examination including complexities concerning representation, voice and interpretive authority, as the researcher attempts to narrate the narratives of others (Chase, 2005; Matthias & Petchauer, 2012).

Considering these complexities, I made the decision to draw upon advocacy ethnography and narrative portraits, as articulated by Smyth and McInerney (2013),

¹⁶ In this study I prefer to use the term ‘informant’ for those involved in the community-based investigation, to recognise their privileged status in relation to Aboriginal knowledges and perspectives. In the literature, the word participant is often used so appears within this theoretical discussion.

as well as juxta-texts (Petersen, 2015) to create a layered text (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). In approaching the writing process and writing product as deeply intertwined, and using writing as a method of inquiry, I placed myself within the text to explore new ways of knowing (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). These methodological practices informed my overall methodological stance within Part B of this research, which differed to that taken in Part A, as it sought to actively deny the possibility of ‘allegedly neutral, objectivist, detached’ social research and disrupt conventional approaches to it (Smyth & McInerney, 2013, p. 3).

In drawing upon narrative portraits, the distinction here is made between portraiture, as a methodology (or philosophical approach to the study) and portraits as method. I did not subscribe to portraiture as methodology, as invented by Lawrence-Lightfoot (2005) and detailed in *The Art and Science of Portraiture* (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Portraiture as methodology reflects the convergence of art and science, of aesthetics with empiricism (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005) in an attempt to record, interpret and document the perspectives of participants through shared negotiation and shaping of the evolving image (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). The researcher is required to ‘channel the spirit’ of the participant, listening both literally and metaphorically to their voice to then capture their presence within the portrait (Hampsten, 2015, p. 470). In functioning as both researcher and artist, qualitative research protocols are followed whilst the researcher creatively paints written pictures and unapologetically uses their own authentic voice to portray the complexity and dynamism of the human experience (Matthias & Petchauer, 2012). The line between researcher and researched becomes hazy, but with the ultimate goal being to enhance understanding of the research subject (Hackmann, 2002). Portraiture as methodology has been criticised from postmodernist positions, for its attempts to capture the essence of a subject as a stable truth and for the authoritative position of the portraitist in constructing such as interpretation (English, 2000). English (2000, p. 21) contends that portraiture is clouded in the ‘politics of vision’ or the ‘uncontested right of the portraitist/researcher to situate, centre, label and fix’ through descriptive composition what the researcher proposes as reality. There is the view that power is concealed within portraiture (English, 2000).

Seeing it as problematic to insert my own voice into the analysis and final research product in such a way, I drew upon the work of Smyth and McInerney

(2012, 2013, 2014), who have used narrative portraits within an advocacy ethnography theoretical conceptualisation in numerous education studies. Advocacy ethnography, a term coined by Smyth and McInerney (2013), is situated within socially critical research, which has an advocacy role in the representation of the lived experiences of marginalised groups. It is committed to ‘re-assembling, reconstructing, and portraying accounts of social life in ways that honour its inherent complexity - rather than purporting to be able to render it down to fragments’ (Smyth & McInerney, 2013, p. 3). Certainly, this research recognised the complexity of the issue of Aboriginal representation within the Australian Curriculum, and the discourses drawn upon by community members in constructing their educational aspirations for children in the community. The discursive field was recognised as both contradictory and complimentary, complex in its makeup and not reducible to a fixed or stable account of (a part of) social life.

Advocacy ethnography also seeks to expose deficit thinking and search for explanations of the social rather than continue the ‘corrosion of character’ that apportions blame to individuals (Smyth & McInerney, 2013, p. 3). This was a research stance taken and articulated in Chapter One. Advocacy ethnography is ‘openly ideological’ in that it promotes the transparency of research agendas and interests, denying that social research can be ‘neutral, objectivist [and] detached’ (Smyth & McInerney, 2013, p. 3). It was thus complimentary to the original aim of this research and its inherently critical foundations, in turning the gaze toward policy as social practice rather than problematising the individual, to make visible power relations as manifested in discourse. I placed myself within the research, making my position, agenda and critical theoretical conceptualisation known.

Methodologically, advocacy ethnography requires creating authentic spaces in the research product that ‘give voice’ to those rarely given the opportunity to engage in public conversations (Smyth & McInerney, 2013, p. 4). In doing so, Smyth and McInerney cite Lawrence-Lightfoot’s (1997) work in portraiture as inspiration, though their methods differ in ways I considered of key importance. Smyth and McInerney (2013, p. 12) attempt as much as possible to ‘allow the portraits to speak for themselves’, balancing the first-person voices of the participant with that of the researcher. The researcher’s voice is not interwoven through the portrait to the extent of Lawrence-Lightfoot’s ‘highly creative’ approach (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005, p. 10). Attempts are made to draw distinctions between researcher and participant, in

presenting a lead-in paragraph (contextual information provided by the researcher) followed by the narrative portrait (a representation of the participant's response). The narrative portrait, as an extended thematic statement, is crafted from the interview transcript, with as minimal editing as possible taking place to capture a particular theme in detail (Smyth & Robinson, 2015). Smyth and McInerney (2013) admit that compromises are made in their process, as portraits are not verbatim accounts of participants' speech, nor are they all that was and could be said. Smyth and McInerney (2013, p. 14) however 'endeavour to remain faithful to the participant's intentions, create a space for their ideas, and retain their vernacular language' in order to retain a reasonable balance between researcher and participant voices. Thus whilst this approach met my desire to create authentic space for informants' voices, to find a balance and not smother them with my own, there remain imperfections to point out. In the doing of research, through interview and analysis processes, there exist elements of co-construction where what is said and not said is mediated and negotiated (Pedroni, 2007). I am wary of engaging in a 'ruse of authenticity' by claiming that I allowed the informants to 'speak for themselves' in an unconstrained way when such co-construction exists (Pedroni, 2007, p. 158).

I considered the use of narrative portraits as method, to be used within the CDA project, as conducive to CDA's multidisciplinary nature. It was therefore used conjunctively with the descriptive, interpretive and explanatory stages of this CDA research as a whole. I felt that the analysis and representation of community responses through narrative portraits was the most ethical way forward, to allow the informants to 'speak' in the final research product (whilst being cautious of such a claim and noting its limitations), which considered the reproduction of sociocultural biases as discourses in curriculum policy. Institutional discourses are viewed within a CDA frame as potentially colonising, with transformative power over social relations (Souto-Manning, 2014). Souto-Manning (2014, p. 163) comments however that 'a discourse is only powerful when it is recycled in stories everyday people tell,' and as such narratives can be joined with CDA to create a more robust means of analysis to assess the discursive field and relations of power.

In further unsettling my authoritative voice, juxta-texts (Petersen, 2015) are utilised within this chapter and in Chapter Eight, and contribute in their own way to my overall methodological stance which denies allegedly neutral research. Often traditional research design chapters are presented as such – allegedly neutral and

detached, comfortable narratives of the research process. In disrupting this and my authority as a researcher through the juxta-texts, I have attempted to provide a 'messy' example of the uncomfortable reality of engaging in critical qualitative research (Pillow, 2003, p. 193). Doing so requires moving toward a reflexivity of discomfort, whereby the common, comfortable usages of reflexivity are resisted and interrupted, and simple 'confessional-tale or truth-claim accounts' avoided (Pillow, 2003, p. 190).

Throughout their presentation within this chapter, juxta-texts have been interwoven to disrupt the format of a traditional Western research design chapter and formalised thinking. In crafting a research design chapter 'to come across as properly social sciency' (Petersen, 2015, p. 152), I could have presented this chapter in a straightforward manner, minus juxtapositions, and certainly it can be read without them. Such a description fails to acknowledge the 'messiness' of the research process however, and the theoretical underpinnings of the research. Juxta-texts are continued in Chapter Eight, alongside the narrative portraits of informants and my analysis of their responses. These juxta-texts, inspired to some degree by Petersen (2015), therefore aim to unsettle the set of premises underpinning my authoritative voice. Juxta-text implies a means of destabilisation, comparing and contrasting the 'scientific' text of research procedures with a reflexive tale of the process. Petersen (2015) calls attention to 'scientific' and 'reflexive' texts as textual performances, and if placed alongside one another allow the presumed authenticity and authority of each to be destabilised. Such juxta-texts seek to extend reflexivity beyond its now common and comfortable usage in qualitative research, where it offers a means of exploring representation, and legitimizing and validating research practices (Pillow, 2003). Destabilisation of this is important here, firstly, to further the 'post-ness' of this research and secondly to add to discussions around how research ethics for researchers working with Aboriginal Peoples are full of complexity and extend well beyond codes of conduct typical of Western Institution Review Board/Committee processes (Denzin, 2005, p. 952).

Drawn from my research journal, notes, communication with supervisors and reflections on the process whilst writing this chapter, the juxta-texts demonstrate how my ways of working did not (out of necessity and respect for community) always align flawlessly with the research procedures and ethical processes designed, detailed and approved elsewhere. These circumstances highlight the ways in which ethical

research is not only tied to prescriptive, regulated approaches but also to processes of engagement (Davis, 2010). Through these juxta-texts I hope to contribute to discussions of research with Aboriginal Peoples and the practicalities, processes and privileges involved.

Am I uncomfortable? Yes. How do I narrate my experiences of the research process, without being self-indulgent? How do I talk about the research problematic, without reverting to a 'clean' explanation in which my textual authority is reinscribed? My first attempts were not disruptive enough – there needed to be more tension, contradiction, disruption, vulnerability, insecurity, complication. I'll try again to disrupt my smooth, comfortable narrative... but where will such disruptions and admissions leave me?

7.2. Research procedures

Research procedures relating to the Part B, the community-based investigation, are discussed below.

7.2.1. Data sources and collection methods

For the community-based investigation, interviews with community members (Source Two) were the main data source. Focus group discussion (Source Three), as an additional data source, was used to provide context for this stage of the research. As with the textual analysis, supplementary contextual materials were drawn upon to add layers of understanding to the interview responses and focus group discussion. Some of this contextual material again formed part of the 'archive', the whole of the discursive practice falling within the research project's domain (Fairclough, 1992, p. 227). This supplementary material included media reports on the community, websites, published histories of the community (noted however that they were largely written by non-Aboriginal Peoples) and community landmarks and displays.

As mentioned earlier in this thesis, I have attempted to localise this research through my relationship with one particular community in the Northern Territory. It is that of Elliott, where I began my teaching career. Thus, contextual material also included my past and ongoing interactions with the community, as a former teacher and resident of that community from 2010 to 2012. This gave me particular insight into community issues, schooling and relationships from a teacher's perspective. Following my relocation to Brisbane to begin this research, my relationship with the community continued through visits, regular phone contact and Facebook

interactions with particular community members. This of course required careful examination of ethical considerations, which are discussed throughout this chapter but particularly feature in the juxta-texts and section on ethical considerations.

Community Reference Group

It should be noted prior to the following discussion that a Community Reference Group was established to guide and monitor the research at the site, and provide cultural advice to me before, during and after data collection. This group was made up of Senior Aboriginal community members, led by a Traditional Owner. On visits to Elliott in the preparation of this investigation, with the most recent visit occurring two months prior to data collection, I spoke with a number of key community members in regards to this Community Reference Group. On returning for data collection with appropriate ethical approvals, I officially invited those community members to participate and provided participant information sheets and consent forms. Those who consented and formed the group met five times during the data collection, to discuss recruitment and interview procedures, transcribing, and cultural considerations. The member/s of this group were active in guiding and monitoring the research, with one member of the group in particular meeting and communicating with me regularly (near daily - at the five formal meetings as well as other informal interactions) whilst I was in community.

Ok, here I go, presenting the experience as a straightforward endeavour. But it wasn't quite so! I had intended on a larger Community Reference Group, but a number of key community members that I had spoken with on previous visits were absent. How did I decide who was 'key', you ask? By following the advice of a Traditional Owner, so that such decisions were not my own. Possible replacement members (those senior in the community and able to work with others in a culturally appropriate way along kinship lines) were busy with ceremony.

Ceremony! I had arrived in community, unknowingly, just five days before its commencement. Ceremony, or young men's initiation, happens yearly Elliott though normally in December or January. For reasons not shared with me, it had been delayed until late February. In the planning of my trip to the community to undertake interviews, this hadn't been communicated with me – as a non-Aboriginal female, ceremony was understandably none of my business. This was so frustrating though! Why couldn't I (as a researcher, not as a non-Aboriginal woman) have been told, so that I could have travelled to community at another time!? With this important cultural event being held, a number of men were unavailable after work as they had to return to the ceremony ground to fulfil their responsibilities. They therefore declined to

participate in the research, as either Community Reference Group member or interviewee. This impacted significantly upon the Community Reference Group, as there were no male voices represented.

These happenings ultimately meant that my Community Reference Group comprised of two members, both Senior Women and Traditional Owners. For some of the meetings, one was absent and unable to be contacted. The second of these women was my key mentor and guide throughout this investigation. Can one or two people be considered a 'group'? As a researcher I felt this left me on shaky ground, but there was little that could be done to overcome this particular issue (for me and my Western ethical review protocols that is). My one-woman-group did not recommend any others be approached to join, and out of respect as well as a lack of understanding of kinship relationships and seniority, I didn't suggest otherwise.

Source Two: Interviews with community members

The main data source for the community-based investigation was interviews undertaken with community members, as this section of the study was to explore the education aspirations of Aboriginal people, to then contribute to the overall aim of the study in exploring how those aspirations are supported in the dominant Indigenous education discourses evidenced within the Australian Curriculum. Informants were local residents of Elliott, and included parents, carers, other family relations to school-aged children and elders.

'Official' ethical approval was sought and granted to undertake interviews in this community, as well as 'non-official' approval, by community leaders and Traditional Owners. Once permitted to undertake research in Elliott, I held small informal information sessions to explain the nature of the research, the participant information sheet and consent form. This initial face-to-face contact and verbal explanation was necessary to allow informants whose primary language is one other than English or those with reading difficulties to ask questions and seek clarification about participation in the research. Snowball sampling was then used to recruit informants, allowing them to control their involvement and decline (by not approaching me) if they did not want to participate.

My original ethics application detailed that a whole-of-community information session would be held, to explain the research as detailed above. The coinciding timing of interviewing and ceremony impacted upon my planned methods however, as I was advised against advertising and inviting all community members to an information session. This was not only because of ceremony but also other events that were happening in town at the time that took priority, including a community meeting with government representatives

from territory and federal levels flown in to discuss the housing crisis being experienced. I was unsure as to how to proceed then, and to what extent I could deviate from my original approved plan. Following the advice of my Community Reference Group, I adapted the plan and spoke to key individuals in the community to spread the word, and then participation in the research was communicated in small, at times impromptu, information sessions. I admit I wasn't confident that this was ethically sound, with my insecurity making me hyper-aware of issues of adequate information-giving, informant understanding and coercing individuals to participate. I spent the first week of the 'data collection' phase communicating with community members about the aims of the research and nature of participation, before then recruiting informants.

Data collection consisted of one semi-structured interview with each informant. These interviews were conducted in person, in a location chosen by the interviewee if not in the private meeting room originally arranged. The interviews lasted between thirty to ninety minutes each, and generally included a selection of relevant questions from the sample list, as well as any other themes that arose (Appendix C). Questions were designed to be open-ended that allowed informants to express their vision of the desired education for the community's children, and were adapted as appropriate depending on the information given by informants. The initial questions aimed to gather information on the interviewee's own experiences of Western education as well as Traditional education, to provide some background to their responses. A number of questions then related to traditional knowledge required and the roles of young people at different ages, and what actions they are expected to partake in or contribute to their community traditionally. This led to questions around informal schooling happening in community, the cultural needs of young people in community and whether these are addressed in formal schooling. Interviewees were then asked a range of questions around content and pedagogy related to the teaching and learning of culture within a school context, as well as community involvement in schooling. Questions about relevance, and objection to or endorsement of the Australian Curriculum, and other education policies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were asked, and finally their vision of the ideal education and aspirations for the community's children. These questions served to uncover the educational context experienced by the informant, informal and formal educational needs of the community's children, the informant's vision of the ideal education for the community's children, and how these ideas connected.

In just a short paragraph I've described a process which I reported to my supervisors as 'making me lose my mind!' Looking back, I was being a little too dramatic but there were some definite challenges in arranging and undertaking interviews. It was actually necessary to 'lose' my old mind, conditioned by dominant discourses and research expectations, and replace it with local, culturally appropriate expectations, processes, roles and thinking.

It was intended that interviews be held in a pre-arranged private meeting room, in the Elliott Council offices. Informants told me that it would be more convenient to be interviewed elsewhere though, so I undertook interviews in parks, the medical clinic, private residences, school and council offices, and under trees on the roadside. At all times I ensured that the informant was comfortable with the privacy of the space, which was at their choosing. I wasn't always comfortable with the privacy of the space though. It was difficult for me to mentally reconcile this with ethical protocols and issues of confidentiality – surely anyone seeing me with notebook in hand, sitting under a tree on the roadside with Aunty, would know she was an informant to the research and may overhear her responses! Was this an issue for her? She told me it was not, and decided upon the nature of her participation. So I ran with it.

For those informants who asked that I come to their home to interview, the limited success I had in finding them at times was frustrating. Much of my time was spent driving around the camps and town, trying to locate informants. It's hard to describe what this work was like. One day I literally spent two hours looking for someone for an arranged interview, found them in the park and their first comment was 'lucky you didn't look for me at home first!' Flexibility was key. Did this difficulty in locating informants signify a deeper issue of a lack of interest and commitment by them to the research? This thought niggled at the back of my mind.

In addition to interview location changes, questions were adapted as well after approvals had been granted. Although originally discussed with the Community Reference Group in the planning of ethical clearance to undertake the research, some questions were advised against once I arrived in community. These were largely around the traditional knowledge a young person is meant to have at different ages, and their traditional roles at different ages. Perhaps these questions were more sensitive because of the men's business happening at the time. The recommended avoidance of such topics was disappointing, as I knew it would then limit my discussion on the social roles children and young people occupied, and whether those were supported within the curriculum. There was also concern expressed during a Community Reference Group meeting that some of the questions were hard, and informants might not know the answer. This was seen to bring shame, which was to be avoided. Whilst I followed the advice of the Community Reference Group, and avoided some questions on the original sample list or approached others more sensitively, wasn't informants not 'knowing the answer' an important point that could have been explored further in my thesis, rather than avoided?

I transcribed all interviews, and transcripts were then returned to informants if they had so requested. Eleven informants requested transcripts, and these were either given in person as a hard-copy (four) before I left community, posted (five) or sent via email (two). Contact details were recorded, so that I could continue communicating with the informant once departing the community, should any responses need clarification.

Did I communicate with any informants after departing, you as the reader ask? No I didn't, except for one. Some clarification had occurred before I left community, and after leaving I didn't feel I needed to further clarify any responses. I also didn't have any response however from informants via email, post or text to confirm they had received their transcript, and this admittedly made me quite uncomfortable long after the event. I'm not sure if this pointed to a lack of interest in the research, and if so, what that means for a work that claims to be inclusive of Aboriginal perspectives and voices - in whose interests is it 'inclusive'?

Source Three: Focus Group Discussion

Informants in focus group discussions contributed to the development of an Aboriginal historical narrative of Elliott, included in Chapter Eight. This short history of Elliott, to detail the context of the community and history of the site to frame the results of interviews, aimed to privilege local Aboriginal perspectives. Such a historical narrative was important to reveal the foundations of the community's ontological and epistemological beliefs.

For the Community Reference Group, it was imperative I include in this thesis information on the importance of the community as a Dreaming trail site. The construction of what appears in Chapter Eight was no easy task, with the piece worked and re-worked constantly until the informants and I arrived at an acceptable compromise. Perhaps for non-informants this historical narrative will not seem all that detailed or enlightening – I read it now, and think what purpose does this serve? I talk about the tensions and restrictions of including detail within the narrative later...

Focus group discussions took place in a range of locations as directed by the informants. Expected to be approximately one hour in length each, the actual length and number of meetings depended upon the informants' wishes. Those participating in focus group discussions were provided with transcripts of the meetings for verification.

You ask if this ever happened? Yes, for some discussions but not all. The first two focus group discussions were transcribed, and provided to informants.

Even though the transcription process was detailed in the information sheets and consent forms, seeing all of her words written down in this way was a surprise to Aunty. This possible lack of understanding raised ethical concerns, not only for Aunty but my other informants – how could I be sure that informants had really understood the information provided to them? Other than verbal verification, I was uncertain.

In terms of verifying the transcripts, Aunty didn't appear interested in reading through them, and instead told me to use her words as a guide only to then construct my own. We had begun the task with differing ideas of how her words were going to be used within the research, and had to renegotiate this as the research unfolded.

Managing the Community Reference Group and focus group discussions were challenging, because of the difficulty I perceived in separating tasks with informants and completing the work I had intended during each meeting. In addition to the development of Elliott's Aboriginal historical narrative, time was also spent on things like Centrelink matters, assisting with personal errands, photographing significant trees for the Sacred Sites mob, and collecting spinifex wax. Some of these activities were a pleasure and a privilege though not expected or considered part of the intended research work. The way in which these activities took place also meant that focus group discussions were not conducted as planned in a private meeting room at the Elliott Council offices, but rather anywhere – locations included my accommodation, in the car whilst running errands, at significant sites around the town and in the bush. This was again difficult to reconcile with ethical protocols, as such processes deviated from the original approved plan. At this point, I was very unsure as to where authority was located – with the ethical Review Board/Committee or with Aunty?

Rather than focus group discussions immediately following Community Reference Group meetings (as detailed in my ethics application), discussion flowed back and forth between these elements of the research. I would 'randomly' be provided with cultural advice or aspects of Elliott's cultural history whenever informants thought it relevant. The recording of this was thus made difficult, and some discussions were not recorded and therefore not transcribed. I needed to adjust my thinking and allow this process, and generation of the historical narrative, to develop in a more organic way than what I originally envisioned, but the question of deviating from the approved research procedure remained.

7.2.2. Justification of sources

Given my experiences as a teacher, curriculum leader and temporary community resident in Elliott, I was less interested in interviewing those involved with the production of the curriculum policy corpus and more interested in exploring the knowledge, beliefs and attitudes of those (at the margins) it was meant to serve. Interviewing parents, careers and family members of Aboriginal children being

educated in a remote community allowed for a different assessment of the Australian Curriculum policy and broader sociocultural situation to emerge. The comparative nature of the research questions allowed the text analysis (Part A) and community-based investigation (Part B) to intersect, and this section of the study serves to offer an explanation of alternative sociocultural practice in which the Australian Curriculum is implemented. In undertaking such research, it was imperative that I be guided by the Community Reference Group, to ensure that the research was sensitive to the cultural context of Elliott, and draw upon the focus group discussions, to provide contextual information jointly developed with those senior community members involved.

7.2.3. Sampling

Differing from CDA conceptualisations of sampling, this stage of the research utilised distinct sampling techniques for each source.

Source Two

Snowball sampling was used to recruit informants for the semi-structured interviews. Initial contact was made in person with potential informants, inviting them to attend a presentation on the project. This face-to-face interaction was intended to overcome the issue of potential informants not having other stable means of contact. Those spoken with were then asked to refer more potential informants, who could approach me to participate in the research. Snowball sampling is recognised as problematic in that social relationships influence the sample, but alternatively it counteracted the potential bias in recruiting informants due to my relationships with them.

As already confessed, the final sample wasn't the ideal, with ceremony impacting upon the participation of males in the research. Though the expected gender ratio as detailed in my ethics application had been 1:1, this wasn't possible with many men declining to participate due to cultural and family responsibilities.

I also found older males seemed hesitant to be interviewed. On a number of occasions when I discussed the research with men, they directed me to speak with their wives. I don't know with certainty if this was a cultural or gender-based issue, and men felt uncomfortable sitting with me privately to be interviewed, or if perhaps they felt education was more the business of their wives. I later offered to interview parents/carers together in an attempt to

overcome this, but still there was an absence of older males represented in the results. I did find that younger males were willing to participate and approached me to do so – perhaps this was because of the previous relationships I had with these informants’ families whilst I was employed at the school.

Source Three

Informants in focus group discussions were those already invited to be part of the Community Reference Group. As mentioned, the Community Reference Group was established to guide and monitor the research in community, and one member in particular took a very active role in doing so. An offshoot of the Community Reference Group was focus group discussion, as it was considered culturally appropriate that senior Aboriginal community members guiding the research be involved in the construction of Elliott’s historical narrative.

That the Community Reference Group’s (or Aunty’s) guidance did not necessarily align with the approved research procedure has been mentioned in some of these juxta-texts so far. This created considerable tensions and contradictions. I’ve asked where authority lay. It was ultimately a question of location – in community, when I felt far removed from my work environment and Institutional Review Board/Committee processes and thinking, Aunty was the authority. As a Senior Woman and Traditional Owner, I followed her recommendations. When I returned home however, and was writing this chapter, I became increasingly concerned. In my attempts to undertake research in ways considered most appropriate to Aunty, had I at times acted ‘unethically’ by not following particular protocols approved by my Institution’s Ethics Review Board/Committee?

7.3. Data analysis

The data analysis of interview responses was undertaken within the research’s broader framework of Fairclough’s (1992; 2001) descriptive, interpretive and explanatory procedures for CDA. Rather than using tools such as Fairclough’s 10 CDA Questions and Leximancer in the descriptive stage of interview responses however, already identified as inappropriate, narrative portraits as method was selected. This involved more thematic analysis of interview transcripts, using the Indigenous education discourse taxonomy as a discourse identification tool. The descriptive stage of data analysis progressed systematically, alongside Fairclough’s (1992; 2001) interpretive and explanatory procedures.

Firstly, interview transcripts were edited, with as minimal editing to the informant’s speech as possible. The initial questions and responses around an

informant's schooling background were removed, as many personal and identifiable details were revealed within them. All questions asked by the interviewer were removed, replaced where necessary with two to three words to lead in the informant's responses. The order of these responses was at times altered, to capture a particular theme and create coherence within the narrative. All narratives were read and re-read, and coded within three broad thematic questions: Why should language and culture be taught at school; what is your vision of schooling for children in this community; and what is the purpose of education here for children? These thematic questions came out of the interview questions asked and those that were most taken up by informants in their responses. They served to provide a logical framing of responses in which the different elements of community aspirations could be considered and discussed.

You wonder if there was any negotiation over these questions between me and the informants? No. I settled on them during data analysis, after having departed the community, and didn't contact informants to discuss this framing of their responses. So what is logical to me, may or may not be to the community.

The coding of responses within these thematic questions, in conjunction with the Indigenous education discourse taxonomy, was used to identify instances of particular discourses and those most dominant within informant responses.

From the narrative of each informant, portraits were then drawn. Each portrait was given a one-line 'grab' from the interview, to capture an overall theme and frame the response (Smyth & Robinson, 2015). Further checking was undertaken to ensure there were no identifying comments or features within them.

Necessary, but such a shame! The informants (read: former colleagues, associates, parents of former students) were so forthcoming with personal details of their lives that really added to the richness of their stories and added another layer of understanding to the reality of their aspirations (as theorised in Chapter Eight). It was really disappointing to leave those details on the cutting room floor. This raised an important question about the tension between the authentic representation of informants, and compliance with ethical protocols. Was I able to present the true reality of my informants' experiences and perspectives, when so much rich detail needed to be excluded from the narrative? If not, to what extent could such research be considered a contribution to the field? In navigating this dilemma, so many times I felt restricted.

Whilst an encapsulating storyline or lead-in paragraph for these portraits is normally provided by the researcher, the construction of these was problematic (Smyth & McInerney, 2013; Smyth & Robinson, 2015). It was difficult to provide contextual information normally encapsulated within the storyline without compromising the confidentiality of informants. Informants provided such rich detail of their lives, but given they are members of a very small community, this detail potentially made them identifiable. Certainly though comment could be made on the significance of each portrait to the themes highlighted within the research, and these were wrapped around the portraits rather than always presented prior to it. I thus deviated slightly from Smyth & McInerney's (2013) approach to narrative portraits in this respect.

The focus group discussion was not so analysed, but was drawn upon as a source of information to construct an Aboriginal historical narrative of Elliott. Focus group discussion was transcribed, and drafts written in close consultation with the Community Reference Group. This contextualisation privileged local perspectives and provides cultural and spiritual information on Elliott to situate informant responses. I recognise the limitations of this contextualisation, in that it is not by any means the whole or only story of Elliott.

'You can't write this. Or this. Cross that out'. Aunty had a texta in hand, crossing out large sections of draft writing because it wasn't appropriate to share beyond our discussions or she didn't feel it was her knowledge to pass on. I was always a little nervous when she took to my work with that texta! But that's the point, isn't it, that it was never 'my work' and I don't have ownership of others' stories. The published story is one that Aunty felt comfortable sharing, but there are many more that were either not shared with me as a researcher, or known and deliberately left out of this thesis. I'm thankful for her honesty and support, in trying to present some cultural and historical knowledge to encourage understanding in a way that respects all informants and community members. At the same time I admit I'm disappointed, as I look back on all of the 'data' collected and what had been shared. The richness of informants' stories that has been excluded here once again could have contributed so much to this thesis and my critique of the national Australian Curriculum. It seems that the information excluded is in some ways the most important, as it demonstrates the depth of cultural and spiritual knowledge held by community members and their unique ontological and epistemological beliefs and values. How powerful can a work such as this be if that detail cannot be used in support of it?

7.4. Reporting of results

The results of the semi-structured interviews are provided in Chapter Eight. The chapter firstly presents the historical narrative of Elliott developed through focus group discussions, as well as a description of Elliott's material reality, to contextualise the proceeding community responses. The community responses, or narrative portraits, are presented as stretches of narrative interwoven with an interpretation of those responses in connection with Indigenous education discourses. In this way, 'the researcher speaks differently from, but not disrespectfully of,' the participant's voice' (Chase, 2005, p. 664). That the interview and analysis processes contain elements of co-construction has been pointed out (Pedroni, 2007). Chapter Eight therefore offers my (the researcher's) interpretation of the discourses drawn upon by community members to express their education aspirations for the community's children. This serves to contextualise the overall explanation of the CDA, dealt with in Chapter Nine. Here, the discourses in each data set (Australian Curriculum policy corpus and community responses) are compared, set within a discussion of the larger social environment. The social determinants and social effects of discourses are considered. Implications for stakeholders are then reported on.

7.5. Ethical considerations

This section of the research, in terms of ethical considerations, requires significant discussion. Intertwined with the discussion of research procedures above have been a number of ethical considerations (including ethical approvals, the formation of the Community Reference Group, inclusion of focus group discussion, and my relationship with community members). Guillemin and Gillam's (2004) framework is utilised here for considering ethics within qualitative research. It sets out both the procedural ethics of the research, specifically the approval of relevant ethics committees; and considerations of 'ethics in practice,' the everyday ethical issues that arose whilst conducting the research (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004).

7.5.1. Procedural ethics

Procedural ethics as they relate to this study involved official approval to undertake the research. Involving the investigation of issues focusing on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (NS4.7), the granting of approval to proceed with this research required the submission of a National Ethics Application Form (NEAF) to the University of New England's Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). The entire study was given approval from 19 December 2014 until 19 December 2015 (Application no. HE14-211). Part of this NEAF application required local consent from community leaders/Traditional Owners, which was granted. Following approval to undertake the research, permissions from key informants were then gathered. Informants were provided with individual consent forms and information sheets. Informants were made aware of the measures taken to secure their privacy verbally, and in the informed consent forms. The privacy of informants was maintained through the use of pseudonyms and the removal of any identifying information within the data collected (including names, family relations, employment details and other personal information). Electronic data was stored securely on password-protected electronic storage devices, and transcripts within a locked cabinet in my office.

The chosen pseudonyms, used within the reporting of results, was deliberated on. Not wanting to use numbers (for example, 'Informant 1') or other such de-personalising methods, I chose to use 'Aunty' and 'Uncle', combined with initials (for example 'Aunty HS'). These initials were randomly selected and known only to me as researcher. The use of Aunty and Uncle not only served to personalise informants' responses in a more humanising approach, but importantly served as a mark of respect. Titles such as Aunty and Uncle are used as marks of respect for persons in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The use of these terms recognised their privileged and respected status as informants.

Whilst my goal was to be respectful, I don't actually know if informants are happy with these pseudonyms as deliberations and decision-making occurred long after data collection (some eighteen months). My ethical approval had lapsed, and I was unsure as to whether (and in practicality how) to contact all informants to ask. I didn't pursue this issue.

Age ranges were also included with pseudonyms (e.g. Aunty HS, 70+ years) to give a temporal indication of informants' schooling experiences. The age brackets of 18-

29 years, 30-49 years; 50-69 years, and 70+ years were used. Any more specificity was avoided, to protect the informants' identities.

Denzin and Lincoln comment that ethics within Aboriginal communities involves the establishment and maintenance of 'nurturing reciprocal and respectful relationships' and that this is 'very much at odds with the Western, Institutional Review Board type of apparatus, with its informed consent forms' (2005a, p. 35). This project endeavored to comply with the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies *Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies* (AIATSIS, 2012), to ensure the research was founded on respect for Aboriginal Peoples' rights. The fourteen principles that form the Guidelines fall under the broad categories of rights, respect and recognition; negotiation, consultation, agreement and mutual understanding; participation, collaboration and partnership; benefits, outcomes and giving back; managing research: use, storage and access; and reporting and compliance (AIATSIS, 2012).

I endeavoured to comply with the Guidelines, but in actual fact did I? In hindsight, more steps could have been taken to ensure all principles were deeply embedded throughout the research, particularly in regards to 'negotiation, consultation, agreement and mutual understanding'. To admit within these juxta-texts aspects of my research which did not fully comply with such principles is difficult. I'm left wondering if 'full' compliance with such Guidelines is possible when it was ultimately I who designed and drove this research project...

7.5.2. Ethics in practice

It is expected that everyday ethical issues will arise in the doing of research, which are somewhat detached from the ethics committee approval process (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004) and cannot easily be anticipated in advance of such ethical reviews (Hampshire, Iqbal, Blell, & Simpson, 2014). This was certainly the case throughout the community-based investigation. These 'ethically important moments' required reflexivity – considering 'what I know and how do I know it' as a process throughout the research (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004, p. 274).

I recognised the problematic nature of 'knowing' the community in a sense, as a past resident, and the difficulties of this in maintaining distance within the study. In drawing upon advocacy ethnography however, this study, and myself as a researcher, reject notions of objective research (Smyth & McInerney, 2013). No researcher can completely untangle themselves from their identity, hence the need in CDA to be

self-reflexive and in respect of Indigenous research methodologies and principles, locate myself within the research. My positioning as researcher within this overall study was discussed in Chapter Three, in relation to my Whiteness and the ways in which Indigenous research methodologies and principles could inform this work. Here, my positioning is discussed in relation to my previous relationship with the community, and the ‘ethically important moments’ that transpired because of this ‘knowing’ (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004, p. 262).

Everyday ethical issues were expected to arise due to me having previously been colleague, neighbour, or the teacher of their child for a number of informants. Guillemin and Heggen (2009, p. 292), in describing the building of rapport between researcher and participant/informant, comment that qualitative research is ‘largely dependent on building good personal relations between researcher and participant’ but that it is a fine ethical balance as suitable distance is maintained in order to protect the participant. My standing in the community contributed to what I believe is a deeper understanding of the research topic, due to the level of trust already established between myself and many informants. This relationship was necessary to engage in such research with Aboriginal Peoples, both ethically and practically. My established relationships with community members most likely allowed information to be shared during the research that would not have been with a complete ‘outsider’, for example men in declining to participate explained their inability to do so due to responsibilities during ceremony.

In occupying such a position however, at times I almost felt ‘invisible’ in the sense that information would be disclosed without thought or realisation of the fact that I was in the midst of undertaking research. Were informants trusting of me, or unaware of the implications of disclosure? These established relationships with informants certainly made them more vulnerable.

I was privileged to be invited to the beginning of ceremony, to go collecting bush tucker, and invited into homes. I viewed these experiences as privileges, and took my responsibility as a researcher very seriously. This positioning thus contributed to a greater depth of understanding of the lived experiences of community members.

Yes, but this is problematic. With a ‘greater depth of understanding’ came ethical tensions as discussed. I also never gained a ‘full’ understanding, as such an understanding of the lived experiences of informants in Elliott was impossible as an ‘outsider’ to this community. Much was not shared, because of my positioning. Of that which was shared, it also didn’t necessarily translate

into the final thesis. Thus my own understanding may have been enhanced to some extent, but has anyone else's?

My position within the research brought about a number of 'ethically important moments' during the research, and navigating these moments required me to exercise reflexivity (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004, p. 262). Personal information of a sensitive nature revealed during interviews, in discussions with the Community Reference Group or when interacting with community members in town, was deleted and/or 'forgotten'. Some of this information was considered sensitive because of the detail it revealed about private lives, other information was cultural and not appropriate for me to 'know', for example things relating to ceremony. Knowing what I wasn't meant to know and sorting through such information required a high level of criticality and self-awareness. When unsure, my relationship with the members of the Community Reference Group allowed open and honest discussion around such matters.

Sometimes I wonder, looking back, if there was actually the level of openness and honesty I required and believed we had. Were some things left unsaid? Or lost in translation? Was there a risk that because of our relationship, Aunty was just being polite, and going along with what I wanted? Did Aunty feel empowered to disagree with my practices or redirect the research if needed? How did I really give power to Aunty when in reality it was 'my' research project all along?

In designing and then carrying out this research, everything I did ultimately became refined towards a more ethical approach that carried through to the reporting of the research. This included the evolving process of reframing my mind to see the research data, as representative of Aboriginal knowledges and perspectives, as not my own in the traditional, conservative approach to research but the community's. The relationship I have with community members and particularly Aunty, who literally took the pen out of my hand and safeguarded certain knowledges on behalf of the community, meant it was both professionally and personally critical to act with ethical purpose. In moving towards a discourse of empowerment, I tried to ensure my voice did not always dominate the voices of informants, through a range of carefully researched techniques, with acknowledgement to Aboriginal literature, to foreground Aboriginal voices where possible. All of these decisions and inclusions, and that

which has been deliberately left out, was necessary to be ethical in a field with a history of unethical research practices and the marginalisation of research subjects.

'Carefully crafted research techniques?! This is too comfortable. Yes, the work became refined towards a more ethical approach, but what is this tale I've just summarised? In presenting the research in such a way, I've inscribed my textual authority and reinforced 'reflexivity's complicit relationship with ethnocentric power and knowledge' (Pillow, 2003, p.192), rather than interrogate it.

Much could be learnt from this imperfect attempt at research, and in challenging its representations through these juxta-texts. Disrupting the familiar telling of the research process I worry is to expose the inadequacies of myself and my research. Such inadequacies, shared through a reflexivity of discomfort, reveal as a necessity the 'uncomfortable realities' of engaging in critical qualitative research (Pillow, 2003).

7.6. Limitations

Limitations related to Part B of the research, the community-based investigation, are discussed here. Firstly, a limitation of the research was the focus on just one community. Such a focus was necessary in order to examine the issue in depth, as well as undertake the research with respect and care for those implicated, and the relationships formed before, during and after the research. As discussed within this chapter, the sample size within this community was also restricted, in part due to the timing of data collection coinciding with ceremony, and potentially also my gender in limiting the number of male informants.

My positioning as researcher within the study (discussed in Chapters Three and Seven) also caused limitations in relation to access to knowledge. When engaging with the community, I occupied particular subject positions that placed restrictions on the types of discourses made accessible and knowable to me as a non-Aboriginal female researcher. At the risk of subscribing to normative, comfortable uses of reflexivity, I note this limitation here. I've also attempted to overcome such usage of reflexivity with its potential to create 'blind spots' and legitimize and validate my research practices however, by using juxta-texts to disrupt my textual authority throughout Part B of this study (Petersen, 2015; Pillow, 2003).

A further limitation of the study is that the implementation of the Australian Curriculum was not examined. In the early stages of this research it had been intended that school staff would be interviewed, to uncover how teachers and

assistant teachers interpreted and implemented the policy. In recognising that the reading and enactment of policy texts may differ from the original intention, such an inclusion would have allowed for comparison between the intention (the discourses privileged and marginalised in the Australian Curriculum document) and the end product (the teacher's (re)articulation of the policy) in a specific context. The Northern Territory Department of Education did not endorse such a study, and following two unsuccessful applications, an examination of the policy in practice was removed from the research.

I'm actually quite happy this limitation was imposed. The inability to interview school staff led to a change in the direction of the research in its early stages and the focus on community members' aspirations. I've decided that this is a key issue with my work though – because I began its conceptual development before the community-based study became a part of it. Is authentic inclusion of the community in the entire research process possible, when the groundwork had already been laid? I'm reminded of criticisms of the Australian Curriculum (discussed in Chapter Two) and its ability to be truly inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, when inclusion was considered after the initial development of the curriculum had taken place.

7.7. Conclusions

This chapter explained the research methods pertaining to the community-based investigation, and provided a justification of the use of narrative portraits to complement CDA. Within it, I communicated the need to allow authentic space for informant voices, so as not to override their responses with my own, though the necessary co-construction that occurs within research was noted to caution against claims of informants simply 'speaking as they are'. In providing juxta-texts throughout the chapter, I attempted to disrupt the 'scientific' text of research procedures with reflexive comments, in order to extend discussions on the engagement of ethical research with Aboriginal Peoples beyond policy and procedural matters. The following chapter reports on the results of interviews with informants, to present their education aspirations for the community's children and the discourses privileged and marginalised within them.

Chapter Eight: Community Aspirations

This chapter presents the results of Part B, the community-based investigation, in answer to the second Research Question: which Indigenous education discourses do Aboriginal community members draw upon in expressing their education aspirations for the community's children? Firstly, this study's conceptualisation of aspiration is discussed. The historical and cultural importance of Elliott is then presented through a jointly-constructed Aboriginal historical narrative of the community, developed by the Community Reference Group and researcher. The context and material reality of Elliott is provided to situate informants' aspirations in the particular social and economic conditions of the community. Following this, a description of the informant demographic is provided. Informant responses are then presented as narrative portraits (Smyth & McInerney, 2013), discussed in Part B's methodology (Chapter Seven). The use of narrative portraits was a methodological decision made in order to privilege informants' voices in the discussion of their aspirations for the education of the community's children. In doing so, informants have been called Aunty or Uncle with pseudonym initials, as a mark of respect and to further humanise this research. Their narrative portraits are framed by three thematic questions: Why should language and culture be taught at school; what is your vision of schooling for children in this community; and what is the purpose of education here for children? The discourses privileged and marginalised in informants' responses are summarised, before concluding with a discussion on aspirations as a source of hope.

8.1. Construction of 'aspiration'

The aim of this research, as stated earlier, is to explore how the aspirations of Aboriginal people are supported in dominant Indigenous education discourses mobilised within the Australian Curriculum. Aspiration as a theoretical construct is therefore particularly related to Part B, the community-based investigation, and requires a discussion of the concept as constructed within this study.

One way of constructing aspirations is as an individual motivational trait, able to be measured as high or low. In policy and populist discourse, the push for students in marginalised social positions (such as those with low socioeconomic status) to

‘raise their aspirations’ in order to increase their capacity to participate in productive futures has gained currency in recent times (Zipin, Sellar, Brennan, & Gale, 2015, p. 227). Now a prominent equity strategy, the raising of aspirations is seen in areas such as higher education as imperative not only for social inclusion projects, but also in maintaining national economic competitiveness (Sellar, Gale, & Parker, 2011). In such framing, a deficit discourse sees those who ‘fall behind’ as lacking in aspirations. If only a person had the right kinds of aspirations in enough measure, they would be able to overcome their disadvantaged position (Zipin et al., 2015). Thus a lack of motivation is signified as a key issue for the individual (Zipin et al., 2015). Zipin et al. (2015) highlight the contradiction in such discourse however, in that whilst individuals are cast as needing to take responsibility for their socio-economic advancement, this deficit discourse is applied to broad social groups, for example, those with low socioeconomic status or those identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Policy then targets such social groups to offer intervention measures. Such interpretations of aspiration and the framing of young people in deficit ways, with low aspirations connected to laziness, lack of effort and poor parenting, are dangerous in their potential to racialize Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and perpetuate colonising assumptions (Harwood, McMahon, O’Shea, Bodkin-Andrews, & Priestly, 2015).

Aspirations, in being connected with individual wants, choices and preferences, have largely remained in the discipline of economics (Appadurai, 2004). In economic analyses and policy utilising such a construction of aspirations as individual wants, cultural contexts tend to be omitted (Sellar & Gale, 2011). In contrast, critical sociological literature offers alternative theorising of aspirations as cultural capacity, rather than simply an individual motivational trait (Reid & McCallum, 2014). Such an alternative theorising is necessary to move beyond a view of aspiration as a commonly held and understood concept, and the lack of attempt within policy or public spheres to understand it as anything other than a homogenous set of values, life experiences and cultural domains (Guenther, Bat, & Osborne, 2014). Appadurai (2004, p. 69), drawn upon in many critical analyses, argues,

The capacity to aspire is... a navigational capacity. The more privileged in any society simply have used the map of its norms to explore the future more frequently and more realistically, and to share this knowledge with one another more routinely than their poorer and weaker neighbours. The poorer members, precisely because of their lack of opportunities to practice the use of this

navigational capacity (in turn because their situation permits fewer experiments and less easy archiving of alternative futures), have a more brittle horizon of aspirations.

The holding of aspirations then is not exclusive to more powerful social groups, but it is the capacity to aspire and availability of such navigational information which is not evenly distributed (Bok, 2010). A person's cultural capacity to imagine futures is framed by their social, economic and cultural context, and it is this focus on capacity that highlights the ways in which social positioning and thus access to resources moderate what futures are thought possible and desirable (Sellar & Gale, 2011). Such a view of aspirations requires consideration of the social, cultural, and economic contexts in which aspirations are formed (Reid & McCallum, 2014).

Framing aspirations as a navigational capacity assists in countering such deficit discourses described above, but is not wholly satisfactory for this study. It could be argued that Appadurai's (2004) work still draws on a deficit theorisation to some extent, with use of terms such as 'lack' and 'fewer' in his discussion of the poor. In extending the conceptualisation of aspiration here, Yosso's (2005) work is useful in exposing cultural capital as the specific forms of knowledge, skills and abilities most valued by those privileged in society, and in highlighting the issue of assuming a 'lack' of cultural capital. Such assumptions position people as 'culturally poor', when in fact marginalised groups have forms of cultural capital that are not valued or recognised in traditional cultural capital theorisations (Yosso, 2005, p. 76).

My rejection of framing the individual within deficit discourses has already been mentioned, and this is extended to discussions around the aspirations of Aboriginal Peoples and their cultural capital. That community members have aspirations for the education of their children is seen as a given, as is their cultural capital. Yosso's (2005) Community Cultural Wealth Framework highlights the multiple cultural capitals residing in communities, in a strengths-based model: aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, familial, and resistant capital. These forms of capital are not isolated but rather overlap and interact with each other in a dynamic process of community cultural wealth. Within this model, aspiration is defined as 'the ability to hold onto hope in the face of structured inequality and often without the means to make such dreams a reality' (Yosso, 2005, p. 77). Aspiration is framed as a positive force in the lives of young people, and as a source of resilience. Overlapping aspirational capital with familial capital (cultural knowledge which

carries ‘a sense of community history, memory and cultural intuition’, and is nurtured amongst *familia* or kin) and social capital (community resources and networks of people), the sense of the collective is enhanced, isolationism is reduced and families are connected with others in their response to common issues (Yosso, 2005, p. 79). This view of aspirational, familial and social capital, among others within the Community Cultural Wealth Framework, is aligned with collectivist forms of aspiration, more applicable to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and particularly to the remote and close-knit Aboriginal community to be discussed in Part B of this study. In Aboriginal communities, aspiration is a source of resilience and a collective process (Osborne & Guenther, 2013a), with collective aspirations tied to land, cultural rights, education and employment and other. Tribal communities see strong connections between education, sovereignty and self-determination, and have long sought to make these explicit (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008). The United Nations *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (United Nations, 2008) is a classic statement of Indigenous aspirations, in which strong points are made in relation to education.

In investigating the aspirations of community members then in Part B of this study, the topic will not be reduced to such simplistic analyses of community members having either ‘high’ or ‘low’ aspirations, or assume a lack of cultural capital. Aspirations may be conceptualised differently to the dominant group’s norms because of the social, economic and cultural contexts in which they are formed, but are recognised as a significant source of resilience for this community. A discussion of community aspirations, relating to the community’s particular social and economic circumstances and the hope community members have for their children to overcome such issues, is presented below.

8.2. The cultural importance of Elliott

Elliott, in the Northern Territory, lies halfway between Darwin and Alice Springs on what is now the Stuart Highway. The area surrounding Elliott and Newcastle Waters is Jingili country, and where the Dreaming Trails of Jingili and Mudburra people intersect (National Native Title Tribunal, 2013). *Kulimindini* is the traditional name for Elliott, named because of the Dreaming Trail of the Emu. A special totem for some people in Elliott, the Emu was one of three brothers travelling

in the Dreamtime. The Emus met approximately 150 kilometres north of Elliott, before going their separate ways. One travelled south, through Elliott ‘leaving behind him our laws, culture, ceremonies and song lines that connect us to our sacred sites and country’ (Barkly Regional Arts, 2013). This Dreaming Trail that passes through Elliott is of extreme importance, and a number of sacred sites remain that the Emu left behind or is connected to. Some exact locations of these sites are unknown, but are still special to people. A Traditional Owner comments, ‘When they sing about it they can tell which direction that animal has travelled...that’s why they sing about that *kujika*’. It is important to know the songlines, and to sing about the animal and where it has travelled, leaving behind sacred sites. Other Dreamings are present in Elliott, but were not shared in the writing of this history as they are connected to different people and not our stories to share.

In Elliott, the *Lirraaku* and *Wilyuku* patrimony ensure the country is cared for appropriately, and the law of the culture passed on by respected elders. It is through this patrimony that the power of totems, Dreaming places and sacred sites are inherited from one’s ancestors. Elders in the community are *Kulyukulyungbi* (bosses, policemen or traditional owners), responsible for handing down the laws and caring for the country. They are accountable to their own bosses. Through patrimony, respected elders are given the cultural heritage knowledge to pass on to younger generations. A Traditional Owner explains that the double rainbow, sometimes seen in the sky, reminds people of the two, *Lirraaku* and *Wilyuku*, their bosses.

Connection to this ancestral Dreaming heritage is what connects people to country, and the flora and fauna in the immediate environment. The Dreaming Trails left behind by ancestors, the songs that communicate them and the country are important then. Out of the ancestors came people; people connected to country and all that is within it. Scholars have questioned exactly how long Aboriginal people have been settled in the Elliott area, but it is perhaps anywhere between one and four thousand years (Forrest & Forrest, 2011). Whatever the length of time, Aboriginal people were certainly in country long before European invasion, and the Dreamings have been handed down through song for generations.

Has this description communicated some of the cultural importance of Elliott? In Chapter Seven I questioned whether it would achieve its aim, given the cultural and spiritual detail that had to be excluded.

8.2.1. The context and material reality of the community

It is believed the region surrounding Elliott first saw European expansion into the area with the expeditions of John McDouall Stuart, in his attempts to cross the continent from south to north undertaken between 1858 and 1862 (John McDouall Stuart Society, 2014). This ‘exploration’ work by Stuart paved the way for the development of the Northern Territory, and the construction of the Overland Telegraph, beginning in 1870. The years between 1883 and 1886 saw new cattle stations established in the Northern Territory, with work beginning in 1883 on what was to be called Newcastle Waters Station (located approximately 25 kilometres north-west of Elliott) (Consolidated Pastoral Company Pty Ltd, n.d.; Forrest & Forrest, 2011). During World War II the focus of the region shifted from Newcastle Waters Station to the township of Elliott, as sites were selected to be developed as staging camps, to accommodate convoys travelling north to the frontline. Originally named Number Eight Bore, the staging camp was renamed Elliott Camp in July 1941 by the visiting Governor-General, after Commanding Officer Lieutenant ‘Snow’ Elliott, who had been responsible for its development (Forrest & Forrest, 2011). Following WWII, Elliott subsequently developed as a township.

The first Aboriginal ‘town camp’ was established at the northern outskirts of Elliott with the 1966 walk-off by Aboriginal pastoral workers from Newcastle Waters Station. Whilst Wave Hill is perhaps the most well-known walk-off, that occurring at Newcastle Waters actually preceded Wave Hill. Fighting for equal pay and working conditions, approximately 80 Aboriginal pastoral workers and their families were led off Newcastle Waters Station by Lupna Giari (also known as Captain Major), head Aboriginal stockman and Mudburra man (Forrest & Forrest, 2011; National Museum Australia, 2008). They moved to Union Yard, in the Newcastle Waters Township, before one month later moving to what is now known as Gurungu, or North Camp, in Elliott. A second ‘town camp’ developed following a downturn in the cattle industry from 1974, with more people moving to Elliott and establishing Wilyuku, or South Camp (Forrest & Forrest, 2011). North and South Camps have developed in parallel but with significantly different sub-cultures over the past fifty years, resulting in a community with ‘diverse roots in Jingili, Mudburra and Wambaya culture and a cattle station folk memory’ (Baker, personal communication, 2011).

The town camps and town centre between them, which make up the community of Elliott, are home to a relatively small population. According to Census data, in 2011 Elliott had 348 residents, 287 of whom identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS], 2013). The community is linguistically diverse, with 29.6% of households speaking more than two languages (ABS, 2013). In Elliott, services and facilities for this population include a school, regional council service centre, sport and recreation centre, aged care services, safe house, police station, service station, art centre, play group, library, post office, caravan park, community store, and medical clinic (Barkly Regional Council, n.d.).

Elliott School serves the community and is a government school catering for students from Transition (Foundation Year) to Year 9 (ACARA, 2016a). At the time of this research, Elliott School's total enrolments were listed as 75, with 99% Indigenous students and 76% of the students having a language background other than English (ACARA, 2016a). Elliott School's Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value was 617 (ACARA, 2016a). NAPLAN results in 2015 were low, with year levels below the reporting threshold for Reading (Year 9), Persuasive Writing (Years 5 and 9), Spelling (Year 9), Grammar and Punctuation (Years 3 and 9), and Numeracy (Years 3 and 9), though there was improvement from 2013 and 2014 in terms of the number of year levels per domain being below the reporting threshold (ACARA, 2016a). In 2015 there was some achievement above national minimum standard, in Reading (17% of Year 3 students above minimum standard), Spelling (8% of Year 7 students above) and Numeracy (17% of Year 5 students and 10% of Year 9 students above) (ACARA, 2016a). Again, this was an improvement on 2013 and 2014 results. The school also saw improvement in attendance figures just prior to the research taking place. Following its identification for inclusion in the Australian Government's Remote School Attendance Strategy (RSAS) in December 2013, Elliott School became the first RSAS to reach 90% student attendance (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2014). The RSAS was designed to be responsive to local context and driven by communities (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, n.d.). In Elliott, the approach has had success and 'the community as a whole has really gotten behind this' (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2014).

Employment is recognised as a key issue for residents of the community. Of the 84 residents who reported being in the workforce in 2011, 46 reported being a full-time employee (13.2% of the population) (ABS, 2013). A further 17 people reported being employed part-time, 18 people reported being away from work and the remaining 3 reported being unemployed (having been employed the previous week) (ABS, 2013). Census statistics do not show what percentage of those employed in Elliott were non-Aboriginal service providers (who do not typically reside in the community long-term) such as myself, employed full-time as a school teacher at the time of Census data collection. Census statistics also do not show youth employment rates. The community has a young population, in comparison to the broader nation. In 2011, the median age of Elliott's residents was 24 years (with 28.3% of the population aged 0 to 14 years and 21.4% aged 15 to 24 years), whilst the median age of Australians was 37 years (ABS, 2013). The median age of those Elliott residents employed full-time was 45 years, in comparison to Australia's median age of those employed full-time of 40 years (ABS, 2013).

Housing is also recognised as a key issue of importance within Elliott. The past three years have seen numerous media reports and releases highlighting the poor condition of housing and overcrowding in the community, which has not seen any new housing built since 2000 (Bardon, 2015, 2016; Barkly Regional Council, 2015; Northern Land Council, 2015; Sharkey & Weekley, 2016; Wood, 2015). Census data reported 11 of the 52 Aboriginal households in Elliott having 5 or more persons usually resident and 20 Aboriginal households having 6 or more persons usually resident. How many rooms each of these particular houses had was not reported on, though the average number of bedrooms per dwelling in Elliott was reportedly 3.3 (ABS, 2013). The total number of people residing in each house was also not reported, so the maximum number of persons (and the extent of the '6 or more' category) residing in particular houses is unknown. Though Census data reported the average number of people per household as 5, media reports have claimed overcrowding is commonplace, citing examples of up to 16 people residing in a two-bedroom house (ABS, 2013; Bardon, 2015). With challenges associated with the collection of Census data in Aboriginal communities recognised (ABS, 2012), the lived experiences of community members as voiced by them must be taken seriously. That the people of Elliott feel forgotten and that they are suffering a housing crisis is a reality (Bardon, 2015, 2016; Sharkey & Weekley, 2016).

I deliberated on the inclusion of such data for a long time. To talk of employment (and thus unemployment) and a housing crisis runs the risk of immediately framing the community in deficit ways, before the tenacity and resilience of the people living there can be shown. The material reality of the community is important though, as it results in informants' agentic work in mobilising particular discourses. There was a fine balancing act in achieving my aims. Have I achieved that balance?

8.3. Narratives from community

Well I grew up with the old people and I learnt my language, our language. And I also learnt the culture and people taught me the rights and the wrongs of culture. And they taught me all the dances in my culture. And I grew up in a very cultured society in the century then... I find that the younger generation are not learning their own culture, their own language, not the real language as they should be taught by the elders. We haven't got many elders now, but this is what they should be learning... Aunty HS, 70+ years

The below narratives present the views of community members in Elliott, in terms of past, current and future education offerings and their vision of formal schooling for the community's children. The complexity of opinions around the place of traditional language and culture within curriculum, visions of schooling for the community and the purpose of education are witnessed in these narratives, with each informant drawing upon numerous complimentary and often contradictory discourses within their responses to articulate their aspirations. What is presented is a complex story of competing challenges facing the community and its children, where people attempt to 'make do' on an educational and social terrain largely not of their choosing (Pedroni, 2007).

8.3.1. Informants' education experiences

I had to work the station from a really young age, like Christmas time I used to work there and then when it come end of January my dad used to bring us across with the horses to Newcastle Waters, get the old truck, the semi-trailer. They used to take us to school then, we never come back then till December. Yeah, stayed there the whole year there, Alice Springs. We lived in an old army camp, in a house where the army used to stay. They moved out and this Anglican mob got it. There was twenty of us. It was very hard though for us, for a young person and my mum and dad you know, we never see them til Christmas time, it was heartbreaking. In Alice there were children from lots of different places, yeah different places, dear, from everywhere you know, where their mum and dad couldn't pay for schooling and that. So the welfare sent us down there now. School was good, I liked it dear because I learnt a lot. I only went to Year 7, that's all, and I was old enough now. My dad said 'you gotta stay home

now and your two brothers got to go now'. Well I had to give them a chance to go and learn you know...Aunty HS, 70+ years

There were a variety of schooling experiences amongst the community members interviewed, in large part due to the age range of informants and the changes to education policy for Aboriginal students during the period in which they reported attending school. Aunty HS's story (above) is the earliest experience of schooling described by informants, with her completing Year 7 in the early 1950s. Most recently, one informant reported graduating from secondary schooling in 2010. This 60-year span no doubt contributed to the wide variety of perspectives and experiences shared within the narratives.

Of the thirteen informants, ten attended the local primary school at some point. Five informants attended primary school elsewhere at some point. Eleven continued on to secondary school, with two completing their secondary education in Elliott. Ten informants attended boarding school at some point in their secondary education. These boarding schools were largely within the Northern Territory, though a small number were interstate. The movement of a small number of informants through different schools, sectors and states was significant, with two noting they had attended four and seven schools respectively across three states. One informant reported graduating Year 12. Most reported leaving school early, completing either Year 9 (one informant), Year 10 (five informants) or Year 11 (three informants). Reasons for not continuing on to complete Year 12 included a lack of interest and family responsibilities. For the two informants who did not continue on to secondary schooling (completing Years 6 and 7), their age and thus education policy and social climate for Aboriginal children at the time of attendance was certainly a deciding factor. One informant reported going to boarding school, but was unsure as to what year level they had completed. For many, these lived experiences and associated values, beliefs and assumptions informed their ideas around the ideal education for the community's children, with informants drawing upon their member resources (interpretive procedures) in the mobilisation of discourses, commonly citing examples of their own schooling to support their views (Fairclough, 2001).

I went to Elliott and then when I went away, I only went as far as Year 10 in Alice Springs. I was a boarder, and I did Years 7 and 8 there. And then Year 9 and 10 I went to high school but then I never went back to do Year 11 and 12. That's why I

make sure that my [children] went right up and did Year 12... Aunty NB, 30-49 years

I've mentioned the difficulty of protecting informants' identities, whilst also representing their stories with as much detail as possible. I would have liked to have included more personal information about the informants, to not only humanise them more but also give you, the reader, an indication of their age, background, education and professional experiences. In the end it was too risky, so I created the age range provided here after their pseudonyms, in an imperfect attempt to give you a temporal indication of their schooling experience.

8.3.2. Rationale for teaching language and culture at school

Informants were asked questions around the broad theme of 'why should language and culture be taught at school?' Informants agreed that traditional language and culture¹⁷ has a place in formal schooling, but the degree of inclusion and rationale for it differed amongst them. For some, language and culture was central to the maintenance of local language/s and culture, namely Mudburra and Jingili¹⁸. Others saw language and culture as needing a place in schooling to support students' identity formation and positive self-esteem. Building on notions of identity, one community member saw inclusion of language and culture as a step towards self-determination, enabling students to participate in rights-based processes like land claims. Others saw inclusion as necessary for building students' capacity to contribute to the community and broader society.

*'Every old man that dies takes a bit with him'
There's been a loss of a lot of culture here in Elliott and the young people aren't learning and who knows if we're going to have our culture in fifteen years you know. It's changed a whole lot. I guess it's changing with time, it's changing a lot more with the White input on things. I think that's probably why I'm strong about the education side, because I see my culture, I see that dying slowly. It's almost as if every old man that dies takes a bit with him you know. And we've only got six old fellas left here in Elliott... Uncle WH, 18-29 years*

The status of traditional languages in Elliott created challenges for informants when considering inclusion of language and culture. Although the Multicultural Multilingual Discourse prioritises teaching and learning in two or more languages, to

¹⁷ The terms 'traditional language and culture' and 'language and culture' are used throughout this chapter, as those are the terms commonly used by community members in responses. It is taken to mean the local language/s and culture/s of the predominantly Mudburra and Jingili Peoples of Elliott.

¹⁸ Also called Jingulu.

enable children to be multi or bi-literate, there was recognition that Mudburra and Jingili are languages in decline, and with them, the local traditional culture. This meant that the Multicultural Multilingual Discourse functioned in a different way to its 'ideal' form. For informants in Elliott, Multicultural Multilingual Discourse manifested in the prioritising of language learning with a focus on language maintenance or revitalisation, rather than the ideal use of first language as a means of teaching across learning areas.

You ask if the labelling of these discourses was negotiated with the informants and whether or not they agree to the way these terms are used to characterise their utterances? No. Doing so would make sense in light of the co-construction of knowledge I discussed earlier. Such work, requiring a return to the community, was never carried out...

Intercultural Both-ways Discourse also manifested somewhat differently. Whilst it focuses on balance and the teaching of Aboriginal and Western knowledges for mutual benefit of all students (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal), this mutual benefit was not discussed at great length by informants, likely due to the school having 100% Aboriginal enrolment at the time of this research taking place. Certainly though informants drew upon notions of balance, control, respect, and equality between Aboriginal and Western knowledges in education, with one not dominating the other.

'Teach in two, European and culture way'
Language should be taught at school, well the easiest one is Mudburra. So then they know the language, Mudburra, all of the children. Because the school has been an English school, you know, a European school all the time. I think if they started teaching in both-ways, I think it'll be good. Yes, because I had that experience at Yirrkala, they teach both-ways there. Yeah, they wrote their own stories in their language and then they write it in English then. And they show the pictures you know, illustrate. They make their own books. I reckon they should teach in English, and they should have a language class then. Both-ways, like different subjects dear, you know? I think that's a better way, if they teach in two, European and culture way. I think it will be really good, because even the little children they can pick [a book] up, they can look at the picture, and then talk about it you know, sound it, talk about it and learn to speak their language. I'd like to see it...Come back, yeah. Teaching two-ways language. Because the children here, they don't know their own language. They only all speak English. Very seldom you might hear a child speak language... Aunty HS, 70+ years

Aunty HS's view of schooling is clearly influenced by her experiences in Yirrkala, in two-way teaching. Yirrkala, a community in Arnhem Land in the

Northern Territory, has a long and proud history of providing a balanced Yolngu and Balanda (Western) education for over forty years. In Aunty HS's response we can see Intercultural Both-ways and Multicultural Multilingual Discourses mobilised, in the repetitive references to both-ways and two-ways teaching and learning. Such an approach would require strong community involvement, to produce curriculum materials and learning frameworks for the teaching of language, and Aunty HS sees this as a way to ensure children learn their own language. This emphasis on language, and underlying ideas of language and culture revitalisation, are supported by Aunty GM.

'More of our language, instead of White fella's language'
Yeah language and culture should be taught at school. So they can learn more of our language, instead of White fella's language, you know, English. They can add Mudburra language and Jingili. Maybe one more than the other, one. Just one, Mudburra. Cause they normally speak Mudburra. Community members should have a lot of involvement at school, as guests or working and doing culture lesson you know, like take them out. Dancing, there used to be dancing before. They don't learn any language and culture at home. No I don't think so because I don't see that much. They should be learning that here at the school. So we make sure it happens, yeah, language and culture... Aunty GM, 30-49 years

Aunty GM, as well as Aunty HS (above), preferences the teaching of Mudburra over Jingili, and this was a common response amongst informants. Some highlighted the difficulty level of Jingili, with two informants commenting Mudburra was the 'easier' language to learn. Informants also pointed out the practical difficulty in learning Jingili, with the number of speakers in the community in the minority and in decline. Mudburra was thus seen as the more plausible of the two languages to retain, and the more dominant of the two in community. This assessment of the languages was supported by 2011 Census data, with 49 people reporting Mudburra as the language spoken at home, compared with 6 people reporting Jingili (ABS, 2013). Whilst Aunty GM believes language and culture should be taught at the school to counteract the loss of community or home-based teaching of language and culture (Multilingual Multicultural Discourse), it is Aunty EC (below) who reasons why.

'Keep the community strong'
It's important that we teach language and culture at school cause they gotta know their culture. Cause when they finish at school, they'll help old people like for ceremony. And do things like that, bush medicine. I speak language and my kids catch what I'm saying. Trying to teach them some more culture stuff. Keep the

community strong. Cause some old people are like getting down. Every ceremony they always say they need young blokes to hold the boomerang and go out hunting. That's what we want in the community. The young ones don't know as much as the old people. They need to learn more, learn about your culture side and what design you have in the ceremony. Gotta teach the young ones how to do that. Cause if old people going to passed away the young ones going to start doing it. If they don't have that culture, they'll be going back to parents, to community for Christmas, and saying what design we gotta put on that person's body, the totem, what design they going to have... Aunty EC, 30-49 years

Aunty EC mobilises a Multicultural Multilingual Discourse in her response, to speak of the importance of teaching language and culture for the sake of continuing community traditions. This notion of helping the old people for ceremony, and needing young men to hold the boomerang and go hunting during ceremony is significant. Aunty EC points to the need for cultural knowledge to be passed on, so young people can be active participants in the maintenance of their culture. Aunty discusses language and culture jointly, as central to individual and community identity. In discussing designs, Aunty EC speaks about young people needing to know which design, or totem, is painted onto a young person's body during the men's initiation ceremony. This totem symbolises their clan and family group and is thus central to their identity and connections to country. Empowerment Discourse is manifested in these ideas of identity formation and assisting elders in maintaining cultural traditions. Aunty EC's response is framed by the current situation in Elliott where young people need to attend boarding school from Year 8 onwards, hence her discussion of returning or coming home at Christmas for school holidays, at the time when young men's ceremony is normally held each year. This is an important topic of conversation for a number of informants, and is discussed in later responses.

Aunty FD's response (below) builds upon notions of identity formation. Mobilising an Empowerment Discourse, she explains the connection of all things as a part of a person's identity and necessary for self-belief. Aunty FD also draws upon Intercultural Both-ways Discourse to explain that as a part of a person's identity, Aboriginal language and culture should be taught in balance with Western knowledge, with one not dominating the other.

*'Culture is always going to be there'
Kids should be learning about everything. Animals whatever, and especially our environment around here. That's part of who we are, you don't want to leave that out. Learning about animals in culture is important, because of connection to land,*

connection to people. Even your skin name is connected to animals and whatever too. It could be yourself or your family group. Cause even your land is connected to that animal. So I reckon that's where teaching language with animals is a really big thing. That's where you come down to your family group. Start with your family group to your skin names and whatever, it's all connected. I think both are important, language and culture and mainstream, yep, so one is not taking over the other, it's all sort of a two-way thing. Cause no matter how far you go in life, your culture is always going to be there...Aunty FD, 18-29 years

The role language and culture inclusion plays in supporting the development of a strong sense of identity and self-esteem is also recognised by Aunty PP (below), who mobilises an Empowerment Discourse in her discussion of pride and equality.

'You feel proud of who you are'
So language and culture should be in primary school. A mixture of in school and at home, I reckon. When I was in Year 6, we had my aunty come in and she taught us how to do bush tucker, like cook a bush turkey in the bush way, not using any civilised things. And best experience ever. Because you feel proud of who you are at school. And the other kids who's not Indigenous get to see that and get to experience that. And it's a...Because we experiencing their way, learning English, writing English, and we're sort of behind on them. For them to come down to our level and experience eating the bush tucker, cooking it the bush way, even learning some of our language, you feel equal, you don't feel under them anymore. Yeah I think it's one of the best things having culture at school, it makes you feel proud of who you are and you want the kid that you go to school with to experience it... Aunty PP, 30-49 years

Aunty PP emphasises feelings of pride and acceptance. This is at an individual level rather than at an organisational or community level, but in other responses Aunty PP also points to the need to support students in achieving, to enable them to contribute to the growth of the community. Though an Empowerment Discourse is evidenced in her response, particularly through the vocabulary she uses and pedagogy (hands-on, real-world oriented activities) mentioned, Aunty still refers to non-Aboriginal children 'coming down' to the Aboriginal children's level through the teaching of language and culture, rather than the Aboriginal children being raised up. Perhaps these perceptions of being 'below' linger from her own schooling experiences, as Aunty describes herself as 'always being behind' and 'under a lot of kids' in terms of academic achievement. In discussing the teaching of language and culture to non-Aboriginal children, feeling equal and proud of her identity, she mobilises something of an Intercultural Both-ways discourse as well. Aunty MW

(below) also discusses inclusive teaching and learning, with non-Aboriginal students participating in cultural learning.

'They [children] need to know their language'

They should be teaching everything about language and culture at school.

Everything. They [children] should know about their background and culture, what's their heritage, the environment, society, righteousness with Aboriginal people, their culture, language, all the stuff like that. How to survive in the bush. This should all be taught at the school. No one been teaching them at home. Yeah, so we can mix it together you know so it's not just separate, not just cultural all the time but bring in the White society too, so they can all... So that when they do the cultural stuff, they can teach the other students that are non-Indigenous. Yeah mix them together. We used to know our language very well. But these ones, they don't even know, they don't even understand. I can't even... when I say to one kid to get water, in language, they just look at me, cause they don't even know what that means. I have to break it down in English and explain it to them. So we need equally you know, so mix it in with the language group. So in everything you do, doing both. Community members should have a lot of involvement really, they should have an input in it and putting efforts into it and making sure these kids are getting a proper education through White and through Aboriginal side as well, they can teach both sides. It's better for the kids, yeah, because if they go somewhere and they'll ask them 'what's your language?' They won't even know. Yeah, Aboriginal teachers and principals, yep that would be good. Because we need our mob to teach our little ones, to teach them about you know, language is very important, especially if it's coming to land claim and all that, if you going to put in for a land claim with Northern Land Council they'll ask you what's your language... Aunty MW, 30-49 years

Aunty MW draws on a number of discourses within her response. Firstly, Intercultural Both-ways manifests in ideas around involving non-Aboriginal children in culture learning, and the equal mixing of traditional language and culture learning and Western learning. In discussing the maintenance or revitalisation of language and the loss of language evident amongst the younger generation, Aunty MW draws upon Multicultural Multilingual Discourse. Significant in her response too are the links to identity, with the question of 'what's your language?' and children needing to know their linguistic heritage, which is connected to their being. Empowerment and Human Rights Discourses are evident in the necessity for young people to know their language (as it forms part of their identity) and therefore have the capacity to engage in activities like land claims (which are of family and community benefit). To have country returned under the Native Title Act, Aboriginal people must prove their traditional relationship to the land, and language and identity are central in those processes.

The informants above drew upon postmodern and critical-oriented discourses to discuss the teaching of language and culture, including Intercultural Both-ways, Multicultural Multilingual, Empowerment and Human Rights. Certainly critical-oriented discourses dominated in the above responses, with Multicultural Multilingual and Empowerment Discourses the most strongly asserted. Alongside more critical education orientations which redress marginalisation, a number of informants also drew upon more liberal and conservative discourses within their responses to discuss the place of traditional language and culture within schooling.

Aunty TH (below), who labels herself as ‘mixed-race’ with Aboriginal, European and Asian heritage, mobilises Liberal Multicultural Discourse to discuss the benefits of learning about all cultures (not only Aboriginal culture) within a multicultural society. She points out the need to learn about many cultures, later connecting this to the multicultural nature of modern Australian society.

*‘Everyone can benefit with different cultures’
Language and culture should be taught at school, I think so. I think it is important, just as important as learning other cultures and other languages. Like I said before, the maths, science, English, history, I think they’re important. Geography even. Those core subjects. But I think [language and culture] should be at least a couple of lessons a week, mixed in there. Say even three days a week, they spend some time on culture. But not just Indigenous culture, all cultures. Like do a block on Indigenous culture, do a block on the Romans and Egyptians and stuff like that or even, and modern day culture as well, I think that will broaden their mind, and let them know wow... I see culture, any kind of culture learning at school, as more just opening up the mind to different possibilities, yep. Yeah I think everyone can benefit with different cultures. I think [traditional] language should be taught separately to the other subjects, especially if you’re going to learn other cultures, other languages. Even if it’s just the basics with other, but go more in depth with the language here. Just sort of try and bring it back kind of thing. Because it is a language that’s being lost...Aunty TH, 30-49 years*

Despite drawing on more liberal ideas around cultural inclusion, a Multilingual Multicultural Discourse is still evident within Aunty TH’s response in the need to revitalise the local language, which Aunty TH later identifies as both Mudburra and Jingili. Continuing on with this notion of language and culture loss occurring in the community, and the need to support its revitalisation through inclusion in the curriculum is Uncle WH’s response (below). Entangled with this manifestation of Multilingual Multicultural Discourse however are elements of Neoliberal

Assimilationist Discourse, with the competing need for English and Western knowledge.

'We have to know mainstream society'

Language and culture should be taught at the school, yes, yeah I think it's important. A lot of families don't know the language and there's a lot of families here that don't know culture. There's a lot of families that don't participate in culture. So because of that I think it's good for the children in those families to be around it. So the families that don't know the language and culture, their kids come to school and start learning. The school should teach the local language, like Jingili Mudburra. The days we live in now, you have to know mainstream society so I'd have it as if you're learning French or Japanese. As a separate lesson. Because it would just take up too much time if you're trying to teach in language and trying to teach in English. That's... It's only my opinion. Yeah, so I'd have it like that just because of how long it'd take for them to learn. You have to know mainstream society right now to be able to live. Like you can't go up to McDonalds and speak in language and ask for a job, they'll look at you and think you're mad. Learning English to a high level, is important, yeah, and that's because you have to do that today. It saddens me when some people have to fill out some forms and they ask me for help because they can't read and write. The times are changing and we have to learn to adapt to survive and to survive we have to know mainstream Australia... Uncle WH, 18-29 years

Uncle WH stresses this need for Western knowledge, or for young people to know mainstream society, through repetition. Despite the importance of traditional language and culture within schooling, to maintain or revitalise that within the community, the need for young people to learn English to enable them to participate in 'mainstream society' appears to take precedence in Uncle WH's response. There is a sense of urgency in his response, with bilingual education taking too much time and English learning being important now. Can such an example be considered conservative? Uncle WH's response, when read in light of the Indigenous education discourse taxonomy, is conflicting. In privileging Western learning for social and economic mobility, Uncle WH doesn't reject the importance of teaching language and culture at school. It was Uncle who earlier commented on the loss of culture when an old man passes, and he sees language and culture teaching within formal schooling as a means of counteracting this loss. Uncle understands the value of the cultural code the community already possesses, but also sees the need to be 'taught the codes [of power] needed to participate fully in the mainstream' (Delpit, 1988, p. 296). He seems to draw upon what has been characterised in the Indigenous education discourse taxonomy as conservative Neoliberal Assimilationist ideas, but doesn't accept these ideas in totality or independently of others. His overall response

is framed by a broader ‘community revitalisation’ discourse. Within this, in drawing on elements of Neoliberal Assimilationist Discourse alongside others which are ideologically conflicting, he shows how different discourses are conceived and negotiated in a highly contextually-dependent way. His articulation of the ideal education for the community’s children responds to the specificities of Elliott’s context, in which he sees employment as a key issue for community survival.

Uncle WH’s response here, and the way in which I have discussed it in relation to a number of discourses, points to a limitation of the Indigenous education discourse taxonomy. Having pre-prepared the taxonomy prior to interviewing community members, Uncle’s response demonstrates how I cannot neatly impose my pre-established understandings onto the way in which people engage in discursive practice, in order for me make sense of their viewpoints. To what extent does the taxonomy allow for the recognition of an individual’s agency and creativity in their fluid engagement with discourses?

Responses to the question, ‘why should language and culture be taught at school’ thus elicited a range of responses inclusive of all orientations to education (postmodern, critical, liberal and conservative). These were clearly linked to the perceived goals of education for Aboriginal students of the community, which were related to both individual and communal strength. For the individual student, a strong sense of identity and self-esteem and access to employment and economic participation were communicated as being important by some informants. Individual gains were tied to collective benefit in many responses. Other informants focussed more explicitly on the strength of the community, and the revitalisation or continuation of its language and culture traditions, which some informants saw as in decline. The above selection of informant responses represents the spread of discourses mobilised. Intercultural Both-Ways, Multicultural Multilingual and Empowerment Discourses were most evident, with instances or elements of Human Rights, Liberal Multicultural and Neoliberal Assimilationist Discourses also evident in addressing this broad question of language and culture inclusion. Informants, rather than mobilising one discourse, drew upon different and at times ideologically conflicting discourses within their responses. More critical and postmodern-oriented discourses dominated, but were reproduced in ways that responded to Elliott’s particular context in relation to the status of language and culture and key community issues as perceived by informants.

8.3.3. Vision of schooling

Informants were also asked questions around ‘what is your vision of schooling for children in this community?’ Informants, in describing their vision of schooling for children in Elliott, quite often began with their ideal level of Aboriginal involvement in schooling. This ranged from control of schooling structures in roles such as principal, to teaching staff, assistant teachers (ATs) and volunteers. Reasons for Aboriginal involvement in schooling ranged from having control of the school, enabling or supporting the teaching of language and culture, and providing role models for students.

‘I’d have co-principals’

My vision of schooling? Well there’s a school up the top end like in Arnhem Land that has co-principals, so like a White and an Aboriginal principal and they work the school together. I’d have co-principals in Elliott. I’d have better pathways for ATs to transition into being teachers. They need proper training, they have to have proper training to be able to teach. There’s so much potential for Indigenous teachers, like they can start off teaching in Elliott and then they can apply for a job somewhere else in other communities, other towns and get experience and come back and then be able to do a greater job. Like go away, see other places, get experience, get some passion, come back and put it in the town. If I become a teacher I want to go and teach in other places and then come back with all the experience that I’ve learnt, come back to Elliott, teach here for a couple of years and try and be a principal. That’s the goal is to be principal of this community. Like, this is where I’m from, this is what I call home, you know, being able to run the school is the goal... Uncle WH, 18-29 years

Though Uncle WH begins speaking of co-principals, the goal for him is ultimately local Aboriginal control of the school. His insistence that local people be properly trained as teachers and experienced, in order to benefit the community, is clear. In other responses, Uncle WH speaks of the need to explore culture, ‘why Aboriginal people have culture’, and how and why as a fluid entity ‘it’s changing with time’ and with ‘white input’ in Elliott. He connects to ideas around cultural revitalisation and young people being strong in culture and Western academia to be able to pursue their aspirations. These ideals, reflecting opportunities for creative change and re-organisation of culture and identity, as well as control of schooling, tie strongly to an Intercultural Both-ways Discourse within the postmodern education orientation. Uncle WH, in his response overall, preferences self-determining ideals and the ability to participate in society at any level of choosing.

Moving away from such a strongly expressed desire for local control of schooling, Aunty EC (below) discusses Aboriginal involvement in schooling within a more critical orientation.

'Reach that high level'

Well my vision of school is like, if we've got a school and Aboriginal teachers with them, just teaching culture... cause our culture is dropping and we need try to make it like, go up. But we don't have that knowledge like, to reach the top. So we just like start step to step and reach that high level. With all the subjects at school, culture is more important and probably English same time. When they want to get a job well there's English in there and when they go back home well there's language in there. You go to every camp, like visit a family, they say it in language. Local people should be teachers, like teaching in a class. They should be teaching in every subjects but sometime it's like culture same time with it, so mixing, yeah if we had Aboriginal teachers. If we had more Aboriginal teachers, we could do both at the same time, so like in the morning at 8 to 12 it's English and probably 1 to 3 it's culture. Yeah, spending time on culture. You have to try your best to do both. ... Aunty EC, 30-49 years

Aunty EC sees the involvement of Aboriginal teaching staff as a way to increase the language and culture teaching happening at school, in order to revitalise culture within the community (Multicultural Multilingual Discourse). She acknowledges the importance of both knowledge systems, with English being important for economic participation and traditional language being important for family and community communication and participation.

Aunty RO (below) agrees that community involvement is key to including traditional language and culture within the curriculum, and that Aboriginal teachers would enable the teaching of local languages. Within the below excerpt she draws on a Multilingual Multicultural Discourse to express her vision of schooling.

'Learning both ways'

There's nothing I would change about schooling here, no. I like what is here, but there should be more language and culture, yeah. Mudburra should be used most at school. And English should be used more. So they know better English then and can learn both ways. It's important to know both, yeah. It's best to know your language and... The best way to teach culture I reckon is getting involved with the community, with the elders I reckon. Yeah, I think we should have more Aboriginal teachers, teaching language I think. Local language, Mudburra, Jingili, Wambaya, a few of them, yeah. I think more local people could be teaching other subjects as well, yeah. Learning both ways, if they want it that way... Aunty RO, 30-49 years

Content with the schooling in Elliott, Aunty RO offers her only suggestion of increased language and culture teaching. Her vision is around increased local Aboriginal involvement in schooling, to support the teaching of multiple local languages. This manner of language and culture inclusion certainly requires strong Aboriginal involvement. Aunty RO speaks of a larger Aboriginal teaching workforce which goes some way towards Aboriginal control, though not to the extent asserted by Uncle WH with control of schools and systems. Whilst Aboriginal control is both a postmodern and critical concept, it is Aunty's focus on multiple languages (rather than critiquing notions of reality) which sees a critical Multicultural Multilingual Discourse drawn upon. Also comfortable with the present education, Aunty NB (below) takes a somewhat liberal approach, beginning with community involvement in terms of volunteers or visitors to the school carrying out culture-based teaching, with involvement being voluntary rather than as embedded school leadership.

'You can have a balance'

What's my ideal vision of school here? I'd keep it going as its going now, but get more community involvement. Do language and culture maybe twice a week. I'd like to see community members telling stories, coming in, maybe teaching the young girls to dance. The men would go and teach the boys. Maybe see a few people come up and teach art. Bush medicine. Bush tucker. I think language should be twice a week, and try and fit it into whatever the teachers are teaching. But doing that at a separate time, yeah. Mudburra is an easy one for the kids to learn, but I think they should still learn a bit of Jingulu. Because Mudburra and Jingulu is from this place. You know like in Tennant Creek is Warramungu so that's what they should teach you know. Does it matter if teachers are Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal? Yes and no, if you want language and culture at your school you have to have some Indigenous staff there to teach it. So you can have a balance you know. And some European teachers as well. The most important thing to learn at school is both ways, so language and culture and you still need to learn maths, English, science. Both ways... Aunty NB, 30-49 years

Aunty NB's vision of Aboriginal involvement in schooling as visitors could be considered somewhat Liberal Multicultural, but Aunty then adds that Aboriginal teachers are necessary for the teaching of language and culture.

I wonder how my former position as a non-Aboriginal teacher at the school impacted upon responses such as Aunty's. Did Aunty feel like she could tell me honestly, how it mattered if teachers are Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal? A number of informants discussed the need for 'properly trained' Aboriginal teachers, but didn't go as far as asserting that the 'European' teachers should all be replaced. Were they restricted in voicing particular desires because of my positioning?

Aunty NB also mobilises something of an Intercultural Both-ways or Multicultural Multilingual Discourse in speaking of language teaching, and the need to have balance and learn both-ways, though feels like it still has to 'fit in' to the standard curriculum offering.

'A non-Indigenous and Indigenous person in a classroom'
Well in my ideal world, I would have non-indigenous and indigenous person in a classroom. Where the teacher would take on some sort of mainstream teaching and all that, when it comes language and culture where the indigenous person would lead. So that would be my ideal. So working together but leading different things, yeah. Local languages would be used, one day a week probably, teaching language. One or two. Mudburra Jingili is the main language. I reckon talking about learning language about our environment, so our animals and trees and whatever and then teaching them the scientific name and sort of animals and also language with that, but at different times, so at language, teaching language names and then the non-indigenous teacher would talk about science name or whatever. I reckon community members should be involved as much as they can be at school. They can be coming in as guests, sitting down in the class, looking what their kids are being taught every day. Just volunteering, maybe with lunch and whatever. And as teachers, yeah. They don't need to be from certain family groups but they need to be local, yeah. Cause that's where the respect lies with the student. So if you're not local the student wouldn't respect you as much as a local person. Their knowledge and background and everything, so it's really important to have a local person... Aunty FD, 18-29 years

Similar to Aunty NB above, Aunty FD doesn't immediately suggest that the Aboriginal person in the classroom should be a registered teacher. Her ideas and response may be influenced by the current norm at Elliott School where a non-Aboriginal teacher and local Aboriginal assistant teacher are within one class. Later in her response, Aunty FD agrees that it would be beneficial to have local Aboriginal teachers, due to their knowledge, experience of community and the respect shared amongst local community members. It was Aunty FD who earlier spoke about the connectedness of country and a person's identity, and here she again refers to the importance of learning about the environment. A local Aboriginal teacher would be able to connect these areas of learning to students' family groups and skin names, building upon aspects of cultural identity (Empowerment Discourse).

Aunty TH (below) offers a possible explanation for why community members may first think of local Aboriginal people being employed at the school as assistant teachers, rather than registered teachers.

'Show the younger generations that you can aspire to anything you want to' Should we have more Indigenous staff? I think there's a fair few there, but that's as teacher aides hey. People immediately think of assistant teacher first, I guess it's because you see more people in that position than what you see in the other, you know as qualified teachers, as principal. Because we haven't had any, I don't think we've had Indigenous principals here at all, like even from other places, all non-Indigenous I think, just growing up and seeing that too, generations after generations get used to it I suppose. It'd be good to see more qualified teachers, like Indigenous people, locals. It'd be good, I think that's good for anywhere, small towns especially to have locals to come back and do jobs like that so it can show the younger generations that you can aspire to anything you want to, you know you can have your dreams and that and you can do whatever you want, I think that's really encourage a lot. ... Aunty TH, 30-49 years

Aunty draws on a quite liberal political discourse, in assuming that all Aboriginal students can advance, so long as they put in effort and apply themselves. This liberal view of role models, as a solution for Aboriginal disadvantage, obscures structural impediments. In her response however, Aunty also hints at particular structural impediments, in the form of a lack of Aboriginal teaching force. In addressing this impediment, Aunty TH mobilises elements of an Empowerment Discourse to discuss how students may be encouraged and their self-belief strengthened if they have Aboriginal teachers as role models, which has not been the case at Elliott School in the past. Aunty PP (below) agrees, commenting that qualified Aboriginal teachers not only offer role models for students, but can also enable the teaching of local languages. She believes that they need adequate training and proficiency in traditional language, in order to offer bilingual or multilingual education to students. Aunty PP comments that this would enable students to take up roles like interpreting, contributing not only to the continuation of language but also White society.

'Keep our community growing'
So language and culture should be in primary school. A mixture of in school and at home, I reckon it should be both, at school. But then it comes down to funding. Extra teachers, you know Indigenous teachers. But an Indigenous teacher whose got an education and speaks their language and spell in their language. That's also a role model for the primary kids. So in a perfect world with no funding issues, I'd have an Indigenous teacher, yes, who teach language and English. So like, if they learning their body parts, you know for them to write in their own language is awesome, and to read in their own language. I know in a lot of other communities they do. And then those kids can grow up to be interpreters. You know, so they can write in their own language, interpret it in their own language and they help the White society with

being interpreters with the whole writing in English, translating so... Which language do you think would be most used at school? Mudburra. Or you mean English? It's a hard one because today everybody wants their kids to learn English to get into White society for their future, language you don't want them to lose it. So I would say English, because we want our kids to thrive, but we would like that little language class so they don't lose it, it doesn't get lost. Still trying hold it there for future. If that makes sense. I reckon we should teach language how you teach any other language, French or something, so it shouldn't be used in every class because you know English, maths and science is very important today. We need it, those kids really need it today for their future. It's not only their future, they're the future of Elliott for us, they're the ones that will when we stop working will keep our community growing, cause you don't want everything to shut down and we all have to move town. They are our future. So they still need English, maths and science, but having the language class just like any other language class would be awesome, you know it's just one subject... Aunty PP, 30-49 years

Aunty PP's response shows the competing ideas around traditional and English language learning. Despite the desire to see students as bi-literate or multi-literate, she reverts to domination of English, asking if 'that little language class' can be offered as a way of maintaining or revitalising the local language, alongside a curriculum that will prepare students for mainstream employment and economic participation. This participation though is to strengthen Elliott's future, and enable the continued functioning of the community for all members, current and future. Evidenced are Multicultural Multilingual and Empowerment Discourses.

Aunty YJ (below) similarly draws upon a number of discourses in her response. Her vision of schooling supports the inclusion of culture and language, but in a more liberal sense than other informants.

'A special day'

Maybe have a big cultural centre or something? Maybe the elderlies would be working there, those with better experience with culture and language. As guests or visitors, coming in and doing a bit of cultural teaching. Yeah activities, learning bush tuckers, language, and traditional dance. Cause the kids nowadays they don't do the traditional dance or get painted up like how we used to. Yeah when we were small we used to get painted up and dance with the old women. We should have more local people there as teachers, yeah and maybe do recordings to pass it on to next generations of the traditional songs and that. Aboriginal teachers can teach all subjects too, if they're qualified as proper teachers. Yeah, we should put them both, culture and western knowledge, in the one lesson. So we need both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal teachers, together, yep. Mudburra should be taught at school by Mudburra elders. I reckon Mudburra should be used less than English at school, cause everybody else in the world won't speak Mudburra. I don't know, I think we should teach students a bit of both, yep. How much local knowledge and culture should be taught at the school? Maybe twice in a month, I don't know. We have the

other subjects, maths, English, science. Is learning that at school is more important than learning culture at school? Yeah. I think you need education. I don't know... To support yourself in life I suppose. Without an education you won't be able to get a job. Maybe culture just one or two days a month, yeah. Yeah, a special day, similar to what we used to have, yep... Aunty YJ, 30-49 years

In Aunty YJ's response, Multicultural Multilingual Discourse is evidenced in ideas around the passing on of language and culture in the form of recordings, and the reminiscent comments around what used to happen with traditional dance. The need for English language learning sits alongside this, to enable students access to wider society and employment opportunities. This leads Aunty YJ to suggest culture learning as a special day (Liberal Multicultural Discourse), which has been done in the past within the community.

Highlighted within many of these responses, including Aunty YJ's (above) and Uncle WH's (below), is the need for Aboriginal teachers to be properly trained.

'Being trained as a professional'

That's a part of it, like language and culture is good, knowing the community and everything is good, having those relationships is good, but my ideal, is being trained as a professional teacher as well. So not just there to talk about language and culture but there to teach every other subject that they have to teach and on a high enough education to be able to do that properly... Uncle WH, 18-29 years

Four informants explicitly expressed the need to have Aboriginal teaching staff, using terms like 'proper teacher,' 'qualified,' and 'with proper training' to communicate their ideal employment status as opposed to assistant teacher. This allows local Aboriginal staff to not only be teachers of traditional language and culture, but capable of teaching across learning areas. For those that were explicit in their desire for registered Aboriginal teachers, relationships, respect and role models were key drivers.

Responses to the question, 'what is your vision of schooling for children in this community?' therefore mobilised numerous discourses across postmodern, critical and liberal orientations to education. Multicultural Multilingual was evidenced in the majority of informant responses, with Intercultural Both-Ways, Empowerment and Liberal Multicultural Discourses also evidenced to a lesser extent. A key theme was the expansion of the Aboriginal teacher workforce, leading to increased community involvement and control of education.

8.3.4. The purpose of education

The third question asked of informants was ‘what is the purpose of schooling for children in this community?’ For the two previous thematic questions, responses within critical frames (though they drew on numerous discourses) dominated and as such, narratives were presented in order of postmodern, critical and then liberal-oriented responses. Here, it is reversed.

I recognise the imperfections in this statement, and in this presentation of responses. Quite often, as has been shown so far to some degree, informants drew upon different and at times ideologically conflicting discourses. What I attempt to show here, by supposedly ‘reversing’ the order in which they are presented, is this creative practice as it is in response to this thematic question that it becomes most apparent.

Overwhelmingly, the majority of informants responded to this thematic question with what appear to be conservative viewpoints, connecting the purpose of education for children in Elliott to employment and economic participation.

‘Go get a job’

The purpose of going to school here is to get an education, so you can go get a job. Go to school, it’s fun, there’s nothing else to do at home so school is the only thing that keeps people, kids lively and they have to learn otherwise they won’t get a job then in the future when they get old enough. So it’s all about, going to school is so you can get a job in life. Find a good job... Aunty MW, 30-49 years

‘Get a good paying job’

The purpose of education is to get as much knowledge as you can about everything really. The basics like maths, science, English, history, the core subjects like that, because they’re the foundations of so many other things that you need in so many jobs and that. So they’re really important. I suppose I’d be like a lot of parents, like their kids to go to Year 12 and that, and uni. Being realistic, I don’t think... I hope that the younger ones will go right up to Year 12 and finish Year 12. But if not, cause I’ve always told them I’d love them to go that far, but there are courses, they line up and work out what they want to do, as long as they can try and figure it out which is, that’s hard. They can do courses, and they’ve got access to a lot of courses that they can do and that. That’s the second option. Yeah so that they can, I’d love for them to get a good education whether it would be to finish Year 12 or to do courses, you know go to Year 10, do courses or something like that to better their education like that and get a good paying job. A good paying job and it’s where they’re happy... Aunty TH, 30-49 years

‘Find a job and move on’

Kids here should go to school to learn. They should be at school every day through the week you know to learn more education. I don’t know why it’s important. So they can grow up and look for jobs. Yeah I got a [child] that goes to school here. I want

to see [them] get education, grow up, find a job and move on. Yeah, away from Elliott to do some training and all that for job you know. No, not here, I don't so it's possible here. It's really hard. Yeah go to uni and all that you know, I'd like [them] to do something like that, yep. It's hard for people from Elliott to go to uni but if you keep talking you know they'll probably do it. I'll send them to boarding school, yeah... Aunty GM, 30-49 years

'Get a job'

The purpose of going to school here is mainly to get a job now that it's harder, you need a certificate you know Year 12 if you want a job. If you want to be that, whatever you have to study for it first. Yeah job mainly. What do I hope for my kids? We still deciding on [my youngest] yet, where to send [them]. We'll send [them] to boarding school, somewhere well more for [them], like education wise, maybe sporting, see what's out there. Do I want [them] to come home? Depends what [they] wants to do. But I'd like [them] to come home now and then. Just to be grounded I guess... Aunty NB, 30-49 years

Whilst the focus on education and employment here could be characterised as conservative and somewhat aligned to Neoliberal Assimilationist Discourse, the direct link informants make between education and employment needs to be considered within the particular context of Elliott. At the beginning of this chapter the community's unemployment issues were presented. The importance of language and culture teaching alongside the culture of power (Delpit, 1988) has also been presented within informants' responses. Informants thus mobilise elements of Neoliberal Assimilationist Discourse in a contextually-dependent way, intertwined with competing and contradictory discourses, to respond to the material reality of Elliott in which they see the future employment of the community's children as a key issue.

There are competing ideas within these responses for all four Aunties, around children securing employment in the future. Aunty MW speaks about education keeping children lively, and there being nothing to do at home. Whilst this seems a straightforward response, parallels can be drawn to those adults who struggle to find employment in Elliott and rely on welfare assistance (with employment figures presented earlier in this chapter). This idea is explored further by Uncle WH (below). Aunty TH raises other considerations, recognising the options in further education and training available to her children should they not complete Year 12 and commenting in a later response that it's difficult as a young person to know what career path to take. This may be more difficult in small, remote localities such as Elliott where children are exposed to a limited number of local professional roles as

seen in Census data, with those in the local workforce employed in either Local Government Administration; School Education; Sheep, Beef Cattle and Grain Farming; Accommodation; or Other Construction Services (ABS, 2013), or where to take up alternative roles would require leaving community. Aunty GM speaks about her child moving on, leaving Elliott to access further training and employment because it is not possible in the community. Aunty NB then adds a layer of detail to these ideas, in discussing decisions around which boarding school would be most appropriate for her child, and their future either in Elliott or living elsewhere. Aunty NB sees it as important for her child to return to community to be grounded, and in other discussions compares this to people who live outside of the community to access employment opportunities based around their aspirations, but return for cultural activities. Some of these ideas are also evidenced in Aunty PP's (below) response. Education, leading to employment and housing is critical for Aunty PP.

'Grow up and have a house'

The purpose of schooling here is learning. Learning is...Kids want to learn. And they don't care what it is, they're here to learn and that's what we're hoping, they're here to learn. And we want them to learn as much as they can, whatever the teacher has to offer. Never really thought about the main subject but yeah, we send our kids cause we want our kids to learn. Cause they our future, we [don't?] want to get to one day where someone says 'oh they're bludgers', do you know what I mean? I want in the future that it gets to that we all contributing. And so what I want for my kids, is I educate my kids as much as I can in the White society and I don't know if that's bad, but I want them to grow up and have a house, and have an understanding to have a house you need to have an education, you've got to get a job. So you can't just go to school and turn up and be there. Especially in high school, my [child's] in high school. Can't just go there and turn up and say 'I'm going to get my Year 12 certificate no matter what'. I tell my kids, there's unemployment that you go on to Centrelink that supports you to get into job. You don't need that, because you'll have the biggest keys ever, is education. You will come out of Year 12 and people will be offering you job or they will help you get jobs, or you can go on to more study as yourself. And then finding a house and a car before having any kids would make life easier for their future. And I've learnt that so that's what we need to teach our kids...
Aunty PP, 30-49 years

Aunty PP doesn't want her children to rely on welfare and be seen by wider society as 'bludgers'. Elements of Neoliberal Assimilationist Discourse are evidenced in her desire to teach her children about White society, to enable their access and participation in areas like employment and housing, but at the same time she wants them to have the capacity to contribute. Again, Aunty doesn't mechanically implement this discourse and accept it in totality. In other responses,

this contribution her children will have the capacity to make is linked directly to the future of Elliott as a community, signalling a broader Empowerment Discourse. Perhaps Aunty PP's focus on having a house, or a stable residence, is more prominent because of the housing crisis being experienced in Elliott, throughout the period of this research (Barkly Regional Council, 2015; Northern Land Council, 2015). Discussed earlier within the description of the context of Elliott, media reports have claimed 80% of Elliott's Aboriginal housing is 'uninhabitable' and needing to be demolished, alongside issues of overcrowding (Wood, 2015).

Remember my inability to hold a whole-of-community information session when recruiting informants, and my subsequent worries of ethical protocols? The change of plans was because of ceremony, as discussed, and also a town meeting taking place where representatives from the Northern Territory's Department of Community Services attended to hear the community's housing concerns (Northern Land Council, 2015). Housing was a prominent issue at the time of data collection then. Its impact was admittedly frustrating in terms of my research plans, but it really foreground the context and conditions in which informants were creatively drawing on discourses to articulate their aspirations.

Many in the community are concerned with the lack of and poor condition of housing within the community, and worry for their children growing up in such an environment. The link between this issue and an empowering education is discussed further below.

Uncle WH (below) also discusses welfare and the need for children to receive a quality education to avoid reliance on such structures. Unfortunately, welfare reliance is considered high in this community and an all-too-real prospect for many, with Forrest and Forrest (2011) characterising Elliott as a township where welfare dependency is thoroughly entrenched, with a lack of employment opportunities available for the local people.

'Get a higher education level'
What is the purpose of school here? Well ideally I'd like the school to be better educationally, so when they leave this school to go college they don't get put in community based classes, they get put straight into mainstream where they get a high education level and with that better education they can either come back if there is a job or... So people are faced with two choices when you come back from school. You come back, you find no jobs. You can either sit and wait. When you sit and wait you're faced with drugs, alcohol, peer pressure from family. You have to surrender yourself to welfare. Because a lot of people don't want to be on Centrelink but because there's no jobs they have to go onto Centrelink otherwise they're not getting

any money and they're not pitching in with family. So they have to do that. And then once they get used to that cycle, it's really hard to get them out of it. If you're sitting down at home every week and you get paid... My dream is for [my child] to make it big in sports one day, and then inspire a lot of young people and older people to dream big ...I want [them] to do what [they] wants to do as long as it's not sitting under a tree drinking with everyone else. As long as [they're] working and making a living or doing something good for [themselves] and others I'm happy but [they're] not going to be, I'm not going to allow [them] to just be a bum... Uncle WH, 18-29 years

In Uncle WH's response, the challenge of receiving a 'better' education and then returning to a community with limited employment opportunities is evident. Notions of empowerment are also mobilised however in his desire for his child to not have to 'surrender' to welfare, and either 'work and make a living' or 'do something good for themselves and others'.

Some informants furthered this notion of the importance of education for employment and economic participation, but drew upon the importance of cultural maintenance as well, such as Aunty HS (below).

'Learn to read and write, learn your own culture'
The point of going to school is to learn to read and write, learn your own culture. And when you grow up you realise then, when you grow up. I've got to do something. And then you thinking what you going to do, if I'm going to work or sit down or what. That's the way I look at it, for children to better their education and culture and get a job. For their own community, to help back with their own community. That's the way I see it. I had to go away from my mum and dad when I was four years old, and I learnt a lot of things. Like my culture way and the European way. I had to learn to get up and speak for myself. That's why I went back to school. To better myself, and get a job. And work, work for my home, for my community here. Cause that's what I did. That's what I think everyone should do. Especially their culture, they shouldn't lose their culture. Well, I like to see my children now go to school, have better education, when they grow up to go away to school or go to university and learn and also learn their culture and come back and do something. And be somebody and do something. It could be anything you know. Nurse, teacher, anything. And when they go away to school like I did, I learnt a lot. And that's why I've travelled a lot, and that's how I learnt things you know, for myself. And I speak really good English because I went when I was very young and I was taught English. But also, I still know my culture. My parents, my grandmother taught me, you know. I still can't, don't forget that... Aunty HS, 70+ years

Aunty HS draws upon notions of learning both ways, Aboriginal and Western, enabling students to pursue their own aspirations and contribute back to community (Intercultural Both-Ways). She relates this to employment, but also the idea of 'being somebody', an empowered person who can aspire to anything. Aunty EC also

discusses Aboriginal and Western learning with more of a focus on employment and economic participation.

'When they finish job they can come back at community and learn their culture'
The purpose of school is they got to learn more education. Cause one day if they get a job they need to speak English more than language and when they come back at home then they can talk language. I hope for my children to finish school for start. And then find a job. Mining is alright for them, see them get more training on how to work on heavy machine and all that. Well if [they're] getting good pay well... then just keep on what [they're] doing. And when they finish job they can come back at community and learn their culture. Like ceremony, hunting and all that. I'm looking at sending them out boarding school. There's one in Tenant Creek and three here. When they get more education then I can just send them that boarding school away from home and get more experience on English and whatever they wanting to do, and come back in community and learn those young kids what they learn more English then. I think it's alright for going to boarding school and see then what they can show this little community what they did in boarding school... Aunty EC, 30-49 years

Whilst focussing on education for employment, Aunty EC appears to reject the Neoliberal Assimilationist Discourse where a boarding school education is framed as a means of personal positional gains. Students returning from boarding school can 'learn' or teach the younger children in community, about English and all they have learnt away at school. The expectation she expresses here is that those students who are sent to boarding school will return and teach those in community the ways of functioning within White mainstream society. Aunty EC, who stresses the importance of culture in other responses, seems to advocate for an instrumental approach to education within which education for employability is the end goal of education to ensure community survival. For Aunty EC, people can build on their cultural knowledge outside of work hours, though she is agreeable to the school assisting if in a position to do so. Perhaps Aunty EC takes this position because of the strong involvement her family has in the cultural life of Elliott, with the possible unemployment of her children being a more serious concern.

Boarding school was an issue commonly raised, and whilst Aunty EC appears quite willing to send her children away to school, Aunty FD (below) doesn't necessarily agree with the current situation in which it is the only opportunity for students to complete secondary schooling.

'Something that can bring them back to into community and help their own people'
The point of school here I reckon it's better education, getting... well we haven't got a choice for education now so... just building our kid up for education, get them ready for boarding school. I think students should go to boarding school, but in my perfect world no. I think I had a better opportunity to learn language because I stayed home, yeah. I think it's because I was here and being around my own people and language group, because as I know they have different language groups at boarding school so I guess they find it really hard to teach different language so... Yeah, which one to teach. So I think staying here was a better language lesson. Well I'm looking after my [family member] at the moment, so my hope for [them] is to finish school, go onto university, but we know that's not going to happen because of money wise and so we just going to do everything we can. No, that's my dream, for [them] to go on to university and get a degree, in something that can bring [them] back into community and help [their] own people. At the moment [they're] talking about health. I want [them] to come back, help build people here, yeah. [They're] still in Elliott at the moment but we're in the process of doing that now, arranging boarding school. At the moment we looking at Yirrara, then we going to send [them] off to Queensland. We got a [family member] down there. I would want to go, for [them], probably a university who has good programs for Aboriginal people, like support for Aboriginal people... Aunty FD, 18-29 years

Aunty FD's overall response draws upon two main discourses, Multicultural Multilingual and Empowerment. Here, Aunty talks about the opportunity to remain in community to complete her schooling as being beneficial to her own personal language and culture learning. Aunty FD links the importance of this to the identity of students, knowing connections to their place in the world and having a strong sense of self. The challenges of the current boarding school situation are acknowledged in terms of the impact on this language and culture learning, but Aunty sees further education as necessary for access to employment, which is communicated as being of benefit to the community. Aunty FD's aspiration for her family member is tangled up with one for the entire community. Despite thinking completing her education within community was better for her personal language learning, Aunty speaks quite favourably about sending her family member to boarding school and then university, so long as they return to the community to contribute. Uncle NK (below) offers a similar viewpoint in speaking of education for employability, for the good of the community.

'Be educated and run the community'
It doesn't really care cause the most thing that we care about here is just getting our young one just educated in English and stuff... learn about English more better work than... like just learn more experience like how to speak and stuff and come back and learn the younger one. It's really good. It's like, its two way to learn, culture and

English, but I think English would be more better than culture. Well I think education need to get our younger ones to be educated for jobs and stuff and so they can learn new bigger words and stuff and they can come back and be a role model for our community and stuff. It important for them to get jobs here and jobs away too. The point of going to school here I think just education, because we want our young kids to grow up to be educated and run the community. For that, going away to boarding school, yep and also doing like apprenticeships or something, training, CDU, go to uni. And then come back. Everyone come back. I think it's just going away and learning English and get a job would be a good thing. That's important, and then still come back and be able to learn culture. I want kids to learn more. They can just grow up and probably teach us when we get older and stuff. I hope for them to get a better future and stuff, like working together, support from community ... best way to learn... Uncle NK, 18-29 years

In other responses, Uncle NK discusses the importance of learning traditional language and culture. Overriding his desire for language and culture teaching and learning within the formal school environment however is the notion that English and Western learning is more important than culture, for economic participation. This ability to participate in employment and the economy is seen as necessary for self-determination, in Uncle NK's desire for students to return to the community, act as role models and take control of the community's operations. Uncle NK thus draws on elements of Neoliberal Assimilationist Discourse but not with the end goal being for individual gains. He sees economic participation as a part of a broader empowering 'community revitalisation' discourse.

Their viewpoints on boarding school are seemingly influenced by Aunty FD and Uncle NK's own experiences with schooling, and though different they ultimately arrive at a similar conclusion. Uncle NK comments that he only really had the opportunity to learn culture once he returned from boarding school. Aunty FD believes that staying in community to complete her education was 'a better language lesson', and in living and working with family she was able to maintain strong language and culture connections and learn more than those who leave community to pursue an education. Whatever their own experiences, both show a belief in students being educated (now through boarding school and university or further training) to then contribute to the community.

This final question, 'what is the purpose of education', elicited a range of responses from informants. The dominant discourses or elements of discourses asserted in responses to this question were Neoliberal Assimilationist, Empowerment and Multicultural Multilingual Discourses. The ways in which these ideologically

conflicting discourses were simultaneously drawn upon in a relatively seamless way points to the importance of the particular context of Elliott, within which informants engaged in this social practice of articulating their education aspirations. Economic participation and employment was seen as the primary purpose of education, but for different reasons ranging from individual financial and housing security, to more common collective ideals of contributing to the community, increased Aboriginal leadership and community revitalisation.

8.4. Summary of responses

In seeking to re-present the education aspirations of Elliott community members, informants' responses were framed by the three thematic questions above: Why should language and culture be taught at school; what is your vision of schooling for children in this community; and what is the purpose of education here for children? Within each question, different discourses were foregrounded, revealing a complex interplay between beliefs. Elements of different and at times ideologically contradictory discourses were drawn upon by informants, to tactically 'make do' on an educational and social terrain which has historically not been of their choosing (Pedroni, 2007). Within their responses, aspiration as a source of resilience was witnessed in their ability to hope for a more positive future in which challenges facing the community are overcome.

In response to the question, 'why should language and culture be taught at school' a range of responses across all orientations to education (postmodern, critical, liberal and conservative) were evidenced, with postmodern and critical discourses (Intercultural Both-Ways, Multicultural Multilingual and Empowerment) dominant. There were also instances or elements of Human Rights, Liberal Multicultural and Neoliberal Assimilationist Discourses. Responses to the question, 'what is your vision of schooling for children in this community?' also mobilised numerous discourses across postmodern, critical and liberal orientations to education. Multicultural Multilingual Discourse was evidenced in the majority of informant responses, with Intercultural Both-Ways, Empowerment and Liberal Multicultural Discourses also evidenced but to a lesser extent. Responses to the final question, 'what is the purpose of education', appeared more conservative than responses to the previous two questions, with elements of Neoliberal Assimilationist Discourse

evidenced, as well as Empowerment and Multicultural Multilingual Discourses. It was questioned whether such a focus on employment could be considered conservative though, when it was seen as a means of community revitalisation.

Drawing on the conceptual framing described in Chapter Three, and particularly Foucault's tactical polyvalence of discourses (Foucault, 1981), texts are seen as sites of struggle in which traces of differing discourses contend and struggle for dominance, and discursive differences are negotiated (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Informants' responses (as texts) were certainly made up of a 'multiplicity of discursive elements' (Foucault, 1981, p. 101) with different and even contradictory discourses mobilised within them. This was seen in a number of responses which dealt particularly with education for employment. Whilst elements of Neoliberal Assimilationist Discourse were evident, informants could not be characterised as such – the importance of language and culture maintenance (Multicultural Multilingual Discourse) and community revitalisation (Empowerment Discourse) struggled against any totalising acceptance of conservative ideology. The cultural wealth of the community was recognised as a source of strength, not to be overlooked. In Pedroni's (2007, p. 40) work investigating African American involvement in school voucher reform, he too found that parents and guardians as advocates for the reform rarely offered 'intact' neoliberal or neoconservative discourses as underpinning their support. Rather, elements of neoliberal or neoconservative discourses were drawn upon by parents and guardians alongside other contradictory elements, to tactically 'make do' (Pedroni, 2007). Pedroni comments that it 'would be a mistake to simply read these parents' and guardians' invocations of neoliberal and neoconservative themes as evidence of unmediated neoliberal and neoconservative ideology' (2007, p. 133). Such discursive elements were in fact reappropriated into their collective redistributive and recognitive struggles (Pedroni, 2007).

Discourse types, rather than being mechanically implemented, are drawn upon in varying combinations alongside an individual's member resources to reproduce subject positions as a response to the ever-changing conditions and demands of social situations. In this reproduction, social subjects are both passive and agentic: passive in that they are constrained by discourse types but agentic as it is only through being constrained that people are enabled to be active and creative social agents. Evidenced within their responses, informants engaged in this agentic work.

They did not fully accept the subject position offered within a Neoliberal Assimilationist Discourse, whereby the student is removed from their historical and geographical influences and framed as any other, needing to be instilled with the knowledge, skills, values and disposition deemed important by mainstream society for individual economic gains. Individual gains were inseparably tied to community benefits. Certainly, education for employment was considered necessary but with the ultimate goal of contributing to the survival or revitalisation of the community. This broader Empowerment Discourse positions the student as one whose education is not divorced from their identity and cultural upbringing, and who can act as a change agent at organisational and community levels. Informants' aspirations were thus grounded in collective hopes. Local language and culture were considered important, with students positioned as active participants in the maintenance of their language and culture AND successful participants in mainstream society (Multilingual Multicultural Discourse). Such participation necessitated a focus on education for employability, as community survival seems unlikely without economic engagement and security. Informants, in simultaneously mobilising ideologically conflicting discourses or elements of them such as Neoliberal Assimilationist, Multilingual Multicultural and Empowerment Discourses, engaged in a creative act of bricolage to articulate their education aspirations.

Absent from informants' responses to these questions were Monolingual Assimilationist and Inclusive Discourses. Despite informants believing that English was imperative for success, Monolingual Assimilationist Discourse was resisted in responses with the persistence in local Aboriginal language/s being included at some level within formal schooling communicated by all informants. No informant advocated for the exclusion of local language/s, or saw them as impeding students' success in academia or society in general. Such a subject positioning of students from a deficit standpoint was rejected. Inclusive Discourse also didn't feature in responses, but was not actively resisted. Though this discourse is invoked within notions of equality and recognition of diversity, these ideas manifested in informants' responses in connection to culture and language, thus aligning more with Liberal Multicultural Discourse.

At times it seemed a Critical Multicultural Discourse may have been being mobilised, though not in direct response to the three questions above. When two informants discussed boarding schools and the division there of students into

particular classes, there was resistance to the practice of Elliott's students being placed in classes for remote community children. One informant labelled these classes as 'black classes', and the other labelled them as 'Indigenous classes', and described them being 'below mainstream'. When their children were automatically placed in these classes when sent to a boarding school in Darwin, one informant 'put up a big argument with teachers over the phone' to have them moved. They commented that it is worrying that Aboriginal children from communities are automatically placed in the 'low' class, 'until they can prove themselves, and if they can't prove themselves or no one puts up a stink about it they stay there'. Whilst liberal political thought would be uncomfortable with this kind of racially-based streaming, it was not considered by informants to be a result of teacher prejudice, but rather structural and institutionalised forms of racism. Informants stated that it was the quality of local education that resulted in this streaming, with the 'education level they teach at the [local, remote] school really poor'. One informant said of the Indigenous class, 'they're below the benchmark and they need a lot more extra help... [My kids] have been automatically placed in there because they come from a remote area, a remote school... The education level needs to be improved, it really does'. Another informant had avoided being placed in a 'black class', stating 'I got put into mainstream classes because of the other schools I went to [interstate], because I'd been to a mainstream school. I see a lot of other kids from Aboriginal communities... that get put into black classes... the gap is just too far'. Remote schooling, or more specifically the quality of education it offered to students and their resultant achievement levels, was thus believed to be the key issue. Whilst neither of these informants advocated for the explicit teaching of power structures to students in line with a Critical Multicultural Discourse, they could see how this institutionalised form of racism or inequality impacted upon their children and were resistant to such structures and subjectivities. Both recognised the challenges of having students from remote schools at 'different learning levels', but did not agree with what appeared to be segregation practices, which served to reinforce negative stereotypes of Aboriginal learners from remote communities and impact upon their self-belief and academic and social mobility.

It is evident that community members drew upon a range of discourses within the field in their attempts to articulate what education means for them and their children. Within all three thematic questions, Multilingual Multicultural and

Empowerment Discourses were present. Neoliberal Assimilationist elements were seen in two of the thematic questions. These discourses were mobilised alongside instances of Intercultural Both-ways, Liberal Multicultural and Human Rights Discourses. Community members drew on, in quite selective and eclectic ways, this range of complimentary and competing discourses to make sense of their vision for education. Within their responses, the specificities of the local context impacted upon how such discourses were utilised in this articulation. These specificities, in connection with aspiration, are discussed below.

It is also recognised here, as it was in Chapter Three, that not all discourses are equally accessible to all members of society, and that my occupation of particular subject positions (due to my race, gender and age for example) may have restricted me from accessing certain discourses or knowledge. It was my aim in this community-based investigation to seek out those marginalised discourses that may be mobilised by community members in articulations of their education aspirations. Particular discourses, however, may have remained inaccessible to me. It is unlikely that such discourses would be circulating within education policy, but it was an important consideration in not restricting what discourses informants may or may have not drawn on in their articulations of education aspirations.

8.5. Aspiration as a source of resilience

It is important to consider the very ways in which aspiration and success are framed within an education system seeking to be inclusive of Aboriginal Peoples and their knowledges, histories and cultures. The language and assumptions of aspiration, which circulate in dominant education discourses, may not be understood by Aboriginal students or align to their values and beliefs (Osborne & Guenther, 2013a). Aspiration is viewed as a commonly held and understood concept, and there is little attempt within policy or public spheres to understand it as anything other than a homogenous set of values, life experiences and cultural domains (Guenther et al., 2014). Aspiration has been framed within this study (discussed at the beginning of this Chapter) not as an individual motivational trait but as a form of cultural capital. In seeing aspiration as cultural capital, issues of the privileging of particular forms of knowledge, skills and abilities and assumptions of a ‘lack’ of cultural capital are highlighted (Yosso, 2005). Aspirations are formed by and within an individual’s cultural, social and economic context, and thus can be conceptualised differently to the dominant group’s norms. The framing of aspiration as cultural capital within this study rejects notions of marginalised groups as being ‘low’ in aspiration, when in

fact they have forms of cultural capital and aspiration which are not necessarily recognised, valued or understood by those privileged in society (Yosso, 2005).

In Aboriginal communities aspiration is a source of resilience and a collective process (Osborne & Guenther, 2013a; Yosso, 2005). Within the above responses, the current cultural, social and economic climate of Elliott can clearly be seen as having significant impact on the aspirations of informants. This impact did not result in lowered aspirations, but rather aspirations that address the specific conditions within the community. A range of challenges were highlighted within informants' responses to the three thematic questions asked of them. Most widely discussed were the maintenance of language and culture, and the economic situation in Elliott (particularly related to housing and employment).

Informants all agreed that language and culture should have a place in school. For the majority, it was to ensure the maintenance or revival of the local Aboriginal language/s and culture. Many mentioned how language and culture teaching and learning had happened in the past and called for a return to such practices, highlighting the loss or decline of language and culture in Elliott, with cultural inclusion in schooling seen as a way to respond to this social issue.

In aspiring for the maintenance or renewal of language/s and culture within the community, the struggle to balance this with Western knowledge learning was evident. As informants' responses progressed through the questions asked, they veered further away from postmodern or critical discourses such as Intercultural Both-ways and Multicultural Multilingual, towards a focus on English language and Western learning and the importance of employment and economic participation. Two informants, after explicitly advocating for language and culture inclusion along Multicultural Multilingual lines, retracted their expressed ideals, concluding with the importance of learning English and mainstream society or White society. Their internal struggle with such issues was made visible. Aunty PP (below) summarises.

*'It's going to leave them homeless'
So I sort of forgot about culture and language because not being mean or anything, but culture and language not going to put my kids in a house. It's going to leave them homeless... For an example, my sister came back to try and bring her son back for ceremony. She had to leave him with me because she has to go back and work to pay her rent. She doesn't pay her rent, she's out. So that's what I mean about culture and language. And it's not... I don't know if it's anyone's fault, I don't know anything, but you can't tell your landlord, you're going home for ceremony. He doesn't care, he wants his rent. Do you know what I mean? That's why sometimes I*

think language and culture is getting lost, because we struggle to... We want to work just like everybody else. Own our own house and have a car as well. And yeah, it is hard, isn't it, the balance. You want the best for your kids in the culture and the White society... Aunty PP, 30-50 years

Aunty's discussion here shows the tension between cultural justice (recognition) and economic justice (redistribution). Fraser (1997, p. 22) in speaking of 'race' being a 'bivalent mode of collectivity', posits that groups 'differentiated as collectives by both the political-economic structure and the cultural-valuational structure of society' will suffer injustices of socioeconomic maldistribution and cultural misrecognition. Such groups necessarily require both redistribution and recognition remedies, but these are not easily pursued simultaneously. To remedy political-economic injustice requires dedifferentiating social groups, whilst remedying cultural-valuational justice requires enhancing the differentiation of social groups (Fraser, 1997). Whilst Aunty wants the best for her children in culture, she sees it necessary to put culture aside to engage in political-economic structures (dedifferentiating in a sense for redistributive justice). This doesn't address issues of recognition however. Fraser (1997) argues for socialist economics and deconstructive cultural politics in combination, in order to address the very real and complex redistribution-recognition dilemma.

The issue of economic justice in employment and housing security being prominent in informants' articulations of their aspirations, such as Aunty's (above), was not surprising. The housing crisis in Elliott has become more prominent in recent years, with community-led calls for action attracting media attention, most recently with the featuring of Elliott in the television program *First Contact* (Sharkey & Weekley, 2016). Many informants saw the need for an empowering education to respond to this economic and social issue. Informants expressed the belief that if students were to have a strong sense of self-belief and self-esteem, they would be able to 'speak up' and take part in collective action. Aunty TH drew on her knowledge of other communities, where development is occurring 'because they are sticking together and helping each other and backing each other up, regardless how long it takes and how many times they have to stand up and say we want this, this is what we should be having'. She believes that such movements begin with building up a student's sense of self-worth, 'to have the confidence in themselves as a person and yeah, build up those attributes and then maybe we might get stronger leaders.

People standing up and getting things done' (Aunty TH). An empowering education that responds to the specificities of Elliott's context, as per the Empowerment Discourse, is not only about building up the self-belief of the individual, but involves action for social change. A broader 'Community Revitalisation' discourse could be seen in the responses of a number of informants then, which drew on notions of empowerment alongside the importance of language and culture maintenance and education for employability. Such an example seen in Elliott demonstrates how aspirations are grounded in the lived reality of communities, and how articulating such generates new discourses that draw eclectically and partially on prevailing discourses.

8.5.1. Hope within a discourse of Community Revitalisation

Despite the specific contextual challenges recognised by community members within their articulations of their vision of education, there was an enduring sense of hope evident within a Community Revitalisation Discourse. This hope was not only for students as individuals to be successful in schooling and later life, but also for the community to benefit. Aspiration, as the 'ability to hold onto hope in the face of structured inequality and often without the means to make such dreams a reality,' (Yosso, 2005, p. 77) is a source of resilience for this community. There is the belief that students can be educated to effectively live in both worlds – that students can learn the local language/s and actively participate in culture, and also access higher education and training to be successful members of the broader economy and society. These beliefs for the individual feed into collective aspirations - that the local language/s and culture can be maintained or renewed, the community (as a township) can continue to function and develop, and that the community (as a people) can have greater control of their destiny.

The journey to understanding aspiration and success as a 'collective process and achievement,' unique to each individual community context, is complex and unmarked (Osborne & Guenther, 2013a, p. 96). In Elliott, informants' aspirations addressed the specific community conditions arising from the current cultural, social and economic climate. The informants' aspirations offered a source of hope and resilience. Their vision of education was articulated as a means through which children could be empowered to respond to such challenges. Education was central to

their articulation of collective aspiration. In order to respond appropriately to informants in Elliott, educators thus need to take up the role of ‘broker and enabler of complex, adaptive and long-term change and community development... to see the possibility of a new mark and measure of ‘success’ and enable a collective aspiration to continue to grow’ (Osborne & Guenther, 2013a, p. 96). In this way, a culturally inclusive education is more than a consideration of ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures’ content within curriculum – it is one that allows communities to carve out spaces of agency and hope to respond to their unique conditions and needs.

8.6. Conclusions

This chapter presented the results of Part B, the community-based investigation, which sought to analyse the education aspirations of community members and the discourses privileged and marginalised within them. In doing so, I as the researcher have attempted to balance my voice with those of the informants’ as much as possible, and not override them with my own. An enduring sense of hope for community revitalisation was heard, with informants drawing eclectically on a number of discourses to articulate their own broader Community Revitalisation Discourse. In the following chapter, Chapter Nine, both sets of analyses (Part A, the textual analysis and Part B, the community-based investigation) are brought together and compared, in relation to each other and to existing research, and conclusions from the study offered.

Chapter Nine: Conclusions

Chapter Six presented the findings of Part A's CDA of the Australian Curriculum policy corpus, whilst Chapter Eight presented the findings of Part B's community-based investigation of education aspirations. This final chapter brings together the two analyses, and discusses the study in relation to existing research. The chapter draws conclusions in response to the study's aim of exploring how the aspirations of Aboriginal people are supported in dominant Indigenous education discourses mobilised within the Australian Curriculum. Finally, the implications of the study and recommendations are presented.

9.1. Discussion of findings

This research, and the results from both Part A and Part B, enabled me to answer the three research questions. What follows is a discussion of these answers and what they reveal of Indigenous education discourses operating within the national Australian Curriculum policy corpus and localised perspectives.

9.1.1. Discourses in the Australian Curriculum

The first research question asked, which different Indigenous education discourses are privileged or marginalised in the construction of Aboriginal knowledges, histories and cultures in the Australian Curriculum? There was no singular answer to this question. Instead, the findings revealed similarities and differences across each of the learning areas and supplementary documents examined. This pointed to a lack of cohesiveness and consistency in the curriculum's rationale for and approach to the inclusion of Aboriginal knowledges, histories and cultures, which was a view affirmed in the literature (Lowe et al., 2014; Salter & Maxwell, 2015). The Australian Curriculum privileged and marginalised the full range of Indigenous education discourses to varying degrees across the *English*, *Mathematics*, *Science*, *History* and *Geography* learning area documents, and *Cross-Curriculum Priorities* and *Student Diversity* supplementary policy documents.

Broadly, a liberal orientation to education was most privileged in the Australian curriculum policy corpus, with Inclusive and/or Liberal Multicultural Discourses dominant in six of the seven policy documents analysed (with both

discourses operant in the seventh document, *Mathematics*). These discourses were evidenced in quite distinct ways. Whilst both speak to notions of valuing diversity, Inclusive Discourse manifested in views around safe and supportive learning environments in which all individuals (regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexuality, ability or other personal characteristic) were equally valued and supported within schooling. Liberal Multicultural Discourse manifested in explicit references to cultural diversity, and the recognition and valuing of cultural pluralism within schooling. Inclusive Discourse was often evidenced in regards to the inclusion of all individual students within the broader school climate or practices and policies aimed at reducing exclusionary structures, whilst Liberal Multicultural Discourse was more often evidenced in connection with curriculum and content integration. Within these liberal discourses, Aboriginal students were framed as being vulnerable to marginalisation and in need of support to ensure equality in education. There remains the question however of whether Aboriginal Peoples are or wish to be included in such discourses (Bevan-Brown, 2013; St. Denis, 2011).

Conservative discourses then followed as those privileged, with Neoliberal Assimilationist and/or Assimilative Monolingual Discourses dominant in three of the seven policy documents analysed (*English, Mathematics* and *Cross-Curriculum Priorities*), and operant in the other four. It was largely the Neoliberal Assimilationist Discourse most evidenced of the two. This discourse was mobilised through the construction of Aboriginal students as those removed from the historical and social context in which they are situated. Aboriginal students were framed as any other, needing to be instilled with the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions deemed necessary by those dominant in society, to enable the student to function effectively as a citizen and future worker for individual and national benefit. Whilst Assimilative Monolingual Discourse was only operant in the *English* and *Student Diversity* documents, it was found to be an underlying discourse across the policy corpus due to the required delivery of the curriculum in Standard Australian English, mentions of first languages largely in reference to the improvement of English literacy, and the absence of bilingualism or multilingualism. These conservative discourses removed Aboriginal students from their cultural and linguistic resources.

Critical discourses were less privileged within the policy corpus, with Critical Multicultural, Human Rights and/or Empowerment Discourses dominant in one of the seven policy documents analysed (*Geography*), and operant in another three

(*Science, Cross-Curriculum Priorities and Student Diversity*). These critical discourses seek to critically evaluate the structures, social orders and values of society and undertake activism to bring about equality. Within the policy documents, this manifested in examinations of the rights and continued struggles of Aboriginal Peoples, activism and advocacy for socially-just change, giving voice to Aboriginal Peoples and disrupting the status quo, and self-improvement for individual and collective benefits. Multilingual Multicultural Discourse was absent across the policy corpus, contributing to the underlying presence of the competing Assimilative Monolingual Discourse (discussed above).

Marginalised within the Australian Curriculum was the postmodern orientation and Intercultural Both-ways Discourse. This particular discourse was absent within all of the seven policy documents analysed. This is perhaps unsurprising, given the way in which conservatives favoured the development of the Australian Curriculum in response to concerns around education standards, and the teaching of common values and knowledge (Bessant, 2011). Conservative critiques of education have gained political and policy traction in Australia and elsewhere, and this orientation opposes postmodernism and ‘progressive’ causes (Bessant, 2011, p. 636).

There does not exist a single discourse of power however, with another running counter to it. As per Foucault’s ‘tactical polyvalence’ of discourses, policy is a ‘multiplicity of discursive elements’ and there can be different and contradictory discourses operating within the same approach (Foucault, 1981, p. 101). Conversely, unchanged discourses can circulate in opposing approaches. Those discourses evidenced within the Australian Curriculum policy corpus were often different and contradictory, and each document within the policy corpus evidenced numerous discourses from three orientations to education (critical, liberal and conservative). The analysis revealed the complexity of policy and a deeper understanding of the processes of ideological struggle as they occur within discourse (Fairclough, 1992).

9.1.2. Education aspirations of Aboriginal people

The second research question asked, which Indigenous education discourses do Aboriginal community members draw upon in expressing their education aspirations for the community’s children? The presentation of the findings of this second research question in Chapter Eight sought to privilege and present the narratives of

informants, largely unaccompanied by research literature. In this chapter, a broader discussion of the community-based investigation is presented, in order to provide a sociocultural explanation of the informants' discursive practices.

The community members of Elliott drew upon a range of Indigenous education discourses in the articulation of their education aspirations for the community's children. Their responses were framed by three thematic questions around their rationale for the teaching of language and culture at school; their vision of education for the community's children; and their beliefs around the purpose of schooling. Across the three thematic questions, critical discourses were most privileged, though to varying degrees. Postmodern, liberal and conservative discourses or elements of them were also evident. Chapter Eight demonstrated how informants engaged in an act of bricolage to creatively stitch together numerous and often contradictory discourses in the articulations of education aspirations, to mobilise a broader empowering Community Revitalisation Discourse.

Postmodern and critical discourses were mobilised most often in informants' rationales for the teaching of language and culture in school. A culturally inclusive education, which does not require Indigenous students to compromise their cultural knowledge base, has long been advocated for by Indigenous Peoples in Australia and internationally (Antone, 2000; Beaulieu, 2006; Brayboy & Castagno, 2009; Price, 2012). All informants advocated for the inclusion of traditional language and culture in formal schooling. Intercultural Both-ways, Multicultural Multilingual and Empowerment Discourses were dominant within their responses, on the basis of communal and individual benefits. These benefits, also recognised in literature advocating multilingual education (Usborne et al., 2009), ranged from the maintenance or revitalisation of local language and culture, to developing student capability to participate and contribute in numerous worlds, to strengthening individual self-esteem and identity formation. Individual benefits were inseparably tied to collective aspirations. This view in and of itself rejected conservative views of aspiration and education as being related to the individual.

Postmodern and critical discourses were also mobilised within the second thematic question around informants' visions of schooling. The critical Multicultural Multilingual Discourse was most privileged, with informants also drawing upon the postmodern-oriented Intercultural Both-ways Discourse, and critical-oriented Empowerment Discourse. The majority of informants drew upon Multicultural

Multilingual Discourse, in seeing the home culture/s and language/s of students as assets to be built upon in meaningful ways within the classroom environment. This view is central to critical multilingual education approaches (Nieto, 2000). The strong presence of Multicultural Multilingual ideals was indicative of Elliott's multilinguistic context.

Given the dominance of the Multicultural Multilingual Discourse, it is unsurprising that informants' responses to this thematic question quite often began with their ideal level of Aboriginal involvement within formal schooling structures. In the mobilisation of this discourse Indigenous Peoples have strong participation in knowledge construction, given that traditional or first languages are used as languages of teaching and learning in addition to the dominant language (Banda, 2010). It is understood that strong Indigenous involvement is necessary in all aspects of schooling to facilitate this, with Indigenous people fulfilling roles such as curriculum developers, literature production supervisors, linguists, and teacher-linguists (Nicholls, 2005; Osborne et al., 2009). Whilst some informants certainly advocated for Aboriginal control of schooling, others were more modest in their approach and considered a stronger Aboriginal teacher-workforce or Aboriginal assistant teachers as being an appropriate level of involvement. It was recognised by a number of informants, as it has been by others (Osborne et al., 2009), that a very common concern for traditional language and culture inclusion in schooling was the availability of qualified Indigenous staff to facilitate it.

Liberal discourses were both evident and absent within community responses. Liberal Multicultural Discourse was mobilised (though not dominant overall) within responses to the first two thematic questions around the rationale for the teaching of language and culture at school and informants' visions of education for the community's children. Inclusive discourse was not evidenced in any informant responses, but does not appear to have been actively resisted. This may be somewhat reflective of the literature, with inclusive education at times characterised as an approach related specifically to students with disabilities rather than its broader interest in all marginalised groups (Ainscow & Miles, 2008). Alternatively, it may not have been an approach taken up by informants as conceptualisations of inclusive education are embedded in the values and norms of the dominant culture, and may not be representative of their own as demonstrated by Bevan-Brown (2013) in his work on Māori perspectives of inclusion. Rather, when notions of equality and

recognition of diversity were discussed by informants, they were in connection with culture and language, thus aligning more with Liberal Multicultural Discourse. As discussed in Chapter Four, the way in which Indigenous Peoples are ‘included’ within this discourse has also been questioned (Holm & Londen, 2010; Marker, 2006). When it was taken up and mobilised in informant responses, direct links to their respective life and schooling stories could be seen. Aunty YJ spoke of ‘special days’ for culture as she remembered had been done in the past, whilst Aunty TH, who labelled herself as ‘mixed-race’ with Aboriginal, European and Asian heritage, spoke about the importance of students being exposed to learning about numerous cultures within a multicultural Australian society.

Conservative discourses were also both evident and absent within community responses. Elements of Neoliberal Assimilationist Discourse were mobilised in responses to the first thematic question around the rationale for language and culture inclusion, and in the third which dealt with the purpose of schooling. Informants largely drew on notions of students needing the language, knowledge, skills and dispositions valued by those dominant in society, in order to participate in the broader economy. These notions were often connected with the current socio-economic context of Elliott and the challenges informants saw in employment, financial security and particularly housing. It was within this thematic question however that the struggles of informants were most apparent, in wanting their children to achieve in mainstream education but not at the expense of language, culture and identity, sentiments echoed elsewhere (Perso, 2012). The second of the conservative discourses, Assimilative Monolingual Discourse, was actively resisted by informants through their advocacy for the inclusion of language and culture via Multilingual Multicultural Discourse. Multilingual or bilingual education is an act of resistance, highlighting (explicitly or implicitly) the need to struggle against submission and domination (Giroux, 2006). Informants, in their resistance to monolingualism, advocated for the maintenance of the local language/s and community, the continued ability to communicate with others in local language/s and thus maintain social and familial connections, and the strengthening of identity. Such views are also found in Australian (McKay, 2011; Nicholls, 2005) and international (Usborne et al., 2009) literature focussing on the multilingual education of Indigenous students (discussed in Chapter Four). Whilst ideals of maintaining a connection to culture are considered by some to be in competition with notions of

successful participation in mainstream society (Dockery, 2010), community members quite effortlessly pieced together these contradictory discourses. In mobilising elements of Neoliberal Assimilationist, Empowerment and Multicultural Multilingual Discourses simultaneously, informants sought to address their redistributive and recognitive concerns.

Again, within this discussion of the community-based investigation, Foucault's 'tactical polyvalence' of discourses is useful here as it reveals how multiple and often competing discourses can function alongside one another (Foucault, 1981, p. 101). As discussed in Chapter Three, the discourses within the Indigenous education discourse taxonomy are not only found in policy such as the Australian Curriculum but also circulate widely. They constitute the broader discursive field within which the second part of this study took place, where informants of the Elliott community attempted to articulate what education means for them and their children. In doing so, they drew on, often selectively and eclectically, a range of competing discourses to make sense of their aspirations. It was recognised within this study that subjects do not simply accept and enact the positions they are assigned through discourse, but can also constitute and construct them. In discussing their education aspirations, informants quite often referenced the social and economic context in which those aspirations were formed. They developed their own unique discourse of Aboriginal education, Community Revitalisation, which drew on prevailing discourses and reflected the specificities of the local context.

9.1.3. Comparing national policy with localised perspectives

The third research question asked, how do the two sets of discourses, evident in the Australian Curriculum policy and in the education desires of Aboriginal people, align? This comparison between the two analyses serves as both explanation and discussion.

The study found disconnect between those discourses evident in the Australian Curriculum policy and in the education desires of Aboriginal people. Whilst both sets of data evidenced a wide range of discourses, the Australian Curriculum privileged liberal discourses, followed by conservative. The policy corpus was not consistent however, and particular documents in the policy corpus supported informants' aspirations more than others. In contrast, the informants' responses in the

community-based investigation represented a complex act of bricolage in which an overall Community Revitalisation Discourse was mobilised by many informants, which rearticulated critical and seemingly conservative ideas (drawing most often on elements of Empowerment, Multicultural Multilingual and Neoliberal Assimilationist Discourses). What was revealed was a complex discursive field circulating within the policy corpus and community articulations of their ideal education. Cognisant of this complexity, an assessment can be made that in general, the Australian Curriculum does not wholly support the critical, empowering aspirations of the community informants. This was particularly evident with the advocacy of all informants for Multilingual Multicultural education, and the complete absence of this discourse within the Australian Curriculum policy corpus.

There are challenges in the provision of an intercultural, multilinguistic education, particularly in relation to Indigenous education. No singular 'Indigenous knowledge' exists, as knowledge is 'a product of context' and each First Nations community will have distinct knowledges, values, beliefs, and understandings of the world (Perso, 2012, p. 39). The intended curriculum then faces challenges in cultural inclusion, and can only respond at a very broad and generalised level (Perso, 2012). National curriculum policy such as the Australian Curriculum however can allow for the inclusion of local Aboriginal knowledges, histories and cultures, to be then put into practice within the localised enacted curriculum. It is recognised that teachers play a large part in connecting the intended curriculum (that which is formally endorsed in policy frameworks, such as the Australian Curriculum) to the cultures and backgrounds of students (Perso, 2012). It is imperative that the intended curriculum provides such opportunities, and that teachers have the resources to enact them. Many saw these opportunities as lacking or ambiguous within the Australian Curriculum (Exley & Chan, 2014; Lowe et al., 2014; Maxwell, 2014).

Of course, this study took the position that inclusion in itself is not an unquestionable good, as inherent in discussions of 'culturally inclusive' education are power relations as the dominant mainstream 'allows' something from the margins to be included (Vass, 2012). It is the embedded values, beliefs and biases possibly transmitted through such inclusion that is also problematic. Some inclusions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures within the Australian Curriculum were considered in the literature to be tokenistic or requiring a low level of critical engagement (Ferrari, 2014; Lowe & Yunkaporta, 2013; Mundine, 2014),

which was supported by the findings of this study in the lack of inclusion based in more critical or postmodern orientations.

In order to overcome the challenge of the very general nature of cultural inclusion in national policy and embedded assumptions within it, there is the need for educators interpreting such policy to consider national debates and systemic priorities as well as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices and priorities, all whilst engaging in critical reflection of their own complicity with colonialism (Osborne & Guenther, 2013b). A reframing of the notion of 'cultural inclusion' is required alongside considerations of the power relations operant within such a notion. Only then can educators begin the very real and complex task of engaging with the complex knowledges and structures residing within communities, in order to deliver localised, responsive education (Osborne & Guenther, 2013b). Successful education for Aboriginal students, particularly those in remote locations such as Elliott, must provide a space for Aboriginal knowledge and connect learning to local community aspirations (Fogarty, 2010). Curriculum needs to respond to the local context in which it is enacted, and the needs of community.

For informants in Elliott, these were largely related to the overcoming of social and economic challenges facing the community, with issues of employment, financial security and housing, and the maintenance or revival of local Aboriginal language/s and culture. Aboriginal Peoples have a strong sense of both the power of Western education to equip their children with the knowledge, skills and understandings critical for the future, and the power of their 'own' knowledge, skills and understandings (Osborne & Guenther, 2013b). In informants' responses, this sense of the power of both was clearly communicated, as was both their recognitive and redistributive struggles (Fraser, 1997).

In Elliott, informants at times prioritised education for employability over language and culture inclusion. It is the community's particular context that renders such a prioritising understandable. In facing two analytically distinct forms of injustice, recognitive and redistribute remedies (Fraser, 1997) may not be equally weighted by community members. Certainly, the tension between cultural recognition and social equality was evident in informants' responses.

As discussed in Chapter Eight, for informants there was a kind of tension between the ultimate purposes of schooling, with education for employability preferred, perhaps until such a time as the economic participation and survival of

Elliott's residents is more assured. It has been commented that in remote communities, the purpose of curriculum remains unclear, with some suggesting participation in employment (Perso, 2012). The realities of many communities however impose limitations on the availability of jobs (Perso, 2012), a reality which was communicated by some informants. Though many were positive about students attending boarding schools elsewhere to develop their knowledge and skills and ability to engage in wider society, there was also the expectation that they would return to community and take up roles to assist in its development. The employment-based knowledge and skills obtained thus need to enable students to enter professional roles and opportunities present within the community. Leading up to this, a locally relevant curriculum is required that focuses on the specificities of context, to enable students to support community development and develop local entrepreneurial opportunities (Perso, 2012). Such a curriculum would respond to community members' aspirations in Elliott. Fogarty (2010) comments that current policy fails in this regard, despite much research promoting the importance of schooling being connected with community and with locally valued, meaningful work or production roles.

A complex question is raised here of whether employability needs to be more of a focus in new critical approaches that speak to and respond to community wants, needs and values. It may seem conservative to privilege a view of education as preparation for work and future participation in the nation's economy (as discussed in Chapter Four), when post-schooling employment is more assured (in White middle-class settings), but in Elliott it cannot be characterised as such. Elements of this conservative neoliberal discourse were mobilised by informants, but not to achieve its conservative ideals. Instead, the discourse was mobilised within an overall narrative of an empowering Community Revitalisation. Not being concerned with employability is not possible when a person's economic future is insecure, with food and housing uncertainties. Where employment participation is not more assured, in contexts such as Elliott, promoting employment preparation could be a critical, localised and central goal for community and educators.

The comparison of informants' aspirations to those discourses mobilised within the Australian Curriculum then reveals further work needs to be undertaken at multiple systemic levels, to ensure curriculum policy is responsive to local context and supports the aspirations of Aboriginal people. The reality of Aboriginal Peoples'

lived experiences, which influence their aspirations, must be reflected in a culturally inclusive national curriculum. In order to respond appropriately to informants in Elliott, educators need to enable the continued growth of collective aspiration for long-term change and community development (Osborne & Guenther, 2013a). Only then will national policies such as the Australian Curriculum in their implementation be best placed to support the aspirations of Aboriginal people and achieve the education goals of the *Melbourne Declaration* (MCEETYA, 2008).

9.2. Implications and future research

The implications of these research findings, as well as recommendations, are outlined below. These have been presented for particular stakeholders: policy makers, communities, school staff, teacher educators and academics.

9.2.1. Policy makers

The implications of this study for education bodies and policy makers working in the Australian Curriculum and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education spaces, are that the Australian Curriculum does not fully respond to Goal 1 of the *Melbourne Declaration* in which ‘Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence’ (MCEETYA, 2008). A consistent, dominant discourse of authentic and respectful inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures in the Australian Curriculum has not been achieved, and as such, the needs of all students within the Australian education system are not wholly being met. Those tasked with reviewing and further developing the Australian Curriculum should look to particular learning areas (such as Geography) for more inclusive and critical exemplars, to ensure this national goal is promoted across all learning areas. Those learning areas in which inclusion has to date been somewhat tokenistic should be revised, with revisions made explicit and promoted to ensure awareness and take-up at state, school and classroom levels. State and school-level policies then need to be developed that encourage culturally inclusive curricula, in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students can see themselves reflected in affirming and empowering ways.

9.2.2. Communities

This research also has implications for communities (particularly Aboriginal communities and those working in solidarity with them), in that the Australian Curriculum may not fully represent the education aspirations of Aboriginal Peoples. Communities should be encouraged and supported to engage in consultative activities with schools and government so that their desires may be heard and responded to. Responding to the limitations of the study, communities could advocate for similar research to be undertaken to survey their localised and contextualised education aspirations, in order to provide a point of comparison and further strengthen advocacy movements in this area. Aboriginal communities and activists should continue to advocate in this space, to ensure authentic and respectful inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, histories and cultures remains and is further promoted in the education policy agenda at local, state and national levels.

9.2.3. School staff

The implications of this research for school staff (including principals, leadership, administrative and teaching staff) is that a gap exists between the national curriculum policy and community aspirations. School staff therefore must work to bridge that gap. School-based curriculum development work, based on a deep understanding of the community the school serves and their aspirations, must be undertaken. School leadership must ensure that schooling responds to the desires, wants and needs of the community, and that there is a whole-school approach to a culturally inclusive curriculum. The benefits of authentic and respectful inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, histories and cultures within schooling should be communicated to staff, students, parents/carers and the wider community. School leadership can encourage accountability amongst their staff, to ensure that as a non-assessable element of the Australian Curriculum, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures cross-curriculum priority is not overlooked within some or all learning areas.

Teachers have a great deal of agency when it comes to embedding (or not) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, histories and cultures within their classroom. Teachers can create a culturally inclusive classroom climate, and build

relationships with students, parents/carers and community in order to learn about and respond to their needs and aspirations. Responding to the limitations of this study, an extension of this research could be undertaken at school and/or classroom levels, to examine how Indigenous education discourses dominant, operant, dormant and absent within the Australian Curriculum are (re)articulated in school and classroom practices. This could provide insightful information on the processes of text interpretation, and enable more targeted recommendations at school and/or classroom levels.

9.2.4. Teacher educators

Teacher educators are also implicated by this work, in that those aspiring teachers currently undertaking initial teacher education should be given the opportunity to engage in critical analysis of the Australian Curriculum, so that the way in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, histories and cultures are framed within it is not assumed to be an unquestionable good. They should also have opportunity to learn about the range of approaches to Indigenous education as described in the Indigenous education taxonomy, and particularly the importance of Intercultural Both-Ways, Critical Multicultural, Multilingual Multicultural, Human Rights and Empowerment Discourses. This is also the case for current educators needing to be upskilled as the Australian Curriculum is implemented across the nation.

9.2.5. Academics

Finally, the study also has specific implications relevant to academics. Research that engages with Indigenous Peoples is complex and requires a high level of reflexivity and ethical purpose. This research does not claim a research agenda for Indigenous Peoples, who will have their own based on their epistemology, ontology and axiology. Rather, it contributes an ethical approach comprised of numerous practical strategies based on Indigenous research principles, for non-Indigenous researchers to engage in research with Indigenous Peoples. These include methodological choices that name the researcher's position and privilege informants' voices, and ethical procedures such as the use of humanising and respectful pseudonyms, appropriate ways of behaving and being in community, and the

inclusion of a Community Reference Group. Responding to the limitations of this study, similar research with communities could be carried out by researchers inhabiting different subject positions to me, for example male. This could reveal other discourses not accessible to me, and also further contribute to theoretical work in the field. Such research could also consider the concerns raised within the juxtatexts, including further destabilising the researcher's authoritative voice and enhancing community involvement, ownership and control of research.

Research must also continue as the Australian Curriculum is developed, revised and rolled out across the nation. The limitation of this study in only analysing the first five endorsed learning areas provides direction for future research, in carrying out similar work for more recently-developed learning areas.

A final implication of this study is that the different approaches to Indigenous education must be made explicit, in order to allow critical comparisons and debates around such approaches to take place. The Indigenous education discourse taxonomy developed for this study provides a conceptual tool that could be used to frame future work in research, policy and curriculum development in Australia or elsewhere. Researchers of other nations may use and build on the discourse taxonomy to further the knowledge field.

9.3. Conclusion

The development of the Australian Curriculum provided an opportunity to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, histories, cultures and languages within the education experience of every Australian student. In some respects, this opportunity was taken up though across the policy corpus there was a lack of consistency in the approach to the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, histories and cultures. Certainly, it did not extend in any great deal to more critical, empowering opportunities as advocated for by community informants of Elliott who see education as a means of community revitalisation. If the Australian Curriculum is to be in a position to respond to the desires and aspirations of Aboriginal people, conservative undertones have to be re-evaluated and replaced by more progressive ideals that take into account the different ontologies and epistemologies of Aboriginal students, and their education needs, wants and values. At a national policy level, inclusion is difficult in anything more

than a general sense. The Australian Curriculum must therefore be flexible in order to support localised approaches. This will allow further work to be undertaken at multiple systemic levels, to ensure curriculum policy is responsive to local context and the needs, wants and values of each community.

Appendices

Appendix A

Table 4.1: Indigenous Education Discourse Taxonomy.

| <i>Orientation</i> | <i>Discourse</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>Goal of education for Indigenous students</i> | <i>Level of Indigenous involvement in knowledge construction</i> | <i>Indigenous subjectivities</i> | <i>Key terms in literature</i> | <i>Pedagogy</i> |
|---|-------------------------------|--|---|--|---|---|--|
| Postmodern: Deconstructing and recreating norms | Intercultural Both-ways | Sees Indigenous and settler cultures taught in equal partnership in which neither presumes dominance. It promotes an equal exchange of ideas in a neutral, negotiated space, where multiple perspectives are interrogated. | To strengthen Indigenous student's identity while allowing them freedom to pursue their own aspirations. Intercultural both-ways education allows students to deconstruct and recreate realities. | Control Schooling is directed by Indigenous peoples. They are involved in developing schooling structures, learning frameworks, curriculum etc. A strong community involvement in all aspects of schooling. | Indigenous peoples, their cultures, languages and belief systems are valued and respected. | Two-ways, both-ways, balance, intercultural, meeting, different knowledge systems, relationship, freedom, identity, community, culture based, respect, control, mutual benefit | Referring to and the interrogation of multiple perspectives, comparing and contrasting, direct cultural discussion |
| Critical: Redresses marginalisation | Critical Multicultural | Questions unequal power structures within society and how these construct identity, difference and otherness. It is emancipatory in nature, pushing back against institutionalised forms of domination. | To deconstruct power dynamics, privilege and oppression both within schooling and wider society and provide students with strategies of resistance against and transformation for oppressive social arrangements. | Strong participation/control Indigenous peoples participate in mainstream schooling contexts, and are grouped with all students considered ethnically or racially diverse. They may be involved in interrogating power structures. | By interrogating Eurocentric bias, the differentiated cultural knowledge of Indigenous peoples is acknowledged. | Critical, power, privilege, difference, equity pedagogy, oppression, resistance, emancipatory, interrogative | Equity-oriented, investigative activities |
| | Multilingual Multicultural | Uses two or more languages as the languages of instruction (both settler language and mother-tongue/s) to not only teach the languages themselves but also content. | To allow students to be multi-literate. It is a vehicle to prepare Indigenous children for mainstream success while being active participants in the maintenance of their minority culture and language/s. | Strong participation/control Strong Indigenous involvement in all aspects of schooling. Indigenous peoples may be literacy workers, literature production supervisors, linguists, teacher-linguists etc. | Multilingual education values and respects Indigenous peoples and their cultures. It ensures support for Indigenous language maintenance. Literacy in a student's first language/s is valued, with multilingual education not simply a means of bridging or transitioning to English. | Language, culture, LoTL (Language of Teaching and Learning), first-language, mother-tongue, traditional language, language skills, literacy, identity, self-esteem, language and culture maintenance, participation | Authentic interactions, reciprocal interactions, dual/multi language use |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|--|--|---|---|--|--|
| | Human Rights | Indigenous peoples have the right to all levels of education, and rights in education. Rights in education challenge dominant norms and involve protecting, respecting and responding to students' needs, cultures, languages and beliefs. | To allow Indigenous peoples to participate in all levels of schooling without discrimination, to receive a quality education which benefits not only the individual student but assists in achieving self-determination and community development. | Strong participation/control Indigenous people free to participate in all levels of education without prejudice or discrimination – leadership, policy, curriculum, teaching, government, support workers etc. They have strong involvement in systems that seek to redress marginalisation and respond to students' needs and backgrounds. | Indigenous peoples are equal to all other peoples and individuals, enjoying the same rights as all others, without discrimination. | Treaty, self-determination, self-development, access, availability, inclusion, quality, constitutional recognition, rights, non-discriminatory, equal participation, control | Rights-based education in a rights-respecting environment, cooperative learning, inquiry, debate, evaluation |
| | Empowerment | Develops students' self-belief and positive identity formation to build their capacity to overcome barriers to success. It targets individual, social and systemic change. | To not only improve upon Indigenous students' self-esteem, but to also effect social change at organizational and community levels. | Strong participation/control Indigenous peoples have strong participation within non-Indigenous education constructs, with community participation the key to an empowering education. Educators, parents/carers and community members work as partners in the education process. | Students are educated in an environment in which difference is actively sought, where they can be proud of their Indigenous cultural and linguistic heritage. They have the potential to be change agents and social critics. | Access, control, respect, equality, understanding, collaboration, self-belief, identity, self-esteem, social change, community, self-determination, giving voice | Critical-democratic pedagogy, cooperative learning, hands-on activities with practical real-world orientation, reciprocal interactions |
| Liberal: Personal development | Liberal Multicultural | Promotes educational equality for all students regardless of ethnic, racial or cultural characteristics. Embedded in cultural pluralism, it aims to recognise and celebrate cultural, ethnic and racial diversity. | To create equitable opportunities for all students regardless of difference, and reduce prejudice and discrimination. | Minor participation Indigenous peoples participate in mainstream schooling contexts. Minimal involvement in this approach – Indigenous peoples are grouped with all considered ethnically or racially diverse. | Studies suggest Indigenous peoples seen as being outside of multicultural education. Approaches/views differ – a liberal multicultural approach promotes the celebration of difference but Indigenous peoples can at times be included in a 'trivial' manner. | Equality, inclusion, cultural, ethnic & racial difference, recognition, equity pedagogy, cultural pluralism, celebrating difference, safe, supportive | Safe and supportive practices, special events and days celebrating diversity |
| | Inclusive | Promotes educational equality for all students. Diversity in an inclusive approach can mean any student who is vulnerable to marginalization because of their race, gender, sexuality, social or economic status, special needs or other characteristic. | To challenge social justice and attempt to provide safe, supportive learning environments in which there is an understanding of and appreciation for diversity. | Minor participation Indigenous people are included within inclusive education along with all others deemed vulnerable to marginalisation – they participate in and are supported within mainstream schooling constructs. | The possibility of the marginalisation of Indigenous peoples is recognised, and cultural/linguistic diversity of Indigenous peoples is acknowledged and respected. | Safe, supportive, equality, diversity, respect, human rights, overcoming inequality, individual/child-centred, celebrating diversity | Safe and supportive practices, open-ended tasks |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|--|--|---|--|--|--|
| Conservative: Transmits dominant ideas | Neoliberal Assimilationist | The Indigenous student is seen as any other, needing to be instilled with the knowledge, skills, values and disposition considered important by those dominant in society, to enable effective participation as citizen and as part of the future workforce. | To prepare students to function effectively in the workforce and wider society. The status quo is maintained. | Non-participation Indigenous students are present in mainstream schooling contexts. There is little room for community/parent involvement. | Indigenous peoples are like any other citizen, needing to be up-skilled to be active participants in society and contribute to the economy. Students are removed from historical and geographical influences and the context in which Indigenous peoples are situated. | Economic, citizen, success, contribute, participate, access, workforce, assimilation, standardization, globalisation | 'Traditional' teaching methods, teacher as authoritarian approach, standardised assessment |
| | Assimilative Monolingual | The privileging of the dominant (settler) culture's language over Indigenous languages. By imposing normative language practices and English-only policies, Indigenous languages are marginalised within schooling. | To improve English literacy to allow students to participate effectively in education and wider society. The status quo is maintained. | Non-participation Indigenous students are present in mainstream monolingual schooling. There is little room for community/parent involvement. | Indigenous peoples are 'lacking' with their language backgrounds seen as an impediment to success in mainstream society. | Dominant, deficit, assimilation, English-only, ESL, problems, failure, participation, economic success, globalisation, literacy skills | Teacher as authoritarian approach, standardised assessment ESL programs |

Appendix B

Cruces analysed in the study

Cruce #1: Rationale of the Australian Curriculum: English, p.4

The study of English is central to the learning and development of all young Australians. It helps create confident communicators, imaginative thinkers and informed citizens. It is through the study of English that individuals learn to analyse, understand, communicate with and build relationships with others and with the world around them. The study of English helps young people develop the knowledge and skills needed for education, training and the workplace. It helps them become ethical, thoughtful, informed and active members of society. In this light it is clear that the Australian Curriculum: English plays an important part in developing the understanding, attitudes and capabilities of those who will take responsibility for Australia's future.

Although Australia is a linguistically and culturally diverse country, participation in many aspects of Australian life depends on effective communication in Standard Australian English. In addition, proficiency in English is invaluable globally. The Australian Curriculum: English contributes both to nation-building and to internationalisation.

The Australian Curriculum: English also helps students to engage imaginatively and critically with literature to expand the scope of their experience. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have contributed to Australian society and to its contemporary literature and its literary heritage through their distinctive ways of representing and communicating knowledge, traditions and experience. The Australian Curriculum: English values, respects and explores this contribution. It also emphasises Australia's links to Asia.

Cruce #2: Rationale of the Australian Curriculum: mathematics, p.4

Learning mathematics creates opportunities for and enriches the lives of all Australians. The Australian Curriculum: Mathematics provides students with essential mathematical skills and knowledge in *Number and Algebra*, *Measurement and Geometry*, and *Statistics and Probability*. It develops the numeracy capabilities that all students need in their personal, work and civic life, and provides the fundamentals on which mathematical specialties and professional applications of mathematics are built.

Mathematics has its own value and beauty and the Australian Curriculum: Mathematics aims to instil in students an appreciation of the elegance and power of mathematical reasoning. Mathematical ideas have evolved across all cultures over thousands of years, and are constantly developing. Digital technologies are facilitating this expansion of ideas and providing access to new tools for continuing mathematical exploration and invention. The curriculum focuses on developing increasingly sophisticated and refined mathematical understanding, fluency, logical reasoning, analytical thought and problem-solving skills. These capabilities enable students to respond to familiar and unfamiliar situations by employing mathematical strategies to make informed decisions and solve problems efficiently.

The Australian Curriculum: Mathematics ensures that the links between the various components of mathematics, as well as the relationship between mathematics and other disciplines, are made clear. Mathematics is composed of multiple but interrelated and interdependent concepts and systems which students apply beyond the mathematics classroom. In science, for example, understanding sources of error and their impact on the confidence of conclusions is vital, as is the use of mathematical models in other disciplines. In geography, interpretation of data underpins the study of human populations and their physical environments; in history, students need to be able to imagine timelines and time frames to reconcile related events; and in English, deriving quantitative and spatial information is an important aspect of making meaning of texts.

The curriculum anticipates that schools will ensure all students benefit from access to the power of mathematical reasoning and learn to apply their mathematical understanding creatively and efficiently. The mathematics curriculum provides students with carefully paced, in-depth study of critical skills and concepts. It encourages teachers to help students become self-motivated, confident learners through inquiry and active participation in challenging and engaging experiences.

Cruce #3: Rationale of the Australian Curriculum: Science, p.4

Science provides an empirical way of answering interesting and important questions about the biological, physical and technological world. The knowledge it produces has proved to be a reliable basis for action in our personal, social and economic lives. Science is a dynamic, collaborative and creative human endeavour arising from our desire to make sense of our world through exploring the unknown, investigating universal mysteries, making predictions and solving problems. Science aims to understand a large number of observations in terms of a much smaller number of broad principles. Science knowledge is contestable and is revised, refined and extended as new evidence arises.

The Australian Curriculum: Science provides opportunities for students to develop an understanding of important science concepts and processes, the practices used to develop scientific knowledge, of science's contribution to our culture and society, and its applications in our lives. The curriculum supports students to develop the scientific knowledge, understandings and skills to make informed decisions about local, national and global issues and to participate, if they so wish, in science-related careers.

In addition to its practical applications, learning science is a valuable pursuit in its own right. Students can experience the joy of scientific discovery and nurture their natural curiosity about the world around them. In doing this, they develop critical and creative thinking skills and challenge themselves to identify questions and draw evidence-based conclusions using scientific methods. The wider benefits of this "scientific literacy" are well established, including giving students the capability to investigate the natural world and changes made to it through human activity.

The science curriculum promotes six overarching ideas that highlight certain common approaches to a scientific view of the world and which can be applied to many of the areas of science understanding. These overarching ideas are patterns, order and organisation; form and function; stability and change; systems; scale and measurement; and matter and energy.

Cruce #4: Rationale of the Australian Curriculum: History, p.12

History is a disciplined process of inquiry into the past that develops students' curiosity and imagination. Awareness of history is an essential characteristic of any society, and historical knowledge is fundamental to understanding ourselves and others. It promotes the understanding of societies, events, movements and developments that have shaped humanity from earliest times. It helps students appreciate how the world and its people have changed, as well as the significant continuities that exist to the present day. History, as a discipline, has its own methods and procedures which make it different from other ways of understanding human experience. The study of history is based on evidence derived from remains of the past. It is interpretative by nature, promotes debate and encourages thinking about human values, including present and future challenges. The process of historical inquiry develops transferable skills, such as the ability to ask relevant questions; critically analyse and interpret sources; consider context; respect and explain different perspectives; develop and substantiate interpretations, and communicate effectively.

The curriculum generally takes a world history approach within which the history of Australia is taught. It does this in order to equip students for the world (local, regional and global) in which they live. An understanding of world history enhances students' appreciation of Australian history. It enables them to develop an understanding of the past and present experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their identity and the continuing value of their culture. It also helps students to appreciate Australia's distinctive path of social, economic and political development, its position in the Asia-Pacific region, and its global interrelationships. This knowledge and understanding is essential for informed and active participation in Australia's diverse society.

Cruce #5: Rationale of the Australian Curriculum: Geography, p.12

Geography is a structured way of exploring, analysing and understanding the characteristics of the places that make up our world, using the concepts of place, space, environment, interconnection, sustainability, scale and change. It addresses scales from the personal to the global and time periods from a few years to thousands of years.

Geography integrates knowledge from the natural sciences, social sciences and humanities to build a holistic understanding of the world. Students learn to question why the world is the way it is, reflect on their relationships with and responsibilities for that world, and propose actions designed to shape a socially just and sustainable future.

The concept of place develops students' curiosity and wonder about the diversity of the world's places, peoples, cultures and environments. Students examine why places have particular environmental and human characteristics, explore the similarities and differences between them, investigate their meanings and significance to people and examine how they are managed and changed.

Students use the concept of space to investigate the effects of location and distance on the characteristics of places, the significance of spatial distributions, and the organisation and management of space at different scales. Through the concept of environment students learn about the role of the environment in supporting the physical and emotional aspects of human life, the important interrelationships between people and environments, and the range of views about these interrelationships.

Students use the concept of interconnection to understand how the causal relationships between places, people and environments produce constant changes to their characteristics. Through the concept of sustainability students explore how the environmental functions that support their life and wellbeing can be sustained. The concept of scale helps them explore problems and look for explanations at different levels, for example, local or regional. The concept of change helps them to explain the present and forecast possible futures.

Geography uses an inquiry approach to assist students to make meaning of their world. It teaches them to respond to questions in a geographically distinctive way, plan an inquiry; collect, evaluate, analyse and interpret information; and suggest responses to what they have learned. They conduct fieldwork, map and interpret data and spatial distributions, and use spatial technologies. Students develop a wide range of general skills and capabilities, including information and communication technology skills, an appreciation of different perspectives, an understanding of ethical research principles, a capacity for teamwork and an ability to think critically and creatively. These skills can be applied in everyday life and at work.

Cruce #6: Cross-Curriculum Priorities (Overview), p.1

The Australian Curriculum has been written to equip young Australians with the skills, knowledge and understanding that will enable them to engage effectively with and prosper in a globalised world. Students will gain personal and social benefits, be better equipped to make sense of the world in which they live and make an important contribution to building the social, intellectual and creative capital of our nation.

Accordingly, the Australian Curriculum must be both relevant to the lives of students and address the contemporary issues they face. With these considerations and the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* in mind, the curriculum gives special attention to these three priorities:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures
- Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia
- Sustainability.

Cross-curriculum priorities are embedded in all learning areas. They will have a strong but varying presence depending on their relevance to the learning areas.

The content descriptions that support the knowledge, understanding and skills of the cross-curriculum priorities are tagged with icons. The tagging brings to the attention of teachers the need and opportunity to address the cross-curriculum priorities at this time. Elaborations will provide further advice on how this can be done, or teachers can click on the hyperlink which will provide further links to more detailed information on each priority.

Cruce #7: Cross-Curriculum Priorities (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures), p.1

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are strong, rich and diverse. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Identity is central to this priority and is intrinsically linked to living, learning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, deep knowledge traditions and holistic world view.

A conceptual framework based on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' unique sense of Identity has been developed as a structural tool for the embedding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures within the Australian curriculum. This sense of Identity is approached

through the interconnected aspects of Country/Place, People and Culture. Embracing these elements enhances all areas of the curriculum.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander priority provides opportunities for all learners to deepen their knowledge of Australia by engaging with the world's oldest continuous living cultures. This knowledge and understanding will enrich their ability to participate positively in the ongoing development of Australia.

Cruce #8: Student Diversity (Introduction), p.4

ACARA is committed to the development of a high-quality curriculum for all Australian students, one that promotes excellence and equity in education. All students are entitled to rigorous, relevant and engaging learning programs drawn from a challenging curriculum that addresses their individual learning needs.

Teachers will use the Australian Curriculum to develop teaching and learning programs that build on students' interests, strengths, goals and learning needs, and address the cognitive, affective, physical, social and aesthetic needs of all students.

Purpose

These materials are presented as a resource for principals, schools and teachers. They are intended to:

- help ensure that all students are able to access and participate in the Australian Curriculum
- provide advice as to how the three-dimensional design of the Australian Curriculum may be used to address the learning needs of all students
- provide specific advice with regard to meeting the learning needs of students with disability, gifted and talented students, and students for whom English is an additional language or dialect
- provide examples illustrating how students with diverse needs can access and participate in the Australian Curriculum.

Cruce #9: Student Diversity (Students for Whom EAL/D), p.23

Although Australia is a linguistically and culturally diverse country, participation in many aspects of Australian life depends on effective communication in Standard Australian English.

In Australian schools, learning is accessed through English, and achievement is demonstrated through English. Each area of the curriculum has language structures and vocabulary particular to its learning domain, and these are best taught in the context in which they are used. All teachers are responsible for teaching the language and literacy demands of their learning areas.

Students for whom English is an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) require specific support to build the English language skills required for effective communication and access to the Australian Curriculum.

The purpose of this advice is to focus on how teachers use the flexible design of the Australian Curriculum to meet the individual learning needs of students for whom English is an additional language or dialect. This section builds on the general Student diversity advice.

EAL/D students are those whose first language is a language or dialect other than English and who require additional support to assist them to develop proficiency in English. EAL/D students come from diverse multilingual backgrounds and may include:

- overseas- or Australian-born students whose first language is a language other than English
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students whose first language is an Indigenous language, including traditional languages, creoles and related varieties, or Aboriginal English.

EAL/D is the educational acronym that refers to those students whose home language is a language or dialect other than Standard Australian English (SAE) and who require additional support to develop proficiency in SAE, which is the variety of spoken and written English used formally in Australian schools. The acronym EAL/D foregrounds the English language learning needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who speak an Aboriginal or Torres Strait creole, or a variety of Aboriginal English, as their home language, as well as those who speak a traditional or heritage Indigenous language; and of migrant and refugee students who speak an English-based creole, pidgin or dialect as their home language, as well as those who are learning English as a second or additional language (ESL/EAL).

Appendix C

Sample Questions for Informants: Semi-structured Interview

Please note these are the basic starting points for the semi-structured interviews only, which will rely largely on open-ended questions that allow community members to express their vision of the desired education for the community's children. Questions will be adapted as appropriate depending on the information given by informants.

- What are your own experiences with Western education?
- What are your own experiences with the Traditional education of your people (name group depending on interviewee)?
- How similar are your own experiences to that of the children in this community?
- What traditional/historical approaches to education still hold relevance e.g. gender separation, age-appropriate learning, and language?
- What traditional knowledge is a young person of (name particular group) meant to have at different ages?
- What is the role of a child, a pre-teen or a teen at different ages traditionally?
- What actions are they expected to partake in or to contribute to their community traditionally?
- How much of these historical/traditional elements of education are reflected in current formal schooling in the community?
- What informal schooling happens here?
- What is your ideal vision of formal education in this community?
- What specific cultural needs do you perceive students (or people of schooling age – from children to teenagers) in this community as having?
- How do you think schooling should respond to those needs?
- To what extent should local Aboriginal knowledges and culture be taught in the school?
- How should local Aboriginal knowledges and culture be taught in the school?
- How much involvement should community members have in the school?
- What roles should they fill? e.g.
 - consultants who don't actually come into the school but can be questioned by staff,
 - occasional guests,
 - daily assistants in delivery,
 - actual co-creators or direct creators of content,
 - advisors at a higher state/ national level etc.
- Should the local language be taught at the school? By whom? How?
- What languages should be the dominant one/s used in school?
- What do you know of the national Australian Curriculum?
- What is your view in terms of its relevance in this context?
- (If relevant) What do you object to in it?
- (If relevant) What do you endorse?
- What do you know of education policies on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students?
- What is your view in terms of their relevance or interventions in this context?
- (If relevant) What do you object to in these?
- (If relevant) What do you endorse?
- What do you see as the purpose of schooling here?

What aspirations do you have for your children in terms of education and life in general?

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