Transforming civics and citizenship education in the middle years of schooling: an exploration of critical issues informing teachers' theories of action.

Thesis submitted by

Robert Neville JENNINGS (MEd Deakin)

in December, 2003

For the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the School of Indigenous Australian Studies
James Cook University
STATEMENT OF ACCESS

I, the undersigned, the author of this thesis, understand that James Cook University will make it available for use within the University Library and, by microfilm, or other means, allow access to users in other approved libraries.

All users consulting this thesis will have to sign the following statement:

In consulting this thesis, I agree not to copy or closely paraphrase it in whole or in part without the written consent of the author; and to make proper written acknowledgement for any assistance which I have obtained from it.

Beyond this, I do not wish to place any restriction on access to this thesis.

________________________  ____________
Signature           Date
ELECTRONIC COPY

I, the undersigned, the author of this work, declare that the electronic copy of this thesis provided to the James Cook University Library, is an accurate copy of the print thesis submitted, within the limits of the technology available.

_______________________________                                              _______________
Signature                                                                                                    Date
STATEMENT OF SOURCES

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted in any form for another degree or diploma at any university or other institution of tertiary education. Information derived from the published or unpublished work of others has been acknowledged in the text and a list of references is given.

______________________   __________
Signature           Date
Declaration on Ethics

The research presented and reported in this thesis was conducted within the guidelines for research ethics outlined in the national *Statement on Ethics Conduct in Research Involving Human* (1999), the *Joint NHMRC/AVCC Statement and Guidelines on Research Practice* (1997), the *James Cook University Policy on Experimentation Ethics: Standard Practices and Guidelines* (2001), and the *James Cook University Statement and Guidelines on Research Practice* (2001). The proposed research methodology received clearance from the James Cook University Experimentation Ethics Review Committee (approval number H784).

_________________________    ________________
Robert Neville Jennings     Date
Acknowledgements

I firstly wish to thank the participating teachers in each case study school who gave freely of their time during the action research phase of the thesis. I also wish to thank the principals of those schools who gave support to the study and the educators who formed an outer reference group during the data collection phase.

I wish to thank the following people who gave advice during the conduct of the study and/or helped with proof reading at different stages: Dr David Dufty, Professor Wayne Pace, Dr Robert Smith, Dr Brad Shipway and Suzanne Mellor.

I recognise the influence of Professor Mary Kalantzis who inspired me to undertake this study. I also recognise the important input of Dr Rob Gilbert who provided critical advice on citizenship issues and Professor Robin McTaggart who gave advice on action research.

I also owe a special debt to my partner Dr Leonie Jennings who inspired me through her own dedication to study, who acted as a critical friend and helped me to maintain a focus on the end result.

Finally, and most importantly, I owe a great debt to my supervisor Dr Sue McGinty who stayed with me through seven long years of study. Dr McGinty proved to be a most generous supervisor who shared her knowledge of qualitative research and provided invaluable advice through teleconferences, research seminars and many drafts of this final study. I have nothing but admiration for her skills as a supervisor.
ABSTRACT

In the past decade there has been a revival of interest in civics and citizenship education at the national and global level. While the revival of interest has influenced all levels of education, this study has a particular focus on civics and citizenship education in the middle years of schooling. It recognises that classroom teachers are “policy actors” who make individual meaning out of official policies on civics and citizenship education. On the other hand, it recognises that teachers are also autonomous agents who sometimes act independently of “official knowledge”. The aim of the study is to identify critical issues informing teachers’ theories of action as they seek to engage young adolescents in meaningful learning experiences. The study is based on the assumption that young adolescents between the ages of 10 and 14 have specific needs and characteristics that present unique challenges for teachers of civics and citizenship education.

The study uses a case study approach based on a selection of schools in Northern NSW and South Eastern Queensland. Participating teachers in an inner reference group conducted action research projects to investigate their theories of action in relation to civics and citizenship education. Data were also collected from an outer reference group of critical friends comprising teachers in other schools, teacher educators, consultants and trainee teachers sharing an interest in citizenship education. The study seeks to redress a perceived gap in the research literature about the knowledge, pedagogical skills and attitudes needed by teachers to make civics and citizenship education more meaningful for young adolescents.

The study is founded on a conceptual framework of “critical theory” (Habermas, 1972; Fay, 1987; Carr and Kemmis, 1993). Critical theory provides a
basis for understanding the critically reflective skills of teachers and also provides an epistemological base for the critical action research methodology used in the study (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2000). A series of semi-structured interviews with participating teachers over periods of one to three years provides a primary source of data on how teachers approach civics and citizenship education and the critical issues that inform their theories of action. Data are also collected by means of direct observation, keeping of professional journals and content analysis of policy and syllabus documents.

Analysis of the data reveals three sets of critical issues: the first resulting from teachers’ self reflection; the second identifying teachers’ response to “official knowledge”; and the third identifying opportunities for transformative action. An analytical model is used to portray the relationships between critical issues that influence teachers’ theories of action when they engage young adolescents in civics and citizenship education. The analysis identifies the critical issues that teachers of young adolescents face as they move from a concern to reproduce society towards a concern to transform society through civics and citizenship education programs. The study contains critical reflections on the research process and on the process of providing education for democracy. A practical outcome of the study is a set of guidelines for professional development programs seeking to develop a critical pedagogy of civics and citizenship education in the middle years of schooling.
TRANSFORMING CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN THE MIDDLE YEARS OF SCHOOLING: AN EXAMINATION OF CRITICAL ISSUES INFORMING TEACHERS' THEORIES OF ACTION

CONTENTS

Introductory Pages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>i</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statement of access</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of sources</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement on the contribution of others</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of contents</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of figures</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chapter One: The Research Problem in Context  1

Vignette 1

- Exploring the Key Terms and Issues 2
- The Social, Political and Pedagogical Context of the Study 4
- Scope, Significance and Limitations of the Topic 11
- The Research Question / Problem 13
- Justification for the Study 14
- Structure of the Thesis 16

Chapter Two: Coming to Terms with Citizenship  19

Outline of the Chapter 19

- Origins of the Terms “Citizen” and “Citizenship” 19
- Emerging Issues in Citizenship 21
- Theories of Citizenship 25
- Citizenship and Liberalism 28
- Liberalism and Democracy 32
- Citizenship and Pluralism 34
- Indigenous Citizenship 38
- The Gender Perspective 40
- National Identity 42
- Culture and Citizenship 47
- Civil Society 47
- Defining Citizenship 48
- Summary of Chapter 49
### Chapter Three: Issues in Civics and Citizenship Education

- Outline of the Chapter
- Civics and Citizenship Education
- Education for Citizenship and the Purpose of Schooling
- Emerging Issues in Civics and Citizenship Education
- “Whereas the people” – a Landmark Report
- “Discovering Democracy”
- Links with National and State Curricula
- Overseas Developments
- Pedagogy
- Perspectives in Civics and Citizenship Education
- Developing a Sense of National Identity
- Values and Citizenship
- Curriculum Delivery of Civics and Citizenship
- Summary of Chapter

### Chapter Four: Reflecting on Civics and Citizenship in the Middle Years

- Outline of Chapter
- Civics and Citizenship Education in the Middle Years
- Teachers’ Theories of Action
- Critical Theory and Teachers’ Critical Reflection
- Resistance Theory
- Ideology Critique
- Legitimation Crisis and “Official Knowledge”
- Critical Pedagogy
- Student Voice
- Summary of Chapter

### Chapter Five: Methodology

- Outline of the Chapter
- Action Research Methodology
- Critical Action Research
- Case Study Method
- Site Selection
- Data Sources
- Data Collection Methods
- Data Analysis
- Locating the Researcher
- Ethics
- Summary of Chapter
Chapter Six: Case Studies: Citizenship in Action

Outline of the Chapter

Case Study One – The Role Model - Sunland Primary

Setting the scene

Background

Decisions, Decisions - Action Cycle One

The Young and the Old - Action Cycle Two

Confronting Selfishness- Action Cycle Three

Order in the House - Action Cycle Four

Bringing Federation to Life- Action Cycle Five

Graham theories of action: engaging with the community

Case Study Two – A Sense of Community - Hilltop Primary

Setting the scene

Teacher background

Far from the Madding Crowd - Action Cycle One

Successive Cycles 2000-2001

Case Study Three – Parliamentarians at Work!-Greentrees Primary

Setting the scene

Background

Giving Students a Voice - Action Cycle One

Skilling Students in Democratic Processes – Action Cycle Two

Renata’s theory of action

Case Study Four – Northlands State School – Promoting Student Voices

Setting the scene

Action Cycle One – Providing a Structure

Successive Cycles 2000-2001

Iris’ theory of action

Case Study Five – Curriculum Pressures - The Lakes High School

Setting the scene

Background

Grappling with Outcomes- Action Cycle One

Developing Appropriate Activities - Action Cycle Two

Joe’ theory of action

Summary of chapter

Chapter Seven: Engaging the Critical

Outline of Chapter

Identifying Critical Issues Using Key Elements and Themes

Critical Self-understanding

The personal

The pedagogical

The definitional

Critique of “Official Knowledge”

The practical

The political