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Towards a multilateral analysis of ‘knowing Asia’: a policy trajectory approach.

A qualitative study of ‘Asia literacy’ as a curriculum imperative in Australian Education.

Thesis submitted by

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in May 2013

for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in the School of Education

James Cook University.

STATEMENT ON THE CONTRIBUTION OF OTHERS

Nature of Assistance	Contribution	Names, titles, and Affiliations of Co-Contributors
Intellectual support	<p>Supervisors (thesis writing and data analysis)</p> <p>Feedback on data analysis chapters (Chapters Four & Five)</p> <p>Feedback on meta-analysis chapter (Chapter Seven)</p> <p>Feedback on initial thesis draft</p> <p>Reviews of papers submitted for journal publication (papers serve as basis for Chapters Four, Five & Six)</p> <p>Editorial Assistance</p>	<p>Professor Bob Stevenson, James Cook University</p> <p>Dr Lai Kuan Lim*, James Cook University</p> <p>Dr Melissa Vick, James Cook University</p> <p>Dr Brian Glover</p> <p>Dr Robert Parkes, University of Newcastle</p> <p>Professor Brian Lewthwaite, James Cook University</p> <p>Anonymous peer reviewers</p> <p>Claire Evans</p>

Declaration of Ethics

Human Ethics

The research presented and reported in this thesis was conducted in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, 2007. The proposed research study received human research ethics approval from the JCU Human Research Ethics Committee Approval Number H4036 (see Appendix A) in April 2011 and the report for research or teaching involving humans submitted in July 2012.

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Abstract

Various economic, political, social and cultural shifts have led to increasing interest, in Australia and other Western countries, in 'Asia'. Consequently, more educators are required to 'know Asia'. In Australia, this engagement is conceptualised as 'Asia literacy' and led by the Asian Education Foundation (AEF). However, it is argued that there is an absence of 'Asia literacy' in both schools and tertiary education and lagging momentum in taking it up.

This thesis examines the epistemological and ontological assumptions in 'Asia literacy' policy and in the enactment of the policy in one high school in Queensland. It explores 'Asia literacy' policy in Australia, focusing on the heteroglossic discursive constructions of Asia, 'knowing Asia' and the imperatives to 'know Asia' and their transformations on these across different sites. This thesis contends that these transformations have a capacity to open up conceptual and political spaces to react back on our global understandings that inform the broad political agenda of 'Asia literacy' and reconceptualise the significance of a trajectory of understanding policy. The analysis of 'Asia literacy' is informed by a number of theoretical elements. It drew on the policy process in terms of Ball's (1993) trajectory theory, and the constitution of the objects of policy using Bacchi's (2009) 'what's the problem' approach. It theorised discourses in epistemological and ontological assumptions about 'Asia' and 'knowing Asia' at each point of the trajectory using Bacchi's (2009) approach, Bhabha's (1995) notion of mimicry, Sen's (1997) view of capabilities and Bakhtin's (1981) concept of heteroglossia as a basis for unpacking the heteroglossic character of the discourse. It also used Said's (1993, 2003) notion of Orientalism, Bhabha's (1995) conceptualisation of hybridity and Ashcroft's (2001) reading of reconceptualisation to frame critical postcolonial perspectives and Nakata's (2012; Nakata, Nakata, Keech, & Bolt, 2012) appeal for convergence and Chen's (2010) call for critical syncretism to extend these

perspectives. Therefore, the reconceptualisation of the discourse of ‘Asia literacy’ has drawn on work of all of the above.

The thesis reflects the research strategy of investigating the three phases of the trajectory of this policy in sequence, and publication at each point in this process, as a form of intervention back into the ongoing academic discourse around the continuing policy development.

Furthermore, reconceptualisation (Ashcroft, 2001; Parkes, 2007, 2012) is used as a generative lens to reflect on the whole and deduce significance of the whole over and beyond the significance of the parts. Key findings that emerged in this investigation are:

- Competing constructs of ‘Asia’ in and between policy text and policy actors that create an ontological dilemma between constructs of ‘Asia’ as unitary and knowable and as complex and diverse, and between economic and cultural imperatives;
- Tensions for teachers as their epistemological assumptions about ‘knowing Asia’ create conflict between ‘what to know’ and ‘how to know it’; and
- The agency of school actors, including school leaders and teachers, in transforming, not just implementing policy.

The thesis thus contends principally that to ‘know Asia’ requires a disruption of the discourse of Asia as a unitary construct with questions of what constitutes ‘Asia’, and how exploring these questions opens up space for schools to engage with ‘Asia literacy’.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

STATEMENT ON THE CONTRIBUTION OF OTHERS.....	2
Declaration of Ethics.....	4
Human Ethics	4
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	5
Abstract	6
TABLE OF CONTENTS	8
LIST OF TABLES	12
LIST OF FIGURES	12
Chapter One: Background to the study	13
Introduction	13
Scope of the study.....	14
Historical Context.....	16
Importance of the study	19
Organisation of the thesis.....	20
Conclusion.....	23
Chapter Two: The landscape of ‘Asia literacy’	24
Introduction	24
Knowing Asia.....	26
‘Asia’.....	27
Asia literacy	33
‘Knowing’.....	35
‘Culture’.....	36
Theoretical tools for knowing	41
Globalisation theory.	42
Postcolonial theory.....	45
Knowing Policy	57
Multiculturalism.	58
Education policy.	61
International policies.	70
Theoretical tools for knowing policy	71
Knowing Schools.....	74

Asia in the curriculum.....	74
The Role of School Leadership.....	80
Teachers' knowing.....	83
Curriculum bed-fellow?.....	88
Theoretical tool for knowing Asia in schools.....	91
Conclusion.....	92
Chapter Three: Research Design.....	97
Introduction.....	97
Orientation to the study.....	98
Qualitative Bricolage.....	99
Poststructural position.....	101
Theorising the Research Dimensions of the Trajectory Strategy.....	102
Policy as text.....	106
Policy to context.....	108
Policy in context.....	110
Theorising reconceptualisation.....	111
Data Collection.....	114
Document study of policy texts.....	115
Case Study.....	117
Meta-analysis.....	126
Research Issues and Limitations.....	129
Reflexivity.....	129
Validity.....	130
Generalisability.....	131
Conclusion.....	132
Chapter Four: The 'problem' in policy.....	136
Introduction.....	136
Approach.....	138
Problematization: how does policy create the 'problem'?.....	140
Studies of Asia: A statement for Australian schools (1995).....	143
National Statement for Engaging Young Australians with Asia in Australian Schools (2006)....	148
National Statement on Asia Literacy in Australian Schools (2011).....	151
An alternative 'solution'?.....	155
Conclusion.....	160

Chapter Five: Creative policy translation.....	163
Introduction	163
Approach.....	164
Metaphor	165
Narrow.	173
Broad.....	177
Imagine, or be imagined?	182
Conclusion.....	188
Chapter Six: Teachers’ cultural maps: Asia as a “tricky sort of subject matter”	190
Introduction	190
Approach.....	192
Teacher Talk	192
Bring it on!.....	193
Tricky sort of subject matter.	195
I just don’t want to get it wrong.....	201
On the back-burner.....	207
Challenging the binary trap.....	209
Conclusion.....	218
Chapter Seven: Navigating the trajectory: reconceptualising ‘knowing Asia’.....	220
Introduction	220
Reconceptualisation framework	222
1. Emergence & acceptance of Asia literacy as a curricular emphasis in policy.	223
2. Slippages and struggles in representations of knowing Asia.....	227
3. Reception of Asia literacy policy.....	240
Destabilisation	242
4. Reconceptualisation of how ‘knowing Asia’ could be otherwise.	248
Conclusion.....	252
Chapter Eight: Conclusion	255
Introduction	255
Navigating the key arguments	256
Moving forward: this study and future possibilities.....	259
Maps... ..	262
References.....	263
Appendix A: Ethics Approval.....	294

Appendix B: Invitation to Principal	295
Appendix C: Transcription protocol	296
Appendix D: Sample data analysis	298
Appendix E: Information Sheet for Principal and Administration Staff	305
Appendix F: Information sheet for School Administration.....	306
Appendix G: Consent form for Principal.....	307
Appendix H: Consent form for School Administration, Head of Departments & Classroom teachers	308
Appendix I: School leader interview questions	309
Appendix J: Invitation to participate in study	314
Appendix K: Information sheet for Heads of Department and classroom teachers.....	315
Appendix L: Classroom teachers interview questions	316
Appendix M: Summary of submissions.....	320
Appendix N: Cross-curriculum priority Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia.	321

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.	Learning emphases for Asia literacy across AEF national statements.....	145
Table 2.	Summary of discourses in strategic arguments for ‘knowing Asia’ in AEF policy.....	228
Table 3.	Summary of discourses of curriculum reform in calls to ‘know Asia’ in AEF policy.....	229

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.	Conceptual diagram of research dimensions of the trajectory strategy.....	106
Figure 2.	Conceptual adaptation of Ashcroft’s (2001) theory of reconceptualisation..	113

Chapter One: Background to the study

Maps are magic. In the bottom corner are whales; at the top, cormorants carrying pop-eyed fish. In between is a subjective account of the lie of the land. Rough shapes of countries that may or may not exist, broken red lines marking paths that are at best hazardous, at worst already gone. Maps are constantly being re-made as knowledge appears to increase...A map can tell me how to find a place I have not seen but have often imagined. When I get there, following the map faithfully, the place is not the place of my imagination. Maps, growing ever more real, are much less true. (Winterson, 1989, pp. 87-88)

Introduction

I have had a passion for 'Asia' from a young age. Dragons have always garnered my admiration, and at some point I discovered Asian dragons. To me, their sleek lines and spiritual and symbolic manifestations seemed to leave their European counterparts wanting. Soon I wanted to know all about them, which sparked a lifelong interest in learning about Asia and Asian cultures. As I studied Southeast Asian history and literature, and later visited Asian countries, I discovered that the Asia of my imagination was 'much less true' to the Asia I was studying and had experienced firsthand. The childhood map of Asia I had created in my imagination was a "potent influence[s]" (Broinowski, 1992, p. 170) that constructed Asia as a singular exotic, extraordinary and mysterious place; everything that the small country town I lived in was not. Through later study and experiences, I realised that this map was "not an inert fact of nature" (Said, 2003, p. 4), but rather a subjective account of the lie of the 'land': Asia. Upon reflection, I determined that the foremost influence on my subjectivity was what Said (2003, p. 6) called Orientalism: a created body of theory and

practice in which knowledge about the Orient is filtered into Western consciousness; “ a set of constraints upon and limitations of thought” (Said, 2003, p. 42) that is “ultimately a political vision of reality whose structure promoted the difference between the familiar (Europe, the West, ‘us’) and the strange (the Orient, the East, ‘them’)” (Said, 2003, p. 43). As my knowledge develops as both a student of Asian history and literature, and a teacher seeking to introduce my own students to Asian cultures and perspectives, I have a growing awareness of my own circumstances and modes of producing knowledge as I continue to re-make my maps for ‘knowing Asia’.

This realisation shapes my approach to my research. As a non-Asian researcher in an Australian, predominantly white academic institution (a position which involves its own cultural ‘maps’), I cannot write as an ‘Asian’ researcher. Yet, the question of cultural mapping of ‘Asia’ in and by ‘Australians’, and the drive for ‘Asia literacy’ in schools as an attempt to require children in Australian schools to ‘know Asia’, has ignited my interest and contemplation as a teacher. Through this research study, I seek and offer an analysis of the complexity of ‘knowing Asia’ in an Australian educational context, referred to in Australian educational policy as ‘Asia literacy’. Asia literacy itself is defined as “possessing knowledge, skills and understandings of the histories, geographies, arts, cultures and languages of the diverse Asian region” (AEF, 2012e, p. i).

Scope of the study

This study is founded on the premise that ‘knowing Asia’ is a dialogic and dynamic process. It seeks to problematise the construct of the Australian curricular priority and umbrella term of policy, ‘Asia literacy’, through a theoretical exploration of ‘knowing Asia’ that serves to highlight the complexity of Asia literacy in policy discourse that potentially narrows the

‘knowing Asia’ project. As a problematisation, the thesis seeks to open up thinking about Asia literacy, framed by two key research elements:

1. Policy text representation
2. Policy engagement.

This problematistion examines the conceptual frameworks that underpin notions of Asia literacy and act as catalysts for, and mechanisms in, Asia literacy curriculum visions, rather than a critique of logistics or technicalities in policy implementation. In short, it is not a critique of pedagogy but a theoretical exploration of epistemologies used to ‘know Asia’ in an Australian education setting. At the centre of this study are two interrelated understandings: constitutive conceptions of Asia and Asia literacy are problematic in multiple ways; and policy analysis must take localised enactment as fundamental to understanding of policy. In order to do this, the study situates the key research dimensions within a policy trajectory (Ball, 1993) across three interrelated dimensions:

1. *Policy as text* – exploring representations of ‘Asia literacy’ as constituted in policy texts. This context employs a critical policy analysis of problematisation of Asia literacy in policy genealogy.
2. *Policy to context* – exploring representations of Asia literacy in school leaders’ decisions to translate policy into their localised context. This context sits within a case study of one school site, chosen because it was one of the Asia literacy pilot schools in the Leading 21st Century Schools project. Central to this context is the examination of the school’s translation of Asia literacy in data obtained through interviews with leaders from the school executive.
3. *Policy in context* – exploring representations of Asia literacy by teachers required to enact policy in the classroom. Also within the case study, this context examines

teacher epistemologies for ‘knowing Asia’ through interviews with teachers across multiple disciplines.

This investigation builds on existing research in both intercultural education, and Asia literacy at school sites and education policy. While each of these domains has its own body of literature, there appears to be an absence of literature encompassing the trajectory of Asia literacy policy from its formulation at the national site to enactment in a local site. This thesis explores the epistemological issues that shape, and in some respects beleaguer, the enactment of the current national policy to promote ‘Asia literacy’. What is currently known as Asia literacy policy employs different constructs for knowing ‘Asia’ with shifting social, political and economic priorities. At the school level, these constructs for knowing ‘Asia’ are also appropriated and mobilised in a variety of different ways, adapted both to local social context and the particular organisational imperatives and structures of the school. The appropriations of different ways of knowing Asia between the point of national policy formation and its enactment in schools demonstrates that policy has a trajectory which entails the continual re-formation of the aims and objects of Asia literacy policy, rather than the articulation of the policy in some pure form and its attenuation as it is implemented. This research examines the complex interaction of epistemologies, ontologies and priorities in order to gain a better understanding of the possibilities for ‘knowing Asia’ in Australian school settings.

Historical Context

Current policies have arisen as the latest iteration in a 60 year history of growing attention and repeated reformulation of what ‘knowing Asia’ means and why it is important. The incumbent Asian Studies Association of Australia president, John Ingleson (2012) reports

“that there have been over 60 reports since 1950 funded by governments or government agencies on Australia and Asia” (p. 1). The coupling of the market potential of the Asian region with a growing emphasis in Australia’s economy in policy has resulted in growth in the seeming importance of the need to ‘know Asia’. National economic interest in Asia and its contribution to government policy in this field culminated in 1994 with a long term plan aimed at producing an Asia-literate generation to boost Australia’s international and regional economic performance (Henderson, 2003). Kevin Rudd, then Opposition Foreign Affairs Shadow Minister, was Chair of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) report *Asian Languages and Australia’s Economic Future* (Rudd, 1994). This report, considered a turning point in cementing Asia literacy in mainstream agenda, sits within an economic rationale to develop an Australian “export culture which is ‘Asia-literate’ ” (Rudd, 1994, p. 2).

The report is positively regarded for securing a place for Asia literacy in education, and the work of the Asian Education Foundation (AEF), the current key body established in 1992 to “advocate[s] for and support[s] Asia literacy in Australian schools” (AEF, 2011a), has been crucial in supporting this (Henderson, 1999, 2003, 2007; Singh, 1996b; Slaughter, 2009). Initially, take-up was at the discretion of schools. The AEF sought to promote this take-up in various ways, including position statements deployed as extensions of government policy and reports (AEF, 1995, pp. 2-3). The AEF has also played a critical role in championing Asia literacy as a cross-curriculum priority in Australia’s first and emerging Australian Curriculum.

Recent policies and education reforms include considerable awareness of Asia literacy. In 2008, then Prime Minister Julia Gillard maintained that “it is impossible to conceive of a future Australian education system that does not take the study of Asia seriously” (AEF,

2008a). The national education agenda articulated in *The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*, released in December 2008, also promotes that “Australians need to become Asia literate” (MCEETYA, 2008, p. 4) and “be able to relate to and communicate across cultures, especially the cultures and countries of Asia” (p. 9). Additionally, “Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia” is one of three cross-curricular priorities in the emerging Australian Curriculum, developed by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) during the period in which research was being conducted for this thesis. The latter involves embedding Asia-related content in the curriculum from Foundation to Year 12. Finally, the Australian Government White Paper *Australia in the Asian Century* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012) “the likely economic and strategic changes in the region and what more can be done to position Australia for the Asian Century” (Australian Government, 2012a) (also published while this research was being conducted and after the publication of the policy analysis conducted during the first phase of the research) within which education is “a big part of this story” (Henry, 2012, p. 1).

There is a growing imperative that Asia literacy is a requisite for Australian education in the Asian century. This imperative is underpinned by an economic rationale which aims to produce an Asia-literate generation to boost Australia’s international and regional economic performance (Henderson, 1999, 2003; Salter, 2013b; Singh, 1995a, 1996b). While it is represented as part of a larger response to global economic shifts, this rationale has been challenged as a “neo-colonial project which aspires to understand the object of Australia’s economic desires” (Singh, 1995b, p. 9). Overall, this imperative positions education as both essential to, and, if not addressed, potentially destructive of, Australia’s economic interests (Singh, 1995b), invoking Asia literacy as a necessary ‘solution’ for a prosperous Australian future (Salter, 2013b).

This link between Asia literacy and a prosperous future has been made in many traditionally Western educational contexts that have decided that an education-based strategy may be essential to economic engagement with Asia (Pang, 2005). Asia study programs demonstrate the rising prominence and importance given to ‘knowing Asia’, and take various forms of cultural and/or language studies, embedded or positioned discretely within curriculum. A curriculum vision, however, does not necessarily transfer into teacher practice that thoroughly reflects its intent due to the complexities of teachers’ work in curriculum enactment. Initiatives to ‘know Asia’ in Australia, the European Union, the United States of America and Canada have struggled to establish a “settled identity...in terms of policy or subject status” (Pang, 2005, p. 194). Despite the “progressive aura” (Nozaki, 2007, p. 155) of Asia literacy, as a curriculum imperative it requires conscientious exploration to engage with theoretical issues around Orientalism and Othering (Dooley & Singh, 1996; Hamston, 1996; LoBianco, 1996; Nozaki, 2009a; Nozaki & Inokuchi, 1996; Williamson-Fien, 1994, 1996).

Importance of the study

The research inquiry undertaken here is significant in numerous ways. Firstly, it is significant in terms of its subject. The research presented in this thesis focuses on epistemologies for engaging with ‘knowing Asia’. To my knowledge, there have been no studies that focus primarily on epistemologies of Australian educators engaging with ‘knowing Asia’, rather than focussing on ensuing pedagogies which are subsequent, yet by no means inferior, manifestations of ‘knowing Asia’. As the imperative of Asia literacy is paired with the ‘opportunities of the Asian century’ by the Australian Government (2012) and increasingly cited in policy documents, there is an urgent need to establish what can be done to ensure that Australians are engaging with this imperative and Asian cultures and peoples

more broadly in critically informed and self-aware ways. Furthermore, this study contributes to critical policy research by expanding on the complexities of policy trajectories at a time when policy interventions into teachers' work are seemingly intensifying (Ball, 2003, 2008; Braun, Maguire, & Ball, 2010). It positions school actors as policy actors to report on the substantial representational practices school leaders and teachers navigate, negotiate and themselves engage in when interpreting and enacting national policies at local levels.

Organisation of the thesis

My approach to this thesis was initially structured around thesis by publication. Peer-reviewed journal articles that were produced as part of this strategy are referenced in relevant chapters and form the basis of the analytical work of the thesis. Traces of this manuscript approach remain in this thesis, particularly in Chapters Four, Five and Six which each have a particular intent and use various theories that meet these intents. It is also reflected in the decision to write Chapter Four largely as it was published, despite the fact that between publication and the submission of this thesis, the White Paper *Australia in the Asian Century* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012) and Australian Curriculum had been published, analysis of both which, potentially could have been incorporated in that chapter.

The conceptualisation of each piece of writing was guided by Ball's (1993) policy trajectory framework, with a focus on problematising 'knowing Asia' in three key dimensions of *policy as text*, *policy to context* and *policy in context*. Despite the discrete linear progression these dimensions suggest, they are complexly interrelated, as will be foregrounded in Chapter Two and established in detail in Chapter Three. The order of subsequent chapters reflects this methodological approach; Chapters Four, Five and Six interrogate each of these contexts respectively, while Chapter Seven serves to interrogate these contexts in a dialogic way to

make clear the significant theoretical work of the thesis regarding problematic constructs of ‘Asia’ and ‘knowing Asia’. The thesis reflects the strategy of conducting the research around discrete phases, each corresponding to Ball’s (1993) notion of policy trajectory. This strategy offered the advantage for a novice researcher of securing critical feedback at progressive stages. While each published paper has been revised in the interests of reducing repetition and improving comprehensiveness and cohesiveness of the overall analysis, some traces of the original approach remain and should be noted. First, the development of the analysis in which later phases of the work reflect the insights gained from earlier phases; these insights are consequently absent from the papers now presented as edited rather than reconceptualised published papers. Second, and most importantly, the thesis reflects the historical development of the field of policy and practice of Asia Literacy over the period in which the research itself was undertaken. My analysis of *policy as text* in Chapter Four, inescapably took into account only those texts that had been published at the time of writing that paper (Salter, 2013b). Analysis of the White Paper and Australian Curriculum therefore does not appear in Chapter Four alongside earlier texts, but in Chapter Seven where it serves to make visible how even the latest texts problematically reflect the same discourses, with minor rebalancing, as the earlier ones, and functions as the focus for considering how current texts can be opened up for reconceptualisation. In so doing, I chose not to impose or contrive a retrospective unity on the thesis, but instead aimed to interrogate the heteroglossic discourse through and with an ensemble of theories and analyses and let different chapters sit against and inform each other. The thesis concludes in Chapter Eight, with a summary of key arguments and identifies areas for further exploration of knowing Asia.

In this first chapter, I have outlined my reasons for undertaking the research by contextualising it within my experiences of ‘knowing Asia’ and I have provided an historical

overview of the imperative to know Asia. Chapter Two provides a comprehensive analysis of the literature that informs this thesis. This chapter explores the landscape of Asia literacy across three key dimensions: Knowing Asia, Knowing Policy and Knowing Schools through a review of available literature and appropriate theoretical frameworks. It begins with an examination of the complexity and constructedness of concepts that can be ‘known’, focussing on key terms ‘Asia’, ‘Asia literacy’ and ‘culture’. It then moves to a review of the policy landscape of ‘Asia’ in Australian policy texts. It concludes with an exploration of policy implementation in schools, as endorsed and challenged by both school leaders and teachers. Chapter Three describes the theoretical analysis informing the methodological decisions made while conducting the study. It articulates how I have taken up a critical research approach that builds on policy trajectory design as advocated by Ball (1993, 1994a), making use of three research dimensions: *policy as text*, *policy to context* and *policy in context* and extending these with an integrative analysis informed by Ashcroft’s (2001) notion of postcolonial transformation. Chapter Four presents findings from the *policy as text* dimension involving a critical analysis of national policy texts. Chapter Five presents findings from the *policy to context* dimension, which details school leaders’ mobilisation of policy discourses in the localised context through a school vision that adopted an Asian metaphor. Chapter Six presents findings from the *policy in context* dimension that explores teachers’ epistemologies for negotiating representations of Asia literacy and enacting their own representations. Chapter Seven extends the findings of Chapters Four, Five and Six using Ashcroft’s (2001) articulation of postcolonial transformation as an integrating generative device. It establishes that despite the discrete linear progression of these dimensions, they are complexly interrelated and should necessarily be considered as such. In the final and concluding chapter, Chapter Eight, I discuss the key findings of the study and suggest possibilities for future research.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an introduction to the research reported in this doctoral study which aims to explore ‘knowing Asia’ in Australian educational contexts. Exploring these issues and their imbrication in the trajectory of Asia literacy policy reflects understandings of discourse in general, and policy discourse in particular as heteroglossic in nature, and constitutive of its objects rather than simply reflective of them. It also extends Ball’s (1993) notion of the trajectory of policy to show how school leaders and teachers can be understood to be engaged in crucial ways in the transformation, not merely the passive implementation, of policy that is essentially handed down from elsewhere.

I argue that actors in the school context negotiate and appropriate policy constructs and insert their own constructs of ‘Asia’ in their implementation of policies. A key finding of this study is the competing constructs of ‘Asia’ in and between policy texts and policy actors. The nature and scope of the constructs employed by school leaders and teachers have implications for, and offer insights into why ‘Asia literacy’ appears limited in schools, and points to ways that we can navigate with, and from these competing constructs to ‘know Asia’.

Chapter Two: The landscape of ‘Asia literacy’

Introduction

This thesis explores the epistemological issues that shape and in some respects beset the enactment of the current national policy to promote ‘Asia literacy’. Hence, the research elements policy text representation and policy engagement guided the scope of this literature review. What is currently known as Asia literacy policy employs different constructs for knowing ‘Asia’ with shifting social, political and economic priorities. At the school level, these constructs for knowing ‘Asia’ are also appropriated and mobilised in a variety of different ways, adapted both to local social context and the particular organisational imperatives and structures of the school. The appropriations of different ways of knowing Asia between the point of national policy formation and its enactment in schools demonstrates that policy has a trajectory which entails the continual re-formation of the aims and objects of Asia literacy policy, rather than the articulation of the policy in some pure form and its attenuation as it is implemented.

This chapter seeks to identify the discourses in the research literature that surround ‘Asia literacy’ within the Australian context. This literature is drawn from distinct, yet interrelated fields to map out the broad terrain of issues and complexities regarding ‘Asia literacy’ in the curriculum. These fields are explored to present an overview of scholarship and policy that exists and highlight different voices in that scholarship and policy. This review seeks to relate together analytically an assemblage of topics that form the landscape of ‘Asia literacy’. As Ball (1994b) suggests of his policy trajectory framework, this is “a heuristic and tentative exploration” of key aspects ‘Asia literacy’ “confront [s], inhabit[s] and respond[s] to” (p. 108).

This chapter is structured in three core areas of epistemology related to Asia literacy education policy: knowing Asia, knowing policy and knowing schools. The focus here is placed on ‘knowing’ as a necessary prerequisite for ‘being’ Asia literate called for in policy. The literature review begins by examining ‘Knowing Asia’. Identifying the various epistemological approaches to knowing Asia, it establishes the complexity of the term ‘Asia’ as a construct that can be ‘known’. Navigating the key terms ‘Asia’ and ‘Asia literacy’ is integral to this research study, but also potentially problematic. Here, notions of culture and cultural understanding are implicated in definitions examined, leading to a critical review of ways in which ‘knowing culture’ is framed and how theoretical lenses such as globalisation and postcolonialism can be used to enrich these frames.

The second section, ‘Knowing Policy’, reviews the policy landscape of ‘Asia’ in policy texts and elaborates on key theoretical frameworks used to interrogate ‘Asia literacy’ policy. The tension between knowing ‘Asia’ as an intercultural and/or as a multicultural concern is significant to the study of ‘Asia’ in policy texts, particularly problematic historical imperatives to know, or assumed knowledge about ‘Asia’ in various policies. Understanding the intersection of interrelated imperatives of domestic and foreign policy in ‘Asia literacy’ education policy in Australia is augmented by an awareness of similar policy moves in Western countries. The theoretical lenses used by Bacchi (1999, 2009) and Ball (1993, 1994b) offer insight into the epistemological and ontological issues of policy formation and implementation.

The third section ‘Knowing Schools’ explores issues related to policy implementation in schools. Policy representations of ‘Asia literacy’ can be endorsed and challenged by school leaders and classroom teachers as part of the policy process. Awareness of the successes and

tensions of Asia literacy imperatives in localised contexts is crucial to an understanding of policy enactment. Sen's (1993, 1997, 2004) notion of capabilities offers here a broader discursive framework for knowing Asia in schools. Finally, the problematic epistemologies of knowing Asia, policy and schools are summarised to identify the challenges and implications inherent to knowing Asia in Australian schools through 'Asia literacy'.

Knowing Asia

In this study epistemology is defined broadly within the Western philosophical tradition as concerned with the "nature, sources and limits of knowledge" (Klein, 2005, para. 1). This study accepts the existence of propositional knowledge as concerned with issues with the creation, application and for the primary purposes of this study, the limitations of propositional 'knowledge objects' related to 'Asia'. Therefore, epistemologies are understood as ways of 'knowing' Asia, both supported and challenged by particular knowledge objects. This section explores how 'Asia' is constructed as a knowledge object. It begins with a discussion of key terms for this thesis: 'Asia' and 'Asia literacy'. Identifying epistemologies of knowing 'Asia' and the complexity of knowing 'Asia' is integral to a study of Asia literacy policy; therefore it is crucial to explore relevant definitions and expand on the use of these words in this study. Culture is also constructed as a knowledge object, and the extension of Asia literacy to subsume notions of knowing Asian culture necessitates a discussion of 'knowing' and 'culture'. Finally, the comparison of theoretical lenses offers insight and approaches useful to negotiate these knowledge objects. Globalisation and postcolonial theories offer various lenses that can be used to reflect on the complexity of knowing 'Asia'.

‘Asia’.

Words like ... “Asia” and “unicorn” enable us to discuss topics about which we would not otherwise be able to hold a conversation, but we should be wary of attributing any more solidity to these concepts than the facts will allow.

(Waddell, 1972, p. 3)

The term ‘Asia’ is widely acknowledged to have definitional problems. It can be analysed as a spatial construct using a critical theory of ‘space’ (Robertson, 2010). Space can be known through a rich lexicon that sees space as social, real, produced and socially constitutive (Harvey, 2006; Lefebvre, 1991; Robertson, 2010). The multiple ways in which space is imagined and experienced (Robertson, 2010), and the point of separation between naming representations of space, perceptions of spaces and lived spaces (Marston, Jones III, & Woodward, 2005) are significant points of complication when defining ‘Asia’. Analytical and theoretical weaknesses in understanding the complexity of spaces (Robertson, 2010), are evident in epistemologies of Asia, despite their potential to be spatially rich.

Rizvi (1997) states that “to assume a fundamentally static notion of Asia is to overlook the vast differences that exist within Asia across region, class, gender, religion and politics” (p. 21). Such a notion potentially conflates the vast array of elements that can be seen to constitute ‘Asia’ by suggesting that it is a unified or essentialised abstraction, reducing space to the “rank of a simple object” (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 73). Space, however, can be framed as shifting and dynamic (Massey, 1994). Asian Studies expert and policy analyst Alison Broinowski (1992) suggests perhaps ‘Asia’ “should always be read as if written between quotation marks” (p. x), such is the plethora of possible definitions of the term. The use of quotation marks acknowledges that the identity of ‘Asia’ is inscribed and can be re-inscribed

as a construct that can be ‘known’ in different ways. Asia in this thesis, is conceptualised, written, and to be read, in quotation marks.

Shifting epistemologies of Asia are the subject of considerable debate in policy, as well as in education research. The Asian Studies Council (ASC), funded for five years from 1986 to advise the Commonwealth government on studies of Asia at all levels of education, acknowledged that the word Asia is used as a problematic, yet convenient shorthand term (ASC, 1988, p. ii). The inherent tension of this term is that it frames Asia as a unitary construct. The Council recommended the adoption of a strategy aimed at Australian school-leavers having an understanding of Asian cultures, geography and economies by 2000, expressing the belief that the cultivation of this rich knowledge would itself help address this problem and “lead to more appropriate definitions” (ASC, 1988, p. ii). In 2006, the Asia Education Foundation (AEF), successor to the ASC, again acknowledged the term Asia as contestable, opening the definition to debate. Despite 20 years of policy development, the rich complex understandings that allow Asia to be used without being simplistic and reductionist are still not in evidence.

As outlined by the AEF (2006b), Asia is conceptualised as a geographic space, marked by subregions:

- North-east Asia including China, Japan, North Korea, South Korea and Taiwan

- South-east Asia including Indonesia, Myanmar (Burma), Thailand, Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore, Vietnam, Laos, East Timor, the Philippines and Cambodia

- South Asia including India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and the Maldives. (p. 7)

This policy also recognises that Asia can be described in “cultural, religious, historical and linguistic” (AEF, 2006b, p. 7) terms, acknowledging the contestability of geographical terms and other constructs of space that are used to categorise Asia as a manageable knowledge object for classrooms.

Such categories are often represented as immutable truths, attributing misleading solidity to constructs of Asia. Interrogating the boundaries of categories may seem a superficial task compared to bigger intellectual challenges of Asian studies, yet it serves to foreground the complexity of selecting and defining the study of Asia (Williamson-Fien, 1994) in and for classrooms. For example, the heterogeneity of nation-states contained within geographic boundaries is obvious, and obviously problematic when not acknowledged. Each sub-region encompasses various nation-states, with boundaries that are assumed to be self-evident.

According to Singh (1995b) such classifications are used because of Australia’s economic, technological and political interests in these geographic regions. Spurr (1994) suggests that the use of these geographical boundaries appears adequate because political definition offers “a coherent stance that determines the nature of its policies towards Asia, its investment or disinvestment in certain areas, its military support or diplomatic negotiations, and its disbursement of aid” (cited in Singh, 1995b, p. 19). These boundaries form the basis of a construct of Asia that is referenced primarily by grouping political concerns according to their relevant geographical area. Similarly, the White Paper *Australia in the Asian Century* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012) draws a boundary of Asia based on “the current and likely future course of economic, political and strategic change ... encompassing China, India, the key ASEAN countries as well as Japan and the Republic of Korea” (Australian

Government, 2011). A tension in geographic categories is that while geopolitical boundaries themselves remain a key basis, the character of the entities referenced shifts and continues to shift. As heuristic devices these boundaries are problematic, as “regions are best viewed as initial contexts for themes that generate variable geographies, rather than as fixed geographies marked by pre-given themes” (Appadurai, 2001, p. 8). Geopolitical constructs of Asia are problematised by political interest that potentially supersedes the complex cultural and historical contexts of the individual nations subsumed by geographic grouping.

Similarly, the ‘lived’ space of Asia for many Asians may not actually be geographically in Asia. The Asian diaspora has complex features. Many Asian countries recognise the value of engaging with diaspora populations as partners in the development of the Asian country of origin: as sources of remittances sent back to homelands, intellectual resources that can be ‘mined’ on return visits, and as intermediaries who can facilitate home countries’ integration into the global economy (Rannveig Aquinas & Newland, 2012). In contrast, diaspora communities can also be positioned as having nothing in common with their home country “except a distant line of descent” (Reid & Reynolds cited in Gungwu & Shun Way, 1999, p. ii). How the diaspora is defined by others is similarly problematic. As Rushdie (1992) notes, migrants find themselves in a precarious situation as “people who have been obliged to define themselves – because they are so defined by others – by their otherness” (p. 124).

Questioning the cultural and geographical boundaries employed to construct Asia and/or Asians as Other foregrounds a further epistemological complexity of selecting and defining spaces of Asia. Historically, in the Western world Oriental Asia has provided a backdrop for European culture to define itself against. Asia was positioned as a culturally distinct Other;

part of colonised and therefore subordinate culture from a different geographical point. As Said (2003) suggests:

men make their own history, that what they can know is what they have made, and extend it to geography: as both geographical and cultural entities – to say nothing of historical entities – such locales, regions, geographical sectors as ‘Orient’ and ‘Occident’ are man-made...the Orient is an idea that has a history and a tradition of thought, imagery, and vocabulary that have given it reality and presence. (pp. 4-5)

The perpetuation of the ‘Orient’ as an idea that encompasses geographical and cultural unity has been extensively documented by Said (Said, 1993, 2003; Viswanathan, 2002) and to some extent by others (Milner & Johnson, 2002; Ryckmans, 1993) in the work of European commentators dating back to the ancient Greeks.

This geographical and cultural construct was manifest in the Australian psyche as “many Australians accepted...that all of Asia was more distant and exotic than Europe” (Broinowski, 1992, p. 15). Hall (1992) extends the specific theory of Orientalism (Said, 2003) to a broader theory of the West and the Rest, identifying the universalising tendency for the West to be a normative reference point. Hall (1992) asserts that the discourse of ‘the West and the rest’ is one of the key processes in the formation of modernity, forging an identity for modern society for both those who employed it and those who were subjected to it (p. 318). In the tradition of subaltern studies, the ‘naturalness’ of Western ways of doing things makes Asia recognisable only when it can be superimposed with Western categories and norms that see difference through the modes of perception of the West (Hall, 1992). This binary, however, has never been applied in a uniform way – in a dialectical sense the West has always been what the East or Rest is not, but the West has never been a

homogenised entity, just as European notions of the Orient have changed and evolved over time (Rizvi, 1996). Therefore, spaces of the ‘West,’ and in this study ‘Australia’, should be conceptualised with caution as they are just as prone to inappropriate and singular abstraction as is Asia.

Ironically, for many Australians, their primary cultural allegiance was to Europe and the ‘West’. Rationales of allegiance have also been invoked within Asia to either reverse political domination or conjure up a sense of a shared experience (Anderson, 1983; Milner & Johnson, 2002; Nozaki & Inokuchi, 1996; Paul, 1999), suggesting that any possible divide instituted by constructing Asia in geographical and cultural terms is not necessarily one-sided. For example, the term ‘imagined community’ was coined by Benedict Anderson (1983) to conceptualise the creation of an imagined Indonesia to unify the disparate peoples, cultures and islands of the region. This term conceptualised superimposing the idea of an imagined community over disparate time and space, making it both meaningful and desirable to the Indonesian nation. It supplanted existing cultural roots with imaginings of a unified national community to make national culture homogenous, therefore not always acknowledging, and by this omission not always fully accepting, historical realities of the nation. The ensuing dilemma for models of both European and Asian cultural allegiances is that their respective spaces of Asia are presented as immutable truths. Entrenched practices of abstracting Asia, particularly those underpinned by and entangled in cultural politics, present a seemingly insurmountable challenge to accommodating or knowing complexity through incomplete or generalised explanations of such constructs. The relationships among these constructs remain unclear; predominantly treated as though purposes and relations among constructs are self-evident instead of always contestable.

Asia literacy.

Central to this research project is how Asia literacy is conceptualised in policy text and how this conceptualisation manifests in the understanding and enactment of Asia literacy in schools. 'Literacy' has increasingly become a political construct that facilitates marketing of various agendas for various reasons¹. Discourse surrounding the term literacy goes beyond a narrow definition of the function of language and extends to other intellectual and educational practices. It is indistinct, however, what degree of 'knowledge' being literate involves. It is unclear if the assumption is that students will be completely literate in all possible aspects of knowing Asia, and/or if being literate is part of a continuum to being 'expert' in these areas. What is clear is that the call for students to be 'literate' in Asia situates the epistemological discussion about constructs of Asia in a school context.

This context carries with it the challenge to 'know Asia' in schools, classrooms and curriculum in ways that are not limited to or by reductionist spatial formulations previously noted. Historically this has been attended to in a variety of ways. In 1988, ASC Chairman Dr Stephen FitzGerald (1988) coined the term Asia-literate, where "knowledge of an Asian language is commonplace and knowledge about Asian customs, economies and societies very wide-spread" (p. 12). The relationship of language competency to Asia literacy is a significant point of tension, particularly for those engaged in the debate and development of curricula that privilege language competency (FitzGerald, 1993; Rudd, 1994). Others, however, see Asia literacy as more than learning an Asian language. For example, Muller and Wong (1991) assert that:

Although the concept of Asia literacy does include language competency, it goes beyond this. The concept also embraces the notion of cultural literacy...the term 'Asia literacy', therefore, refers to the intellectual uses of the study of Asia and the question of Australian identity. (p. 3)

A further tension is the location, and reach, of Asia literacy as an Australian educational project; is it only relevant to schools and what is worth knowing? Notable absences regarding significant and sustainable application of Asia literate curriculum are commonly cited (AEF, 2010a; FitzGerald, Jeffrey, Maclean, & Morris-Suzuki, 2002; Wilkinson & Milgate, 2009; Wyatt, Manefield, Carbines, & Robb, 2002). A major theme that emerges from this literature is that the Asia literacy project is situated exclusively in Australian schools and universities, and requires limited participation from those with first-language proficiency (Hughes, 2012). Hughes (2012) suggests this positions Asia literacy as an aspirational target grounded in an Australian school context that disregards increasing Asia literacy in wider lived spaces, such as the rise in Asian languages in Australian homes (ABS, 2012). This disregard sits at odds with the high priority some proponents of Asia literacy place on language proficiency (FitzGerald, 1993; Rudd, 1994). Additionally, Williamson-Fien (1994) notes that “as a specific goal within education the development of ‘Asia literacy’ is ...not readily definable or achievable” (p. 77) as “the possibility of ‘Asia literacy’ as a goal hinges on an unproblematic reading of ‘Asia’ ” (p. 78), highlighting tensions around constructs of Asia already noted.

Adopting the political slogan Asia literacy into the field of education implies that teachers must be Asia literate, and suggests that Asia literacy is a global project. Williamson-Fien (1994) suggests it is impossible to be literate in all things Asian. However, Asia literacy can also be interpreted as a narrower project that demands ‘literacy’ in selected areas. For example, consider the discriminating ways in which different constructs of Asia are selectively taken up, such as the geopolitical boundaries taken up in the White Paper *Australia in the Asian Century* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012).

‘Knowing’.

Importantly, this research seeks to remain open to new forms of knowledge and ways of ‘knowing Asia’. Practices of abstracting Asia and Asia literacy have implications when constructed as a curriculum vision. The term Asia literacy provides a point of tension – if practices of abstracting Asia are circumscribed by political and geographic boundaries, teaching students how to be successfully ‘literate’ in it could see a perpetuation of knowledge of Asia as defined and limited by spatial boundaries, rather than opening up critical dialogues of these boundaries as historical, social and political constructs. Due to the problematic nature of the term Asia literate, in this thesis I differentiate between ‘Asia literacy’ and ‘knowing Asia’. Asia literacy is policy speak and a construct of espoused policy. It is a political slogan appropriated for education (Williamson-Fien, 1994). ‘Knowing Asia’ goes beyond a political slogan to encompass the curriculum vision for Australian education in the Asian century to consider how the slogan represented in policy texts is enacted and made relevant to localised contexts.

To ‘know’ indicates a process. Knowledge of Asia is always developing, and subject to and in constant negotiation with practices of abstraction; it therefore cannot be claimed as ‘known’ due to the sheer multiplicity of possible constructs. This recognises, as previously established (Williamson-Fien, 1994), that to ‘know’ Asia in a definitive way, is not possible and invites the dangerous possibility of essentialised or fixed meanings. I represent ‘Knowing Asia’ as aspirational, prompting a plural and fluid frame of reference, continually searching ‘to know’ Asia as a dynamic and shifting space (Massey, 1994) rather than reaching a knowledge destination where Asia can be ‘known’, or one can be completely literate. Both terms will be used in this thesis for different purposes.

‘Culture’.

Asia literacy is consistently linked to intercultural education² (AEF, 2011b; 2012a, 2012d; ACARA, n.d.b; Commonwealth of Australia, 2012). This link implies that Australian students will engage meaningfully with Asian cultures that may not be their own. Culture, however, is also a knowledge object. It can be constructed in different ways, and ‘knowing culture’ is similarly complex to knowing Asia. It is important therefore to acknowledge the common constructs used for culture, explore ways in which culture can be ‘known’ and identify tensions in enacting Asia-focussed intercultural education in schools.

Culture is a “slippery, even a chaotic concept” (Smith, 2000, p. 5). Possible definitions can be divergent and reflective (Hickey & Austin, 2006). A common misconception of Asian culture is as “a static and hermetically sealed thing” (Tsen Khoo in Ling, 2001, p. 165). Like Asia, culture can be constructed by geographic, religious, historical and linguistic boundaries. Similarly, there are multiple approaches to knowing culture.

Two common conceptualisations of knowing culture are as a distinct entity, and as a source of commonality. The first constructs aspects of culture as different and Other, reducing culture to visible manifestations such as native dress, language and food. This construction of culture allows it to be presented as something separate and discrete: different yet equal and non-threatening (Hoffman, 1996) to the dominant or existing culture. Visible facets also contribute to creating Other imagery. Aspects of the exotic Other are highlighted as key points of difference that represent an authentic and/or unadulterated part of cultural experience. This discourse of the Other occludes other possible ways of viewing culture as it

constructs seemingly insurmountable cultural borders between the known and the unknown, exotic Other.

The second constructs aspects of culture through points of commonality, focusing on the aspects of culture that are familiar to that of those seeking to know it, often in categorical ways that fail to foster reflexivity needed to challenge learners to shift beyond their own frames of reference (Hoffman, 1996). Both of these conceptualisations seek to explain culture through approaches that create neither opportunities for aspects of diversity, or complexity.

The coupling of distinct knowledge objects, Asia and culture, in the call to know Asian culture, increases the need for alternative ways to know culture to accommodate spaces of complexity and diversity. A social inquiry approach challenges simplistic notions of culture with cross-cultural comprehension to understand the different levels at which anything cultural, and anything can be cultural, can be known. This approach derives from the study of culture as an interpretive search for meaning rather than complete explanation, informed by an anthropological method of 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973). The intercultural focus of Asia literacy in policy points schools towards the task of knowing Asia through a cultural approach. Given the divergent and reflective nature of constructs of Asia and culture, an anthropological model of knowing culture that seeks to acquire deep understanding and accommodates complexity offers more than either of the two approaches just described to the task of knowing Asia.

Knowing culture through inquiry facilitates an ongoing and reflexive endeavour. In Australia, this inquiry model manifests in a growing demand for cultural proficiency. In the

1960s David Dufty pioneered the development of what he termed ‘intercultural awareness’ in Australian curriculum, advocating dispositional and cognitive elements that highlight how culture conditions perspectives, with a call to action to develop an intercultural perspective that develops multiple ways of seeing the world (Henderson, 2004a). More recently, there has been a propagation of models of ‘cultural competence’, originating from health care developments in the United States. Underpinning these models is the agreement that “cultural competence is an on-going activity and journey of growth and development” (Perso, 2012, p. 22). Furthermore, cultural competence is a precursor for cultural responsiveness: “Cultural Responsiveness is enacted Cultural Competence” [author’s emphasis] (Perso, 2012, p. 22). In the quest for cultural competence, an individual “needs to examine their personal attitudes and values, and acquisitions of the values, knowledge, skills and attributes that allow them to operate appropriately in cross-cultural settings” (Perso, 2012, p. 26), effectively reconceptualising their cultural map (Crozet, Liddicoat, & LoBianco, 1999; Henderson, 2004a): “maps we hold in our minds to make sense of the world are tangible maps which we often mistake as immutable truths.” (Crozet et al., 1999, p. 4). This points to the power of discourse to construct norms that are taken for granted as truths, as “To dislodge the apparent immutability of our cultural interpretations of the world requires considerable effort” (Crozet et al., 1999, p. 4). Furthermore, it calls for exploration beyond normative constructs, to explore how other constructs, or multiple constructs, or possibly even something beyond constructs, could be used to ‘know’: “It requires educating the mind to identify cultural boundaries within which we operate and it requires the willingness to venture into the foreign and to potentially be changed by it” (Crozet et al., 1999, p. 4).

Inquiry serves as a catalyst to shift focus from culture as an implicit knowledge object that is constructed, to explicit recognition that this very object is constructed. Asia, then, may be

known through a cultural literacy approach (Muller, 2006), necessary to “come to a position of empathy and ‘informed tentativeness’ regarding cultural identity and cross-cultural understanding where ‘to know the other one must other the known’” (Muller, 2006, p. 15). Muller (2006) suggests a framework for the discussion of cultural literacy through 11 attributes of the ‘globally, culturally literate person’; these attributes include knowledge of the complexity and constructedness of culture, and the problematics of cultural universals, cultural arrogance and cultural stereotypes. Muller and Wong (1991) transect the study of Asia and cultural literacy to challenge common misconceptualisations of culture previously noted:

which can be difficult to define given the enormity and diversity of Asia and the multifaceted nature of its cultures...Asian studies is regarded as the study of Asia, its languages, societies, cultures, economies, history and geography...This concept also embraces the notion of cultural literacy in a form that transcends a superficial familiarity with customs, dress, food and social norms. (p. 3)

The implementation of Asia literacy in schools and its link to cultural education foregrounds the complexity of knowing culture for teachers. In education, there is a growing and rigorous focus on the development of cultural competency for both educators and students (AEF, 2006b; 2011b, 2012a, 2012d; ACARA, n.d.b; Buchanan, 2004; Curriculum Corporation, 2008; MCEETYA, 2008; Perso, 2012). Teachers’ work that engages with this focus “is challenging and dependent upon [the teacher’s] capacity for reciprocity and self-reflection” (Henderson, 2004a, p. 5), however, is not limited to Anglo teachers teaching non-Anglo students. In the United States discourses on culture were found to be more effective in challenging dominant viewpoints in teacher education courses when incorporating critical

consciousness (DePalma, 2008; Gorski, 2008; Haviland, 2008; Mazzei, 2007), complementing Australian calls for critical reflexivity in knowing Asia (Dooley & Singh, 1996; Hamston, 1996; LoBianco, 1996; Nozaki, 2007; 2009b; Nozaki & Inokuchi, 1996; Williamson-Fien, 1996). For instance, indigenous teachers have been found to transform attitudes about their own culture after integrating its language and culture into the curriculum of their school (Yamauchi, Ceppi, & Lau-Smith, 2000).

The integration of Asia literacy into curriculum is a potentially complex task for Western-oriented teachers. Australian epistemologies are primarily embedded in Western frames of reference by a teaching profession that is overwhelmingly Anglo-Australian and characteristically white and middle class (Babacan, 2007; House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Education, 2007). Unawareness of the construction of Asia as a knowledge object risks teachers seeing dominant viewpoints as a complete, or at least adequate, explanation for Asia. Therefore, messages that position Asia as ‘content’ in the emerging Australian Curriculum require careful attention. There is a possibility that knowing Asia will be compressed to content knowledge only, overlooking values, skills and attributes of cultural competence. This could see the priority translate into a ‘tick box’, where distinct constructs of Asia are seen as complete explanations and easily inserted into curriculum without requiring teachers to engage with the complexities of negotiating multiple constructs of Asia. Intercultural Understanding, one of the seven general capabilities of the Australian Curriculum, to some extent mediates this concern. While not Asia-specific, it does have the potential to re-engage teachers with the complexities of discourses on culture:

Intercultural understanding combines personal, interpersonal and social knowledge and skills. It involves students in learning to value and view critically their own cultural perspectives and practices and those of others

through their interactions with people, texts and contexts across the curriculum. (ACARA, 2012c)

However, there is literature to suggest that there is a high level of reliance on simplistic constructions of visible culture as a way of knowing Asia in schools. The Review of Studies of Asia in Australian Schools (Wyatt et al., 2002) found that the apparent success of activities that create positive community good will, such as food festivals and multicultural days, seduces schools into believing they have ‘done’ Asian studies. In terms of classroom presence, notable absences regarding significant and sustainable application of Asia literacy are cited (AEF, 2010a; FitzGerald, Jeffrey, Maclean, & Morris-Suzuki, 2002; Wilkinson & Milgate, 2009; Wyatt et al., 2002). A reliance on limited constructs of Asia is evident in the literature.

In this context, teachers present simultaneously a challenge and the “key to progress” (AEF, 2012e, p. 11). Limited exposure to studies of Asia in their own education has resulted in the need for many teachers to engage with professional development in order to enact Asia literacy (AEF, 2012e). A significant gap in the literature is the absence of efforts to determine how teachers represent Asia – is it as a unitary construct or with recognition of multiple simultaneous ones? While there is much attention given to the pedagogy of teachers and what they ‘do’ to implement Asia literacy, little is afforded to their epistemology and how they ‘see’ Asia, as an integral and preliminary step to ‘doing’.

Theoretical tools for knowing

Gaps between theory and practice can engender a self-perpetuating cycle. I argue that a theoretical understanding of culture supports the teaching of studies of Asia. If theoretical

knowledge of cultural education is not privileged for and by teachers, then they will be reluctant to embrace and find a place for studies of Asia in the curriculum. This section explores established and emerging theoretical lenses in the examination of Asia literacy. While postcolonial theory forms the basis of existing theorising in the field of Asia literacy, this section expands on this base to introduce alternate conceptual tools that invoke more fluid ways to 'know Asia'. Globalisation theories offer a reconceptualisation of space and place, particularly; they challenge the epistemic positions that construct spatial binaries of West and East, North and South. In an adjoining theoretical paradigm, Chen's (2010) critical syncretism and Nakata's (2007) cultural interface introduce more amorphous concepts that move beyond existing and potentially overused binary constructs.

Globalisation theory.

Asia literacy fits agreeably with educational discourses of globalisation. Singh (1995b) notes that "it is important to understand that studies of Asia are part of the larger processes of global restructuring" (p. 39), as evidenced in a variety of traditionally Western educational contexts that have acknowledged that an education-based strategy may be essential to economic engagement with Asia (Pang, 2005). For example, there is "Asia Pacific studies" in Canada, "Curriculum rapprochement" in the European Union, "International education" in the United States and "Educating for Asia" in New Zealand (Pang, 2005). In contrast, while Western contexts seek to make others' cultures attractive through more hyperbolised policy imperatives, China, for example, has focused on making "its culture attractive to others" (Ding & Saunders, 2006, p. 22) to help achieve economic, cultural and diplomatic goals (Ding & Saunders, 2006). The Chinese government has tied these goals to a growing global interest in Chinese language, facilitated by the establishment of Confucius Institutes "(Ding

& Saunders, 2006) in various international sites³. This section seeks to define globalisation and explore its divergent theoretical frameworks.

In education policy, globalisation is often invoked as an imperative and is closely linked to arguments for intercultural understanding. Globalisation, as a concept, has contributed to government policy and wider educational contexts regarding representations of and calls for the implementation of Asia literacy in Australian schools, and as such demands closer scrutiny. As Rizvi (2007) notes:

the term *globalization* does appear to be quite useful in capturing some of the changes that have transformed the world...yet, such is the all-encompassing nature of its use that its explanatory power has become increasingly questionable. (p. 256)

Waters (2001) asserts that “globalization may be the concept, the key idea by which we understand the transition of human society into the third millennium” (p. 1). Singh, Kenway and Apple (2005) echo this, stating that the global analytic is invariably adopted across a range of theoretical and disciplinary orientations when exploring contemporary times.

Dispersion within the discourse of globalisation is commonly acknowledged (Appadurai, 2001; Rizvi, 2007; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010), however Waters (2001) defines globalisation as:

a social process in which the constraints of geography on economic, political, social and cultural arrangements receded, in which people become increasingly aware that they are receding and in which people act accordingly. (p. 5)

Rizvi and Lingard (2010) suggest that there are at least three different, and potentially fluid, ways in which globalisation can be understood as an empirical fact that describes the

profound shifts that are currently taking place in the world, as an ideology that masks various expressions of power and a range of political interests, and as a social imaginary that expresses the sense people have of their own identity and how it relates to the rest of the world (p. 46). These three ways alone provoke further questions of the representations of Asia literacy in globalised discourse. Respectively:

- Is the ‘need’ to know Asia an empirical fact and imperative need, as suggested in government policy, due to the developments currently taking place in the world?
- What ideology (and accompanying discourses) is evident in policy calls to know Asia, and what range of political interests may it mask?
- Is an ‘Asia literate Australia’ a social imaginary that genuinely reflects the Australian nation and its positioning in the world?

Rizvi (2007) suggests that many critical analyses of globalisation “are paradoxically complicit with claims of its empirical reality and historical inevitability found in international business, global politics and popular culture” (p. 258). Popular discourses on globalisation are highly ideological (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010) and often reify global economy to the exclusion of alternate discourses and practices (Hursh & Henderson, 2011).

For example, the dominant discursive formation positions globalisation as occurring ‘from above’, in a primarily neoliberal narrative that “disseminates a consumerist ethos” (Falk, 1993, p. 39) within a broader discourse of capitalism that presupposes that the global economy determines all possible options (Rizvi, 2006, p. 201). However, an alternative discursive formation represents globalisation as a process arising ‘from below’, in a narrative that “consists of an array of transnational social forces animated by environmental concerns, human rights, hostility to patriarchy, and a vision of human community based on the unity of

diverse cultures seeking an end to poverty, oppression, humiliation and collective violence” (Falk, 1993, p. 39). This discourse explores agency within globalisation, drawing on notions of democracy, justice and autonomy (Appadurai, 2001; Falk, 1993; Rizvi, 2006).

Sklair (1999) further problematises the construction of globalisation as a wider discursive formation, suggesting that “not all those who use the term distinguish it clearly enough from inter-nationalisation” (p. 144). The key distinction here is that ‘inter-nationalisation’ incorporates “(inadequate) conceptions of the ‘global’ founded on the existing even if changing systems of nation-states” (Sklair, 1999, p. 143). Globalisation is defined as “(genuine) conceptions of the global based on the emergence of global processes and a global system of social relations not founded on national characteristics or nation-states” (Sklair, 1999, p. 143). Is Asia literacy a global concern, as policy documents suggest, or can it be more accurately represented it as an inter-national concept with a more regional orientation, and what implications does this have for implementation? Extending on Anderson’s (1983) notion of imagined community and drawing on definitions of imagination as a social construct through which ordinary people define and construct their own worlds (Appadurai, 1996, 2001; Rizvi, 2006), a framework of globalisation articulated as a global imaginary superimposes a normative construction of globalisation that can be meaningful for particular reasons yet fails to acknowledge competing imaginaries. For example, there is potential for the neoliberal paradigm of globalisation ‘from above’ to be adopted as the normative view of globalisation and marginalise discourses of globalisation ‘from below’.

Postcolonial theory.

Rizvi (2007) advocates the incorporation of postcolonial theory into globalisation analyses to extend critical analysis. His argument, which resonates with Chen’s (2010) call for decolonisation in an era of neoliberal globalisation, is for a relevant body of theory as “so-

called global culture has by and large reproduced the colonial structures of inequalities, with the postcolonial elite playing a major role in their reproduction” (Rizvi, 2007, p. 261). He claims postcolonialism “points to the inherent dangers in the analyses of contemporary cultural practices, which are over determined by global capitalism and regard globalisation as historically inevitable” (Rizvi, 2007, p. 262). Postcolonial theorists Said, Spivak and Bhabha are cited (Lingard, 2006; Rizvi, 2007) to prompt resistance to globalisation ‘from above’. Drawing on the conceptual frameworks of both postcolonial and globalisation could prove useful in shifting the discursive focus from economy to

culture as pivotal to understanding the nature of contemporary reality characterised by the expansion of global cultural interconnections, which, even if they are powered by economic forces, needs to be located in particular localities. (Rizvi, 2007, p. 262)

Postcolonial theory offers a useful lens to question Eurocentric and imperialist discourses. Existing literature also documents the various uses of aspects of postcolonial theory to problematise the relationships between Australia and Asia and the implementation of Asia literacy (Broinowski, 1992; Buchanan, 2002; Hamston, 1996, 2006; Henderson, 2004b; LoBianco, 1996; Muller, 2006; Nozaki, 2007; 2009a, 2009b; Nozaki & Inokuchi, 1996; Pang, 2005; Rizvi, 1996, 1997; Singh, 1995a, 1995b, 1996a, 1996b; Singh & Miller, 1995; Williamson-Fien, 1996). This section defines and discusses dominant theories evident in this literature: those of Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak.

The term postcolonialism is used in diverse ways:

to include the study and analysis of European territorial conquests, the various institutions of European colonialisms, the discursive operations of empire, the subtleties of subject construction in colonial discourse and the

resistance of those subjects, and...differing responses to such incursions and their contemporary colonial legacies in both pre- and post-independence nations and communities. (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2000, p. 187)

Increasingly, it is also used as an analytical framework in wider historical, political, sociological and economic disciplines to engage with the impact of European imperialism upon world societies (Ashcroft et al., 2000, p. 187). The latter purpose is relevant to education. A postcolonial framework can be useful to know Asia as it encourages critical awareness of notions of Other evident in mainstream and popular culture and curriculum development rationales. With strong roots in literary theory, it is a useful lens to critically approach the dominant discourses in traditional areas of integration of Asia literacy curricula such as the Humanities. While postcolonial scholarship has been widely recognised in literary circles since the 1960s, its application to Asia literacy education policy in Australia is not widespread (Singh, 1996b).

In the context of Asia literacy policy imperatives, Asia is positioned in hegemonic discourse with an economic advantage for which Australia seeks, whilst conscious too of the competition that Asia poses (Salter, 2013b). The significance of this potential of economic advantage and threat is demonstrated by the drive to include Asia literacy in the Australian curriculum. Making space in the Australian Curriculum to capture this advantage, also suggests that Asia is unknown and in some way inherently different from 'Australia', an assumption that is amplified by an absence of calls, for example, for knowing America (Salter, 2013b). Hence, Asia literacy can be viewed as a process of Othering to include rather than exclude. It assumes that appropriate knowledge needed to boost business can be discretely identified, inserted and accurately re-presented into curriculum (Williamson-Fien, 1996). The subtext of this inclusion is that Asia literate knowledge is all that is needed to

invert reliance on Asia and assert Australia's dominance in economy. This resonates with neo-colonialism, opening the door for positioning Asia as the Oriental Other (Singh, 1996b): a fecund economy that is now sophisticated, and requires a more strategic approach to penetrate and pillage (Singh, 1995a). It also positions Australia as homogenous, failing to acknowledge the historical realities of pre-existing relationships between Australia and Asia, or the realities of Asian-Australians (Broinowski, 1992; Salter, 2009a; Singh, 1995b; Singh & Miller, 1995).

As part of the postcolonial suite of theories, Edward Said's Orientalist project has provided a basis for questioning seemingly immutable truths evident in prevailing discourses of Asia literacy. Critique of the Orientalist project comes from an analysis of a 4000 year history of, and cultural relations between, Europe and Asia which perpetuated images, stereotypes and a general ideology about the Orient as Other. This was based on a cultural construction less of nature than of imaginative geography and a relationship of power, domination and varying degrees of hegemony. Said (2003) cites the dogmas of Orientalism as:

- the absolute and systemic difference between the 'superior' West and the 'inferior' Orient,
- abstractions about the Orient that are always preferable to direct evidence, and
- the Orient as incapable of defining itself and therefore reliant on Western definitions that the Orient, overall, is something to be feared or controlled.

The binary opposition of ‘West’ and ‘Orient’ that is the strength of this theory is also an inherent limitation. As a hegemonic force “Orientalism [is] a kind of immutable all-encompassing ideology” (Snedeker, 2004, p. 35) in which there is little room for agency. At the time of the first publication of Said’s *Orientalism* in 1977, the theory was critiqued for essentialising the term Orientalism, restricting and indenturing any progress or agency that could have been executed by Orientalism. This theoretical gap means that while Said highlighted hegemony and domination in his discourse analysis he was less clear about what role critical analysis can play in transformative application. In *Culture and Imperialism* (Said, 1993) he revisited his earlier work and acknowledged that resistances and contestations to Orientalism can be identified and that the binary is in fact not as immutable as his original work suggested as noted in subsequent work (Said, 2003). An additional tension is that the binary has never been applied in a uniform way – in a dialectical sense the West has always been what the East is not, but the West has never been a homogenised entity, and European notions of the Orient have changed and evolved over time (Rizvi, 1996).

While originally applied to the relationship between Europe and America and the Middle East, the transferability of the concept of Asia as Other to the analysis of the Asia literacy project is apparent. It must be acknowledged, however, that there are tensions regarding Australia’s position as a colony, which leads to some ambivalence in notions of Australian identity. Australia was established as a British colony and identified itself as an outpost of Britain, but it was simultaneously aware that it was itself identified by Britain as an Other – a relatively uncivilised outpost (Rizvi 1997, Singh 1996a). Within Australia, Indigenous Australians and various migrant groups, including those of Asian heritage are identified as Other evidenced in, for example, ideology supporting the Immigration Restriction Act, known more colloquially in Australia as the White Australia Policy (see also

Multiculturalism in this chapter). There is a clear consensus in the literature that Australia's engagement with Asia has been marginalised because of historical and cultural relations with Europe, the United States and Asia itself (FitzGerald, 1995; 1997; 2002; Jeffrey, 2003; Milner, 2009; Rizvi, 1996; Singh, 1995a, 1995b, 1996a).

In Australia knowing Asia is complicated by Eurocentric traditions that at times support seemingly immutable truths about 'Oriental' Asia (Broinowski, 1992). Postcolonial critiques of Orientalism are most commonly applied when identifying Other in cultural conceptions or curriculum representations (Broinowski, 1992; Buchanan, 2002; Hamston, 1996, 2006; Henderson, 2004b; LoBianco, 1996; Muller, 2006; Nozaki, 2007; 2009a, 2009b; Nozaki & Inokuchi, 1996; Pang, 2005; Rizvi, 1996, 1997; Singh, 1995a, 1995b). Analysis of the construction of Asia and Asian culture in policy and curriculum as the Other is used to inform critical reflection on the ways in which studies of Asia serve various ideologies of racism, nationalism, imperialism and globalism. Approaches in the literature focus on cultural binaries to elucidate further the development of cultural representations in Australian society and have potential applications for conversations regarding the inclusion of various subaltern and/or migrant cultures into Australian education and curriculum.

The Western orientation of the majority of teachers' epistemologies presents a challenge and potential barrier for knowing Asia. Western frames of reference often engender residual imperial discourses (Chen, 2010) in Western educational contexts. Knowing Asia in such contexts risks running the gauntlet of the East /West binary, as made explicit in the Orientalism project. In the USA, Asia literacy has been found to implicitly or explicitly engender binary opposition that is a critical part of the discourse of Othering – the West (represented as 'us') and the East ('them') (Nozaki, 2009a). In Australia there are also

concerns about the potential damage of Oriental legacies (Dooley & Singh, 1996; Hamston, 1996; LoBianco, 1996; Nozaki & Inokuchi, 1996; Williamson-Fien, 1996). Such legacies are evident in discourses of ownership or control of knowledge of Asia (Milner & Johnson, 2002; Salter, 2013b; Singh, 1995a, 1996b; Williamson-Fien, 1994, 1996). For example:

to speak in terms of ‘Asia’, it is argued, is reflective of a long-standing tendency of Western intellectuals to view the region in exploitative or security-minded terms. ‘Asian Studies’, following this type of logic, can be argued to imply that Asia, or at least the knowledge of Asia, is in some sense a possession of the West. (Milner & Johnson, 2002)

Asia literate curriculum can be read as an attempt to colonise knowledge of Asia and appropriate it to secure future economic and security ties, rather than a cultural end in itself (Salter, 2013b). The current *National Statement on Asia Literacy in Australian Schools* (AEF, 2011b) “recognises...the growing influence of India, China and other Asian nations...Asia literacy provides our young people with a competitive edge in today’s world and contributes to our national advantage” (p. 2). Knowledge of Asia is positioned in policy as a rich and pliable fund of knowledge that can be discretely identified, inserted, and accurately re-presented into curriculum (Singh, 1995a, 1996b; Williamson-Fien, 1996). This reconstitutes residual imperial discourse in ways that suggest the development of Asian studies requires further critical engagement, as Williamson-Fien (1994) cautions:

appropriate development of Asian studies will begin when Australians begin to unpack and critically reflect on the discourses through which they have constructed the phenomenon ‘Asia’ and by which they translate ‘Asia’ into Asian studies...[it] is not easy but it needs to be done if the current demand for Asian studies is not to imply new versions of old Western discourses.” (p. 85)

Recognising binarism can be the catalyst to employ “a certain kind of self-consciousness about cultural artefacts that had been considered impervious to this kind of analysis” (Said cited in Viswanathan, 2002, p. 116). However, to acquiesce to binarism potentially indentures a paralysis that makes it difficult for educators to see beyond discrete categories and potentially inhibits engagement with critical reflexivity necessary for intercultural understanding. Using Said’s model to critically theorise the inclusion of Asia literacy into school and teacher epistemology does not necessarily elucidate the agency of teachers to actively negotiate curriculum by either perpetuating or disrupting notions of the Other. Singh (1996b) suggests that at this point Gayatri Spivak can be employed to theorise critical points in negotiating the Other. While her main focus is the subaltern, particularly women and the structures of violence imposed by Western imperialism, there are direct parallels to be drawn with Australian subaltern groups that are oppressed and silenced (e.g. Asian migrants). Spivak’s (1985) work highlights the tactic of negotiating structures at play to intervene, question and change the system from within:

A functional change in a sign-system is a violent event. Even when it is perceived as ‘gradual’, or ‘failed’ or yet ‘reversing itself’ the change itself can only be operated by the force of a crisis...yet, if the space for a change (necessarily also an addition) had not been there in the prior function of the sign-system, the crisis could not have made the change happen. (p. 206)

While Said offers a theory of consciousness Spivak moves towards (but does not necessarily guarantee) change and appears to be called upon in literature to empower educators to celebrate, rather than be disheartened, by the identification of Orientalism in curriculum and policy representation; “this does not mean giving up on these ideas, but rather using the crises created by their intersection as a basis for productive negotiations” (Singh, 1996b, pp. 166-167).

Additionally, the theory of Homi Bhabha (1984, 1995, 1990) is applied when looking for ways to move forward post-crisis (LoBianco, 1996; Rizvi, 1996, 1997; Singh, 1995b, 1996b). Bhabha's primary interest is the experience of social marginality. In terms of postcolonial studies there are two main currents here: the ambivalence of mimicry as the colonial subject becomes the icon of the enforcement of colonial authority and its strategic failure, and the problematic of colonial representation in hybridity in which denied knowledges enter the dominant discourse creating a hybrid that is neither one or Other but contests the territories of both. Bhabha's (1995) perspective of postcoloniality provokes questions of how, once notions of culture have been critiqued and interrupted, they progress as "the time for assimilating minorities...has dramatically passed. The very language of cultural community needs to be rethought from a postcolonial perspective" (p. 175).

However, while Bhabha's notion of hybridity affords subjects in hybrid formations agency to challenge the binary of coloniser/colonised, subjects remain the product of constructions, in which categories of the coloniser and colonised remain dominant and the reciprocal and reflexive nuances of relationships are left unexplored. There is a tendency to deny human agency in this paradigm. The available literature offers neither productive strategies nor a clear design for progress. Furthermore, Australians are now keenly aware that they are linked to Asia, however the basis of this link is debated depending on the stratum of society it comes from: economic, cultural, geographic, security or intellectual. There is a clear dilemma; "the key to unlocking the door to Asian markets is assumed to be education. But what kind of education?" (Rizvi, 1996, p. 186).

Kuan-Hsing Chen's (2010) theory of Asia, in particular his notion of critical syncretism, provides a useful conceptual tool not previously applied to the field of Asia literacy. Extending on discussions of decolonisation and deimperialisation common in postcolonial theory, Chen (2010) suggests a strategy that extends on Bhabha's notion of hybridity with his notion of critical syncretism. While he acknowledges that colonial structure is useful as a reference point that intersects with other structural forces that form a 'structure in dominance', he openly advocates for the breaking down of this structure. This breakdown is commonly called for in postcolonial theory, however the structure, or coloniser/colonised binary is primarily used as an analytic tool that perpetuates the use of these binaries as (useful and necessary) categories for critique and analysis, which makes the binaries integral to the approach, whereas Chen (2010) advocates for moving past binarism to eradicate the structure completely:

The aim is not simply to rediscover the suppressed voices of the multiple subjects within the social formation, but to generate a system of multiple reference points that can break away from the self-reproducing neocolonial framework that structures the trajectories and flow of desire. (p. 101)

The necessity of 'breakdown' or 'break away' is the 'critical' aspect of his theory. Without this breakdown, he asserts, the identities and subjects it produces will always exist, with their persistence perpetuating identity constructions on either side of the binary; they may co-exist, yet remain distinct forces and are still known through constructs. 'Syncretism', however seeks to offer something more dynamic than constructs, it:

not only emphasizes the process of mixing but also produces a much more active participation of the involved subjects; the practices of the subject are not imposed and unconsciously accepted, but are reflexive processes that engage the interlocutors. Understood in this way, the difference between

syncretism and hybridity is that syncretism denotes a subject who is highly self-conscious when translating the limits of the self, whereas hybridity is simply a product of the colonial machine's efforts toward assimilation.

(Chen, 2010, p. 98)

The critical reflexivity in Chen's (2010) approach resonates with Nakata's (2007) notion of the 'cultural interface' at the intersection of Western and Indigenous epistemologies in Australia. As Nakata (2007) notes, it is important to consider what happens when knowledge is documented in ways that disembodies it from the people who are its agents, when the 'knowers' of that knowledge are separated out from what comes to be 'the known', in ways that dislocates it from its locale, and separates it from the social institutions that uphold and reinforce its efficacy, and cleaves it from the practices that constantly renew its meanings in the here and now. (p. 9)

Chen (2010) and Nakata, Nakata, Keech and Bolt (2012, p. 132) agree that a critique of complex colonial histories and legacies is prerequisite in decolonising work. "Convergence" (Nakata, 2012; Nakata et al., 2012), rather than division, is needed, and "not as a one-way process" (Fiedler, 2007, p. 55). Convergence calls for human agency to employ effective strategies to explore complexities such as "more language and tools for navigating, negotiating, and thinking about the constraints and possibilities that are open at this challenging interface" (Nakata et al., 2012, p. 133). Epistemological critique that encourages participants to interrogate their own conceptual limitations, and the conceptual limitations of all the ideas and discussions put forward in the learning space is a key tool in this navigation for both Nakata et al (2012) and Chen (2010). In the "cultural interface" (Nakata, 2007, p. 9) binary demarcations are not clearly defined and identities are more amorphous. Similarly, critical syncretism (Chen, 2010) advocates for a cultural interface where binaries such as

Asian/Western, or Indigenous/Western, are recognised as an unnecessary polarisation of knowledge systems.

Whereas a clear ‘us’ (Australia) and ‘them’ (Asia) binary can be seen historically there is now a growing dialogue of ‘we’ (Asia-literate Australia) which Said, in his postcolonial study of Orientalism did not accommodate so easily, while Spivak, in her study of subalterns, remains caught in the ‘us’ and ‘them’ struggle. For the ‘we’ to progress, there is a call for hybrid narratives in the implementation for Asia Literacy, for “Multivocal accounts” (Singh, 1995b) or “multiple narratives” (Williamson-Fien, 1996). Bhabha’s (1995) notion of hybridity, in which “denied” knowledges enter the dominant discourse creating a hybrid that is neither “one” or the “other” but contests the territories of both appears as a useful educational theory regarding cultural understanding and Asia literacy.

A common critique of postcolonial theory, however, is that it is used by intellectual elites who presume the authority to “speak for others” and reinstate them, presuming their own voice of authority while critiquing the authority of Western epistemological practices (Henderson, 2004a). As globalisation intensifies, Bhabha’s (1984, 1995, 1990) tenets seem plausible to educational theory regarding multiculturalism and Asia literacy, however also opens up great freedom as Rizvi (1997) notes, if the hybridity argument has any merit, transformation will never be uniform as globalisation produces new hybrid formations that are context-specific and localised. Rizvi (1997) asserts that Bhabha’s theory is a “useful antidote to cultural essentialism, but cannot itself provide answers to the difficult questions of how hybridity takes place...and how particular hybrid formations are progressive or regressive” (p. 25).

Applying postcolonial theory highlights the negative impact of using a colonialist framework in education and policy, and the reality of why critical reflexivity is necessary.

At its best, a critique of Orientalism serves to highlight early political relationships with Asia and Asian migrants but the growing economic focus shifts the relationship from oppositional to alongside to redraw the boundaries initially established by Othering in Orientalist approaches. Spivak (1985) encourages educators to vigorously take all opportunities to redraw these boundaries, and Bhabha (1995) gives educators a vision for redrawing them. However it is Chen (2010) that suggests a strategy that strives beyond binaries to create spaces for everyone to speak in turn, in unison, in contrast and in discontinuity. It can be argued that teachers, as well as policy makers, who have a rich understanding of postcolonial theories might be better equipped to design curriculum frameworks and pedagogical strategies that ‘work’ to know Asia.

Knowing Policy

Using policy as a focal point, this section explores the complex interaction of epistemologies, ontologies and priorities of ‘knowing Asia’ in Australian education policy through the contextualisation of three distinct, yet in regards to Asia literacy, intimately interrelated policy agendas. As previously noted, Asia literacy draws on notions of multicultural and intercultural education. Respectively, these notions are analogous with domestic and foreign policy, and, education policy. A critical review of the development of ‘multiculturalism’ in domestic and foreign policy locates the Asia literacy education imperative in a context of already shifting, and perilously Oriental, constructs of Asia and Asian peoples and cultures. The review of education policy reveals how constructs of Asia are further bound, valued and shifted by the Asia literacy imperative. These constructs are perpetuated in similar Asia-focused policy imperatives in other Western nations. Finally, the comparison of theoretical

lenses offers insight and approaches useful to examine these policy imperatives. Of particular interest are the policy approaches of Bacchi (1999, 2009) and Ball (1993) that extrapolate on the complexity of policy constructions and their trajectory from espoused to enacted policy.

Multiculturalism.

Social policy relevant to Asian immigrants is significant in the Australian context. Despite evidence that trade between Aborigines and Asians significantly predates British settlement (Stephenson, 2001), Asians were not considered by the government to be important immigrants to Australia until it was realised that there would be a potential labour shortage at the end of the convict system (Jupp, 2004). Initially, Asian immigration was constructed as a source of labour⁴.

This construct was soon superseded by the construction of Asia as the Oriental Other in Australian immigration policy. From the 1850s, gold attracted Chinese immigrants who became temporary residents and for the most part returned to China once their wealth had been accumulated. Some stayed behind to pioneer burgeoning Asian communities in Australia and were subject to a developing racist ideology (Jupp, 2004). Initial distrust of Chinese settlers that came as part of the gold-rush was later perpetuated through constructs that demonised Asia throughout Australian history (Broinowski, 1992; Hage, 2003; Jupp, 2004). For example, until 1961 *The Bulletin*, founded in 1880 and an icon of Australian patriotism, read ‘Australia for the White Man’ on its masthead. In this publication alone Asians have taken the images of:

A pestiferous insect plague, an Oriental dragon, or a Mongolian octopus
whose tentacles wormed into every hallowed Australian institution, a venal

usurper of Australians' jobs, and a creeping threat to their wives and daughters. (Broinowski, 1992, p. 9)

This stereotyping had a lasting effect on the Australian psyche (FitzGerald, 2002), most notoriously through the Immigration Restriction Act 1901, known colloquially, and hereafter referred to as the White Australia Policy (WAP)⁵. The Act lasted fifty years, underpinned more by ideology than merely a method of controlling immigration, which manifested in “an international understanding that it was not worth trying to immigrate if unacceptable” (Jupp, 2004, p. 75).

While the demise of WAP suggests that the construct of Asia as Other is likewise expired, there are claims that suggest this construct remains, quiescent in contemporary time for pragmatic rather than principled reasons (Jordan, 2006). Jordan (2006) notes there was a growing need to “avoid alienating Asian and international opinion” (p. 232); however, “those responsible for reform...rarely if ever promoted a shift in thinking by invoking high moral principle” (p. 243). This assertion has current implications as, if the motives for making the WAP defunct were not entirely altruistic, then legacies of White Australia may be dormant rather than obsolete. The brief popularity of Pauline Hanson and the One Nation political party in 1997, for example, and the Cronulla Riots or more recent racist attacks on Indian students in Melbourne give some credence to the latter or, at least, suggest there is an evident level of xenophobia in public discourse (Hage, 2003; Jordan, 2006).

Australian multiculturalism is depicted as a major achievement of Australian culture; however, Curran (2002) suggests that “multiculturalism may well have offered a new myth of Australian distinctiveness, by virtue of its stark contrast to British racial homogeneity, but it still struggled to offer a new myth of national cohesion” (p. 477). Jayasuriya and Pooking

(1999) further add to this debate by suggesting that the racist argument was now stated in terms of “social cohesion” and “national unity” (p. 82). Multiculturalism purported to value cultural diversity and uniqueness yet, as the emerging form of nationalism in Australia it still demanded affirmation of the values of the dominant cultural group. Asian culture was constructed as a subordinate Other to Australian culture in multiculturalism. Legacies of the WAP and loyalty to the British persevered to some extent making it difficult to intervene, question and challenge the cultural *status quo*. Former Prime Minister Bob Hawke clung to the “enormous debt we owe to Britain” (Curran, 2002, p. 481). Keating, the leader of Asia-engagement rhetoric was allegedly motivated more by using this rhetoric as a “tool to be used in the nationalist struggle against the British” (Curran, 2002, p. 484). Sentiments regarding a dominant Eurocentric culture were echoed in educational spheres. The call for equal status of Asian languages in school curricula was met with claims from “ethnic and multicultural lobby groups [that] feared that community and European languages would be placed at risk if Asian languages were given parity” (Henderson, 2003, p. 28).

In multiculturalist rhetoric the value of Asian culture was problematic. Shifting arguments say it was at times tolerated (Choi cited in Ling, 2001) rather than embraced within the dominant cultural pattern, and at others, included in a subservient role and easily consumed by this pattern. The dominance of ‘White’ culture existed as an immutable truth, in which migrant cultures were subordinated as enriching, rather than equivalent cultures (Kwok, 2004, p. 5). Hage (2003) suggests a more negative phenomenon of ‘white colonial paranoia’ implying that the British legacy also perceived non-British culture, such as that of Asian migrants, as well as other non-Anglo-Celtic Australians and particularly Indigenous Australians, as a threat to social cohesion and lifestyle.

Government policy regarding multiculturalism has struggled to subvert an overwhelming Anglo-Celtic cultural identity to establish a distinctly Australian identity that incorporates a variety of cultural influences. Schools have been implicated in this struggle. Matas and Bridges (2005) identify a shift in Queensland state policies from mostly humanist notions of multiculturalism to an emphasis on a democratic political agenda. They note that “particular emphasis [on] ... understanding and acceptance of multiculturalism” (p. 375) has been replaced by a “stronger focus on accountability” (p. 376). Tangible enactment of multiculturalism is regarded as paramount and schools are positioned as key sites for enacting social reproduction of cohesion and harmony. This also positions schools as key sites for perpetuating, and challenging constructs of Asia in multiculturalist discourse. Consequently, moves towards Asia literacy in Queensland schools could significantly contribute to the inclusion of Asian born migrants (and subsequent generation Australians) into a more tangible, as opposed to merely rhetorical, vision of multi-cultural society. The tensions of Australia’s historical legacies may be exigent, but, regardless of this, this is the local context in which Australia becoming Asia literate is situated.

Education policy.

Regardless of the numbers of Asian students in classrooms, the market potential of the Asian region to the Australian economy suggests students should be equipped to engage with Asia beyond the classroom. The increasing pressure of such market forces is evident in the historical growth of national economic interest in Asia. This growth documents the study of Asia as both an economic and predominantly language-driven priority. Henderson (2003) summarises the stages of this growth as follows:

1. The **need for parity of status** of Asian languages with European, first raised by *The Teaching of Asian languages and Cultures* report (known also as the Auchmuty

report) in 1969 and supported by subsequent utilitarian reports. Australian Asian scholars also sought to highlight economic, cultural, political and military links with Asia, suggesting Australia needed to challenge prevailing Anglo-centric traditions.

2. The **need to establish a culture of foreign language learning**, advocated from 1982 by language professionals. This was clouded with arguments that advocacy of Asian languages perpetuated unbalanced assumptions of Australia's 'multi-culture' and that it was difficult to reach proficiency in Asian languages in allotted school hours.
3. The **need of the changing global and regional environment**, commencing from 1986 in key policy documents generated by the Asian Studies Council-*Report of the Working Party* (known also as the Scully report), in 1988 *A National Strategy for the Study of Asia in Australia* and in 1989 the *Asia in Australian Higher Education: Report on the Inquiry into the Teaching of Asian Studies & Languages in Higher Education* (known also as the Ingleson report). These reports drew together themes of the previous stages and set them in a wider national, economic and strategic setting to acknowledge the ways in which intellectual, philosophical and utilitarian features of learning Asian languages and culture need to be included in education from primary to tertiary levels.
4. The **need to boost the national economy** which grew from utilitarian discourse in the previous stage, most significantly in 1989 through *Australia and the Northeast Asian Ascendancy: Report to the Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade* (known also as the Garnaut report). This report 'mainstreamed' Asian studies by lifting the policy initiatives onto the main political agenda and presented a comprehensive case that fitted a range of government strategies at that time.

5. The **need to cement economic links** was clear by the early 1990s as policy documents increasingly advocated the study of ‘trade’ languages and study of Asian societies for ‘business reasons’, accelerated by Prime Minister Keating, well known for his advocacy of engagement with Asia.
6. The Council of Australian Governments’ **commission and acceptance** in 1994 of a long term plan aimed at producing an Asia-literate generation to boost Australia’s international and regional economic performance. Kevin Rudd, then Opposition Foreign Affairs Shadow Minister, was the Chair of the COAG report *Asian Languages and Australia’s Economic Future* (known also as the Rudd Report).

An elaboration of these somewhat schematic stages through a narrative of the development of government policy reveals a number of nuances and tensions that have contributed to the construction of Asia literacy as an economic and language-driven priority.

The Vietnam War was a major political catalyst for calls for increased awareness of Asian neighbours, particularly Southeast Asia. Despite evidence of Asian language studies in Australian schools in the early 1900s (Klaberg, 1997), the 1969 Auchmuty Report hailed Asia into Australian policy discourse and triggered a proliferation of studies of Asia (Fitzgerald et al., 2002). The Auchmuty Report constructed the study of Asia primarily as a language-focussed endeavour through its call for parity of esteem with the study of European languages and cultures, supported by “practical arguments...[of] steady growth in economic, cultural, political and military links between Asia and Australia during the last decades” (cited in Henderson, 2007, p. 20) that indicated that a “reappraisal of Australia's traditional attitudes towards Asia” (cited in Henderson, 2007, p. 11) should start in the classroom. However, some members of ethnic and multicultural lobby groups feared that European

languages would be placed at risk if Asian languages were given this (Henderson, 2003, p. 28).

In 1980 the FitzGerald Report diverged from a language focus and advocated an intellectual focus with “intellectual worth...in intellectual terms” (Fitzgerald, 1980, p. 4). The report was somewhat pragmatic in its recognition that:

despite the intrinsic intellectual interest of all societies in the world, priorities in education must ultimately be determined by national need and national interest...the basic arguments we must put forth for the study of Asian societies are both utilitarian and educational.

(Fitzgerald, 1980, p. 5)

In the 1980s language policy again emerged as a clear focus. The Fraser government commissioned a Senate inquiry into a national language policy in 1982, which recommended a “comprehensive approach to national language planning that would address all of Australia's language and literacy needs” (Lo Bianco, 2005, pp. 2-3). The focus on studies of Asia and Asian languages started to wane somewhat in 1986 with the growing paradigm of the complementarity of studies of Asia and studies of Australia. This emphasis balanced an economic rationale with intellectual, philosophical and cultural rationales for learning Asian languages (Henderson, 2007). The Scully Report (1986) stated that “some familiarity with Asia-related subjects should be part of the normal educational background of all Australians” (p. 5). Henderson (2003) suggests that this report is significant as its endorsement provided the momentum for the political will required for an Asian languages and cultures strategy to be realised.

The *National Policy on Languages* in 1987 was adopted as Australia's first formal language policy. This policy focussed on widely taught languages (Arabic, Chinese French, German, Greek, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese and Russian) and Indigenous languages. Implementation of this national policy was complicated by debates from migrant groups that lobbied for the promotion of their languages, while professional language associations exerted influence to promote their own languages (Henderson, 2003, p. 29), amid claims that more time was needed to reach proficiency in Asian languages in school hours. Clear consensus on basic arguments and tenets of language policy focus proved elusive.

In 1988 the ASC framed the “proper study of Asia and its languages [as] about national survival in an intensely competitive world” (1988, p. 2), checking this potentially utilitarian tone with the acknowledgement that “the study of Asia and its languages is not a panacea for our foreign, economic and political problems” (ASC, 1988, p. 7). The following year the Garnaut Report emulated the utilitarian tone. This report linked education explicitly to “augmenting Australia's skill base” (Garnaut, 1989, p. 305) and “long term success in getting the most out of its [Australia's] relationships with Asia” (Garnaut, 1989, p. 317) framed by economic discourse. It further stimulated a growing utilitarian focus of studies of Asia, which served to put these studies on a larger national agenda, but also signalled a major shift in discourse towards a focus on human capital development that could strengthen ties between Australia and Asia. This highlights Henderson's (2008) claim that Garnaut held a “paradigm of Asia as a marketplace, economic policy model and answer to Australia's economic problems” (p. 173), crystallising the link in policy between economics and intercultural education. This paradigm sought to exploit a wider economic market in a context of globalisation, however, as the Ingleson Report (1989) noted, studies of Asia and languages were still on the periphery of most higher education institutions and calls from

earlier reports that studies of Asia not be relegated merely to language studies or isolated curriculum but integrated into the Humanities had not been realised.

Languages other than English (LOTE) continued as a key aspect of the link between economics and intercultural education. On 13 December 1990 the Minister for Employment, Education and Training, John Dawkins, released the Policy Discussion Green Paper entitled *The Language of Australia: Discussion Paper on an Australian Literacy and Language Policy for the 1990s*, which identified needs for language and literacy education and proposed national goals. *Australia's Language: The Australian Language and Literacy Policy White Paper*, released by Dawkins in August 1991 outlined 4 goals to be implemented from January 1992 including “Goal 2 - the learning of languages other than English must be substantially expanded and improved to enhance educational outcomes and communication within both the Australian and international community” (Department of Employment, 1991a, p. 14). Goal 2 noted that “Asian studies, including Asian languages, has been identified as a priority area...it is included in the priority areas for the current 1991-1993 triennium...The Government will continue to pay close attention to needs in these areas” (Department of Employment, 1991a, p. 17). This included a component to ensure “all Australian school children have access to the study of Asian languages by the year 2000 and the study of Asia becomes part of the core program in Australian schools by 1995” (Department of Employment, 1991b, p. 64). In this language based policy, the balance of languages with the importance of intellectual study of Asia was noted.

This balance was challenged by the 1994 Rudd Report. Rudd states that this report “sought to be more than simply another articulation of grand national strategy...it also dealt with [a] range of complex policy issues” (Rudd, 1995, p. 39). The implication of this latest

development was that by engaging with “complex policy issues” the report would bring depth and substance to previous unsustainable strategies. At the very least it indicated the government had paid ‘attention’ to priority areas of studies of Asia and languages. This Report cemented Garnaut’s shift from the argument of national interest to one of human capital as governments came to view second languages as a national resource (Henderson, 2003, 2007). The *National Asian Language/Studies Strategy for Australian Schools* (NALSAS), developed in response to the report, was a Commonwealth Government initiative targeting Mandarin, Japanese, Indonesian, Korean languages. It also recommended that Asian studies courses be developed within the Key Learning Area of Studies of Society and the Environment. The value of this move was contested. Wilson suggests that the quantitative goals of the NALSAS meant that most Australians that “derive a sophisticated, operational form of Asia literacy...will do so from the study of Asia in the humanities...not language learning (also because of the relationship between language proficiency and knowledge)” (Wilson, 1995, p. 118). Others believed it positioned Asian studies as the “poor relation” (Henderson, 2007). Additionally, it was suggested that the impressive targets of the strategy put it at risk, as “the focus becomes growth in quantity, not quality” (Lo Bianco, 2005, p. 8) in an attempt to meet targets for funding, rather than targets for intellectual understanding. This is echoed in Rodney Cavalier's critique (a former Minister of Education 1984-88), and supported by Wilson, that the Rudd report is “silent on pedagogy” (Wilson, 1995, p. 110).

Although both criticised and welcomed, Slaughter (2009) suggests the strategy “undoubtedly provided a much-needed financial and image-related boost for Asian languages study” (p5). Henderson (2007) cites some potent successes of the NALSAS, despite its early demise:

- The inclusion of three of the priority languages as part of the 12 Asian languages taught in all States and Territories,
- A growth of more than 50% in numbers of school students studying an Asian language in both state and Catholic sectors (in contrast, Slaughter (2009) cites evidence that suggests that the percentage of students studying an Asian language in the Catholic education system is lower in Victoria and NSW at least, in comparison to other systems),
- Participation of over 1000 schools in the Access Asia program,
- And, the conclusion that the above suggests that education systems were undergoing a cultural transformation and recognising the educational and strategic benefits of a long term commitment to Asian languages and studies in the school curriculum.

Despite the suggested success of the NALSAS strategy, funding was cut with no explanation by the coalition government in 2002. This had a negative impact on the momentum that had finally seen Asia literacy move from the periphery to the core of government initiatives. Pang (2005) suggests that “the defunding crisis...clearly illustrates the uneasiness about the promotion of Asia literacy as an 'economic project' rather than treating it for its educational worth” (p. 180). However, without transparency regarding government decisions the reasoning is not clear.

Under Rudd's stewardship as Prime Minister, NALSAS was resurrected as the *National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program* (NALSSP) in 2008. The aim of this program was to "increase opportunities for school students to become familiar with the languages and cultures of Australia's key regional neighbours, namely China, Indonesia, Japan and Korea" (Department of Education, 2011). An economic rationale remained visible as its central aim: "this commitment recognises the importance of Asian languages and studies of Asia in ensuring young Australians are equipped with the skills to allow them to compete in the globalised economy of the future" (DEEWR, 2008, p. 1). In 2011 Education Minister Peter Garrett announced the last round of funding under the four-year program. The impact of this program is yet to be determined, however its conclusion seems incongruous to recent education developments. Prime Minister Julia Gillard commissioned the White Paper *Australia in the Asian Century* (Commonwealth of Australia) released in 2012. It is described by the Prime Minister as a "national blueprint for a time of national change" (cited in Henry, 2012, p. 3). First and foremost it is positioned as a domestic policy document that looks to relationships with Indonesia, India, China, Japan, South Korea and Vietnam particularly, due to development and strategic considerations (Henry, 2012) with terms of reference that include: "opportunities for a significant deepening of our engagement with Asia across the board, including...education" (Australian Government, 2011, p. 1). Secondly, the cross-curriculum priority Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia is to be implemented in the emerging Australian Curriculum. This priority seeks to provide "a regional context for learning in all areas of the curriculum...[to] ensure that students learn about and recognise the diversity within and between the countries of the Asia region" (ACARA, 2012a). In summary, the boundaries of knowing Asia in and through Australian policy imperatives continue to shift.

International policies.

The Australian imperative to 'know Asia' is supported by the rise of Asia studies programs in countries across the Western world however an unsettled "identity...in terms of policy or subject status" (Pang, 2005, p. 194) persists across this field. For example, momentum in the USA for education reform for 'International education' supporting 'knowing Asia' and international competence received high-level encouragement in response to the report: *Asia in the schools: preparing young Americans for today's interconnected world* (2001). In Canada, Asia Pacific Studies was confirmed as being high on foreign policy agenda when "funds were provided for Asian languages and cultural training in addition to providing assistance to the trade sector" (Pang, 2005, p. 181). "By the mid-1990s some degree of success in secondary schools had been achieved" (Pang, 2005, p. 183) in emphasising Asia Pacific studies, however like Australia, initiatives suffered a major setback when funding was cut in the late 1990s. In New Zealand, Educating for Asia has raised similar curriculum issues to those raised in Australia, notably in regards to reorientating a Western curriculum, indecision over the 'place' of studies of Asia in social studies and intercultural versus multicultural debates (Pang, 2005). In some European countries, the call for Asia literacy has moved beyond advocacy to a seemingly secure place in curriculum. In Sweden, for instance, the proposed national strategy, *Our Future with Asia - A Swedish Asia Strategy for 2000 and beyond* (Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Sweden), 1999), included compulsory school and upper secondary school education programs. In 2011 it was announced that Chinese should be taught in all Swedish schools within the decade ("Chinese to be taught in all Swedish Schools," 2011). Despite differing contexts, a major curriculum tension regarding the risk of perpetuating the Oriental myth is documented in curriculum representations being developed in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the USA (Pang, 2005; Singh, 1996b).

Theoretical tools for knowing policy

As noted by Young (1999), there is utility in using multiple lenses to consider the policy phenomena under study. This section explores theoretical lenses that can be used to critically explore the epistemological and ontological issues of policy implementation. Rationalist approaches to policy analysis often take a problem-solution approach, relying on problem identification (Bacchi, 2009; Blackmore & Lauder, 2004). These approaches consider values extraneous to policy implementations, and policy formulation and policy implementation as separate phases in a linear policy process. Critical policy approaches encourage engaging with the complexity of policy creation at different levels. Considine (1994), for example, advocates a critical approach that seeks to investigate the role of policy actors in policy formation and innovation as potential solutions to policy problems. This, however, fails to look beyond the creation of policy as a “problem solved”, to consider “the links between policy as intended by the policy-makers and its relationships to what actually happens in practice” (Blackmore & Lauder, 2004, p. 98). Policy problems are also often constructed as immutable truths (Bacchi, 1999, 2009; Ball, 1998; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010; Young, 1999), which as Bacchi (1999) notes “emphasises the inability to separate ‘solution’ from ‘problem definition’...revealing the assumptions about the nature of the problem in any postulated solution” (p. 21). Questioning policy problem construction is therefore an important task to undertake in critical policy analysis.

The work of Carol Bacchi (1999, 2009) offers here a useful theoretical lens that can theorise Asia literacy policy in new ways. Bacchi’s What’s the Problem Approach (WTP) can be used to extend the analysis of representations of Asia literacy in policy rhetoric. This approach interrogates Asia literacy as a proposed ‘solution’ to ‘problems’ economic imperatives present to the knowledge economy, which is also invoked as an immutable and unproblematic idea (Robertson, 2005). Using this approach the value conflicts involved in

the problem representation of Asia literacy can be critically examined, potentially opening up an exploration of the constructed ‘problem’ of Asia literacy as constituted within the policy community itself . By exploring this analysis, further competing interpretations or strategic representations with political discourses can be identified to probe what is both problematic and left unproblematic in policy representations of Asia literacy to see where, and by implication where they do not, lead. For example, questioning how Asia literacy is represented as both an economic problem and solution in policy, as opposed to modes that mobilise alternative discourses of globalisation.

Questioning policy implementation is a further logical extension of interrogating policy. In schools, educators are also “policy makers or potential makers of policy, and not just the passive receptacles of policy” (Ozga, 2000, p. 7). The inclusion of both written policy and policy endorsed by school leaders and teachers in schools in the critical exploration of policy serves to broaden notions of policy analysis. Ball (1993) encourages the exploration of potentially problematic social actions, particularly the need for in-depth study to detail not just espoused, but enacted policy at a micro-level. Rather than negate a broader context analysis of policy, this serves to highlight that “the challenge is to relate together analytically the ad hocery of the macro with the ad hocery of the micro without losing sight of the systematic bases and effects of ad hoc situations” (1993, p. 10). Extending critical analysis of Asia literate policy beyond the official text is integral to exploring notions of discourse and agency central to the policy to interrogate how constructions of Asia and Asia literacy are accepted, negotiated and challenged. Ball (1993) advocates policy trajectory studies that link the origins of policy with its effects, to:

employ a cross-sectional rather than a single level analysis by tracing policy formulation, struggle and response from within the state itself through to the

various recipients of policy...such a trajectory form of analysis may also be a way of ensuring that policy analyses ask critical/theoretical questions, rather than simple problem-solving ones. (p. 16)

Original conceptualisations of policy trajectory define three contexts of policy-making: “the context of influence, the context of policy text production and the context(s) of practice” (Bowe, Ball with Gold 1992 cited in Ball, 1994a, p. 26). This does suggest a linear separation of contexts (Gale, 1999, 2003), but rather that each context is embedded in and requires an understanding of the others, exploring the policy cycle as “a heuristic and tentative exploration of the social phenomenon – policy – as something we confront, inhabit and respond to” (Ball, 1994b, p. 108), to investigate both enacted and espoused policy. The inclusion of this theoretical perspective also impacts heavily on the definition of policy to be used in this thesis. The notion of policy as “the continuing work done by groups of policy actors who use available public institutions to articulate and express the things they value” (Considine, 1994, p. 4) is a limited definition that focuses on policy only as product and does not recognise the ‘process’ of policy beyond its initial articulation as an ‘official’ policy text. A more apt definition of policy as referred to in this thesis would therefore be as “both process and product. In such a conceptualisation, policy involves the production of the text, the text itself, ongoing modifications to the text and processes of implementation into practice” (Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard & Henry, 1997, pp. 24-25). Therefore, it can be argued that adoption of a policy trajectory approach that applies a critical policy analysis can better elucidate the epistemological complexity of constructing, and representing, Asia literacy in both espoused and enacted policy.

Knowing Schools

A critical review of enacted policy in school sites is therefore a necessary element of an examination of Asia literacy policy. This section reviews the representations of Asia literacy in school contexts to explore both epistemological and ontological perspectives they embody. Since the 1970s attention given to how studies of Asia is conceptualised and taught in Australian schools has gradually grown. This section starts with a review of approaches to the enactment Asia literacy, as advocated by policy makers and education researchers. Each of these approaches is underpinned by a particular view of what place Asia literacy has in Australian curriculum. The role of school leadership is significant to securing this place in school visions. Additionally, the capacities of teachers to ‘know’ and ‘enact’ Asia literacy are crucial, as the workforce of reform (Connell, 1991), to realising how Asia literacy policy is inhabited, and responded to (Ball, 1994b) every day in schools. Finally, Sen’s (1993, 1997, 2004) notion of capability is explored as a theoretical lens that accommodates, but also extends beyond, an economy-driven construction of Asia literacy to offer new insights to existing theorising in the field.

Asia in the curriculum.

Debate at the level of implementation of Asia literacy starts with disparate understandings of both the importance, and form, of Asia literacy. The ‘language and/or studies’ argument is a fundamental point of debate. For FitzGerald, there are two necessary preconditions for changing the position of Asia knowledge in Australian education systems: firstly, a clear view of Asia curriculum and secondly, placing Asia in a non-negotiable position in curriculum to combat marginalisation (1993; 1995; 1997). He asserts that this non-negotiable place is necessary as a counterpart study to Asian languages for three critical contributions: intellectual breadth and development; differentiated understanding of regional markets; and general internationalisation of Australia’s outlook (1993). In short, he argues, “there is no

escaping the imperative of learning the language” (1997, p. 88) and he is critical of the ability of Studies of Society and the Environment (SOSE) to offer an academically rigorous and intellectual place for studies of Asia (1993, 1997). The ‘languages and/or studies’ debate is also fuelled in part by the Rudd Report’s statement that Asian language development was “a matter of national importance, requiring urgent and high-level attention at a national level” (Rudd, 1994, p. i). FitzGerald does concede that most Australians will learn about Asia in English and the Humanities (1997), a point on which there is consensus (Fitzgerald, 1995; Henderson, 2004b; Muller, 2006; Muller & Wong, 1991). Primarily, FitzGerald situates studies of Asia within an intellectual and language orientated framework. This potentially locks Asian Studies “in to the perceived needs of Asian language programmes while seemingly offering little opportunity for debate or discussion” (Williamson-Fien, 1994, p. 18), potentially engendering a construct that limits knowing Asia to ‘knowing language’.

A significant and contrasting theme in literature promotes knowing Asia as a globalised approach. Michael Singh (1995a, 1995b, 1996a, 1996b) puts forth arguments that critique studying Asia for national economic interest. His work has been particularly influential in highlighting the dangers of a neoliberal agenda (1996b) and warrants close examination to identify tensions within discourses. Commentators were quick to highlight the neoliberal agenda of the Rudd Report and Singh (1996b) asserts:

there is no neutral position from which Australians can study Asian languages and cultures; this curriculum initiative is already saturated with Australia’s economic interests and concerns about creating new employment opportunities. (p. 159)

This agenda is underpinned by a dominant view of globalisation which assumes that the global economy is reified and unavoidable. Within this paradigm, the Rudd Report positions

Asia literacy as key to “Australia’s well-being...as a matter of economic interest to governments, businesses, unions and Australia’s youth” (Singh, 1996b, p. 159). Singh (1996b) also suggests that discourses of Asia literacy in the Rudd Report enact a form of neo-colonialism that signals alterations to capitalist modes in Asian societies. Australia’s dependence on Asian markets is articulated through “competency in cultural understandings ...presented as an important factor in achieving international cost-competitiveness” (Singh, 1996b, p. 159) and the need to “resuscitate the study of languages other than English, especially those of Asian trading partners” (p. 160). Asia literacy is called upon to demystify the Asian market and is clearly linked to employment growth in the Rudd Report.

Singh (1995b, 1996b; Singh & Miller, 1995) seeks to expand the representation of Asia in Australia’s otherwise Eurocentric curriculum by adopting a postcolonial lens and applying theorists like Said, Chow, Spivak and Bhabha. Singh and Miller (1995) advocate the use of Bhabha to analyse tensions in the Asia Education Foundation’s position statement. Singh argues that a mere insertion of studies of Asia in to existing curriculum does not allow for prevailing colonial and Oriental legacies that see studies of Asia Othered by Eurocentric curriculum. For example, although FitzGerald argues passionately in favour of studies of Asia (1993; 1995; 1997), Nozaki and Inokuchi (1996) are critical of his tendency to construct studies of Asia using Orientalist characteristics that continue frames of world hegemony while putting forth this argument.

In contrast, Singh (1995b) advocates a “multivocal” approach to curriculum as “students need to learn from the many voices it [Australia] contains, voices that studies of Asia should not ignore” (p. 12). Singh (1995b) further complicates the debate about the place of studies of Asia in the curriculum by calling for a critique of existing curriculum in order to introduce

Asian voices. He reveals problems confronting the development of an Asia literacy curriculum by examining postcolonial critiques of Orientalism, namely, “that Asia literacy, as for any curriculum representation, operates according to the prevailing tendencies of a specific historical and socio-economic setting” (Singh, 1995a, p. 615). He is critical of what policy initiatives ask of education and educators and, with other curriculum leaders, raises concerns about inadequate attempts at Asia literacy in existing curriculum and the potential damage of Oriental legacies perpetuated when such attempts are implemented without critical reflexivity (Dooley & Singh, 1996; Hamston, 1996; Henderson, 2004a; LoBianco, 1996; 2007; Nozaki, 2009b; Nozaki & Inokuchi, 1996; Williamson-Fien, 1996).

The debate regarding the place of Asia Literacy in the curriculum also considers multicultural education. Singh (1996b) suggests a potential pairing between Asia literacy and multicultural education. Lo Bianco (1996) questions if the inclusion of Asia Literacy in multicultural education dilutes the importance of the Asian focus, or affords it its own subject that negates ideas of equity in multiculturalism by elevating the study to a higher status? Henderson (2008) states:

Since Asian studies involved values and beliefs about the nation’s future direction, it was inextricably linked with other questions about Australian identity...it was in this sense that Asian studies was problematised along with debates about multiculturalism. (pp. 177-178)

Additionally, suggestions that multicultural education is constructed on European terms and so has failed to dispense with racism (LoBianco, 1996; Williamson-Fien, 1996) reveal similar concerns to those raised by curriculum leaders concerned with Oriental legacies in curriculum. In American multicultural education literature these concerns are articulated as

Eurocentric orientation or racist undertones of ‘whiteness’ (Haviland, 2008; Mazzei, 2007).

These themes are mirrored in Australia as Rizvi (1996) suggests Asia literate initiatives were:

unlikely to succeed in challenging residual expression of racism in Australia unless ‘Asia literacy’ and multiculturalism are much more than learning about other cultures...these projects should be about problematising the cultural politics of Asia-Australia relations. (p. 188)

‘Problematising’ reinforces calls for critical reflexivity previously noted in discussions regarding the construction of culture (see also Knowing Asia: ‘Culture’ of this chapter).

While discussion regarding critical engagement with studies of Asia has a firm intellectual basis, the relationship between epistemology (how we might ‘know Asia’) and ontology (what is the nature of the ‘Asia’ that might be the object of that knowledge) is further complicated. Some ambivalence is noted due to uncertainties in how Australia identifies itself (FitzGerald, 1995; 1997; 2002; Jeffrey, 2003; Milner, 2009; Rizvi, 1996; Singh, 1995a, 1995b, 1996a) as a nation. This is an additional problematic to the consistency of approaches to cultural politics and thus, further ties Asia literacy to multicultural policy of cohesion of national identity and education.

Given the interaction between epistemological and ontological perspectives of Asia literacy it is not surprising that more recent scholarship has not seen any resolution to these debates.

Recent Education Revolution calls have seen a return to a language focus, as the 2009 winter edition of *EQ Asia Literacy – Our Future*, published by the Curriculum Corporation, featured eleven articles, out of a total of nineteen, on language teaching and practice. A clear consensus on the representation of Asia literacy is still elusive. If Asia is constituted in policy as always no more than a conceptual abstraction, or if it is something with ontological

solidity that exists as a thing in itself, or, if it is constituted as both in different places, how we might know Asia is inescapably messy and contradictory.

Overall, while literature critiques constructs of knowing Asia and calls for reflexivity, there is no consensus or recommendations regarding how to move forward. This potentially contributes to claims that “Twenty years of work to advance Asia literacy through various policies has yielded mixed results...The available evidence also suggests that studies of Asia has limited penetration in content taught in Australian schools” (AEF, 2012d, p. 2). Concern over the varying rates of ‘slow’ growth of studies of Asia in both school and tertiary institutions has been progressively noted (AEF, 2008a; 2010a, 2012a, 2012d; Fitzgerald et al., 2002; FitzGerald, 1980; 2010; Hooper, 1995; Owen, Ling, Andrew, & Ling, 2006; Wilkinson & Milgate, 2009; Wyatt et al., 2002). In 1992 core funding from the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training was allocated to the establishment of the AEF, funded to stimulate and support studies of Asia in schools. In 2007 the Department of Education and Training in Australia stated that the *National Statement for Engaging Young Australians with Asia in Australian Schools* (AEF, 2006b) was endorsed by all state and territory education ministers since 2005 and was informing curriculum reform across the country. Yet, despite this statement and the proliferation of many quality curriculum support documents, the *Call to Action* (AEF, 2008a) found Australian education to be lacking in consistent and meaningful application of Asia literate curriculum. The document suggested that momentum of the 1990s had waned as:

- No education system explicitly requires schools to teach about the Asian region. Data indicate that 50% of Australian schools are not equipped to teach about Asia.

- Less than 25% of students have the opportunity to study an Asian language. Only 5.8% of Year 12 students choose to study an Asian language, decreasing to 3% at University.
- The majority of teachers have had no opportunity to learn about Asia in their own education. There is no plan to ensure the Asia literacy of new teachers.
- No education system monitors student learning about Asia. (AEF, 2008a)

The 2009 research report *Studies of Asia in Year 12* (Wilkinson & Milgate, 2009) supports the *Call to Action* (AEF, 2008a), revealing that “across Australia it is only a small minority of students who undertake studies with content or focus on Asia” (p. ii). This literature suggests that while Asia literacy had secured a place in the broad education agenda, it was still on the periphery of the national education agenda. In contrast, “Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia” was included as one of three cross-curricular priorities in the emerging Australian Curriculum developed by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). It involves embedding Asia-related content in the curriculum from Foundation to Year 12, however there is some ambiguity in recommendations that “[cross-curriculum priorities] will have a strong but varying presence depending on their relevance to the learning areas” (ACARA, n.d.a). A decisive element in realising this ‘presence’ in enacted curriculum will be the commitment of schools and their agents to knowing Asia.

The Role of School Leadership.

Leadership is often considered an imperative for curriculum reform (Rennie, Venville, & Wallace, 2012). Leadership and policy decisions of leaders are intimately tied to policy

enactment as “leadership acts as a catalyst without which other good things are unlikely to happen” (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008, p. 28) within the school. Ylamaki (2012) calls for a new field of curriculum leadership at the intersection of educational administration and curriculum studies, citing a need for broader understandings such as “how leaders (individually and collectively)...influence curriculum transformations in schools” (p. 316). Ylimaki’s (2012) study found “varying ways in which today’s leaders enact curriculum leadership are relational and grounded in subjective interpretations, arising from self-awareness, personal beliefs and experiences in their schools and communities” (p. 342). This in turn impacts on enactment of curriculum change, which is largely dependent on the ability of leaders to frame it as meaningful and purposeful change for the school itself. Relied upon to relate policy to context, school leaders are frequently positioned as gatekeepers (Ball, 1993). The notion of gatekeepers, however, is not always accurate. In many ways, it is an inadequate and restrictive term. While policies, as “textual interventions into practice” (Ball, 1993, p. 12) constrain leaders in some ways with particular problems posed, they do not necessarily delimit space for action in localised responses, making it unnecessary in many cases to default to ‘guarding against’ external policy. It is often the role of school principals or curriculum leaders to take the first steps to enacting policy. These key mediators of policy serve to introduce the local particularities of policy enactment, often through the construction of narratives that rationalise school change. Commonly conceptualised as a narrative of the future, it is one “that is better in some important ways than what now exists” (Bennis cited in Ylimaki, 2006) and is closely intertwined with leaders’ aspirations for the school (Leithwood et al., 2008).

The notion of leader as visionary intersects with Ball, Maguire, Braun and Hoskins’ (2011) findings. They found that school leaders take up positions as ‘narrators’, who interpret, select

and enforce meanings of policies. Key to this role is the articulation of an “‘improvement plot’ of some kind” that serves to “join up disparate policies into an institutional narrative” (Ball *et al.* 2011, p. 626). In some cases this is achieved through a “‘principle of integration’, which coheres policy and the school itself” (Ball *et al.* 2011, p. 627). The integration and fusion of seemingly disparate policies involves “creative social action not robotic activity” (Ball 1993, p. 12).

Leaders’ work is imaginative, proactive in appropriating policy, rather than repudiating it in attempts to guard the school from apparently unrelated policy. This transformation work requires that school leaders be active agents in “changing the landscape” (Newman, 2005, p. 724) at the localised context of the school and more broadly within state and federal contexts of educational reform. Newman (2005) suggests that this agency can be exercised through managerial assertiveness that draws on policy discourses to drive through change that might otherwise be blocked, repackaging policy to meet local agendas and privileging social agendas to re-work responses to meet social problems. This process of discursive articulation positions school leaders as much more than submissive inheritors of policy (Ozga, 2000; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010).

School leaders are positioned as key agents within the Australian programme of reform to know Asia. Leadership and advocacy within school administration is noted as a key priority for engaging schools with Asia literacy (AEF 2006b; McRae, 2001). As the formal school leader, the Principal holds unique responsibility for policy decisions made at the school level and is more enabled than head teachers to initiate significant reform. Research on successful school leadership affirms that principals are the main source of leadership in schools and greatest influence in all schools (Day *et al.*, 2010; Glen, 2009; Leithwood *et al.*, 2008). This

is reflected in the *Leading 21st Century Schools: Engage with Asia (L21CS)* program that identifies principals as key leaders and ‘targets’ for facilitating the implementation of Asia literacy, signalling an anticipated transformational capacity of school leaders to “change the landscape” (Newman, 2005, p. 724) of the micro-politics of ‘knowing Asia’. The decision to target principals within school leadership teams was based on findings of *The Future of Studies of Asia and Australia in Australian Schools: An Evaluative Investigation* (Owen et al., 2006), which identified the need to persuade principals for school change with a clear rationale or justification for including studies of Asia and Australia in the curriculum. The Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) funded an A\$1.5 million three year project “to build a national cohort of Principal ‘champions’ to increase the uptake of the *National Statement for Engaging Young Australians with Asia in Australia Schools*” (AEF 2008b, p. 1). The *National Statement*, endorsed by the Ministerial Council on Education Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) in 2005, identifies “active support and involvement of school leadership” (AEF, 2006a, p. 13) as the first indicator of significant progress in establishing a central focus on Asia literacy. The most recent AEF release reaffirms this indicator (AEF, 2012e). Mandating Asia literacy in the emerging Australian Curriculum has dramatically increased the imperative for the *L21CS* program to engage principals in developing clear articulations of Asia literacy.

Teachers’ knowing.

The importance of local enactment as an active reconstitution of policy rather than a mere translation is emphasised by Ball’s (1993) concept of the underlife of policy. The “underlife” of policy intention and “secondary adjustments” (Ball, 1993, p. 13) to policy relate teachers to policy in different ways. Attending to this underlife offers a sense of interplay of on-the-

ground factors; mechanisms of agency and restraint for teachers in their policy enactment.

The enactment of Asia literate curriculum is highly dependent on teachers' perspectives and theoretical work employed within this underlife. In enacting curriculum and policy, teachers are intellectuals engaged in theoretical work (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Giroux, 1985a, 1985b; Hudson, 2012; Macintyre Latta & Wunder, 2012; Smyth, 2001) in ways that deliver more than an externally devised template of curriculum. This theoretical work is integral to the reconstitution of policy, despite being sometimes downgraded to mere conceptual work (Meleis, 2012) in subordinate disciplines such as teaching and nursing. Once the decision has been made to take-up Asia literacy as a school imperative, enactment is often left to teachers as the "workforce of reform" (Connell, 1991).

Ensuring teachers have the discipline and pedagogical knowledge to know Asia is a necessary pre-cursor to classroom enactment. Existing attempts to implement Asia literacy in schools has resulted in low levels among secondary school graduates (Hill & Thomas, 1998; Wilkinson & Milgate, 2009). Hill and Thomas (1998) found that upon entering teacher education courses, of these secondary school graduates "only a minority of students were interested in further study [of Asia]" (p. 59) to improve their subject knowledge of Asia. It seems logical that if preservice teachers have low levels of Asia literacy then they will be reluctant to embrace and find a place for Asia Literacy in the curriculum. It is a reasonable concern that if teacher educators are not addressing Asia literacy in tertiary settings then there is limited hope that pre-service teachers will be able to mediate Asia literate curriculum for their students.

The scan of studies of Asia activities in pre-service primary and secondary teacher education (AEF, 2001) in the year 2000 found:

- The vast majority of the subjects taught devoted 5% or less of the class time to content on Asia, and the inclusion of additional Asia-related content was a low priority for faculties and departments,
- Both Deans of Education and teacher educators suggested that specialised staff would be needed and that professional development in some form would be required to shift the emphasis [a response which implies expertise in this area is limited],
- Finally, findings were increasingly alarming when considering that the sample was self-selecting and considerably biased towards those already teaching about Asia, highlighting that Asia-related content does not occupy a central role in pre-service teacher education programs.

A 2009 review of Asia-related content in pre-service teacher education programs in two major Queensland institutions (Salter, 2009b) noted that while studies of Asia are evident in elective courses, subject outlines of core subjects, as a representative sample of subjects and their priorities, confirmed the AEF's statement that "the majority of our [Australian] teachers have had no opportunity to learn about Asia in their own education" (AEF, 2008a). Paired with the assertion that content from Professional Development sessions "fails to materialise in the classrooms of the majority of attending teachers" (Buchanan, 2004, p. 46) this is problematic in light of calls for teachers to be more directly involved in policy and initiatives in order to ensure long-term sustainability (FitzGerald, 1997; Griffin, Woods, Dulhunty, & Coates, 2002; Hamston, 1996; Singh, 1995b).

However, literature reviewed suggests that there are two leading factors in teacher efficacy in regards to knowing Asia:

1. *Key Educators*. Findings of an investigation of sites of best or innovative practice identified passionate people (Buchanan, 2005) as key factors in ensuring the promotion of studies of Asia in teacher education. Findings of the NALSAS strategy scan (AEF, 2001) further support the notion of key educators as a driving force on placing import on the studies of Asia.
2. *Key Experiences*. Many teacher educator sites have fostered effective engagement with the studies of Asia through cultural immersion and travel through study tours and pre-service placements in Asian countries (Halse, 1999; Hilferty, 2008; Hill & Thomas, 1998, 2002; Mills, 2008). Not only did such programs enhance teacher awareness of other cultures but many participants noted that the experience forced them to be more self-aware and critical of their own pre-existing assumptions. This however, is not a ‘magic bullet’ as cost is often cited as an inhibiting factor.

Considering that languages are identified as an independent discipline, and that most Australians will learn about Asia outside of this discipline (Fitzgerald, 1995; Henderson, 2004b; Muller, 2006; Muller & Wong, 1991), exploring the tangible places teachers have found to implement Asia studies can establish broader notions of Asia literacy as relevant to the cross-curriculum priority.

One of the most revealing studies is the NALSAS Taskforce funded study to measure the knowledge, understanding and attitudes of more than 7000 students in years 5 and 8 in schools across Australia. This selection provided information about development at critical stages in primary and secondary education. Key findings of the range of scores showed “that

it was possible for schools to deliver high quality education about Asia and its importance to Australia...despite both the lack of a central place for studies of Asia in the curriculum and variations in resource use and training for teachers” (Griffin et al., 2002, p. 1). However, there were clear discrepancies in high school, where “Year 8 had fewer students with highly positive attitudes and more negative attitudes” (Griffin et al., 2002, p. 55). This finding is notable as it would be conceivable that students may be ready to engage more maturely with complex topics and cultural issues by Year 8. Furthermore, there were differences at primary and secondary levels in that “primary schools tend to be whole school focused while the focus at secondary schools tended to be department or discipline level” (Griffin et al., 2002, p. 39), where the discipline level traditionally is Arts, English and the Humanities, as was mirrored in the Queensland schools’ *Exploring Asia in Schools Project* (Dunlop, 1996).

Perhaps a reason for this primary/secondary division can be found in the use of integrated curriculum. The use and benefits of integrating curriculum when incorporating studies of Asia in primary schools is documented (Dunlop, 1996; Power, 2007; Power & Auh, 2001; Singh, Chirgwin, & Elliot, 1998). Power (2007) elaborates on this in a study of an experienced primary teacher with noted success with studies of Asia in primary contexts who found when moved to a high school context, that “there has been little collaborative planning across disciplines that would promote the kind of rich, multi-layered learning that had been possible in primary classrooms” (p. 51) . Various articles relating to studies of Asia in high school curriculum are organised around distinct curriculum areas; Arts (Griffiths, 1996; Power, 2007), Geography (Rossimey, 2003), History (Henderson, 2004b; Simpson, 2009; Stirling, 2009) and Languages (Ferguson, 2009; Lo Bianco, 2009; Orton, 2009; Reynen, 2009). In contrast Dunlop (1996) demonstrates the success of a collaborative approach to studies of Asia involving the development of curriculum units in Studies of Society and the

Environment (SOSE), Technology, The Arts and English in a case study at Mt Isa's Kalkadoon State High School. Division at a discipline level could be a pedagogical matter, reliant on individual student interest and teacher interest and expertise at particular sites.

A dominant theme in classroom enactment in this largely professional literature accessed by teachers is the implicit notion that these examples are of 'best' or 'good' practice. This approach emphasises pedagogy, which in itself works to fill the gap noted in the Rudd report (Wilson, 1995), yet it predominantly overlooks the philosophical and conceptual work undertaken to implement this pedagogy. 'Good practice' is a contested term and the notion that practice can be isolated and transferred is problematic (Alexander, 2012; Coffield & Edward, 2009; Hargreaves, 2004). The underpinning assumption of 'good practice' is that teaching practice can be identified and transferred (Coffield & Edward, 2009). Brown, Collins and Duguid (1989) note that assumptions that conceptual knowledge can be abstracted from situations undoubtedly restrict the effectiveness of such practices. In contrast, positioning teachers as intellectuals (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Giroux, 1985a, 1985b; Hudson, 2012; Macintyre Latta & Wunder, 2012; Smyth, 2001) draws attention to their agency, and obligation, to philosophise and conceptualise pedagogical practice rather than merely implement it.

Curriculum bed-fellow?

'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures' is also a cross-curriculum priority in the Australian Curriculum. The inclusion of Indigenous Perspectives and Asia literacy has made the two key areas seemingly strange bedfellows, with similar concerns regarding the problematising of cultural politics, challenging Eurocentric curriculum and the complexities of cross-cultural understanding, yet competing for space as discrete bodies of

knowledge. Unlike Asia literacy, Indigenous Perspectives have been explicitly identified and addressed in curriculum for some time. *The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy* was implemented in 1989 and the *National Indigenous English Literacy and Numeracy Strategy* in 2000-2004. In Queensland, there have been a number of initiatives, including *A National Strategy for the Education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples 1996-2002*, *Partners for Success: A Strategy for continuous improvement in educational and employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in Education Queensland 2000*, the Queensland Studies Authority's (QSA) *Indigenous Perspectives 2008* and the *Melbourne Declaration* (MCEETYA, 2008, p. 9).

In terms of cultural education and in line with Buchanan's distinction (2004), Asia literacy is seen as intercultural, a curriculum initiative that operates regardless of the ethnic mix in classrooms to consider world-connections rather than necessarily Asian students in the classroom. Indigenous Perspectives on the other hand, reflects features of a multicultural initiative and has direct implications for the ethnic composition in the classroom, particularly Indigenous students in Australian classrooms and society.

While Asia literacy policy is couched in mainly economic and intercultural dialogue, Indigenous Perspectives policy is supported by arguments for social inclusion and equity. Major concerns of the latter include attendance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, their engagement, retention in and completion of school and gaps between Indigenous student achievement and non-Indigenous students (Gray, 2008; Klenowski, 2008; Tripcony, 2002). There is much attention given to Indigenous languages, recognised as "a major part of Australia's heritage...a major vehicle for the conservation of Aboriginality and Aboriginal ways of thinking and constitute an important symbol of identity for many

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people” (Department of Employment, 1991a, p. 19).

The value placed on languages in this context is largely cultural, rather than for economic and business gain as in the human capital discourses of Asia literacy.

While the dialogue surrounding Asia literacy and Indigenous Perspectives does vary, there are echoes of issues relevant to both. Similar to Asia literacy, a culturally responsive pedagogy is often cited as necessary to open up the curriculum and allow Indigenous students to engage more fully with education (Gray, 2008; Klenowski, 2008; Nakata, 2007; Perso, 2012; QSA, 2008; Tripcony, 2002; Williamson & Dalal, 2007). In Williamson and Dalal (2007), a review of literature was used to inform cultural standards for *Indigenous Perspectives* in curriculum including:

- The need to problematise the endeavour of embedding Indigenous perspectives
- The requirement that students deconstruct their own cultural situatedness in order to appreciate the ways in which the Other is framed
- The hegemonic and appropriating capacities of Western disciplines and the dissonance between Indigenous and Western ways of knowing
- The complexities of cultural interactions at the cultural interface and the difficulties of achieving cross-cultural understandings and acquiring cultural competencies
- The need to reorient curricula to engage with alternative ways of knowing and alternative skill sets. (p. 52)

There are apparent correlations between tensions surrounding the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives, and tensions surrounding the inclusion of Asia literacy, in curricula. Both are concerned with problematising cultural politics, challenging Eurocentric curriculum and the complexities of cross-cultural understanding. Additionally, the complexity of the term Asia is mirrored by that of Indigenous in Australia – wherein there are two distinct groups: Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples and then further distinct groupings from different countries within these groups, which, as is for the term Asian, are often conflated and abstracted into a pan Indigenous identity. Furthermore, as in the case of Asia literacy, the sustainability of Indigenous Perspectives initiatives is questioned, as Gray (2008) asserts that progress regarding the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives has been slow and a plateau reached in terms of outcomes. What the legacy of attempts to ‘Asianise’ and ‘Indigenise’ curriculum, in their variety of forms, do make clear, is that historically the attempts to open up dialogue and alternatives to Eurocentric curriculum were resisted or silenced.

Theoretical tool for knowing Asia in schools

Themes in the literature at the level of school enactment point to Asia being mobilised as more a cultural than economic concern. This suggests that theoretical tools for knowing Asia in schools require space to engage with both the economic imperative in policy texts and the cultural focus in policy implementation. Sen’s (1993, 1997, 2004) notion of capabilities can offer a broader discursive framework for knowing Asia than existing theories in the field of Asia literacy. Reconciliation of both human capital and human capability in this framework creates space to negotiate alternate positions for potentially reimagining the ‘solution’ (Salter, 2013b) for knowing Asia in Australia education. Sen (1993) differentiates between human capital, that “tends to concentrate on the agency of human beings in augmenting productions

possibilities”, and human capability that “focuses on the ability – the substantive freedom –of people to lead the lives they have reason to value and to enhance the real choices they have” (p. 293). Sen (1997) argues that “capability serves as the means not only to economic production (to which the perspective of ‘human capital’ usually points), but also to social development” (p. 1960). Foregrounding social development indicates “broadening that is needed is additional and cumulative, rather than being an alternative to the ‘human capital’ perspective” (p. 1960).

In extending this notion to Asia literacy, those considered ‘Asia-literate’ teachers “are not merely means of production (even though they excel in that capacity)” of Australia’s success in the Asian century, “but [are] also the end of the exercise” (Sen, 1997, p. 1960). Sen’s notion of capabilities also affords great agency to teachers; as Nussbaum (2003) notes, it creates space for choice in the Asia literacy policy ‘solution’ (Salter, 2013b), delineating a difference between mandating how teachers will be ‘Asia-literate’ and leaving the choice up to them. It can also serve to mobilise Asia in divergent and concurrent ways, as “capability serves as the means not only to economic production (to which the perspective of human capital usually points), but also to social development” (Sen, 1997, p. 1960)

Conclusion

The landscape of Asia literacy is rich and wide. This literature review highlights the complexity of discourses that surround and are employed to know Asia. A summary of key themes in literature highlights:

- An imperative for cultural understanding that employs a critically reflexive approach to knowing Asia, however the available research literature does not extensively

address the explicit and implicit epistemologies for knowing Asia in policy constructions and implementation.

- An unsettled identity in terms of policy or subject status further complicated by historical legacies exigent in Australia's domestic context, and while research literature from the 1990s highlights the economic assumptions of early policy imperatives for Asia literacy, a contemporary analysis, which is imperative in light of the recent release and promotion of the White Paper *Australia in the Asian Century* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012), is not offered.
- Despite an unsettled identity, school leaders and teachers take-up and enact policy in schools, however teachers' capacities for engaging with cultural understanding imperatives, and negotiating correlating cultural imperatives such as Indigenous perspectives is a point of tension. While there is a great focus in the available literature on what school leaders and teachers do, or do not do to implement Asia literacy in schools, there is negligible focus on teachers' intellectual work; especially the theoretical work requiring them to engage with various epistemologies of knowing Asia, as a necessary pre-cursor to 'doing'.
- New conceptual tools need to be brought to bear in this study. Globalisation theory, Chen (2010), Nakata (2007) and Bacchi (2009) in particular offer concepts to problematise and challenge existing knowledge objects of Asia and Asia literacy.

This literature review, as summarised through these themes, points to an epistemological challenge in knowing Asia, and highlight the need for significant theoretical work to distil the nature and scope of knowing Asia in contemporary Australian education policy in the Asian century.

Notes:

1. For example, the Shape Paper Consultation Report (2009) for the Australian Curriculum sought feedback on areas of financial, consumer, Asia and statistical literacy as items for consideration in future implementation.

2. Intercultural educationalist John Buchanan (2004) makes a distinction between multicultural and intercultural education, however also states that all education can be acknowledged as intercultural. Buchanan's distinction is useful in highlighting two clear areas of government approach to aspects of Asia literacy. Multicultural policy and subsequent education tends to have implications for the ethnic composition of Australian society and classrooms with initiatives to foster social cohesion and engagement with Australian national identity. Intercultural policy and education operates regardless of the ethnic mix in Australian society and classrooms, focussing on the wider global context to foster environmental, political and economic engagement with global issues. Multicultural policy is not the same in focus as intercultural policy or Asia literacy policy, but it is interconnected through arguments for national and international harmony. Additionally, dynamics of Asia-Australia engagement are evident in Australian and global contexts, making Asia literacy relevant to both.

Multicultural education seems an obvious place to initiate Asia literacy. However, there is a key difference between multicultural education, which is generally defined as a study of cultures 'within country' and Asia literacy, which extends further to include a study of cultures that are also beyond national geographic borders. Multicultural education encompasses a broad range of scholarship and while the task of inserting an Asian voice in the multi-cultural dialogue of Australian educators is not a new idea, a major ideological and

curriculum shift may be needed to consider how studies of Asia are integral to multicultural education and whether this integration is a paradigm in which diversity, and potentially cultural boundaries are celebrated by conservative discourses of the cultural Other, or whether Asia literacy is approached with a more critical and globalised pedagogy. The latter is often where calls for intercultural education are invoked. Asia literacy is positioned primarily as an intercultural, yet simultaneously multicultural initiative, taking up the notion that multicultural and intercultural education are interconnected through arguments for cultural understanding.

3. Confucius Institutes are managed directly through headquarters in China, a direct subsidiary to the Beijing-based Office of the Chinese Language Council International, known as Hanban. Hanban was established in 1987, “establishing non-profit public institutions which aim to promote Chinese language and culture in foreign countries” (Hanban, n.d.).

4. Currently, Australian immigration policy aims to meet four major objectives:

1. To allow reuniting of close relatives with those already legally admitted to Australia;
2. To bring in skills, assets and educated people;
3. To fulfil international obligations to accept refugees; and
4. To permit free access from New Zealand. (Jupp, 2004, p. 186)

A program weighted more towards skill migration is a more favourable avenue for the Australian Government to take as research shows that migrants entering Australia in the skill stream outperform those in the family and humanitarian streams with higher labour force participation rates, lower unemployment rates and higher incomes and occupational status (Ho, 2006).

5. WAP favoured immigration applicants from certain countries and employed measures such as a dictation test often conducted in a language not familiar to the applicant. It originated largely in response to fears that Chinese diggers and later labourers of the South Sea Islands of the Pacific (Kanakas) were a threat to white entitlements and lifestyle. The life of WAP also included internment of Asian immigrants during World War II and Asian wartime refugees forced to repatriate in 1947.

Chapter Three: Research Design

For every complex problem there is a simple solution and it is always
wrong. H. L. Mencken

Introduction

The literature review in Chapter Two identified a significant theoretical gap requiring work to distil the nature and scope of knowing Asia in contemporary Australian education in the Asian century. To address this gap, I focus my research problem on the epistemological tensions across the policy trajectory of Asia literacy. This chapter establishes the parameters of, and methods used to explore this problematisation of Asia literacy. Integral to this problematisation is the acknowledgement that the very act of framing the problem as an epistemological dilemma works to construct a methodology that is grounded in a critical qualitative approach. The methodology is informed by Bacchi's problematisation of representations of 'problem' and 'solution' in policy. It is framed in Ball's (1993) policy trajectory approach to explore these policy constructions at three different sites. Policy trajectories offer a critical policy approach to interrogate policy problem representation and reveal assumptions about the nature of the problem at both macro and micro policy levels.

This chapter begins with an explication of the policy trajectory framework used in this study. It then discusses the theoretical strengths of this approach to engender a creative dialogue between multiple theoretical lenses to understand the complexity of the research problem. Following this is an outline of the data collection methods chosen to support this research design; critical review of analysis of policy texts, case study of one school engaged in enacting Asia literacy that encompasses both document study and individual interviews, and meta-analysis that synthesises distinct components of policy document analysis and case study analysis. Next, the research issues and limitations associated with this design, and

issues of reflexivity, validity and generalisability are discussed. The chapter concludes with a summary that justifies the methodological design of this research study.

Orientation to the study

This study used a qualitative research approach to interrogate the problematisation of Asia literacy in policy and the enactment of the policy in one high school. It seeks to open up ways to conceptualise knowing Asia, specifically the policy imperative to know Asia as articulated in Asia literacy; what it means to ‘know Asia’; how Asia can be ‘known’. The key ‘problems’ represented in the broad range of literature are a lack of curricular consideration for Asia literacy in both schools and tertiary education (AEF, 2001; 2010a; FitzGerald, Jeffrey, Maclean, & Morris-Suzuki, 2002; Hill & Thomas, 1998; Salter, 2009b; Wilkinson & Milgate, 2009; Wyatt et al., 2002), and lagging momentum to taking it up too (AEF, 2012a; 2012d). The research design was shaped by the following key research questions:

- How is Asia, and Asia literacy, represented in formal policy texts?
- How might Asia and Asia literacy be represented by school leaders and teachers?

Ball’s (1993) policy trajectory approach framed the investigation of the representations of Asia and Asia literacy from policy text to policy representations in one school setting. The line of inquiry to the research questions was guided by the premise of policy genealogy, that is, to open up ways to respond to the policy problem represented, it is first necessary to depart from a position that confers the problem as *res ipsa loquitur* and interrogate how these problems are ‘constructed’ (Bacchi, 1999, 2009).

This thesis was written at a time in which Asia literacy was being developed as both a policy goal, manifesting ultimately in the Australian Government’s White Paper *Australia in the Asian Century* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012) and a curricular goal in the emerging

Australian Curriculum. Accordingly, I employed a theoretical approach that enabled me to engage with, and generate insights into the significance and the richness of emergent phenomena. In order to interrogate competing constructs of Asia, as well as of Asia literacy, I made use of theoretical frameworks derived from poststructuralist positions within a qualitative paradigm. These frameworks work in a conceptual dialogue to examine the epistemologies used to know Asia in Australian education.

Qualitative Bricolage.

The methodology design was qualitative and rejected positivist assumptions that knowledge is a generalisable and discrete phenomenon, taking an interpretivist approach that recognises knowledge as a social construction, as established in Chapter Two (see the section ‘Knowing’). With this position, the methodology was designed to guide, and enable a study that interrogates the production, representation and policy regulations of Asia and Asia literacy in policy texts and their articulations.

The concern with epistemology demanded an approach that “stress[ed] the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 10). Denzin and Lincoln examined a range of tensions that have shaped the qualitative research tradition since its beginning in classic anthropological ethnography. Key to these tensions is an “evolving criticality...in this context, criticality and the research it supports are always evolving, always encountering new ways to irritate dominant forms of power, to provide more evocative and compelling insights” (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005, p. 306). The concept of critical, as applied in this thesis, seeks to interrogate dominant narratives to look for more pluralistic perspectives of and about ‘Asia’. As a result, methodological processes, as Miles and Huberman (1994) note, often adopt an “eclectic form of generating meaning – through a

multiplicity of ad hoc methods and conceptual approaches” (cited in Kvale, 2007, p. 115). A bricolage approach favoured a critical post-positivist approach as it is “grounded in an epistemology of complexity” (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005, p. 317). To address the research questions, and importantly to open ways to re-imagine Asia and Asia literacy, the methodology design of this study drew on the synergy of multiple methods and theories. To critically engage with the socially constructed nature of reality, “the task of the bricoleur is to attack this complexity, uncovering the invisible artefacts of power and culture”, making bricolage a constructive choice as it appreciates that “interactions with the objects of...inquiries...are always complicated, mercurial, unpredictable, and of course, complex” (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005, p. 317). This eclecticism looked at the inclusion of distinct, yet complementary theoretical perspectives to explore new meanings for specific aspects of available data, as will be explored further in this chapter in *Theorising the Research Dimensions of the Trajectory Strategy*. Additionally, an inseparability of researcher subjectivity and the social location of their personal history and that of others in the ways knowledge is produced and interpreted (Kincheloe, McLaren & Steinberg, 2011), was acknowledged. The constitutive effects of the discursive practice I adopted as researcher, and my subjectivity, impacted on how I, in turn, represented the research problem and findings of the study. Awareness of this subjectivity required reflexivity, a “conscious experiencing” (Lincoln & Guba, 2003, p. 283) of myself as inquirer in this study: both as a teacher myself looking to engage with Asia literacy and a learner engaging with Asia literacy policy and others’ experiences of it, and as one coming to know myself and my own constructions of Asia, Asia literacy, culture and knowledge within the process of research itself.

Poststructural position.

Characteristically, poststructuralist positions deny the possibility of a unified or positive position. Rather than indulging in the “reduction of complexity to simplicity, of something differential and problematic to a simple identity” a poststructuralist position “instead acknowledge[s] that one is always within narrative and pursue the narratives” (Rivkin & Ryan, 1998, pp. 353-354). This implies that the search for objective truth and discrete categories of knowledge are inherently problematic as “Knowledge is interrelational, interwoven in webs of networks” (Kvale, 2007, p. 21).

Foucault contended that discourses do not mirror the world, but in some way constitute it (Callincos, 2007). Foucault (1972) explored this constitutive effect, “no longer – treating discourses as groups of signs (signifying elements referring to contents or representations) but as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak” (p. 49). This “domain of research” (Foucault, 1972, p. 261) made it possible to see multiple discursive articulations, and to disrupt binaries and notions of fixed knowledge and meanings.

Bakhtin’s (1981) notion of heteroglossia brought further nuance to fundamental ideas of discourse as reflective and constitutive and so informed the concept of discourse used in this study. In Bakhtinian thought, languages juxtapose, mutually supplement and contradict one another, yet can be interrelated dialogically in heteroglossia. Meaning and dialogue are inseparable: meaning generates dialogue and dialogue is necessary to drive meaning. A heteroglossic approach highlighted the dynamism of dialogue, illuminating the polyphony of discursive possibilities to knowing Asia and the complexity of the ways in which constructs of Asia are mobilised and appropriated. A conceptual framework drawn from cultural studies, postcolonial theory (Bhabha, 1995; Said, 1993, 2003) and Bakhtin (1981) served to illuminate critical issues surrounding discourses found to be operating in epistemologies used to know Asia.

Taking a position that disrupted notions of fixed and discrete meanings in this research drew attention to the 'invisible', or ways of knowing made normative, by pointing to other ways of knowing. The methodology design worked to the aim of opening up imagining Asia, rather than closing it to a neat and marked description. From this position, I sought to know Asia in a way that neither colonised or imposed meaning, nor conceived and positioned Asia in reductive terms. Instead, I sought to explore multiple representations of knowing Asia and pursued narratives within which these representations are set. The exploration of policy actors, specifically school leaders and teachers' negotiation of heteroglossic discursive articulations of knowing Asia was integral to this search.

Theorising the Research Dimensions of the Trajectory Strategy

Qualitative strategies give life to this policy process [axiomatic in that once the juggernaut of policy is started into motion, the arena for action has been changed] and map out its inconsistencies, misreadings, misinterpretations, as well as accommodation and perhaps resistance.

(Maguire & Ball, 1994, p. 282)

The focus of this study was how the construct of Asia was represented in policy texts, and by school leaders and teachers. This focus was based on the following premises: firstly, policy texts do not reflect policy enactment; secondly, policy enactment alone does not sufficiently reveal the agentic, specifically intellectual work that school leaders and teachers do in navigating policy. Hence, the approach taken in this study is on policy 'life' that is from policy as texts, to their take up and transformation into school practice, and drew on Ball's (1993) policy trajectory framework. Ball (1993) encourages the exploration of potentially problematic social actions, particularly the need for in-depth study to detail not just espoused,

but enacted policy at a micro-level. It departed from a study that decontextualised, or situated policy on an abstracted state level and instead investigated the interrelational nature of policy at macro and micro levels (Ball, 1993). Extending critical analysis of Asia literacy policy beyond the official text was integral to exploring notions of discourse and agency central to the policy, as is advocated by Blackmore and Lauder's (2004) critical policy studies approach. Ball (1993, p. 16) advocates policy trajectory studies that link the origins of policy with its effects through cross-sectional analysis and seeks to generate critical and theoretical questions. The underlying premise of this approach recognised policy as a process (Taylor et al, 1997) for heuristic exploration (Ball, 1994b).

Key to this recognition was the acknowledgement that policy texts are “not necessarily clear or closed or complete” (Ball, 1993, p. 11), allowing meaning to shift and change in different contexts. This raised the notion of policy as text and discourse. Attending to policy assemblage and how problems are represented opened space for investigation of the representational history of policy as text both at the macro and micro level. However, just as policy that arrives at a school has a representational history, the school institution itself does not exist in a vacuum and localised contextual factors act in significant ways to affect, inflect and deflect policy (Ball, 1993, pp. 11-12). This highlights a dynamic relationship between constraint and agency for actors of and within policy. Differentiation between conceptualisations of policy as text and policy as discourse (Ball, 1993) creates an untenable separation of approaches that more clearly operate in complementary and simultaneous ways (Bacchi, 1999, 2009; Henry, 1993; Nudzor, 2009). Interrogating the problematisations in Asia literacy also illuminated how policy texts do not simply address, but simultaneously also construct problems. It also enriched analysis of the complexity of policy enactment. This

enabled a constructive questioning of policy (Bacchi, 2009), allowing “more time theorising the ‘space for challenge’” (Bacchi, 2000, p. 55).

Furthermore, there were a number of reasons to remain cautious in regards to policy responses that varied between contexts and tendencies to generalise from such findings. First, “there is danger of idealising the past and portraying a situation in which teachers once had autonomy and now do not” (Ball, 1993, p. 16) where a policy from ‘above’ approach is seen as a primary constraint and influence on teachers’ work. Secondly, “the generalisation will not encompass the experience of all types of teachers in all types of situation” (Ball, 1993, p. 16) where in some contexts teachers and students experience agency (Goodson & Ball, 1984) and in others the situation will be reversed.

Whilst localised complexity is integral to the trajectory strategy, it is also a point of critique. Henry (1993) is critical of Ball’s “more post-modernist one [theoretical project] of localised complexity” (p. 10). She sees his rejection of “‘totalising’ structural analyses” as creating a weakness in his theoretical approach in terms of “what generates or connects the component parts of policy ensembles...for example, what structural patterns underlies the observation that policies allow ‘different people’ to do ‘different things?’” (p. 103). While acknowledging “at the empirical level, this [Ball’s policy trajectory framework] seems entirely sensible” she asserts that “the theoretical framework presented here...does not...lead, as he hopes, to critical/theoretical exploration rather than simple problem solving” (p. 103). Ball (1994b) defends his approach with a direct response to the ‘problem’ of structural analyses countering that “[Henry’s] implication is that all policy must, can only, be explained this way [as having a material basis]” (p. 108). Alternatively, Considine’s (1994) ‘actors’ approach offers “a more forensic view” (p. 6) of policy development and policy makers.

However, despite the strengths of these approaches to relate policy to wider structural patterns and to detect patterns of interdependence between actors in policy emergence, respectively, both serve relatively explicit purposes and neither attends to the broader complexities and particularities of policy epistemologies in enactment. Trajectory studies serve to broaden notions of power through casting a spotlight on the agency present and taken up in policy enactment. Additionally, they are not bounded to the danger of simple essentialism in conceptual phenomena (Ball, 1994b).

However, Henry's (1993) critique of the usefulness of a generative or connective lens to relate the parts to a whole is valid. The value of a critical/theoretical exploration to extend the trajectory and highlight its exploration of conceptual phenomenon is clear. Yet, due to the iterative nature of policy trajectory studies, an appropriate method for this critical/theoretical extension may not be chosen in advance, but rather becomes clear during, and sometimes after, the policy trajectory process has been worked through. In the case of this research, working through the trajectory confirmed that it was open to further development through the inclusion of an additional generative lens. The methodological design aimed towards opening ways of re-imagining of Asia and Asia literacy from the interrogation of the discursive tensions in policy text and enactment. Through the investigation of the policy trajectory, Chapter Seven puts forward a reconceptualisation that responds in a more dialogic way than Ball's account of the trajectory approach, and makes clear the significant theoretical work of the trajectory and the social phenomenon of knowing Asia.

Thus, this research project reconceptualises Ball's (1993, 1994b) notion of policy trajectory. It is not an attempt to explain Asia literacy policy. Figure 1 relates the policy trajectory study envisaged here as a policy cycle framework, rather than a strictly linear policy process. What

this project aimed to do was explore Asia literacy policy as “social phenomenon” (Ball, 1994b, p. 108) using elements of a case-study to investigate the complexity and subtlety of localised complexity (incorporating *Policy to context* and *Policy in context*) within a broader critical analysis of relevant policy and curriculum documents (*Policy as text*) and once complete, a dialogic reconsideration of ‘knowing Asia’ across and between all contexts (discussed below as *reconceptualisation*). Here, contexts were separated primarily for analytical purposes, as “any such division of policy analysis...needs to remain aware of the interconnections between [these] policy levels” (Gale, 1999, p. 397). Each context was embedded in and required an understanding of the others, as is highlighted in the intersecting generative lens of *reconceptualisation*:

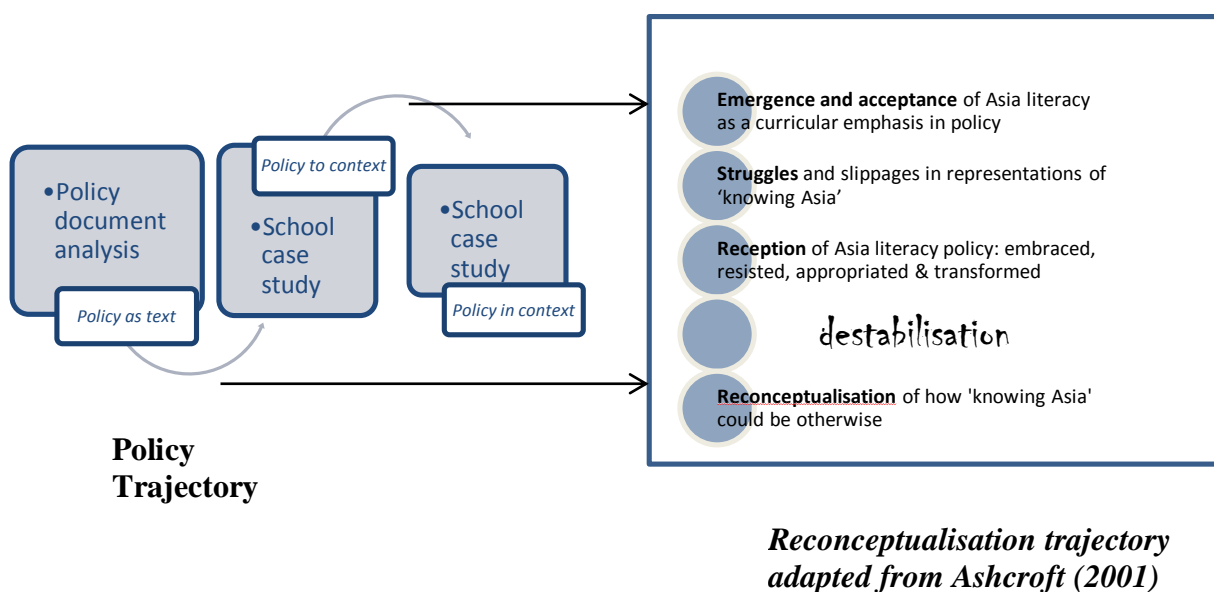


Figure 1. Conceptual diagram of research dimensions of the trajectory strategy.

Policy as text.

The *policy as text* dimension of the trajectory strategy adopted in this study addressed problem and solution representations in policy text and its intentions targeted at macro levels. For Ball (1993), “much rests on the meaning or possible meanings that we give to policy; it affects ‘how’ we research and how we interpret what we find” (p. 10). He notes that “it is crucial to recognise that the policies themselves, the texts, are (a) not necessarily clear or

closed or complete...(b) Policies shift and change their meaning in the arenas of politics; representations change, key interpreters...change” (p. 11). Thus it was important to examine the representational history of knowing Asia in policy documents as well as the representation of Asia literacy in current curriculum documents that served to enact this policy. This further elucidated the “gaps and spaces for action and response [that] are opened up as a result” (p. 11) of potential re-workings and re-orientations of the policy itself over time.

In this dimension, the representations of Asia, and the justifications for Asia literacy in an ensemble of policy texts were examined. Drawing on the work of key scholars in earlier iterations of Asia literacy that took a postcolonial lens (Broinowski, 1992; Buchanan, 2002; Hamston, 1996, 2006; Henderson, 2004b; LoBianco, 1996; Muller, 2006; Nozaki, 2007; 2009a, 2009b; Nozaki & Inokuchi, 1996; Pang, 2005; Rizvi, 1996, 1997; Singh, 1995a, 1995b, 1996a, 1996b; Singh & Miller, 1995; Williamson-Fien, 1996), I revisited postcolonial theories to explore how an economic and Orientalist (Said, 2003; Singh, 1995a) construction of Asia literacy gained primacy over time in key cultural policies. Following de Certeau, cultural policy is regarded “as a strategy made possible by the will and power of a properly constituted government agency and targeted at a client group whose representatives have been co-opted into the agenda of the corporate state” (cited in Singh & Miller, 1995, p. 305). The discussion in this dimension thus addresses policy at the macro level of the state¹.

Governing knowledge produced by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) and AEF formed the constituents of the discourses that determine how “purposes and intentions are re-worked and re-orientated over time” (Ball, 1993, p. 11). As an extension of government policy and expansion of the Rudd Report, the first dedicated policy text, *Studies of Asia: A statement for Australian schools* (AEF, 1995) illustrated the nucleus of policy at

the nexus of Asia literacy and mainstream education agendas. Subsequent policy documents²; *National Statement for Engaging Young Australians with Asia in Australian Schools* (AEF, 2006b) and *National Statement on Asia Literacy in Australian Schools 2011-2012* (AEF, 2011b), were interrogated for the changes and continuities to the dominant frames of the initial policy.

I used a policy genealogy approach to explore shifts in the representation and interpretation of ‘knowing Asia’. Bacchi’s (1999, 2009) What’s the problem? (WTP) critical policy approach provided a conceptual tool to interrogate both discursive presences and absences in policy and a postcolonial analysis re-opened the space around critiques of cultural policy in Australia (Singh, 1995b; Singh & Miller, 1995). Bhabha’s (1984, 1995) postcolonial notion of mimicry offered an analytic tool “whereby the contradictions and marginalised elements present in governmental cultural policy can be juxtaposed in order to shed a different light on the policy itself” (Singh & Miller, 1995, p. 305).

Reading policy text against itself helped to interrogate the immutability of constructions of problems (Bacchi, 1999, 2009), identifying marginalised concerns recognised as part of dominant discourse (Singh & Miller, 1995, p. 307). Liberating these suppressed elements was a tactic for elucidating broader frames of reference and investigating alternatives to existing problematisations. Chapter Four reports in detail the research findings of this dimension of the trajectory strategy.

Policy to context.

The second dimension of the trajectory strategy employed in this research study shifted the exploration to the micro level of complexity localised in a school context. Just as the policy

document that arrives at the school has a representational history, the school institution itself does not exist in a vacuum. Ball (1993) reminds us that “the text and its readers and context of response all have histories” and policy, “although it may change them, is affected, inflected and deflected” (p. 11) by existing institutional practices and contexts. Additionally, “some texts are never even read first hand...but there may often be key mediators of policy in any setting who are relied upon by others to relate policy to context or to gatekeep” (p. 12). It is often the role of school principals or curriculum leaders to decide if and/or how policy will be adopted and enacted by the institution, further adding to the representational history of the policy. As key mediators of knowing Asia in schools they served to introduce the local particularities of policy enactment. Also, it was crucial to detail the context of the institution in order to analyse the decisions of key mediators of Asia literacy policy at the site, supporting the decision to situate the *policy to context* and *policy in context* dimensions within a case study of one school (see Data Collection: Case Study section of this chapter).

An initial analysis of publically available documents related to the school (see Data Collection: Case Study; Document Analysis section of this chapter) indicated that globalisation had been strategically deployed as a factor in leaders’ decisions to introduce and shape Asia literacy in the school. Bakhtin’s (1981) concept of heteroglossia offered a useful theoretical framework for extending data analysis. Heteroglossia was useful to understand the polyphony of discursive possibilities that existed in the metaphor, an utterance of school leaders’ “conversations” (Ylimaki, 2012, p. 308) regarding the representation of Asia literacy at the school. Chapter Five reports in detail the research findings of this dimension of the trajectory strategy.

Policy in context.

The third dimension of the trajectory strategy employed in this research study explored Ball's (1993) pragmatic acknowledgement that "policies **are** textual interventions into practice" [bold in original] (p. 12). This is where the localised complexity of policy was most relevant as "we cannot predict or assume how they [policy matters] will be acted on, what their immediate effect will be, what room for manoeuvre actors will find for themselves" (p. 12). Policy texts can easily intensify teachers' work in practice, and as such do not necessarily easily transfer into institutional practices that automatically enact 'good' or even 'consistent' understandings of the policy itself. This was precisely why critical insight into the localised context was necessary. Ball adopts Riseborough's (1993) notion of underlife to policy intention, noting that "generally we have failed to research, analyse and conceptualise this underlife, the 'secondary adjustments' which relate teachers to policy and to the state in different ways" (Ball, 1993, p. 13). This underlife offered a sense of interplay of on-the-ground factors; mechanisms of agency and restraint for teachers that enact espoused policy and its accompanying curriculum. The interview questions were thus focused on exploring a potentially rich area of the policy that highlights "the complexity of the relationship between policy intentions, texts, interpretations and reactions...there is agency and there is constraint in relation to policy" (Ball, 1993, p. 12).

The primary analysis in this dimension was of interview data generated by semi-structured interviews to gather classroom teachers' representations of Asia and Asia literacy. Initial analysis of interviews revealed key themes related to teachers' epistemology of Asia literacy. Bhabha's (1995) concept of hybridity offers a way to analyse the teachers' representations of policy text and their school leaders' conceptualisation of the intents of Asia literacy however it was limited in opening up ways to depart from the limitations of postcolonialism. Chen's (2010) notion of critical syncretism gave emphasis to explain the complexity in active and

reflexive consciousness of ‘mixing’, as he puts it, “the difference between syncretism and hybridity is that syncretism denotes a subject who is highly self-conscious when translating the limits of the self, whereas hybridity is simply a product of the colonial machine’s efforts toward assimilation” (p. 98). While Bhabha (1984) points to opportunities for agency within mimicry, syncretism positions agency as fixed for all interlocutors. Chen’s (2010) call for multiple reference points to support this interrogation also resonated with Bakhtin’s (1981) conceptualisation of the dialectical heteroglossia of discourses teachers use to know Asia and aligned with the critical approach of the thesis that seeks more pluralistic perspectives.

Theorising reconceptualisation.

The final dimension of the policy trajectory approach employed in this research study offered a reconceptualisation of Ball’s (1993) approach. Considering policy trajectory of Asia literacy in a more dialogic way made clear the significant theoretical work of this thesis and brought to the forefront ways in which dominant discourses can be, and were, challenged. Parkes (2012) argues that in a critical appraisal of a particular curriculum vision, it is important to ask how the subject representations, in this instance, Asia, can be reconceptualised to destabilise dominant discourses. This call acknowledges “curriculum is a key site where people’s subjectivities and cultural imaginaries are produced, contested or transformed” (Lin, 2012, p. 170). A postcolonial reading of Asia literacy makes visible that what has remained uncontested in the struggle for Asia literacy is the representational practice of knowing Asia. It is one way of critically approaching dominant Australian discourses of Asia.

Key to this reading was the recognition that postcolonial studies was first conceived of as a methodology for analysing modes of imperial discourse of societies affected by the historical

phenomenon of colonialism (Ashcroft, 2001, p. 7). Australia's national consciousness has been inscribed by imperial legacies such as British colonisation and the White Australia Policy, the consequent disruption of which does not automatically render defunct the parallel inscription of Australian subjectivities and identities (Parkes, 2007; Salter, 2009a). The notion of Europe as the superior and imperial West is embedded in much of Australia's contemporary historical consciousness, as is the profound ability of this notion to impact on Australia's engagement with Asia (FitzGerald, 1995; 1997; 2002; Jeffrey, 2003; Milner, 2009; Rizvi, 1996; Singh, 1995a, 1995b, 1996a) and inscribe and perpetuate Asia as 'the Other' (Broinowski, 1992). In curriculum, this inscription is further compounded by imperialistic legacies in Western educational discourse (Willinksy, 1998).

This final intersecting dimension of the trajectory study deployed in this research study was a reconceptualisation of 'knowing Asia' as it was constructed across the policy trajectory. It applied a postcolonial reading of knowing Asia in its adaptation of Ashcroft's (2001) articulations of postcolonial transformation as a generative lens to the previous dimensions of the approach. The proposed reconceptualisation drew attention to the agency of participants in policy discourse to negotiate and challenge discursive mechanisms of the "machine" (Chen, 2010, p. 98). It worked as an analytic framework to examine the epistemological tensions in navigating multiple constructs relating to Asia literacy. At the centre of this complexity is the "question of resistance...[that] has always dwelt at the heart of the struggle" (Ashcroft, 2001, p. 13), a resistance that is "conceived as something much more subtle than a binary opposition...the appropriation and transformation of dominant technologies for the purpose of re-inscribing and representing" (Ashcroft, 2001, p. 14). The trajectory of this struggle was made visible through four responses to the matter of representation in the dominant discourse:

1. Acceptance of the dominant discourse,
2. Rejection of this discourse identified in slippages and struggles within the dominant discourse,
3. Interjection of counter narratives, and
4. Interpolation of a reconceptualised discourse for knowing the phenomena (Ashcroft, 2001; Parkes, 2007).

This was used in this thesis to analyse the constructions of objects of knowledge such as ‘Asia’, and generate the reconceptualisation process represented in Figure 1. Like the contexts of the policy trajectory, the four responses listed here were separated for analytical purposes, and this division supported by an awareness of their continuing interaction. The first three responses especially were embedded in and required this awareness of each other. The interface between these three responses created opportunities for destabilisation, from which a fourth response of reconceptualisation emerged. This conceptual adaptation of this struggle is represented in Figure 2.

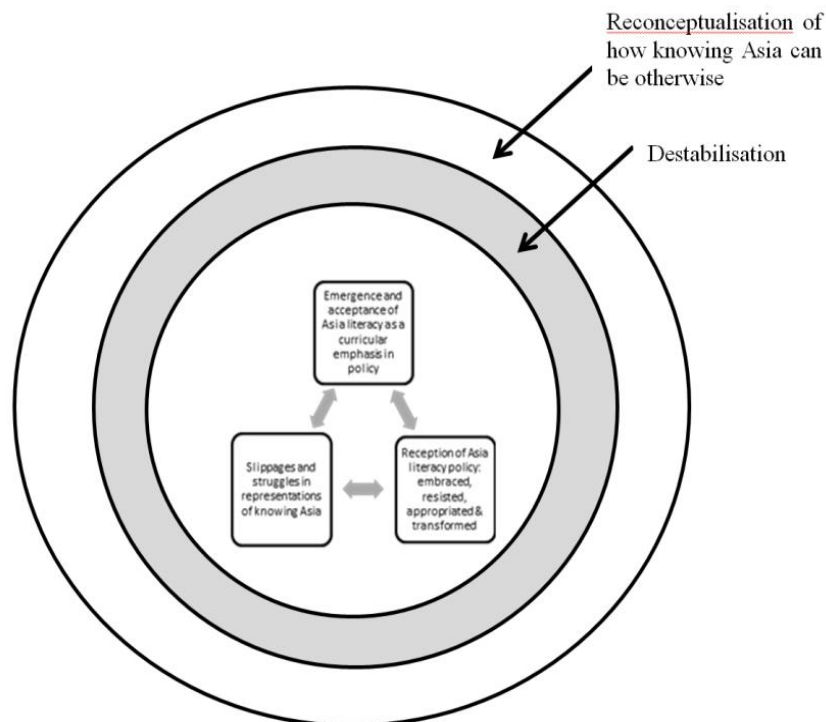


Figure 2. Conceptual adaptation of Ashcroft’s (2001) theory of reconceptualisation.

These four responses charted the trajectory of representations of Asia literacy as “representation describes both the site of identity formation [acceptance] and the site of struggle over identity formation [reject, interject, interpolate]” (Ashcroft, 2001, p. 4). As noted by Hall (1990):

Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation, Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous ‘play’ of history, culture and power. (p. 255)

This trajectory offered a heuristic (Parkes, 2007, 2012) for reconceptualising the ways in which knowing Asia can resist interpellation and inscription within dominant representations of Asia literacy. Chapter Seven reports in detail the research findings of this integrating dimension of the trajectory approach. It draws on the recently published White Paper *Australia in the Asian Century* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012) to speak to, and back on the Asia literacy policy developments. The location of this analysis in Chapter Seven facilitates consideration of the ways in which the discursive narratives mapped in the *policy to text* dimension have persisted or evolved over the period in which the research was undertaken. This was integral to this analysis which served primarily to explore how Asia literacy had been inscribed by policy discourse and how it may be reconceptualised.

Data Collection

Following a policy trajectory approach, policy texts and interview data with a sample group of school leaders and teachers formed the primary data. Additionally, key research on earlier policy iterations of Asia literacy also contributed as primary data for analysis. As research was conducted while the Australian Curriculum was still in draft form, and the cross-curriculum priority ‘Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia’ not yet finalised, texts

selected for the research were drawn from existing national statements of education related both specifically to Asia literacy and more broadly to Australian education in general.

Additional texts published late in the process, such as the White Paper (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012) and the Australian Curriculum, were incorporated into analysis accordingly.

Also of significant import to data collection was the notion of ‘spiralling’. The trajectories of policy (Ball, 1993, 1994b), and struggles with representations (Ashcroft, 2001; Parkes, 2007, 2012), are employed as heuristics to explore the complexity and multi-layered ‘problem’ of Asia literacy. Choices of method made in different dimensions of these trajectories were interdependent and included a heuristic device Kvale (2007) and Denscombe (2007) denote as ‘spiralling’. ‘Spiralling’ refers to the iterative nature of the research process and makes clear that the linear progression the list of methods above, or the distinct dimensions of the trajectories of policy or representations that guide various dimensions of data analysis suggests is in practice modified into a circular or spiral model where the researcher, with an extended understanding of the themes investigated, returns to a component of the research design on more than one occasion (Denscombe, 2007; Kvale, 2007).

Document study of policy texts.

The critical review and analysis of written policy texts was integral to the *policy as text* dimension of the trajectory strategy that explored Asia literacy at the macro level. The object of this document study was to critically evaluate how Asia literacy was represented in official policy texts. This method generated data needed to critically analyse the representational history of ‘knowing Asia’ in policy documents. Whilst “documents can owe more to the interpretations of those who produce them than to an objective picture of reality” (Denscombe, 2007, p. 245), the critical approach of this study served to explore these very

representations in an ensemble of policy texts using both Bacchi (1999, 2009) and Bhabha (1995).

This method identified, described and analysed a selection of key policy texts that represent Asia literacy. The focus in Chapter Four was on three publically available documents created and published by the AEF since Asia literacy entered the mainstream education agenda: *Studies of Asia: A statement for Australian schools* (AEF, 1995); *National Statement for Engaging Young Australians with Asia in Australian Schools* (AEF, 2006b); and *National Statement on Asia Literacy in Australian Schools 2011-2012* (AEF, 2011b). These three documents were respectively endorsed to schools as national statements for engaging with Asia in Australian schools by the Asian Education Foundation (AEF), and as such considered key curriculum policy statements regarding the positioning of Asia literacy in Australian education (see also Chapter Four). For the scope of this study the second edition of the 1995 statement, released in 2000 was not used as amendments were minimal, and as such the 2006 statement determined to be the next significant policy modification. Critical text analysis of these policy texts using Bacchi's (1999, 2009) WTP approach facilitated a longitudinal analysis of 'Asia literacy' policy over an approximately twenty year period.

Analysis of these policy texts also included a secondary analysis of Singh's work (1995a, 1995b, 1996a, 1996b; Singh & Miller, 1995) on Asia literacy. This work was included in this document study due to its formative nature in generating critical discussion around Asia literacy both preceding and following the release of the first AEF policy statement in 1995. Sarantakos (2005) categorises this as a form of meta-analysis which provides "a secondary analysis of results relating to a particular topic" (p. 296) (see also Meta-analysis in this section of this chapter). The focus of this meta-analysis was to apply Singh and Miller's

(1995) original application of Bhabha's (1995) notion of mimicry to all AEF policy texts relating to Asia literacy to further enrich the longitudinal analysis.

Document study was also included in the *reconceptualisation* dimension of the trajectory strategy in Chapter Seven. In that chapter, representations of Asia literacy were critically analysed in the Commonwealth of Australia White Paper *Australia in the Asian Century* (2012), the Australian Curriculum and the AEF report, *Building Demand for Asia Literacy: What Works* (2012d). In Chapter Seven identification of representations of Asia literacy in these documents that continued, despite rhetoric about reorientating Australia for the 'Asian century', representations identified in earlier documents analysed in Chapter Four, served to focus the reconceptualisation.

Case Study.

The *policy to context* and *policy in context* dimensions of the trajectory strategy sit within a case study of Ibis State High School (pseudonym) (Years 8-12), one of the larger government secondary schools in Queensland, Australia. The case study is focussed on the second research element: Policy Representation. Within this research project case study is defined as:

an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon [knowing Asia] in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context [as they relate to epistemologies for knowing Asia evident in those charged with enacting policy] are not clearly evident. (Yin, 2009, p. 18)

A single case study was chosen to "optimize understanding of the case rather than to generalise beyond it" (Stake, 2005, p. 443) as the intent of the trajectory strategy is to explore

not explain (Ball, 1994a, p. 108) policy to highlight the potential inadequacy of policy analyses that do not take localised enactment as fundamental to understanding of policy. A single site facilitates “the development of a nuanced view of reality” (Flyvbjerg, 2011, p. 303) to create a data set that problematises knowing Asia and works to clarify the deeper causes of this problematisation rather than describing the symptoms of the problem and how frequently it occurs (Flyvbjerg, 2011). Furthermore, a dense and thick study of one school site was more useful and interesting for a study grounded in social theory as it provided more opportunity to describe the school and enacted policy in different facets (Flyvbjerg, 2011; Peattie, 2001; Stake, 2005), allowing for greater engagement with the “empirically rich underlife to policy intention” (Riseborough, 1993, p. 37).

Seeking the “particular more than the ordinary” (Stake, 2005, p. 447), site selection was purposive to ensure a school actively involved in the take-up of Asia literacy. It was selected and invited to be part of the study (see Appendix B) because it had a prior history of engaging with the imperative to know Asia, and as such the study would document epistemologies that facilitate and pose difficulties to knowing Asia: the single case represents a critical test (Yin, 2009) of Asia literacy policy.

Situated in a regional city (Birdtown), the school positions itself as a leader in multiple curriculum areas and has a strong internationalisation agenda which includes affiliation with international bodies. The student profile was varied. Distinctive features included students from low socio-economic status (SES) and an enrolment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students which sits significantly above the figure (8.4%) recorded for state school students within Queensland (Queensland Government, 2011). The school leadership structure is complex. The school is led by the Principal, who holds executive power of the

school educational vision and administration. He is supported in this role by a deputy principal, who assists him in the development and articulation of the school vision and who is in turn supported by three assistant deputy principals who are line managers for different departments, guiding Heads of Department in their implementation of the school vision.

The school participated in the L21CS program and established whole-school processes for embedding studies of Asia into the school's teaching and learning programs, including an Asian language program. The school is an Asian Learning Centre, providing leadership across the district to enhance schools' engagement with Asia. The school prospectus notes that the school has taken a leading role in the region to engage students with Asian cultures through its involvement in the AEF Access Asia initiative. This involved:

- Principal's presentation to full staff outlining alignment of Asia literacy with the school's core mission
- Distributed leadership to an implementation team drawn from staff in Humanities, Arts and English curriculum areas
- Audits of curriculum and staff experience and skills related to Asia
- Incorporation of Asia literacy into three-year strategic planning and professional learning
- Trailing an Asia-focused unit of work and following success, planning further curriculum units, and
- Introducing an Asian language into the Year 8 program.

(ISHS, 2010)

Professional leadership staff involved:

- Principal,

- Deputy Principal and
- Assistant Deputy Principal, initially assigned leadership of studies of Asia to oversee development of an implementation strategy for the school as head of the Humanities department.

The school's take up of Asia literacy policy, made at a time prior to the Australian Curriculum when engagement with the policy was at the discretion of schools. A study of this take up serves as an important study in the complexities that may ensue as the cross-curriculum priority is taken up across Australia. Furthermore this policy was taken up at a time in which cries of 'over-crowded curriculum' were loud in public and professional debate, and literacy and numeracy were accountable priorities particularly for schools such as Ibis, which had an above average percentage of students from low socio economic backgrounds and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures (Queensland Government, 2011).

Case study data comprised:

- School profile and context constructed from publically available websites and school documents, such as the school prospectus;
- Semi-structured research interviews with 3 school leaders involved in take-up of knowing Asia at the school site, the data from which informed the interview purpose, question design and target interviewees for;
- Semi-structured research interviews with 9 teachers, including curriculum leaders and classroom teachers.

School Document Study.

The document study included in the case study collected supplementary data generated by or about the school setting. As noted by Lofland et al. (2006), archival records of this nature can be a source of rich data. Public documents under review here included:

- School website;
- School prospectus;
- Leading 21st Century Schools Project page from the AEF website that documented the school's involvement with the project;
- School page from the Myschool website;
- National and state curriculum and policy documents related to Asia literacy.

Initially, exploratory analysis of these documents was applied to “identify the message conveyed through the document[s]” (Sarantakos, 2005, p. 294) regarding how Asia literacy was represented in and by the school. This exploratory analysis revealed a clear link to notions of globalisation, which was then used to inform interview question design. In later stages of the study, the data were also used to “corroborate and augment evidence” (Yin, 2009, p. 103) gathered from these interviews.

Interviews.

Mishler (1986) suggests that there is often a “restricted conception” (p. *vii*) of the interview. As Kvale (2007) notes, there are different epistemological conceptions of interviewing as a process of knowledge collection or as a process of knowledge construction. In the postmodern paradigm of this research study, interviews were understood as a process of knowledge construction, as elaborated in Kvale's (2007) traveller metaphor which:

understands the interviewer as a traveller on a journey to a distant country that leads to a tale to be told upon returning home... The interview traveller, in line with the original Latin meaning conversation as ‘wandering together

with', walks along with the local inhabitants, asks questions and encourages them to tell their own stories of their lived world. The potentialities of meanings in the original stories are differentiated and unfolded through the traveller's interpretations in the narratives he or she brings back home to audiences. The journey may not only lead to new knowledge; the traveller might change as well. The journey might instigate a process of reflection that leads the traveller to new ways of self-understanding, as well as uncovering previously taken-for-granted values and customs in the traveller's home country...A traveller conception leads to interviewing and analysis as intertwined phases of knowledge construction... (pp. 19-20)

This understanding served to reinforce the exploratory nature of the study and enhance reliability and validity of the generated data by seeking to avoid the projection of pre-determined themes. Semi-structured interviews were chosen to enable comparability between the categories of interviewees' responses but also allowed flexibility if topics had already been answered by other questions, and most importantly enabled interviewees to develop ideas and speak more widely on issues raised in both questions and responses. Each interview was no longer than 1 hour in duration, and took place at the school setting where staff worked.

Interviews were recorded using a digital audio recorder, transcribed (see Appendix C: Transcription Protocol) within two weeks and returned to interviewees for checking. Interview data were then de-identified and analysed using a responsive strategy that drew on two guidelines: a proscriptive guideline that did not foreclose the prospect of considering the analytic tools of various theoretical perspectives, and a prescriptive guideline that constantly

compared data under analysis to stimulate ideas (Lofland et al., 2006, pp. 212-219). This strategy utilised categorisation, as distinct from coding, offering a “more systematic conceptualisation of a statement”, employing categories that can “arise ad hoc during analysis, they may be taken from the theory or from the vernacular as well as from interviewee’s own idioms” (Kvale, 2007, p. 105). This involved extensive use of analytic memos (Saldana, 2009) to document emergent patterns, categories and sub-categories and how individual components of the research study intersected and how different theories could potentially extend findings (see Appendix D: Sample Data Analysis).

School leader interviews.

In the *policy to context* dimension of the trajectory strategy semi-structured interviews were conducted with leadership staff involved in leading whole-school processes (initial invitation to was extended during face-to-face meeting, see Appendices E, F, G and H for relevant information sheet and consent forms):

- Principal,
- Deputy Principal and
- Assistant Deputy Principal, initially assigned leadership of studies of Asia to oversee development of an implementation strategy for the school as head of the Humanities department.

Initially, questions were tested in a pilot interview with a school leader from a smaller independent school in Birdtown who had been similarly charged with the task of leading their school in implementation of Asia literacy following the school’s induction into the Leading 21st Schools project facilitated by the AEF. This pilot interview tested questions and the interview script to ensure questions could elicit useful responses that helped to produce

knowledge on representations of Asia literacy. It also allowed me to practice the semi-structured interview method, particularly allowing interviewees to elaborate on their responses. Interview questions (see Appendix I) were organised into three themes to better elucidate gatekeepers' decisions:

- *Perspectives*; designed to explore participants' own representations of Asia literacy, including the history and context of representations and factors that participants represent as being key to Asia literacy. Also, given the emphasis on global citizens and contexts identified in the supplementary data generated by the school document study, interpretations of globalisation are elicited.
- *Responses*; designed to explore how policy is adopted and represented by the school. This includes how it is related to the school context and what decisions have been made, by what means and by whom.
- *Concerns/Aspirations*; designed to further inform and/or reinforce participants' initial responses in Perspectives questions and explore what the perceived outcomes of decisions will be.

These questions were designed to explore the representations of Asia literacy within responses, and at the conclusion of the three interviews there was an obvious point of saturation in the synchronicity of leaders' responses. Through the interview data the participants drew on a specific metaphor to articulate the relevance of Asia literacy. This metaphor, while not a "definite conceptual structure" in itself, it opened up "more integration...by portraying and contrasting different understandings" (Kvale, 2007, p. 116) of the data generated from these interviews. Furthermore, Kvale (2007) notes that fewer interviews in a study can permit the researcher to take more time to prepare and analyse

interviews, an aspect that was greatly beneficial in this stage of the study when unpacking how Bakhtin's (1981) notion of heteroglossia could extend the frog metaphor and in the integral 'spiralling' practice of the research process previously noted.

Classroom teacher interviews.

In the *policy in context* dimension of the trajectory study semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers from a range of subjects taught at the school. Their teaching experience ranged from 4 to 24 years. Participation was invited from the whole teaching cohort and 9 teachers volunteered (see Appendices H, J and K for relevant consent forms, information sheet and invitation to participate in study). While all were classroom teachers, many also held leadership positions that included pastoral and curriculum responsibilities. One teacher identified as belonging to an Asian ethnic group although the invitations to participate in the study did not target particular ethnic groups nor were the teachers asked to specify their ethnicities.

A trial interview was conducted for face validity with a classroom teacher from a school with similar contextual features as Ibis State High school. Questions (see Appendix L) were organised into three sections to better elucidate this:

- Perspectives; designed to explore participants' own representations of Asia, including interpretations and factors that participants represent as being key to Asia literacy.
- Responses; designed to explore how policy is perceived to be enacted, including how it is related to the school context.
- Concerns/Aspirations; designed to further inform and/or reinforce participants' initial responses in Perspectives questions and explore what the perceived outcomes of enacting Asia literacy will be.

Ethical Considerations.

An ethical issue that should also be acknowledged when documenting site selection for the case study and subsequent interviews was my previous involvement with the site. I had previously been a classroom teacher at the school, however had not been employed or involved with the school for eighteen months prior to the first interview at the site.

Researchers are often exhorted to “collect the richest possible data, by achieving intimate familiarity with the setting” (Lofland, Snow, Anderson, & Lofland, 2006, p. 16). As a previous staff member I occupied in part an ‘insider’ researcher role with knowledge of the site I could “easily (if not successfully) put...to use” (Lofland et al., 2006, p. 41). However, as Lofland et al. (2006) note, “whatever the relationship, it is simultaneously an advantage and a drawback” (p. 23). While my previous experiences afforded a level of familiarity with the school, and the eighteen months out of the school context allowed for some distancing and separation from this context, I was at all times critically aware of this relationship. I endeavoured to adopt what Kvale (2007) defines as ‘qualified naiveté’ which requires the researcher to negotiate the tension of exhibiting openness to new and unexpected phenomena, rather than having ready-made categories and schemas of interpretation, and employing sensitivity and foreknowledge about the research topic and site (see also Research Issues and Limitations in this chapter).

Meta-analysis.

Qualitative meta-data-analysis (Paterson, Thorne, Canam, & Jillings, 2001; Sandelowski, 2012), sometimes known as secondary analysis of data (Sarantakos, 2005), refers to the synthesis of findings from completed qualitative studies. This research strategy differentiates between and includes both the processes of analysis and synthesis, asserting that research findings “must be analysed before a synthesis of the research can occur in order to generate new and more complete understanding of the phenomenon under study” (Paterson et al.,

2001, p. 2). It comprehensively and transparently aims to ascertain the state of knowledge in a field of study as both an analytic process and interpretive product (Sandelowski, 2012). Typically, meta-analysis enhances a case-orientated study that encompasses larger and more varied samples than are usually found in one qualitative study (Sandelowski, 2012). Re-analysis of distinct studies that use similar instruments, data sets and analytic methods serves to enhance the rigour of correlations made between them (Paterson et al., 2001). In this research study, meta-analysis is utilised as a “means toward enhancing the reliability and utility” (Sandelowski, 2012, para 2) of the data generated exclusively within the *policy as text* dimension, and of the data generated by all the *policy* dimensions within the *reconceptualisation* dimension of the trajectory strategy.

A challenge of integrating research results is the balancing of diverse research approaches and agendas (Sandelowski, 2012, para 1). This balancing was achieved in the following ways:

1. In *policy as text*, Singh and Miller’s (1995) research approach using mimicry served as a unifying element, as their approach was identified in their primary analysis of the first Asia literacy policy text, then integrated with Bacchi’s (1999, 2009) WTP approach and extended to subsequent policy texts.
2. In the *reconceptualisation* dimension of the trajectory strategy, a constant ‘spiralling’ was integral to the research process. Upon reflection, it became apparent that analysis of the *policy in context* dimension, and the intersection of theories used within the conceptual framework of this dimension (see Chapter Six) had already started the transformation process that led me as researcher to fundamental features of Ashcroft’s (2001) notion of *reconceptualisation*. At the core of this approach was the matter of representation and transformation. Transformation was of increasing relevance as the

research progressed and critical insights about the narrow ways in which Asia was constituted in policy texts and representations emerged. It became clear that a research approach that explored the notion of transforming ‘narrow’ views, and engaged the “dialogic energy” (Ashcroft, 2001, p. 5) of more affirming representations, was a suitable research methodology to use to integrate research findings.

Overarching theoretical approaches within *policy as text* and *reconceptualisation* served as “analytic sequence[s]...directly linked to a newly synthesised research product” (Paterson et al., 2001, p. 2).

The matter of representation is also relevant to assumptions underlying this methodological design. Research findings of distinct dimensions were constructed with a linear understanding and interpretation due to the chronology in which each dimension of the trajectory strategy was conducted. Even with the ‘spiralling’ of the construction of research findings, they differ to the construction of findings synthesised in the penultimate ‘spiralling’ of the meta-analysis. As Paterson, Thorne, Canam and Jillings (2001) note, the meta-analysis “deals with constructions of constructions” and as such the research product of the meta-analysis:

cannot be regarded as the only possible findings that could be drawn from the available body of research, but rather as those findings constructed by specific meta-[analysis] at a given point in time in accordance with their own range of interpretative skills. (p. 7)

The choice of Ashcroft’s (2001) notion of reconceptualisation as an analytic sequence for the reconceptualisation dimension of the trajectory strategy also considered this.

Research Issues and Limitations

The scope of this project is limited to exploring Asia literacy as it is represented by policy and a specific selection of educators that are active agents of policy (Ozga, 2000). The iterative ‘spiralling’ nature of the trajectory design required a recurrent need to clarify the research process and involved key issues I faced as a researcher:

- Reflexivity;
- Validity;
- Generalisability.

Reflexivity.

Reflexivity (Denscombe, 2007; Gergen & Gergen, 2003; Hammersley, 2012b) is a protean concept. A common usage, and the main use in this study, argues that researchers are always part of the social world and “should continually reflect on their own role in the research process, and on the wider context in which it occurs” (Hammersley, 2012b, para 1).

Importantly, reflexivity was used consciously in this study to “relinquish the ‘God’s eye-view’ and reveal...[the study] as historically, culturally and personally situated.” (Gergen & Gergen, 2003, p. 579).

For example, as a study of representations, this research rejected the premise that there is an immutable truth and recognises that what is offered here represents *a*, and not a definitive, *the* study of Asia. Furthermore, at the outset of this research journey, I recognised that a grand narrative or a diligent application of one theory, or a neat methodology, has historical, and concomitantly inherent, rigour, direction and clarity within its discipline. Following a close reading of some key literature, particularly across postcolonialism to globalisation theories, I wanted a methodology design that was responsive to the relevant tangents that emerged from continual reflection across each stage of the research process. The rigour and discipline in

this study was supported by the traveller metaphor for interviewing and in a theoretical bricolage which advocated critical reflexivity. A more developed version of this argument (Hammersley, 2012b) was also relevant in addressing how the researcher had influenced the case-study interviews with minimising negative impacts on the research findings and bias that may have been incurred by the interviewer's familiarity with the school context. As previously noted, Kvale's (2007) notion of 'qualified naiveté' was embraced here. Overall, reflexivity was a fundamental part of the research process as I came to understand the undertaking of knowing Asia and my own 'maps' and representations of this task.

Validity.

Validity, as it is relevant to this thesis, commonly refers to the extent to which a method investigates what it purports to investigate. In recent years, there has been much discussion on the 'crisis of validity' (Gergen & Gergen, 2003) in qualitative research studies, particularly in a poststructural paradigm that suggests there is no objective truth, only subjective representation. In response, a number of researchers have suggested a reframing of the concept of (or of criteria for determining) validity (Gergen & Gergen, 2003; Kvale, 2007). Kvale (2007) interprets validity with a "more open conception" in ways appropriate to the construction of knowledge in interviews, "rather than 'finding' knowledge" (p. 122). As Kvale (2007) suggests, validation is a continual process that permeates the entire research process, guided by three general approaches that have been used to guide the validation of this research study:

- To validate is to check. This approach foregrounds critical interrogation of the final analysis. As a researcher I exercised reflexivity in critically looking at my analysis, as well as testing its communicative validity in conversations with my supervisors and in the submission of articles for peer review that form the basis of *the policy as text*,

policy to context and *policy in context* dimensions of the trajectory strategy informing Chapters Four, Five and Six respectively. Additionally, the application of the meta-analysis in the *reconceptualisation* dimension served to critically re-analyse findings.

- To validate is to question. This approach focusses on the congruence of content and purpose of the study with how to question it. The exploratory nature of the study was maintained through the trajectory design and researcher reflexivity that served to foster openness to possible readings of the data.
- To validate is to theorise. This approach involves a theoretical conception of what is investigated. Theory was used extensively in each distinct dimension of the trajectory strategy to explain interpretations, and also in the meta-analysis dimension *reconceptualisation* to “enhance[e] the reliability and utility” (Sandelowski, 2012, para 2) of research findings.

Generalisability.

A significant point for discussion and potential limitation to this study was its generalisability. However, key to this research project was its inception as an exploration into situated knowledge; located within particular communities at the macro and micro level at a particular time at the emergence of the ‘Asian century’. This study borrowed from Kvale’s (2007) discussion of situated knowledge: “Rather than seeking universal knowledge, the emphasis is on situated knowledge. What matters is not arriving at context-independent general knowledge, but producing well-described situated knowledge” (p. 143). However, as Gergen and Gergen (2003) note, “it borders on the banal to suggest that everything can be valid for someone, sometime, somewhere” (p. 587).

In this research study a discussion of the generalisability of case studies (Denscombe, 2007; Flyvbjerg, 2011; Stake, 2005; Yin, 2009) was relevant to the *policy to context* and *policy in context* dimensions of the trajectory strategy of this study. Flyvbjerg (2011) asserts that the orthodoxy of case study includes the misunderstanding that “it is often difficult to summarise and develop general proposition and theories on the basis of specific case studies” (p. 311).

He offers instead that:

It is correct that summarizing case studies is often difficult, especially as concerns process. It is less correct as regards case outcomes. The problems in summarizing case studies, however, are often to the properties of the reality studied than to the case study as a research method. Often it is not desirable to summarise and generalise case studies. Good studies should be read as narratives in their entirety. (p. 313)

However, while the boundaries of the case study in this research study were distinctive, it was also a single example of a broader class (Denscombe, 2007; Hammersley, 2012a; Yin, 2009) of schools that are involved in the Leading 21st Century Schools Project led by the AEF, and even more broadly a single example of schools around Australia that are being required to engage with Asia literacy in the emerging Australian Curriculum cross-curriculum priority: Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia. Furthermore, the trajectory strategy can be applied to cases studies involving other schools to achieve analytic generalisation (Yin, 2009).

Conclusion

The methodological design in this study was grounded in qualitative and poststructural paradigms. This study re-theorises Ball’s (1993) policy trajectory framework with the addition of a reconceptualisation dimension informed by Ashcroft (2001). The sites of

research in this study included a national site of policy at the macro level and a localised site of policy at the micro level. The latter site was bound in a case study of one school setting. Data were generated through document analysis and interviews across these two sites, and through a meta-analysis of all data generated from the study. Overall, this study foregrounded a heuristic ‘spiralling’ (Denscombe, 2007; Kvale, 2007) of the research process in a theoretical bricolage (Berry, 2004; Kincheloe, 2001; 2005; 2011; Kincheloe & Berry, 2004) that sought to explore and open new ways to know Asia in Australian policy sites.

This possible re-interpretation of epistemologies used ‘to know’ Asia drew on the notion of the bricoleur that “piece[d] together set[s] of representations that [were] fitted to the specifics of a complex situation” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 4). The process nature of this theoretical bricolage employed divergent modes of inquiry with divergent philosophical understandings to move freely between different analytic techniques and theories (Kincheloe, 2001; Kvale, 2007) seeking:

not to provide the *truth* about reality but to avoid the monological knowledge that emerges from unquestioned frames of reference and the dismissal of the numerous relationships and connections that link various forms of knowledge together. [italics in original] (Kincheloe, 2005, pp. 326-327)

This approach was situated in a critical notion of hermeneutics; critical in the sense that it had engaged with critical theory’s concern with power and social action and makes use of multiple critical social-theoretical discourses (Kincheloe, 2005). In short, “bricolage must problematise both the world and itself” (Berry, 2004, p. 115).

The trajectory framework adapted in this research project offered a point of entry structure that acknowledged that contexts were interrelated and that open and fluid theoretical explorations were useful, particularly in disrupting hegemonic discourses, as well as departing from hegemonic theories or methodology to reconstitute the ‘Other’. Intertwined in this acknowledgement was the understanding that bricolage has structure, which “works inwardly, playfully, complexly and rigorously” (Berry, 2004, p. 103).

In summary, this theoretical bricolage sought to avoid a reductionist mode of research that sees contextual insights and dynamics as irrelevant and messy, instead realising that “knowledge is always in process, developing, culturally specific and power-inscribed” (Kincheloe, 2001, p. 689). This approach was also informed by Bakhtin’s (1981) notion of heteroglossia, as evidenced in Hamston’s (2006) study of a Studies of Asia project that privileged productive and disruptive, rather than reproductive, discursive struggles that shape and continue to re-shape lived cultural experiences. I contend that such an approach can foster new dialogues on knowing Asia and potentially “produce new forms of knowledge that inform policy decisions and political action in general” (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005, p. 318). The aim of this research was not “simply to rediscover [Asia]... but to generate a system of multiple reference points” (Chen, 2010, p. 101) that recognised, negotiated and challenged previous constructs and epistemologies for thinking about Asia.

Notes

1. Represented here by COAG and the AEF. COAG works as a direct extension of the corporate state, including the Prime Minister, State Premiers, Territory Chief Ministers and President of the Australian Local Government Association. Established in 1992, its role is to “initiate, develop and monitor the implementation of policy reforms that are of national significance and which require cooperative action by Australian governments (for example... education and training)” (COAG, 2011). The AEF, established in 1992, is a joint activity of Asialink at the University of Melbourne and the Curriculum Corporation, receiving core funding from the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training to “advocate[s] for and support[s] Asia literacy in Australian schools (AEF, 2011a). AEF position statements, developed to guide curriculum decisions in Australian schools, are an example of cultural policy due to the role the AEF has in producing governing knowledge about Asia literacy. In 2011, the AEF is considered a “key stakeholder” by the Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) in the development and implementation of NALSSP (DEEWR, 2011) and is responsible for managing one of the four forms of this funding; Becoming Asia Literate: Grants to Schools.
2. For the scope of this study only the first edition of the 1995 statement has been used, with the 2006 statement considered the next significant shift.

Chapter Four: The ‘problem’ in policy

This chapter is drawn from:

Salter, P. (2013b). The problem in policy: representations of Asia literacy in Australian education for the Asian Century. *Asian Studies Review*, 37(1), 3-23.

Introduction

This chapter explores *policy to context*, in particular the values and objectives at play in the representation of the ‘problem’ that requires an Asia literacy ‘solution’ in Australian education. To a certain extent, the positioning of Asia literacy in policy is “creative” (Bacchi, 2009, p. 211) of the problem in the first place. Asia literacy is simultaneously positioned as both ‘problem’, in a perceived lack of Asia knowledge needed to ensure Australia’s economic future, and ‘solution’ as an imperative to increase this knowledge. The primary form of the problem/solution identified in the literature on this field represents Asia literacy as a “neo-colonial project which aspires to understand the object of Australia’s economic desires” (Singh, 1995b, p. 9). A reductionist economic rationale is used to engage with Asia, positioning Asia as the Other that must be known and subjugated in order to secure Australia’s future trade and industry. Certainly, the “whole notion of ‘policy’ rests upon a presumption that policy ‘fixes’ things” (Bacchi, 2009, p. 31), but despite gaining traction in the mainstream agenda and successive policy statements re-iterating the need for Asia literacy in Australian schools, it can be claimed that the solution has still not ‘fixed’ the problem due to an absence of substantial and sustainable applications in both schools and tertiary education of Asia literacy (AEF, 2001; 2010a; FitzGerald, Jeffrey, Maclean, & Morris-Suzuki, 2002; Hill & Thomas, 1998; Salter, 2009b; Wilkinson & Milgate, 2009; Wyatt et al., 2002).

Tensions and implications arise out of representations of the necessary ‘solution’ in policy texts, contributing to a seeming *stasis* for Asia literacy in Australian education. Exploration of a problem/solution binary in policy requires an examination of the constructedness (Bacchi, 1999, 2009) of such policy ‘problems’. Central to this exploration is the analysis of the terrain of Asia literacy policy at the macro level. Policy texts chosen for analysis in this chapter are national statements for engaging with Asia in Australian schools produced by the Asian Education Foundation (AEF). This choice recognises the authority attributed to these statements and their endorsements from the AEF as an influential government-funded body recognised by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. Policy texts included in this genealogy are *Studies of Asia: A statement for Australian schools* (AEF, 1995); *National Statement for Engaging Young Australians with Asia in Australian Schools* (AEF, 2006b) and *National Statement on Asia Literacy in Australian Schools 2011-2012* (AEF, 2011b). Problematizing this policy reveals the construction of Asia literacy as a ‘solution’ for a preferred economic future, first constructed in policy production in the mid-1990s at the nexus of Asia literacy and the mainstream education agenda (Henderson, 1999, 2003, 2008). This ‘solution’ positions Asia literacy as both an economic and Oriental project (Singh, 1995a, 1996b), in initial (Singh & Miller, 1995) and subsequent (Salter, 2013b) policy texts.

Meta-analysis of this problematisation in initial (*Studies of Asia: A statement for Australian schools* (AEF, 1995)) and subsequent (*National Statement for Engaging Young Australians with Asia in Australian Schools* (AEF, 2006b), *National Statement on Asia Literacy in Australian Schools 2011-2012* (AEF, 2011b)) policy texts identifies both consistencies and inconsistencies in key arguments contributing to the narratives that surround and rationalise Asia literacy policy. Alternate and subordinate discourses within policy ‘mimic’ (Bhabha,

1984, 1995) dominant policy narratives. This creates ambivalence and a growing sense of frustration in regards to knowing Asia: heralded as Asia literacy in policy and the ‘fix’ for Australia’s needs, yet struggling to fulfil its purpose within Australia’s mainstream education agenda. Disrupting or reimagining the problem has implications for schools. Initiatives such as China’s Confucius Institutes could serve to reimagine the problem. Similarly, subordinate discourses can be taken up to disrupt dominant policy narratives.

Approach

The *policy as text* dimension of the policy trajectory (see Chapter Three: Theorising the Research Dimensions of the Trajectory Strategy: *Policy as text*) explores representations of Asia literacy in policy texts, particularly the representation of Asia literacy as a potential ‘problem’, and proposed ‘solution’, in policy texts created by the government agency the AEF. Data in this chapter is drawn from an array of policy texts (see Chapter Two: Data Collection: Document study of policy texts) and synthesised in a meta-analysis (see Chapter Two: Data Collection: Meta-analysis).

This data is analysed using theoretical lenses drawn from Bacchi’s (1999, 2009) What the problem? (WTP) approach and Bhabha’s (1984, 1995; Singh & Miller, 1995) notion of mimicry. WTP engages with the complexity of policy formation, challenging “the commonplace view that policy is the government’s best attempt to deal with ‘problems’” (Bacchi, 2009, p. 1). Bacchi’s (1999) focus moves beyond accepting problems as immutable, exploring instead their constructedness, or problematiation to “understand how policy decisions close off the space for normative debate because of the impression that indeed they are the best solution to a problem”(p. 20). Bacchi’s (1999, 2009) approach includes three main aspects:

- Identification of the problem; including assumptions inherent to and origins of this representation,
- Problematising the problem; silences, effects and aspects left unproblematic by this representation, and
- Alternatives to the problem; can it be disrupted or re-imagined?

This approach enables an exploration of options to re-open the space around problem representations in policy. Mimicry, applied initially in reference to a system of subjectification used when annexing the British economy in India, operates through the suppressed element, “as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite” (Bhabha, 1984, p. 126). Many Indians strove to be part of this economy, in the process suppressing their ‘Indianness’. Yet it remained as a cultural marker of their struggle with alterity: they could mimic the British but would always be identified ‘British Indians’. Allowing Indians to identify as simply ‘British’ would empower them with access to dominant colonial discourse which was in turn a dangerous threat to colonial power. Australian economic interest in Asia similarly requires the formation of ‘Asia literate’ workers (Singh & Miller, 1995) that seek to know Asia though they are not ‘Asian’, however to embrace this reform threatens to privilege knowledge of Asia. In both contexts the very existence of mimicry challenges the immutability of the dominant discourse. There is a split way in which reform is doubly understood, on the one hand a description and legitimation of certain changes in and through education, and on the other, as a signifier of a potentially intolerable or threatening challenge to existing asymmetrical power relations. (Singh & Miller, 1995, p. 306)

This creates a crisis of cultural priority. Australia and Asia appear to have cultural affinity, yet Asia’s cultural difference as recognisable Other creates a seemingly un-reconcilable rift

(Bhabha, 1984). Un-reconcilable binaries contribute to this crisis and can be identified to liberate otherwise suppressed elements. In this instance, Bhabha's (1995) view of mimicry as a form of mockery is privileged as

a discursive process by which the excess or slippage produced by the ambivalence of mimicry (almost the same, but not quite) does not merely 'rupture' the discourse, but becomes transformed into an uncertainty which fixes the [colonial] subject as a 'partial' presence'. (p. 86)

In this chapter, WTP is used as a critical conceptual tool to interrogate the problem, and mimicry is used to extend discussion around how notions of the problem can be disrupted. Mimicry, paired with Bacchi's (2009) use of binaries, explores what presuppositions underlie the problem. Binaries simplify complex relationships that encompass hierarchy and privilege, "hence we need to watch where they appear in policies and how they function to shape the understanding of the issue" (Bacchi, 2009, p. 7). Mimicry enhances critical analysis of binary function to "challenge the discourse's authority through identifying slippages...[and] inconsistencies in the prevailing discourse" (Singh & Miller, 1995, p. 307). This application is not a "deliberate undermining of policies we dislike" (Bacchi, 2009, p. 214), but rather a "tactic whereby the contradictions and marginalised elements...can be juxtaposed in order to shed a different light on the policy" (Singh & Miller, 1995, p. 305).

Problematism: how does policy create the 'problem'?

The Rudd Report and 1995 AEF statement *Studies of Asia: a statement for Australian Schools* played a key role in establishing the Asia literacy 'solution' on the mainstream education agenda. This agenda highlighted a connection between Asia literacy and the economy; a connection which secured this position but is also problematic. The tension that

the narrow economic policy frame creates for intellectual and cultural foundations is noted in Australia (Healy, 2009; Henderson, 1999, 2008; Singh, 1995b, 1996b) and in other contexts (Pang, 2005). Henderson (1999) notes that Rudd could have taken up a broader policy frame to position Asia literacy within economic, intellectual and cultural foundations.

An absence of Asia literacy was perceived as a ‘problem’ for Australia in a changing global and regional environment (Garnaut, 1989; Henderson, 1999, 2003; Ingleson, 1989; Rudd, 1994, 1995; Scully, 1986). An ‘Asia literate’ generation was identified as a pre-requisite to boosting international and regional economic performance (Henderson, 2003; Rudd, 1994, 1995; Singh, 1996b) in a “paradigm of Asia as...answer to Australia’s economic problem” (Henderson, 2008, p. 173). The establishment of this ‘problem’ simultaneously crystallised the need for a ‘solution’, secured in policy as Asia literacy.

This problem/solution binary was initially problematised by Michael Singh through substantive critique on the narrow economic frame. His work has been particularly influential in highlighting the dangers of a neoliberal agenda (1996b) and warrants close examination to establish an initial problematisation of, and tensions within such a problematisation, of Asia literacy. As noted above, commentators were quick to problematise the neoliberal agenda of the Rudd Report. Within this agenda, Singh (1996b) asserts:

there is no neutral position from which Australians can study Asian languages and cultures; this curriculum initiative is already saturated with Australia’s economic interests and concerns about creating new employment opportunities. (p. 159).

This problematisation highlights a dominant view of globalisation which assumes that the global economy is reified and unavoidable. Popular discourses on globalisation are highly ideological, privileging economic over political and cultural process. This includes an emphasis on instrumental values of competition and economic choice (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010) to the exclusion of alternative discourses and practices (Hursh & Henderson, 2011). Assumptions around the globalised context of the problematisation are consistent with “globalisation from above” that “disseminates a consumerist ethos” (Falk, 1993, p. 39) and is often read as “simply neo-liberal economics” (Lingard, 2006, p. 290). Within this paradigm, the Rudd Report positions Asia literacy as key to “Australia’s well-being...as a matter of economic interest to governments, businesses, unions and Australia’s youth” (Singh, 1996b, p. 159).

Singh (1996b) also problematises Asia literacy in the Rudd Report as a form of neo-colonialism that signals alterations to capitalist modes in Asian societies. Australia’s dependence on Asian markets is articulated through “competency in cultural understandings ...presented as an important factor in achieving international cost-competitiveness” (Singh, 1996b, p. 159) and the need to “resuscitate the study of languages other than English, especially those of Asian trading partners” (p. 160). Robertson (2005) suggests that “what unites...policies is the invoking of ‘the knowledge economy’ as if the knowledge economy was not only an unproblematic idea but an unproblematic reality” (p. 166). Central to this invocation is human capital theory. Asia literacy is called upon to demystify the Asian market and is represented as an incontrovertible link to employment growth in the Rudd Report.

This need to ‘demystify’ is intertwined with notions of Orientalism (Said, 2003). Asia is constructed in hegemonic discourse as a fertile economic site as well as a powerful economic competitor. The Asia literacy ‘solution’ is a process of Othering that includes rather than excludes. It assumes that appropriate knowledge needed to boost business can be discretely identified, inserted and accurately re-presented into curriculum (Williamson-Fien, 1996) and facilitated by policy such as AEF position statements.

The subtext of this inclusion is that Asia literacy is the ‘solution’ to inverting reliance on Asia and asserting Australia’s economic dominance. This resonates with neo-colonialism, opening the door for positioning Asia as the Oriental Other (Singh, 1996b): a fertile economy that is now sophisticated, and requires a more strategic approach to penetrate and pillage (Singh, 1995a). It also positions Australia as homogenous, failing to acknowledge the historical realities of Australia already engaging with Asia, or the realities of Asian-Australians (Broinowski, 1992; Salter, 2009a; Singh, 1995b; Singh & Miller, 1995).

Studies of Asia: A statement for Australian schools (1995).

As an extension of government policy and expansion of the Rudd Report, the first dedicated policy text, *Studies of Asia: A statement for Australian schools* (AEF, 1995) illustrates the nucleus of policy at the nexus of Asia literacy policyspeak and mainstream education agendas. Primarily, it threatens to sanitise Otherness, making it difficult to create critical space for other possibilities (Williamson-Fien, 1996) to re-orient curriculum. Postcolonial analyses are advocated as a tool to disrupt Orientalism (Singh, 1995a, 1995b, 1996b; Singh & Miller, 1995). Singh and Miller’s (1995) analysis of this statement employs mimicry in a search for disruption as “mimicry aims to repeat rather than re-present, in a way that undermines dominant discourses by mocking their power” (p. 307). The policy claims to

resemble the dominant discourse of reform, “Australia’s growing economic, social and political relationships with Asia have added urgency to calls for the development of educational policies which provide improved knowledge of...Asia” (AEF, 1995, p. 2). However, repeated calls for stability outnumber and consequently overshadow appeals for reform, suggesting that reform is undesirable, possibly as it threatens Australia’s existing identity and power position (Singh & Miller, 1995). Mimicry occurs in the way Asia is presented as being like Australia (assuming humanist values are universal) but not quite, resonating with Orientalism:

at the very moment the policy acknowledges “difference”. The statement ‘emotional and physical needs of human beings are the same’ [p. 4] dislodges the power structures built into the cultural discourse on Asia, as well as Australia, effectively excluding a response, unless it is within the bounds of these values...discourse such as this gains its credence from being ‘seen’ as attempting to create open learning, a new opening in Australian cultural literacy, but its ambivalence regarding change and stability casts doubt on this as a serious possibility. (Singh & Miller, 1995, p. 310)

Ambivalence is also evident in binaries of curriculum approaches that seek to remain the same, yet need to be different. Amidst recognised needs for stability there is a call for curriculum itself to be reformed. Cultural change and reform appear to be the dominant discourse, yet slippages reveal counter pressures that insist on stability through acknowledgement of what can be realised politically and economically (Singh & Miller, 1995). Mimicry “shows up contradictions in cultural policy and creates possibilities, however slight, for taking advantage of displaced elements” (Singh & Miller, 1995, p. 312). The binary of economic versus more philanthropic goals in Singh’s (1995b) own analysis

works to explore how the economic rationale can be disrupted by liberating marginalised elements which “may be developed according to more admirable goals” (p. 17). The learning emphases of the statement, for example (see Table. 1), broaden scope for engagement beyond an oft-cited economic rationale. Liberation work for “more admirable goals” (Singh, 1995b, p. 17) can be invoked as positioning schools within an economic struggle serves to delimit Asia’s contribution to Australia’s social and cultural life (Singh, 1995b, 1996a). Singh (1995a) seeks to “reject the idea of a monolithic Asia, for instance, by exploring the complex issues of nationalism, class struggle, work and the individualising experiences of love and anger” (p. 612), advocating an agenda of “emancipatory human interests” (p. 617) and “voices of less powerful Asian groups” (Singh & Miller, 1995, p. 311).

<i>Studies of Asia: A statement for Australian schools (1995)</i>	<i>National Statement for Engaging Young Australians with Asia in Australian Schools (2006)</i>	<i>National Statement on Asia Literacy in Australian Schools (2011b)</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Developing concepts of Asia 2. Challenging stereotypes 3. Being informed about contemporary issues 4. Understanding contributions made by the peoples of Asia to the world 5. Considering the likely implications of closer Asia-Australia relationships 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand ‘Asia’ 2. Develop informed attitudes and values 3. Know about contemporary and traditional Asia 4. Connect Australia and Asia 5. Communicate 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Asia and its diversity 2. Achievements and contributions of the peoples of Asia 3. Asia-Australia engagement

Table 1. Learning emphases for Asia literacy across AEF national statements.

Tensions within this liberation work are evident. Firstly, Singh (1996b) himself notes that rejecting a monolithic of Asia to “specialise in single issues such as civil rights, social justice...reflects unwarranted divisions.... How these might cohere as a mutual venture is not at present apparent” (p. 166). To move beyond potentially isolated representations of Asia is desirable, yet the alternative is not clear. Secondly, tentative explorations to attempt this (Singh, 1995b; Singh & Miller, 1995) include tensions regarding the use of Western modernist frameworks (Williamson-Fien, 1996). Advocating representations of Asia informed by critical awareness, acknowledging risks of reformulating Orientalist discourse and privileging forms of Asian knowledge potentially reflects unwarranted divisions of a different nature. It embodies the quest for inclusiveness; Othering to include rather than exclude. There are attendant dangers of “trafficking in otherness” in this means of appropriation (Kong, 1995; Williamson-Fien, 1996). When exploring concepts such as social justice, Asian peoples remain the Other against which the efficacy, or otherwise, of particular cultural and historical constructs are judged (Williamson-Fien, 1996). Kong (1995) notes that this process protects the identity of Australia by inserting the Other into the circuit of hegemony, which maintains a space of difference – shifting the emphasis, rather than displacing the position of Other.

Essentially, a call is made to incorporate a “multi-vocal account of places and peoples” (Singh, 1995b, p. 7). Yet, the premise of the Asia literacy project means the only “narrative possibility is to use the master discourse or nothing” (Kong, 1995, p. 93). The master discourse here, to Other Asia to include it, as demanded by Australia’s future economic needs, is one that resonates in representations in policy texts examined in this chapter, and to some extent in the representations of Asia literacy interpreted and perpetuated by school

leaders (see Chapter Five) and school teachers (see Chapter Six) who enact policy in schools. Asia, despite critical engagement with its inherent complexity, will always be subject to risks of being “flattened and depoliticised” (Kong, 1995, p. 95) in representations. It is difficult to resist the temptation to normalise cultural contexts by making sense of them within colonial narratives (Prakesh cited in Williamson-Fien, 1996, p. 39) and neo-colonial frameworks (Chen, 2010). The problem in trying to open the narrative space is not so much of explanation of the Other, but to “live out the experiential and the theoretical...to articulate a geography of the possible” (Kong, 1995, p. 94) and challenge binary representations (Chen, 2010; Nakata, 2007; Nakata et al., 2012).

Finally, despite his critique of economism, Singh (1996b) advocates that resistance may not be the best alternative. It “may be more useful to engage in productive negotiations” to learn from and potentially shift interests, rather than outrightly disregard problematic policy constructions, as

various forms of economic rationalisms create openings for pedagogical interventions that are not wholly predetermined; and that a provisional coalition may be formed with sectors of the government and others for the express purpose of shifting the agenda. (p. 167)

His problematisation concludes with the suggestion that possible points of disruption or crisis could be used to negotiate productively with Asia literacy as an economic project (Singh, 1996b).

Singh is positively regarded for this initial problematisation and his suggestion that the Asia literacy solution reconstitutes policy problems such as economism and Orientalism in new ways. There are tensions in this problematisation but the process is in itself complex: if the

intent is to contest assumed problems and question the truth status of theoretical premises which shape policy (Bacchi, 2009), this contestation will necessarily be complicated. Above all, the importance of Singh's (1995a, 1995b, 1996a, 1996b; Singh & Miller, 1995) work lies in its value in contextualising problematisations and raising awareness of assumptions, prompting important questions to be asked of successive policy documents: Has the dominant agenda shifted over time? Have assumptions inherent in the initial problematisation been challenged? And if not, have points for disruption been taken up?

Focussing on successive policy documents takes up Singh's (1995b) challenge that concerns previously noted are "intended to provide a basis for the sustained critical reflection needed to interrupt the familiar and habituated appropriation, containment and domestication of curriculum changes" (p. 39). Subsequent policy documents¹, *National Statement for Engaging Young Australians with Asia in Australian Schools* (AEF, 2006b) and *National Statement on Asia Literacy in Australian Schools 2011-2012* (AEF, 2011b), can also be problematised to identify repetition and interruption of his initial concerns, identifying both legacies of, and to some extent liberation from, dominant frames of initial policy.

National Statement for Engaging Young Australians with Asia in Australian Schools (2006).

The 2006 statement, endorsed by the Ministerial Council on Education Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) in 2005, "signalled...commitment to and the importance of educating Australians for a world in which the Asian region plays a major role" (AEF, 2006a, p. 3). It not only repeats Singh's concerns of economism and Orientalism but signals a significant increase in the former with the development of a divisive emphasis of competition with undertones of a security threat.

The economic ‘problem’ is perpetuated in this policy text. Neoliberal globalisation is reiterated in the first sentence of the statement positioning Australia in a “global society and...global economy” (AEF, 2006b, p. 2). Asia literacy is constructed as Australia’s ‘solution’ to this position and key advantage in competition for Asia’s trade and investment:

The diversity of the Asian region, combined with rapid change and the impact of globalisation, makes our engagement an increasingly challenging task – much more so than we recognised a decade ago. This demands timely, clever and flexible responses from Australia. (AEF, 2006b, p. 6)

Asian languages are also seen as a key aspect in human capital needed to secure this advantage as “General Peter Cosgrove makes the point that, ‘language skills and cultural sensitivity will be the new currency of this world order’” (AEF, 2006b, p. 14).

This shift in emphasis is also reinforced by changes to learning emphases in AEF statements – *Being informed about contemporary issues* and *Understanding contributions made by the peoples of Asia to the world* from the 1995 statement have been amalgamated into *Know about contemporary and traditional Asia* and a new emphasis – *Communicate* includes both intercultural communication and Asian languages (AEF, 2006b, p. 9) in the 2006 statement (see Table. 1). Languages, while noted as a factor to be considered when determining priorities, are not explicit in the 1995 emphases. As with the 1995 statement though, the 2006 emphases’ suggested for the curriculum have the potential to widen the economic scope (see Table. 1).

This statement also brings a divisive tension that departs from singly economic concerns, yet retains notions of Orientalist Asia as “a symbol of fecundity” (Singh, 1995a, p. 609). A security discourse is evident in a growing emphasis on geography as “[Asia’s] diverse

region's [sic] rapid development demands increasingly sophisticated and informed responses from Australians" (AEF, 2006b, p. 4). In contrast to the exclusively intellectual experts used to support the 1995 statement, in 2006 a military expert is included. General Peter Cosgrove, leader of the international peacekeeping mission to East Timor in 1999, is cited with a call to be a "good neighbour" (AEF, 2006b, p. 4). While this appears to appeal to "more admirable goals" (Singh, 1995b, p. 17), tension in this humanitarian call is revealed as deeper understanding necessary to be a good neighbour "will make it much easier for us to handle those occasions in the future when political, strategic or economic tensions arise between Australia and the countries of our region", a region which is represented "as diverse as our bilateral and multilateral strategic security and economic alliances" (AEF, 2006b, p. 5). There are, however, some attempts to disrupt discourses around these alliances. Calls for cohesiveness and harmony through "good neighbours", "responsible global citizens" (AEF, 2006b, p. 4) and "harmonious Australia" (p. 5) contrast with suggestions that Australia needs a cultural advantage during times of tension that indirectly refer to the East-Timor crisis: "is highlighted by international events of recent years" (p. 5).

Finally, the tactic of mimicry resonates with Orientalist discourse. Attempts in the statement to recognise a more heterogeneous Australia include slippages. Asian peoples "represent the cultural heritage of a growing number of Australians" (AEF, 2006b, p. 2) and "our schools include teachers, students and parents from Asian backgrounds" (p. 5) however two of the six interlinked elements that support implementations of the statement cast doubt on this heterogeneous identity. The fourth element (*Engaging parents and the community*) and the fifth (*Teacher education*) do not acknowledge this heritage. It is marginalised by discourse that emphasises the need to inform parents and the community of the importance of the initiative, implying that they are Eurocentric and need "arguments and evidence" to convince

them. Teacher education similarly needs to “increase opportunities for trainee teachers to learn about and engage with Asian cultures and languages” (AEF, 2006b, p. 18), highlighting further that teachers may not already be part of such cultures. Further slippages can be seen in the reform/stability binary. This statement “builds on...[and] reflects the significant work undertaken since 1993 by all education jurisdictions and schools across Australia in integrating the study of Asia across learning areas, including Asian languages” (p. 3). This contrasts with acknowledgement that curriculum design “is a major challenge” (p. 12) in which “there will be considerable disparity” that “requires a cultural change” (p. 16).

Slippages in the call for cultural change to re-orientate the curriculum generate ambivalence in policy, rather than decisiveness. It is this very dilemma that has contributed to the stagnation of dialogue around Asia literacy: calling for reform yet meeting resistance in policy. The consequent slippages indicate that the “familiar and habituated appropriation, containment and domestication” (Singh, 1995b, p. 39) of Asia literacy policy has been interrupted in only a very limited way. Without due attention, issues in Singh’s initial problematisation continue to be replicated rather than resolved and policy calls for Asia literacy become louder *and* more frustrated by their own ambivalence and that of the policies being enacted.

National Statement on Asia Literacy in Australian Schools (2011).

The 2011 statement is an example of this pairing of ambivalence and frustration. It begins with an imperative: “the *Melbourne Declaration* acknowledges the clear demand for Australian schools to become Asia literate”, pointing to skills that “all Australian students should” (AEF, 2011b, p. 2) have. The severity of reform needed is acknowledged because “the growing influence of India, China and other Asian nations both globally and in

Australia, is a major change” (p. 2). In the third paragraph, the timeliness of this imperative is emphasised because “Australia’s engagement with Asia...has grown at a faster rate than our engagement with the rest of the world combined” (p. 2). The uncertainty of the imperative is then revealed and by the fourth paragraph is metered more as desire, since Asia literacy – it appears – is still seeking acceptance as the “aim of the statement is to advocate for and acknowledge the place of Asia literacy” (p. 2).

Economic concerns in this statement perpetuate perceptions of Asia as an economy acquiescent to Australia (Singh, 1995a). It implies that there are economic problems that Australia will face if it does not find a way to negotiate the inherently different ways of Asia, specifically in regards to trade, investment and neoliberal globalisation. This implication is made through both presences and absences. The statement is prefaced with an extract from the *Melbourne Declaration*: “Global integration and international mobility have increased rapidly in the past decade” (cited in AEF, 2011b, p. 1). As such it emphasises the urgency and inevitability of globalisation. “Trade” and “investment” (AEF, 2011b, p. 2) are cited first as reasons why Australia’s engagement with Asia is necessary. Furthermore, it is the absence of trade interests other than Asia that reinforces representations of difference.

The extract taken from the *Melbourne Declaration* to support the statement cites “the growing influence of India, China and other Asian nations” (MCEETYA, 2008, p. 4). It is interesting to note that the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) (2011) cites India as Australia’s third top export market, and makes special note that India is one of Australia’s fastest growing major trading partners. Similarly, China is the top two-way trading partner, top export market and import partner (DFAT, 2011). Other Asian nations that figure highly in these figures are Japan (second top two-way trading partner and third

biggest foreign investor) and the Republic of Korea (fourth top export market and two-way trading partner) (DFAT, 2011). This pattern appears to confirm that a strategy to increase the Asia literacy of today's students and tomorrow's business leaders is the solution necessary for "a competitive edge" and "national advantage" (AEF, 2011b, p. 2) in economic negotiations.

Asia is also further re-Orientalised in the learning goals of this policy text: "Asia and its diversity"; "Achievements and contributions of the peoples of Asia"; and "Asia-Australia engagement" (AEF, 2011b, p. 2). The statement assumes that these learning goals summarise appropriate knowledge that can be neatly identified and inserted into curriculum – knowledge needed to boost business. These goals are positioned as being essential for Australia to be clever and "competitive" (p. 2) in interactions with Asia. It is, however, also absent in policy that contribute to tensions around Orientalism, notably the absence of calls for an 'America-literate' program to help facilitate trade with the United States, which is Australia's third top two-way trading partner, fifth top export market, second top import source and top foreign investor in Australia (DFAT, 2011).

There is also further evidence of ambivalence. Despite demands for cultural change noted above, the purpose of the statement is drawn back to stability by suggesting Asia literacy is already included in curriculum, identified by the *Melbourne Declaration* as a "key part of the Australian curriculum" that can be achieved "in the context of existing policies and practices" (AEF, 2011b, p. 2). As a cross-curriculum priority, however, its effectiveness is questioned within the statement: it seems that these priorities should be "embedded in all learning areas" but it "will have a strong but varying presence depending on their relevance to each of the learning areas" (p. 2). The message conveyed regarding the ability of the Australian

curriculum to be the answer to the call for reform is confused. Asia literacy is positioned as both dominant and marginalised: at the same time already accepted yet still requiring advocacy.

In contrast to the previous policy text, the 2011 statement does attempt to disrupt the competitive economic scope by developing a parallel vision that privileges harmony more than competition. The imagined community of Australia is constructed through “our young people” who will “build a creative, prosperous and socially cohesive Australia” and be conducive to developing “harmonious regional and global communities” (AEF, 2011b, p. 2). It emphasises the interdependence of global communities: “the growing influence of [Asian nations] globally”, “global mindset”, “global communities” and “global citizens” (p. 2). Australians are urged to think globally and consider themselves as part of a wider, and inevitably global, landscape. Here social imaginary is used to secure consent and legitimise policy authority (Rizvi, 2006, p. 198).

The repeated use of ‘global’ also reinforces associations with perceptions of globalisation as being inescapable, and unintentionally reinforces a contentious (Falk, 1993; Hursh & Henderson, 2011; Rizvi, 2006) neoliberal rationale across policy assemblage. As noted above, the national statement aligns itself with the *Melbourne Declaration* (MCEETYA, 2008) which notes a special need to engage with cultures, “especially the cultures and countries of Asia”(p. 9), of which India and China (p. 4), are foregrounded. Similarly, the *National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program* (NALSSP), to which the Australian Government committed funding of A\$62.4 million from 2009-2012 reinforces the point that the program:

will equip the students today with the skills to excel in the careers of tomorrow in our increasingly globalised economy...help build a more productive and competitive nation. This is beneficial for our economy, community and individuals, creating more jobs and higher wages and overall better opportunities for all Australians. (DEEWR, 2011)

Additionally, of the four languages targeted by the NALSSP, three – Chinese, Japanese and Korean – align with Australia’s major trading interests. The fourth, Indonesian, is Australia’s tenth top export market (DFAT, 2011) and closest neighbour, which aligns with security interests that were noted in the previous 2006 statement.

An alternative ‘solution’?

Since 1994 policy assemblage has struggled to progress significantly beyond initial successes of securing a position on the mainstream education agenda and raising the profile of Asia literacy. In spite of ebbs and flows in government funding, Asia literacy, due in no small part to the AEF, has maintained a profile in policy agenda. However as Singh (1995a) notes: “While the slogan ‘Asia literacy’ has proved useful for mobilizing government action, its curriculum manifestations remain unclear” (p. 600). There are obvious tensions to adopting this slogan (see Chapter Two: Knowing Asia: Asia literacy). In the classroom, the presence and demand for Asia literacy is often found to be wanting (AEF, 2010b, 2012a, 2012c, 2012d; Owen et al., 2006; Wilkinson & Milgate, 2009; Wyatt et al., 2002). The Australian Curriculum, seeking to re-assert Asia literacy within the mainstream agenda with its inclusion as a cross-curricular priority ‘Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia’, creates an opportune space to create clearer curriculum manifestations. Although clearly committed to the promotion of Asia literacy, ambivalence in policy may mean that the substantial body of

policy work the AEF has generated has not reached as far as it could in advocating how this space may be realised.

The policy analysis in this chapter demonstrates that policy representations of Asia literacy derived from Australia's economic interests are proving difficult to challenge. The 'solution' of Asia literacy presented in policy privileges knowledge, however, primarily this is economic and human capital knowledge. Educational policy objectives closely tied to economic goals are "derivative of neoliberal economic thinking" (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 196). Singh (1995b) notes, "it is important to understand that studies of Asia are part of the larger processes of global restructuring" (p. 39). These links are made in a variety of traditionally Western educational contexts that have realised that an education-based strategy may be essential to economic engagement with Asia, such as: 'Asia Pacific Studies' in Canada, 'Curriculum rapprochement' in the European Union, 'International education' in the United States of America and 'Educating for Asia' in New Zealand (Pang, 2005). Similar links have been made within Asia. For example, while Western contexts seek to make others' cultures attractive through policy, China has focussed on making "its culture attractive to others" (Ding & Saunders, 2006, p. 22) to help resolve economic, cultural and diplomatic goals (Ding & Saunders, 2006). The Chinese government has tethered these goals "to the global popularity of Chinese. The latest tool in this arsenal is the Confucius Institute" (Ding & Saunders, 2006, p. 19). "Political foreign policy and economic interest" frame these goals, with "the underlying implication that economic strength and partnerships is the deciding factor" (Zhao & Huang, 2010, p. 132) in placing Confucius Institutes (CIs) in international sites.

In a move contrary to that of positioning Asia as a fecund economy in Australian policy, there are suggestions that CIs use soft power to likewise position Australia as a site where China's goals can be asserted. In Australia, CIs have been approached with caution due to concerns of hidden agendas and that the integrity of Chinese studies run by the government of China may negatively impact on Australia's agency to negotiate and critique China's economic and political values on its own terms (Yang, 2010). Soft power "emanate[s] from the attractiveness of one's ideas or one's ability to set the political agenda in such a way that manipulates others actors' preferences so that they mirror one's own" (Ding & Saunders, 2006, p. 9). CIs serve to expand China's international influence. As the Asia literacy 'solution' highlights, Australia is a peripheral economy and sees great advantage to securing relationships with Asian neighbours. Opportunities for trade and investment with and within China mean that "few countries would not be lured to such an economic temptation, therefore, China has a strong soft power" (Li & Worm, 2010, p. 73). Furthermore, soft power is considered an essential strength for the 21st century (Ding & Saunders, 2006, p. 11).

CIs utilise cultural soft power premised on China's unique cultural and attractive cultural resources (Li & Worm, 2010, p. 75), particularly Chinese language. However two acknowledgements must be made here. Firstly, English as a foreign language (EFL) is still recognised as "the ideal commodity in the knowledge economy during the process of industrialization in China and Asia" (Zhao & Huang, 2010, p. 131). The promotion of Chinese language is not seen as a replacement for engaging with English as the *lingua franca* for trade but the work of establishing EFL in China has greatly informed policy of Chinese as a foreign language [CFL] in China (Zhao & Huang, 2010)². Secondly, the work of CIs in developing soft power is still being explored. Despite the proliferation of 339 CIs spread over 83 countries since the first CI in 2004, and predictions of over 1000 by 2020 (Zhao & Huang,

2010, p. 129), Li and Worm (2010) suggest that China's cultural soft power is in fact underdeveloped, and that CIs can be a coordinating agency for the international advancement of China's cultural strategy and the application of its cultural resources.

Regardless of strategies employed to further economic interests, the neoliberal focus of dominant discourses regarding Asia literacy does not provide a panacea for Australia's economic deficiencies. Rizvi (2007) challenges this neoliberal emphasis, suggesting that contemporary ideological constructions of globalisation need to be explored otherwise neoliberal ideas will "continue to appear as a natural and inevitable response to the steering logic of economic globalization" (p. 259). The imperative that knowledge needs to be useful reflects a utilitarian emphasis, which is also embedded in the logic that privileges science knowledge in education. Solesbury (cited in Bacchi, 2009) notes that "government demands science policy that views academic research as a means of economic and social development much more than as a cultural end in itself" (p. 241) and as such produces a narrow understanding of relevance. If consistently represented within an economic rationale Asia literacy too is at risk of a narrow frame of reference rather than a cultural end in itself.

Neoliberal focus denies "the primacy of human relationships in the production of value, in effect erasing the social" (Ball, 2008, p. 22). The suggestion that Asia literacy is the solution for Australia's economic future disregards the potential for Asia-Australia relationships that look beyond trade and the economy to encompass more social contributions Asia literacy can have to Australia (Singh, 1996b). It also leaves unaddressed the possibilities of a broader discursive framework for knowing Asia. For example, Sen's (1993, 1997) notion of capability that encompasses economic production and social development, to increase and add to a human capital focus. All AEF statements refer to globalisation and global

communities and there is space here for globalised education for a social democratic approach that creates an alternative to neoliberalism (Hursh & Henderson, 2011). Whilst the learning emphases included in AEF position statements include knowledge, skills and understandings that traverse an economic rationale, policy discourse continues to position Asia literacy as a means to an economic end. On the other hand, China's approach via CIs does not make as clear a distinction. It reflects the oft noted cultural emphasis of the Chinese, on 'guanxi' (relationships) (Gold, Guthrie, & Wank, 2002). Whilst economic motives might be implicit in the building and sustaining 'guanxi', the CI approach gives primacy to using Chinese language and culture education as a tool to "make connections between countries, cultures, institutions, communities and individuals" (Zhao & Huang, 2010, p. 139). Even as rhetoric these explicit statements can be viewed as public declarations of intent, and in positioning themselves to want to know, to share, to educate the West about the Chinese values and practices, it opens up opportunities for dialogue that is beyond economics in forming, developing and sustaining 'guanxi' with the West.

CIs offer an alternate way to develop relationships between China and Australia. While predominantly attached to universities, there are also a growing number attached to schools. Consistent across both Chinese and Australian policy shifts is a clear emphasis on East/West engagement, though the 'problem', be it as an economic or cultural imperative, differs. Additionally, an underpinning strategic focus largely articulates curriculum imperatives, whether Asia literacy or Chinese as a Foreign Language, as 'solutions' for an increasingly globalised world. Re-imagining economic globalisation, thus, could also become one of these "more admirable goals" (Singh, 1995b, p. 17).

Conclusion

This chapter examined the strategic arguments articulated in calls for the teaching and learning of Asia in schools. Asia literacy is currently framed as a necessary ‘solution’ for an anticipated, but not assured, problem in Australian education; future generations that lack the necessary Asia literacy to achieve their human capital potential. Acceptance of this ‘solution’ into the mainstream educational policy agenda has been problematised as a neoliberal and neo-colonial construct. Subsequent policy debate indicates the dominance of an economic rationale that is seemingly impossible to resist, intertwined with notions of Orientalism. The use of Bacchi’s WTP critical approach and Bhabha’s mimicry interrogated Asia literacy policy in this chapter to highlight ambivalence in strategic arguments that articulate Asia literacy as a necessary ‘solution’ for Australian education.

Current policy is littered with complex binaries that shape how Asia literacy is understood and rationalised; it is at the same time dominant and marginalised in curriculum reform, economic and philanthropic, competitive and harmonious, and neoliberal and cosmopolitan in its perceived purpose. Slippages generate ambivalence, rather than decisiveness in policy. This contributes to dialogue around Asia literacy stagnating; calling for reform yet meeting resistance in policy evidenced by these slippages. Adding to the tension is policy rhetoric of Asia as an economic partner and regional ‘mate’, and yet this partnership is articulated as a site of economic abundance that requires arming Australian students with the ‘tool’ of Asia literacy to ‘mine’. However, literature suggests this positioning of Asia literacy has not resulted in significant and sustainable application in both schools and tertiary education (AEF, 2001; 2010a; FitzGerald, Jeffrey, Maclean, & Morris-Suzuki, 2002; Hill & Thomas, 1998; Salter, 2009b; Wilkinson & Milgate, 2009; Wyatt et al., 2002), and little demand for such application (AEF, 2012a; 2012d). Without due attention, issues in Singh’s initial problematisation continue to be replicated rather than resolved. As a result, policy calls for

Asia literacy become louder, frustrated in their ambivalence. Furthermore, if left to continue on this current trajectory, Asia literacy is at risk of being viewed more as a means of economic development than as a cultural end in itself, leaving unproblematic neoliberal economics and narrative possibilities for alternative arguments.

Tensions in policy representations and interpretations are evident and in the current geopolitical context are often inevitable. The implication that can be drawn from *policy as text* is that despite inclusion in the Australian Curriculum, knowing Asia cannot be considered a straightforward addition. This also makes visible that although the dominant conditions of 'Asia literacy' policy is shaped by economic discourse, slippages in policy generate conditions for other possible ways to know Asia. The result is a struggle for representative clarity. At times, working within the economic agenda appears to be a positive move forward, similarly a radical departure from a distinct policy agenda holds some appeal. It is here that the trajectory moves to school contexts to explore how ambivalence is negotiated, and clarity pursued, in the enactment of policy.

Notes:

1. For the scope of this study only the first edition of the 1995 statement has been used, with the 2006 statement considered the next significant shift.

2. CFL programs run in China parallel to English as a foreign language programs that run in English-speaking countries.

Chapter Five: Creative policy translation

This chapter is drawn from:

Salter, P. (2013a). Knowing Asia: creative policy translation in an Australian school setting.

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Introduction

This chapter explores *policy to context*, in particular the imaginative work many leaders do to interpret and translate policy in highly creative, sophisticated and contextualised ways (Braun et al., 2010, p. 549). School leaders are considered crucial catalysts (AEF 2006b, 2008b, 2012a, 2012b, 2012d; McRae, 2001; Owen et al., 2006) for realising Asia literacy policy imperatives in schools and ensuring future generations ‘know Asia’. School leaders interpret policy discourses and select and order these discourses to promote preparing students with twenty-first century skills for a globalised world. School leaders represent this selection and interpretation in a metaphoric narrative that appropriates an Asian proverb that a frog living in a well can see only a small circle of sky. Leaders “are themselves key sites in the discursive articulation of policy” (Ball, Maguire, & Braun, 2012, p. 51). They use the proverb to rationalise ‘knowing Asia’ as a way of challenging the narrow mindedness of small-place perspective, transforming policy discourse to create a new conclusion for the proverb – that ‘knowing Asia’ can broaden perspectives and help frogs escape the well. This narrative is heteroglossic (Bakhtin, 1981), mobilising multiple intertextual motifs (Lemke, 1995) that draw from policy and various discursive frameworks. It re-orientates the policy imaginary and demonstrates leaders’ agency to narrate and negotiate policy (Ball, 1993; Ball et al., 2011; Newman, 2005; Ozga, 2000; Ylimaki, 2006) to know Asia in creative ways.

This chapter explores discourses leaders mobilise to know Asia. The primary focus here is the overarching vision and metaphor that embodies policy take-up and acts as a catalyst for curriculum reform, rather than the detailed particularities of curriculum enactment. This chapter takes up Grimaldi's (2012) call "to analyse how people can make a difference exerting their agentic powers" (p. 1) in discursive articulation; however, it diverges in its empirical "take up [of] the challenge...to relate together analytically the *ad hocery* of the macro with the *ad hocery* of the micro" [italics in original] (Ball 1993, p. 10). As such, it explores how school leaders have negotiated tensions in policy representations (see Chapter Four), and to what extent their selections are influenced by dominant conditions of economic discourses (Salter, 2013b; Singh, 1995a, 1995b, 1996a, 1996b). Situated within an understanding of globalisation, the exploration of heteroglossic discourses at the moment of *policy to context* makes visible the complex creativity of policy translation as it is enacted to know Asia. Discourses leaders draw on within this translation juxtapose, supplement, contradict and interrelate dialogically with each other (Bakhtin, 1981). The nexus of this translation is the frog metaphor, which mobilises discursive threads in the institutional narrative that intersect and are re-imagined in the metaphor through a narrow/broad binary. This chapter attends to this metaphor to discuss implications of this translation, and the agency of leaders to shape policy articulation.

Approach

The *policy to context* dimensions of the policy trajectory (see Chapter Three: Theorising the Research dimensions of the Trajectory Strategy: *Policy to Context*) explores leaders' representations of knowing Asia, particularly their mechanisms for rationalising Asia literacy for their school context. Data in this chapter is drawn from the case study (see Chapter Two: Data Collection: Case Study) of Ibis State High School. Semi-structured interviews with

school leaders integral to the translation of Asia literacy at the school site (see Chapter Two: Data Collection: Interviews: School Leaders Interviews) form the main body of this data.

Leadership staff involved in leading whole-school processes:

- Principal (hereinafter referred to as P),
- Deputy Principal (hereinafter referred to as DP) and
- Assistant Deputy Principal (hereinafter referred to as ADP), initially assigned leadership of studies of Asia to oversee development of an implementation strategy for the school as head of the Humanities department.

This data is analysed using a derivative of Bakhtin's (1981; Lemke, 1995) notion of heteroglossia to interrogate apparent synchronicity in leaders' discourses within the frog metaphor adopted at the school. The analysis reveals multiple articulations of the metaphor as an "improvement plot" (Ball et al., 2011) for the school. How narrators weave policies and school idiosyncrasies into the metaphor, and how this institutional narrative shapes imagining of school curriculum, and concomitantly shapes the leaders' imagining of students' future, or post-school opportunities are discussed in this chapter. Leaders' words are fused from preceding dialogues that have left residual meanings, and leaders' own perspectives that orient them toward ongoing dialogues. An examination of how they are drawn in by the leaders for the orchestration of the metaphor gives insight into the values and intentions they have for their 'vision'.

Metaphor

The "principle of integration', which coheres policy and the school itself" (Ball et al., 2011, p. 627), is a metaphor of a frog in the well, first applied to the school by P:

I always use Li Cunxin's book Mao's Last Dancer and the story of the Frog in the Well as an iconic story to say that we need to take all the little frogs from [Wellington-suburb of Birdtown] and show them that there is a world beyond [the major football] stadium, that there is a big world out there. (P, research interview, 21 July, 2011)

This metaphor can be summarised as follows:

A little frog lived at the bottom of a well. He could see the sky but the only world he knew was his well. One day he met a frog who lived in the world above. The little frog asked the frog from the world above to come and play in the well. The frog from the world above did not want to go into the well because it was so small. The little frog didn't believe that his life in the well was limited and asked his grandfather if there really was a big world up above, and if so why didn't the little frog know about it. His grandfather confirmed that the big world did exist, and that he hadn't told the little frog about it because his destiny was in the well and the little frog couldn't get out.

This made the little frog determined to escape the well. (Cunxin, 2003)

Knowledge of the 'big world' is akin to knowledge of Asia. Students are positioned as 'narrow frogs', which need to 'broaden' their outlook to escape the well.

The relevance of this metaphor to Asia literacy is clear in the national policy context that seeks to refocus Australia-Asia relations. The White Paper *Australia in the Asian Century* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012) offers a distinct imagining of Australia's future engagement with Asia. Commissioned "to consider the likely economic and strategic changes

in the region and what more can be done to position Australia for the Asian Century” (Australian Government, 2012a), it describes its purpose as a “national blueprint for a time of national change” (Henry 2012, p. 3) and “roadmap for the whole of Australia” (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012, p. 1). It is a future-orientated policy that cites a critical need for “‘knowledge, skills and mindset[s]’ for successful engagement in Asia” (Asialink cited in Commonwealth of Australia, 2012, p. 180). Additionally, the emerging Australian Curriculum includes the cross-curricular priority ‘Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia’, which requires that “students learn about and recognise the diversity within and between the countries of the Asia region” (ACARA, 2012a). Within this national policy context, Australians can be positioned as frogs in the well. For example, the White Paper *Australia in the Asian Century* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012) provides a plan to enable frogs to leap from the well, and to dismantle it to “detail[s] how, by 2025, Australia can be a winner in this Asian century by becoming more prosperous, more resilient and sharing the new opportunities” (p. iii). It foregrounds a need to ‘seize opportunities’ and ‘broaden’ Australians’ outlooks to be “open to the world” (p. 1) and look to Asia in “shaping our future” (p. iii).

Being a ‘winner’ requires Australians to look beyond Australia, and be ‘open’ to knowledge of the ‘big world’, and in particular an increasingly prosperous and globally powerful region, Asia. Looking into the Asian horizon reflects P’s metaphor of lifting frogs out of the well. As *the* leader responsible for the school, P determines the school’s agenda and represents himself as the primary enabler of Asia literacy policy at the school:

in terms of my general influence as a leader in the school I mean it was my decision firstly to become involved with these things...I did make a very

conscious decision that I would do something about it and that we needed to have discussions here about how we could move the agenda forward – that was a very conscious decision where I would say that my role as a leader was important. (P, research interview, 21 July, 2011)

This decision, made at a time when take-up of Asia literacy policy was at the discretion of schools, is significant in positioning P as agentic and engaged in the “‘real’ business” of visionary and enabling leadership (Newman, 2005, p. 725).

Both DP and ADP position their interpretations of policy and roles in translation work as secondary to P, yet complementary in crucial ways. ADP’s involvement is integral to policy implementation yet ultimately defers to P; *“The principal ... was the key person, and ...I became the next person to affect change”* (ADP, research interview, 8 June, 2011). DP sees her role as more about her ability to internalise the initiative first, so as to better support the initiative across the wider school and district:

- coming to an understanding of myself, personally, and then being able to develop work with the staff to develop the curriculum

- we have worked very hard to engage our cluster in developing a strategic plan. I worked with ADP on that. (DP, research interview, 30 May, 2011)

The decision to situate policy in Humanities signals agency:

I looked for the department that I thought we would have most success in and obviously Social Sciences or Humanities, was a department where that would

easily blossom because of the nature of the studies and I engaged our Head of Department [ADP] who was obviously a very passionate and hard working person and very much on-side and she became the program leader in our school. (P, research interview, 21 July, 2011)

Whilst the decision to situate Asia literacy in Humanities reflects the dominant curricular observation that it is most commonly taught in English and the Humanities (Fitzgerald, 1995; FitzGerald, 1997; Henderson, 2004b; Muller, 2006; Muller & Wong, 1991), it sets itself apart from the government's instrumental economic agenda. As discussed in Chapter Four, the 'solution' of Asia literacy policy privileges primarily economic and human capital knowledge, within which knowing Asian languages is positioned as an imperative for a globalised economy (DEEWR, 2011) and the choices of target languages integrally linked to trade interests (Salter, 2013b). The school has re-introduced an Asian language. While this was a "very specific" decision and "has been a big success" (P, research interview, 21 July, 2011), it is positioned by DP as part of a larger commitment to language education in general, rather than driven solely by Asia literacy and an economic agenda:

we were looking to introduce another language, we used to have Indonesian but because we couldn't, we have French obviously and that's been here all the time but we couldn't really find another LOTE. It was very difficult to find one that you could easily staff and so when I started to look around I thought we really should have an Asian language – it would be good to have an Asian and an

European one and so Japanese is a subject that we can find staff for so that was really important so I guess it was really part of all that.

A combination of things happening there?

Yeah. (DP, research interview, 30 May, 2011)

The importance of a shared vision and a unified approach to policy is also acknowledged. ADP is identified as someone who is “*very much on-side*” (P, research interview, 21 July, 2011) and she worked to “*get as much enthusiasm off the ground as we could*” (ADP, research interview, 8 June, 2011). Passionate people are key actors in promoting Asia literacy in sites of best and innovative practice (Buchanan, 2005). Acknowledgement of ADP’s passion reinforces a desire for those that can share the vision of the reform: shared passion acts as a binding agent that forges agreement on the necessity of Asia literacy. P credits himself with being the catalyst for this passion after first recognising this necessity on an AEF led study tour:

I went and spent a couple of weeks in Korea...it made me aware of how narrow my view of the world was... how narrow my view of culture was... it sort of blew my mind to a certain extent so I decided I would follow this up and when we got back our school engaged with the 21st century school Access Asia program... made me think how narrow the view of most people I knew here in [Birdtown]. (P, research interview, 21 July, 2011)

P notes a rising self-awareness of his own ‘narrowness’ and belief that the school and community play an implicit part in perpetuating it. P’s personal experience catalytically shaped his ‘take’ (Braun et al., 2010) on policy enactment. His tour experience, coupled with

deep contextual knowledge resulting from a long established tenure at the school of over 30 years, inform his school vision.

‘Narrowness’ is manifest as a key theme in his vision for the school and, as an extension of this, his vision for the wider community. He positions himself as a community leader, a sort of public intellectual that has responsibility within the community to “*push[ing] the edges a bit*” to elicit ‘broader’ views:

For the last two speech nights, graduation and awards night I have purposefully chosen people to speak about with Asian background because I want to promote this theme... This year ... I’m thinking about doing ... Anh Do, he has a book out at the moment called The Happiest Refugee and he describes very clearly his life, especially the harrowing trip they had here on a boat, he was a refugee who came here illegally on a boat initially from Vietnam... they survived everything and here is a man loved by, he’s a comedian, a TV star and he came out in a refugee boat, and yet there is so much antagonism in our community towards the boat people... some people would say don’t let them in and here is a person that snuck in, somehow, and has been amazingly successful and I am going to do my speech this year purposely on that and one day I might have someone jump up... or disagree but I haven’t had that yet because I think it is important that our community understand that they shouldn’t jump to conclusions and they shouldn’t be too redneck about these things... I keep pushing the edges a bit. (P, research interview, 21 July, 2011)

Speaking as a public intellectual contributes further nuance to the articulation of policy. P identifies his major rationalisation that the people of Birdtown are potentially narrow in their views, a perception that is also held by some teachers at the school (see Chapter Six: Teacher Talk: Tricky sort of subject matter). Despite his own erroneous claim that refugees are illegal, he asserts that they should not be “*too redneck*” (P, research interview, 21 July, 2011), a colloquialism for suggesting their lack of knowledge has prejudiced them against Asian boatpeople. The community “*should not jump to conclusions*” (P, research interview, 21 July, 2011), but instead be more open, justifying his choice of topic for speech night as an attempt to ‘broaden’ the community’s exposure to such topics. P assumes there will be resistance, yet simultaneously embraces his agency to ‘push the edges’ of their narrowness.

His capacity to commit to his transformative agenda is potentially constrained by tensions of a ‘narrow’ and ‘redneck’ community however these tensions are repositioned to justify the imperative, situating his visions in a ‘broader’ globalisation agenda. P’s rationale as public intellectual is synchronous with the beliefs and experiences shaping his school vision. The narrow/broad binary of the metaphor resonates in responses of supporting leaders:

we use here the frog in the well story a lot where little kids from [Wellington-a suburb of Birdtown], young people from this district who think [the] Stadium is the centre of the universe... they haven’t been encouraged to look outside that world but they need to. (DP, research interview, 30 May, 2011)

we have a large number of students here who truly and utterly believe that [Birdtown], or [Ville-a neighbouring city] is the end of the Earth and we know that in order to be successful in the 21st century they are going to need

to be able to operate on a scale much broader than that (ADP, research interview, 8 June, 2011).

What is interesting here is the synchronicity, yet leaders' dialogue reveals differences in their imagining of metaphor enactment, and spaces they see for narrative possibilities.

Narrow.

In the first instance, students are positioned as frogs that need to escape their 'well'; defined by the boundaries set by the outer suburb of Birdtown, Wellington, and the town's football stadium. Integral to the metaphor of students as frogs in the well is a discourse that conceptualises students as 'narrow', drawing on the imagery of the frog in the well, looking up at a small space of sky.

Ideological representations of low socio-economic status (SES) contribute to an intertextual formation (ITF) (Lemke, 1995) of 'narrowness'. The representational meaning is established by P; "*we have a very working class school – the ICSEA [Index of Socio-Educational Advantage] score is very low*" (P, research interview, 21 July, 2011). This meaning is influenced by the Australian government website Myschool which uses the ICSEA value to profile schools, on which the value for the school sits below median. Additionally, low SES is commonly defined as negatively impacting on social, cultural and economic resources in educational contexts. P's long tenure at the school and accompanying experience of the school community has led him to conclude that "*the problem is that when you live in an area, especially a low socio-economic area where there isn't a lot of education there is no demand for it*" (P, research interview, 21 July, 2011). This attitudinal meaning positions low SES as a source of disadvantage and synonymous with lack of aspiration.

Within this deficit discourse home is positioned as in some way inadequate and often failing to equip students socially and/or culturally for engagement with Asia. Students' home environment is identified as a 'narrow' site that fails to cultivate aspiration:

we want to support, of course, what happens at home and the perspectives of the kids at home but they have also got to see that sometimes there are bigger perspectives than that and I think our students here really need that. (DP, research interview, 30 May, 2011)

This is supported within the school profile, written by P and published on the AEF website as part of the school's participation in *L2ICS*:

students ... generally come to [school] with limited international knowledge, understandings and experiences. I believe strongly that it is the responsibility of the school to create opportunities for students to build their social capital so they can take their place confidently and successfully as responsible citizens in an increasingly global world. (ISHS, 2010)

Consistent with the emphasis in the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (MCEETYA, 2008), the leaders represented Asia literacy as a twenty-first century skill that is particularly necessary to address the socioeconomic disadvantage present in the well:

ultimately we deal with a socio-economic status of students that is very diverse, we have a large number of students here who have significant disadvantage, ... and we know that in order to be successful in the 21st century they are going to need to be able to operate on a scale much broader than that. (ADP, research interview, 8 June, 2011)

In positioning the students' socioeconomic status as a social problem (Newman, 2005), leaders clearly foreground it and seek to broaden the home environment as a school response to address the disadvantage. P aspires towards a "*better society*" in which "*mister ordinary mum and dad who are going to live in suburbia all their lives*" can "*know about and understand Asian cultures*" (P, research interview, 21 July, 2011). For DP, this culminates in "*a point where students came here expecting and wanting to be taught by people from different cultures ... being open to that*" (DP, research interview, 30 May, 2011). Both P, in his comments about speech night, and DP, cite the importance of not just broadening students but the wider community as well:

as an educator ... you have to actually be willing to work within a community, to help a community come to new understandings. (DP, research interview, 30 May, 2011)

The chain of intertextuality in discourse related to narrowness builds a dominant discourse that speaks of, and about, low SES students to have no aspiration to escape their well. This indicates normative assumptions on behalf of the leaders that students neither have the capacity to recognise that they are, metaphorically speaking, in a well, nor aspire to escape because "*there is no demand for it*" (P, research interview, 21 July, 2011). Asia literacy is thus positioned as not just the horizon, but the tool that could facilitate students and their

community to “*come to a new understanding*” (DP, research interview, 30 May, 2011) regarding the imperative of escaping the well.

P’s comment that there is no demand for education suggests that students do not aspire to improve their lives through education. Appadurai (2004) suggests that it is not that the poor do not aspire, but that their capacity to aspire is not equally concentrated due to the unequal distribution of social, cultural and economic resources. Singular focus on resources such as cultural capital is supported by presenting the home environment as disadvantaged. In contrast, aspiration can be conceptualised as a navigational capacity; dependent on an ability to both imagine the future in a detailed way and transfer this imaginary into outcomes (Smith, 2011), manoeuvring across “a map of a journey into the future” (Appadurai, 2004, p. 76). Appadurai (1996, p. 5) asserts that “imagination has now become a part of the quotidian mental work of ordinary people” who have a wider set of future options than ever before. Contemporary globalisation has led to the rise of imagination “‘work’ in a variety of ways with which people define themselves and construct their relations to others” (Rizvi, 2006, p. 194). Frogs are encouraged to aspire and imagine a future outside of the narrow well as it is imagined they will engage with Asian culture and ‘broaden’ their lives to become competent twenty-first century citizens. School leaders’ commitment to support an escape from the well could be a catalyst for increasing students’ navigational capacity. Resultant curriculum change that enriches students’ experience as learners within education institutions and builds on their limited access to social, cultural and economic resources can affect what students perceive as both desirable and realistically achievable (Smith, 2011). Additionally, leaders’ positioning of language as a complement rather than the sole imperative, as it is positioned in human-capital orientated language driven policy, could also serve to ‘broaden’ students capacities to see beyond economic instrumental imperatives that are integral to the Asia

literacy ‘solution’ identified in Chapter Four. Appadurai’s (2004) notion of navigational capacity could intersect here with Sen’s (1993, 1997, 2004) notion of capabilities, to see “broadening that is...additional and cumulative” (Sen, 1997, p. 1960) and synchronous more with social development than only economic production (Sen, 1997).

This chain of intertextuality, however, highlights an oppositional, and in significant ways, a cautionary discourse. Assuming students, prior to the implementation of Asia literate policy, did not aspire at all further diminishes their capacity, delimiting imagination rather than inspiring students to broaden narrow perspectives:

dominant conceptions of aspiration imply potentially offensive and normative assumptions about the value and legitimacy of particular educational pathways, forms of employment and life projects. That is, those who do not aspire...are assumed to have lower aspirations. (Sellar, Gale, & Parker, 2011, p. 38)

The narrative to challenge ‘narrow’ frogs potentially restricts frogs’ future choices, albeit in subtle forms. Further investigation is warranted here to determine if the focus is on telling students they *must* escape, ‘saving’ them from the well, or empowering them with increased capacity, should they *choose* to leave.

Broad.

Consensus building among school leaders justifies enactment of policy in terms of the extent to which it can ‘fix’ what is viewed as lacking in frogs that live only in the well.

Globalisation is implicated in discourses of narrowness and aspiration as part of this ‘fix’ and is drawn on in multiple ways to legitimise school change (Newman, 2005) that might

otherwise be resisted. An ITF of globalisation forms a dominant discourse around the importance of ‘broadening’ students and works in important ways to support deficit discourses of ‘narrowness’.

Globalisation is represented as integral motivation for increasing, therefore ‘fixing’, what is viewed as ‘lacking’:

it is important that students get a global perspective because we live in a global world and if they don't they are going to be very narrow people and that sort of narrowness breeds intolerance. (P, research interview, 21 July, 2011)

students here have very little exposure to other cultures other than their own, in any real way, and I think if they are going to become really strong global citizens who can make some sort of contribution they are going to need a lot more. (DP, research interview, 30 May, 2011)

in order to be successful and engage globally Australia has to be Asia literate, or, we will find ourselves unable to engage on a global scale. (ADP, research interview, 8 June, 2011)

Consensus on the importance of being “*global*”, equating this with ‘broadening’, indicates that globalisation is strategically deployed as a factor in leaders’ decisions.

The dominant view of global economy is underpinned by primarily neoliberal views of globalisation which resonates with the construction of Asia literacy as the policy ‘solution’

(see Chapter Four: The problem in policy). At the school the policy's economic rationale to secure Australia in a "global society and ... global economy" (AEF, 2006b, p. 2) saturates a compelling discourse of globalisation that equates Asia-literate knowledge with being "successful in the 21st century" (ADP, research interview, 8 June, 2011):

Well, if you read the statement [National Statement for Engaging Young Australians with Asia in Australian Schools] ...it is very good, it explicitly talks about a number of factors – one of them, I don't know if I can remember them all, one of them is obviously economic...where would we be without the mining industry and China buying our resources at the moment... but politically China is undoubtedly a major nation of the world and it may even take over in the next 10 to 20 years to become THE major world power and obviously we need to be aware of that. (P, research interview, 21 July, 2011)

The Principal's imagining of the economic future, and the place of China, reflect the representation of Asia literacy as a knowledge product that can secure economic connections with Asia. This imagining is consistent with the policy statement that states: "Australia's future economic strength requires Australians to be knowledgeable and confident in relationships with the peoples of Asia" (AEF, 2006b, p. 6). A perceived absence of Asia literate knowledge is seen as a problematic for the knowledge economy (Salter, 2013b). Governing knowledge produced by the AEF is constituted by discourses of preparing an Australia workforce that is globally competitive and can capitalise on economic opportunities (Salter, 2013b) available in Australia and the Asian region. The representation of Asia as a powerful economic competitor is evident in DP's portrayal of Korea:

if you look at Korea and the way Korea has really improved in terms of PISA type data, they are doing really good things in terms of education and if you just think about the work ethic of most Asian cultures it is very strong...their knowledge economy is growing and ... we have to compete with that and I don't think that many Australians have really, until recently, had much appreciation of that. (DP, research interview, 30 May, 2011)

An alternate imagining of globalisation is juxtaposed against economic discourses. This juxtaposition resonates with binaries evident in policy (see Chapter Four: The 'problem' in policy: Problematisation). However, whereas binaries in policy create ambivalence (Salter, 2013b), here DP is able to resolve them into interrelated and complementary approaches. DP imagines a more harmonious future:

in terms of having some sort of peace in the world I think we have really got to get to greater depth of understanding between different people in the world and what their perspectives are and at the moment that doesn't happen. When you think about it, there is a lot of conflict...and a lot of it's to do with cultural misunderstanding and I think that is something that we really have to prepare the next generation to address. (DP, research interview, 30 May, 2011)

DP's vision for the future is fused with policy discourses that resonate with more cosmopolitan, as opposed to neoliberal paradigms of globalisation. A direct link can be drawn here to the most recent Asia literacy policy:

Young Australians who possess a regional and global mindset and skill-set will be able to build a creative, prosperous and socially cohesive Australia and develop harmonious regional and global communities that can work together to resolve the issues that affect us all. (AEF, 2011b, p. 2)

Repetitious calls to increase students' cultural resources draw attention back to the assumption that students lack social and cultural capacity. Presenting Asian perspectives as facilitating “*deep knowledge*” (DP, research interview, 30 May, 2011) and the ability to “*engage*” and “*interface meaningfully with Asian culture*” (ADP, research interview, 8 June, 2011) confirms the importance of intercultural understanding and the positioning of Asia literacy as an intercultural initiative (AEF, 2011b; 2012a, 2012d; ACARA, n.d.a; Commonwealth of Australia, 2012) . Furthermore, this agreement supports a mutually beneficial relationship with knowing other cultural groups, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. At the time of planning for Asia literacy in the curriculum, state and national governments also mandated that Indigenous perspectives be addressed (MCEETYA, 2008; QSA, 2008). Initially, the complementary nature of the two priorities was not identified, however work within the *L2ICS* program provides impetus for greater alignment between potentially competing presences:

the more we have gone into it the more alignment we have seen. We started off saying an “Asia literate [school]”, then we looked to an “Internationally minded [school]” and as we continued along that journey we really started to move towards a language of intercultural understandings. So, once we moved to that position where we had a greater depth of knowledge about what it was we wanted... alignment has grown more and more. So, rather than trying to cram in a unit on Indigenous Australia and cram in a unit on Asia we are really teaching to something that is broader. (ADP, research interview, 8 June, 2011)

This pairing highlights similar concerns noted in Chapter Two: The landscape of ‘Asia literacy’: Knowing Schools: Curriculum bed fellow? regarding the problematising of cultural politics, challenging Eurocentric curriculum and the complexities of cross-cultural understanding (Williamson & Dalal, 2007), while at the same time disregarding competition for space as discrete bodies of knowledge. Repackaging Asia literacy in this way allows the metaphor to meet local agendas: drawing on and accommodating the contextual factors of a higher than average enrolment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and parallel Australian Curriculum cross-curriculum priority; ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders histories and cultures’.

Imagine, or be imagined?

With the government’s emphasis on literacy and numeracy, voluntary take-up of policy that promotes cultural engagement with Asia might not necessarily be an obvious choice for a low SES school with high enrolment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. This contextual factor usually draws on discourses of social inclusion and equity in a concerted and explicit inward focus on itself, rather than be fused with other factors in a broader global vision. School leaders’ decision to give curricular emphasis to Asia literacy suggests “pushing the local...understood not just in a spatial sense but as symbolically condensing a range of attachments and identifications constituted around a ‘we’” (Newman, 2005, p. 727) in a metaphor that is distinctive to the school. This decision demonstrates leaders’ agency in both choosing to creatively imagine and enact policy in a localised narrative, positioning them in roles beyond those of mere gatekeepers of policy.

Driven by pressures of globalisation informing national policy, and underpinned by local understandings of the implications of globalisation, heteroglossic discourses are mobilised to appropriate policy in accordance with local strategic priorities, translating it rather than simply ‘implementing’ it in the school context. School leaders interpret policy to rationalise demand for Asia literacy at the school by drawing on global discourses to drive change, privileging discourses of socioeconomic disadvantage as social problem and repackaging policy to meet local discourses (Newman, 2005) regarding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. These discourses are juxtaposed in the frog metaphor to act in mutually supplementary ways. Imperative to this is the assumption that students *must* escape the well, however without intercultural knowledge of Asia they lack resources to do so, reflecting an empowerment discourse to ‘free’ the frogs and prepare them to be ‘successful in the 21st century’. The heteroglossic nature of the metaphor means that it can manifest in potentially contradictory social agreements. Discourses in this heteroglossia are evident in both espoused policy (see Chapter Four) and leaders’ vision for enactment; economic and competitive, or philanthropic and harmonious. They are oppositional, yet interrelated dialogically as incongruous aspects of a twenty-first century skill set that leaders represent as desirable.

Tensions between empowerment discourses, changing lives to “*have a better society*” (DP, research interview, 30 May, 2011), and those that seek to delimit students, are problematic. A school vision has the potential to do either, as well as in unintentionally contradictory ways, both. The “improvement plot” (Ball *et al.* 2011) to empower frogs is integral to school change and leaders as narrators are engaged in a “politics of hope relate[d] to the encouragement of students [and teachers] to imagine other, to imagine a better world” (Wrigley, Lingard, & Thomson, 2012, p. 105). Resultant curriculum reform is presented as

crucial to ‘broadening’ mindsets to increase capacity of students to imagine and navigate ‘better’ futures.

‘Better’, however, is inherently normative, and intertwined with school leaders’ unusually synchronous beliefs and experiences. The metaphor is presented as a stimulant (Leithwood et al., 2008) for teachers to similarly become:

‘the guardians’ of the idea of an open cosmopolitan neighbourhood of ‘likeminded’ individuals...an approach which, as Vanessa Andreotti notes, may end up in teachers promoting, “a new ‘civilising mission’ as the slogan for a generation to take up the ‘burden’ of saving/education/civilising the world” (2006, 83). (Langmann, 2011, p. 403)

The metaphor also appeals to the school leaders as a social covenant, built through:

- A sense of identity that coheres the metaphor to the school context, making links to key contextual factors such as SES and above average enrolment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students,
- A sense of responsibility to help frogs ‘escape’ the well and
- Confines of contextual factors.

It is maintained by a “sense of identity, obligation, duty, responsibility and reciprocity” (Sergiovanni, 1998, p. 44) to “*make a significant change to the lives of, if not all, at least a significant number of kids*” (DP, research interview, 30 May, 2011). This covenant thus presents a powerful moral purpose to school staff to make “*significant change*” (DP, research interview, 30 May, 2011), engaging moral purpose as a catalytic force for further

drivers of change (Fullan, Cuttress, & Kilcher, 2005). However, it is unclear if teachers and ‘frogs’ will be empowered by the metaphor or merely bound to comply with it. Furthermore, the moral purpose of emancipating frogs positions Asia literacy as putting capital into frogs and stems from a premise that students are culturally ignorant. This positions Asia literacy as a ‘fix’ for what is deemed lacking in frogs, and is reminiscent of presumptions that “policy ‘fixes’ things” (Bacchi, 2009, p. 31) explored in Chapter Four. There is an implicit acceptance among leaders that the ‘problem’ (Bacchi, 1999, 2009) of low cultural capital is innate, therefore closing off further discussion around the construction of students as ‘lacking’. This imperative, as already noted, is perhaps partially driven by a principal social agenda manifest in umbrella policy statements that call for commitment to “ensure that socioeconomic disadvantage ceases to be a significant determinant of educational outcomes” (MCEETYA, 2008, p. 7).

While undeniably a desirable outcome, temptation to save and redeem frogs for a ‘likeminded’ future puts at risk frogs’ agency to imagine their own futures. As Ylimaki (2006) cautions, “visions crafted by a formal leader are inherently undemocratic and do not necessarily engender ownership” (p. 623). Ironically, this reveals a possibility that school leaders’ creative work is deeply flawed, bound by ‘narrowness’ that asks students to neglect their own imaginative work for their futures and instead conform to normative aspirations. Rather than liberate, the metaphor potentially delimits those that use it to shape their own future pathways.

Ultimately, this space makes possible a particular globalised imaginary, delimiting what is recognised as aspiration for ‘frogs’. Those who feel that leaving the well is not possible or

desirable risk being constructed as having ‘low’ aspirations and in some way ‘deficit’; this points to dangers in taking up policy enactment as a form of social covenant. Drawing on Taylor’s (1994) notion of recognition regarding the struggle of cognisance afforded to different cultural groups, under-participation in Asia literacy can be explained as a result of low aspiration where there is “*no demand for it*” (P, research interview, 21 July, 2011) because students “*haven’t been encouraged to look outside that world but they need to*” (DP, research interview, 30 May, 2011). This perpetuates a normative recognition of Asia literacy as valuable knowledge (Sellar et al., 2011), and is supported by policy (Salter, 2013b).

The economic rationale of social contract is similarly problematic, suggesting that Asia literacy will enable many from disadvantaged backgrounds to be more competitive in the workforce. The metaphor is also driven to some extent by economic and competitive discourses of policy included in narratives of social contract. The metaphor as contract is an example of “curriculum reform [that] has been linked to the reconstitution of education as a central arm of national economic policy” (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 96). A promise of gain is highlighted in implicit contractual discourse that offers incentives of increased job opportunities if frogs endeavour to escape the well. The contract’s alignment with dominant economic rationales in policy suggests increased human capital is a desirable outcome.

While not the only incentive offered to entice students out of the well, this impedes notions of Asia-literate knowledge for harmonious and peaceful purposes, or necessarily cultural rather than economic ends.

Sen’s (1997) notion of capabilities may offer an alternative here. Sen’s (1993) distinction between human capital and human capability, argues that the latter encompasses both

economic productivity *and* social development. Above all, integral to the notion of capability is *choice*, particularly the “difference between pushing people into functioning in ways you consider valuable and leaving the choice up to them.” (Nussbaum, 2003, p. 40). Or potentially, in the case of Ibis State High School, the difference between frogs’ futures being imagined for them, or leaving frogs to imagine their own future. Education offered at the school can play a role in extending the capabilities of ‘frogs’, “broadening” (Sen, 1997, p. 1960) capabilities to expand levels of ‘Asia literacy’ and opportunities to apply it. Autonomy is central to this notion of capability and required to navigate normative assumptions that underpin opportunities to ‘broaden’ frogs and free them from the well. Saito (2003) suggests that expanding capabilities should make people autonomous. He offers a “sense of freedom...in terms of ‘freedom to’, rather than ‘freedom from’” (Saito, 2003, p. 21), inferring that the former is positive and the latter negative. Normative assumptions inherent to leaders’ vision for freedom from the well create a dilemma for frogs: it is unclear whether it is frogs’ choice to jump out of the well, or if they are pushed to escape a pre-determined conceptualisation of a ‘narrow’ life.

The conceptual framework of analysis utilised here provides a “framework to capture the fluidity of policy processes” (Lendvai & Stubbs, 2007, p. 189) across policy trajectories, realising that policy exists as a living utterance (Bakhtin, 1981). The call to ‘know Asia’ in national policy formation is enacted at Ibis State High School by appropriating and mobilising current national policy to promote Asia literacy in ways that adapt it to the local social context and particular organisational imperatives and structures of the school. School leaders’ deep contextual knowledge enables them to translate policy into the educational, professional and social ethos of the school. They deploy the frog metaphor to position aspiration as a cultural capacity for realising a collectively imagined future. Knowing Asia

dismantles the well, as well as enables the frogs to leap from the well. Binary opposites ‘narrow’ and ‘broad’ are juxtaposed to mutually supplement one another. Furthermore, leaders simplify complex relationships that encompass hierarchy and privilege of certain knowledges, functioning at the school site to shape how they rationalise demand for Asia literacy. This extends Ball’s (1993) notion of the trajectory of policy to show how school leaders can be understood to be engaged in crucial ways in the transformation, not merely the passive implementation, of policy that is essentially handed down from elsewhere.

This study demonstrates how leaders mobilise the school vision to negotiate deficit in schools both intentionally and unintentionally. There has been a conscious and deliberate use of agency to enact Asia literacy to recognise and mediate ‘narrow’ resistance. The way this enactment has been taken up makes it difficult to see it as unapologetic rhetoric. The school has struggled with the implementation of Asia literacy and while this vision is not yet realised, there is a clear notion that this struggle is worth the commitment to “*push[ing] the edges a bit*” (P, research interview, 21 July, 2011).

Conclusion

This chapter examined the localised enactment of calls for the teaching and learning of Asia in schools. Policy implementation at school level is often recognised as transformative enactment. Positioning school leaders as gatekeepers in this enactment is limiting. This chapter explored the complex contextualised agency of school leaders showing that their role, far more than gatekeeping, can be enabling and transformative. Identifying the agency of school leaders in enacting policy imperatives to ‘know Asia’ creates space to imagine localised narrative possibilities that negotiate and potentially challenge policy agendas. Accounts of policy work by school leaders are heteroglossic and densely intertextual in their

mobilisation and collocation of discourses. A metaphor of a frog in a well is taken up to translate policy in locally specific ways that make it much more than a template of externally devised policy. Deep contextual knowledge empowers school leaders to imagine policy in innovative ways; however it is paired with a cautionary note on risks inherent to shaping policy for ‘like-minded’ futures. While the unintentional unison of school leaders supports an interesting metaphor for curriculum reform, what may be even more interesting is teachers’ rejoinder to this vision and as ADP notes: “*I knew that in order for this change to be sustainable it could not be imposed and that staff needed to be, I guess, meaning makers in it*” (ADP, research interview, 8 June, 2011).

The implication that can be drawn from *policy to context* is that Asia literacy, despite its mandated and seemingly fixed presence in the emerging Australian Curriculum, exists as a living utterance; a policy initiative in continuation, affected and being affected in perpetual dialogue. This suggests that the struggle for representative clarity made visible in Chapter Four allows for the interjection of counter-narratives, in which schools can take-up the call for knowing Asia in ways that appropriate and transform policy narratives to suit their localised context. It is here that the policy trajectory moves to *policy in context* in Chapter Six, to explore teachers’ epistemologies for policy enactment of knowing Asia.

Chapter Six: Teachers' cultural maps: Asia as a "tricky sort of subject matter"

This chapter is drawn from:

Salter, P. (2014). Teachers' cultural maps: Asia as a "tricky sort of subject matter" in curriculum inquiry. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 44(2), 204-227.

Introduction

This chapter explores *policy in context*, in particular teachers' active reconstitution of policy that contributes to the "underlife" (Ball, 1993, p. 13) of policy intention. The nature of this underlife is dependent on teachers' perspectives and their intellectual engagement in theoretical work (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Giroux, 1985a, 1985b; Hudson, 2012; Macintyre Latta & Wunder, 2012; Smyth, 2001). The enactment of Asia literacy policy in schools is highly reliant on teachers' capabilities to mobilise a number of epistemologically complex concepts, such as Asia (see Chapter Two: Knowing Asia: 'Asia'), Asia literacy (see Chapter Two: Knowing Asia: 'Asia literacy') and culture (see Chapter Two: Knowing Asia: 'Culture'), hence, the realisation of Asia literacy curriculum is potentially a "tricky sort of subject matter" for teachers.

This chapter explores teachers' epistemologies employed to know Asia. The primary focus here is the overarching conceptual framework that teachers use to engage with Asia literacy, rather than the procedural or logistic complexities in their response to curriculum. This chapter explores teachers' perceived barriers to 'knowing Asia' as a "*tricky sort of subject matter*" to explore the underlife of policy intention that is often neglected in research.

Central to this analysis is the premise that Asia literacy is an intercultural initiative (AEF, 2011b; 2012a, 2012d; ACARA, n.d.a; Commonwealth of Australia, 2012). As such, it presents a key theoretical challenge for teachers to engage with, imagine and in some way

‘teach’ Asian cultures in a way that recognises that ‘knowing culture’ is a challenging (Hickey & Austin, 2006; Hoffman, 1996; Smith, 2000) and reflexive (Crozet et al., 1999; Henderson, 2004a; Muller, 2006; Muller & Wong, 1991; Perso, 2012) endeavour. Western frames of reference and an absence of critical reflection on such frames in Australian policy and teaching discourses create tensions within this challenge. For example, Chapter Four established how Asia literacy curriculum can be read as an attempt to colonise knowledge of Asia and appropriate it to secure future economic and security ties, rather than a cultural end in itself (Salter, 2013b). Asia literacy policy positions knowledge of Asia as a malleable and rich fund of knowledge that can be discretely identified, inserted and accurately re-presented into curriculum (Singh, 1996b; Williamson-Fien, 1996). This reconstitutes residual imperial discourse in ways that suggest the development of Asian studies requires further critical engagement to reconceptualise existing cultural maps (Crozet et al., 1999; Williamson-Fien, 1994). Additionally, Chapter Five highlighted that translation of such policy, particularly how knowing Asia is translated in relevant ways into localised contexts, can be fundamental to enactment of ‘Asia literacy’.

This chapter draws on Lin’s (2012) recognition that “curriculum is a key site where people’s...cultural imaginaries are produced, contested, or transformed” (p. 170) and Hudson’s (2012) acknowledgement that teachers are rarely recognised as theorists or positioned in ways that value their theoretical engagement. Key themes of “*authentic knowledge*” and “*not wanting to get it wrong*” highlight issues in theorising constructions of cultural knowledge and “*on the back burner*” suggests a conscious awareness of these issues. This chapter attends to these themes to open new possibilities for Asia literacy and offers a theoretical resolution that is two-pronged, addressing both teachers’ knowledge constructs of Asia and constructs of their role as teacher; knower of this knowledge.

Approach

The *policy in context* dimension of the policy trajectory (see Chapter Three: Theorising the Research Dimensions of the Trajectory Strategy: Policy in Context) explores teachers' interpretations of knowing Asia, particularly their epistemologies that inform the cultural maps used to make sense of Asia literacy as an element of curriculum. Data in this chapter were drawn from the case study (see Chapter Two: Data Collection: Case Study) of Ibis State High School. Semi-structured interviews with nine teachers (see Chapter Two: Data Collection: Interviews: Classroom Teachers interviews) compose the main body of this data.

This data is analysed using theoretical lenses drawn from postcolonial theory (Bhabha, 1995; Said, 1993, 2003) to interrogate discourses of Eurocentrism and imperialism detected in teachers' epistemologies. While using a coloniser/colonised binary as an analytical tool creates a useful reference point for analysis, it also potentially perpetuates, rather than challenges this binary (Chen, 2010). Therefore, this analysis also makes use of a cultural studies (Chen, 2010; Hall, 1992) lens, focussing on Chen's (2010) critical syncretism approach to augment the insights of postcolonial theories. Additionally, what the interrogation of binary analytic tools makes clear is that discourses mobilised in teachers' epistemologies are heteroglossic, drawing on Bakhtin's (1981) notion of heteroglossia and Nakata's (Nakata, 2007, 2010; Nakata et al., 2012) conceptualisation of the cultural interface.

Teacher Talk

Despite clear enthusiasm for Asia Literacy as a curriculum inclusion, the complexity of engaging with Asia creates seemingly insurmountable barriers for most teachers. Key themes in teachers' responses indicate that they are keen to "*bring it on*" and engage with Asia literacy, however the complex nature of this engagement is clearly acknowledged as a "*tricky*

sort of subject matter". Asia is positioned as complex yet knowable, but at the same time potentially unknowable in an authentic way. This positioning creates a potential paralysis around "*doing it [Asia literacy] wrong*". Such is the difficulty of this task that it is put "*on the back-burner*" for beginning teachers as it is perceived to be too complex for them. If barriers are present in a school that has proactively elected to adopt Asia literacy policy, their concerns will provide necessary insight for those seeking to support settings in which Asia literacy is framed in more mandatory ways.

Bring it on!

The consensus of teachers was that the take-up of Asia literacy was a positive move and it was not seen as a problem at all. Enthusiasm for it is cited by all staff, from senior teachers with 24 years of classroom experience to early career teachers:

I think it is fantastic, I have no problem at all, bring it on. (Experienced teacher; Teacher 9, research interview, 7 December, 2011)

I feel really good about that... it will be really interesting and really challenging for our curriculum to have that as one of the cross-curricular priorities – it will lend for and open up a lot of avenues and different ideas to incorporate different learning experiences and perspectives and themes ... which will be really, really good. (Early career teacher; Teacher 2, research interview, 5 December, 2011)

In policy Asia literacy is represented as a twenty-first century skills that all students should have (AEF, 2011b; MCEETYA, 2008). This imperative is positioned through a hierarchy of need that is at times both supplementary and contradictory; primarily emphasising a

neoliberal need to secure a competitive Australian economy, and secondarily aspiring to foster a global community mindset (Salter, 2013b). Teachers, like school leaders, reverse this hierarchy. School leaders localise the global education narrative with a metaphorical vision that positions students as frogs who need intercultural education to escape from their well to live a 'better life' in a world beyond their familiar 'well' (Salter, 2013a). The well is symbolised in school discourse by a boundary marked by the local football stadium and major shopping centre and resonates in teachers' responses:

[local] kids live in a little bit of a cultural bubble... they need to understand that there are other people and there are other places and they do impact on us. We need to pop the bubble a little bit and make sure kids understand other people's perspectives. (Teacher 2, research interview, 5 December, 2011)

students need to open up those avenues of looking at other places and other ways of life and seeing that there is a bigger wider world than just Australia. (Teacher 3, research interview, 5 December, 2011)

students need to know that there is a world outside [the] stadium our students are the future of our economy and society, so they are the ones that need to be trading on our behalf, negotiating on our behalf so they need to be able to do that with an informed perspective of our neighbours. (Teacher 4, research interview, 5 December, 2011)

Though teachers recognise an economic imperative, their enthusiasm appears directed at localising policy, rather than adopting it as an external template, indirectly recognising a need

to engage conceptually and creatively (Ball et al., 2011) in policy articulation. They seek to continue the institutional narrative (Ball et al., 2011; Braun, Ball, Maguire, & Hoskins, 2011; Braun et al., 2010; Newman, 2005) of leaders' frog metaphor (Salter, 2013a). The professional development used to introduce the policy to the school context has been successful in mobilising teachers to engage with Asia literacy, however has also potentially led to a 'romancing' of the imperative. A recurrent theme in teacher responses is that although substantial, most professional development had been rationale based, aimed at increasing staff enthusiasm for the initiative, rather than actual implementation:

more across the board, whole school stuff, a lot of it has...been intercultural education in a broad sense. (Teacher 9, research interview, 7 December, 2011)

a lot of it, just going to be honest, is we need to incorporate Asian perspectives. Full stop... I think it comes from up here [administration] but when it gets to us who are actually implementing it I think it stops. (Teacher 2, research interview, 5 December, 2011)

Tensions inherent to the task of 'knowing' 'Asian' 'culture', as noted in Chapter Two, have potentially been overshadowed by teachers' enthusiasm for the social covenant of leaders' vision to 'liberate' students as identified in Chapter Five.

Tricky sort of subject matter.

These tensions, though overshadowed, were not dormant. Curriculum enactment is viewed with some trepidation, in which knowledge of Asia is positioned as "*tricky sort of subject matter*" (Teacher 1, research interview, 5 December, 2011). This diffidence suggests

recognition that singular notions of Asia are inadequate (Broinowski, 1992; Rizvi, 1997). For the majority of teachers, Asia is characterised by diversity and richness; “*lots of cultures, lots of different countries and religions*” (Teacher 1, research interview, 5 December, 2011). There is a consensus among teachers to discourage negative and homogenous representations of Asia, in favour of encouraging diverse notions of Asia. While acknowledgement of diversity initially appears to support understandings of the problematic nature of defining Asia, further analysis reveals that for some, this diversity is perceived as part of the larger binary relationship between the West and Asia where the West is accepted as normative and Asia is presented as Other and *completely* different:

our closest neighbour and that it is a thriving place, I would probably say overpopulated, I'd say that there is a lot of people from there in Australia ...Completely different culture...it is rich in culture.

Completely different how?

I guess it is the same things that the kids see – the food, the customs, the clothing, I guess that is the same for me. (Teacher 2, research interview, 5 December, 2011)

This resonates with the ‘seduction’ of visible culture in the Review of Studies of Asia in Australian Schools (Wyatt et al., 2002). The notion of inherent difference positions knowing Asia as epistemologically difficult and potentially intangible in a classroom setting:

it is complex, it is the way somebody who lives in Asia, in inverted commas, how they view the world through their own socio-cultural paradigm... we tend to pick things and try and at least become culturally aware of a perspective but I don't know that you can really transfer that perspective to the student, not without a lot of

study anyway, more than we do. (Teacher 7, research interview, 6 December, 2011)

Teacher 7 recognises that Asia is not a simple knowledge object, simultaneously working in and transitioning across different epistemological paradigms. “*Complex*” Asia can be known, imagined and experienced in multiple ways (Broinowski, 1992; Rizvi, 1997; Singh, 1995b; Williamson-Fien, 1994, 1996), therefore awareness of the complexities of cultural “*view[s]*” is paramount (Muller, 2006; Perso, 2012), Asia literacy is positioned as a “*transfer*” task, rather than a critically reflexive endeavour (Crozet et al., 1999; Henderson, 2004a; Muller, 2006; Muller & Wong, 1991; Perso, 2012). This teacher is cognisant that the task of knowing Asia is not a simple process and “*more*” needs to be done.

Notions of universality further complicate this process:

I try to encourage the fact that the world over, everyone has the same wants, needs and desires on a very basic level and that necessarily how we go about doing that might be different... we feel the need to live by a code and that helps us as a society as a cultural group know what is right and wrong and different cultures have embraced different religions and they do that because they see that need as important. (Teacher 4, research interview, 5 December, 2011)

Universality (Hall, 1992) is also evident in abstractions that work to make Asia recognisable through identifying emphases that are perceived as ‘not Australian’, in this case an emphasis on religion:

the other thing I push a lot is religion is a big part over there and it does influence a lot of the ways they act and react, particularly Indonesia and those sorts of things, they are probably the two things I push. (Teacher 9, research interview, 7 December, 2011)

Teachers seek to find ways in which Asia is both similar and different, implicitly perpetuating practices of Othering: we and us (the normative West), and them over there (the East). Discourses of the Other are intensely heteroglossic (Bakhtin, 1981): at times juxtaposed as identified here and at other times contradictory, further applying the notion of Other within the constructed “we”. The teachers also identify the school community as Other. This in turn creates an additional barrier to the ‘tricky’ nature of the subject matter. The community is perceived as narrow-minded, like the opening of the well in the school leaders’ metaphor (Salter, 2013a):

I find that lots of [the city] is still very racist to Aboriginal people too and Asian people fall beneath that which is terrible...And kids are parrots and they will say what their parents have said and until you challenge them they will have their parents’ beliefs too and some of those parents have never been challenged so they just think that and the media helps support it... I think [the city] is still predominantly narrow-minded ...we are just still developing as a community.

(Teacher 6, research interview, 6 December, 2011)

I think there is also an emotive response, especially given, I will be honest, given how redneck, if I can use a pejorative term, I think it is important that from us they

see a sort of more open inquiring mindset rather than pre-judging. A lot of the kids we get, affected from parents...some very closed outlooks. (Teacher 7, research interview, 6 December, 2011)

The derogatory term “redneck” suggests the community is not only uneducated but bigoted too. This representation resonates with some perceptions of students:

kids have a negative perception of Asia. (Teacher 2, research interview, 5 December, 2011)

to start them off it is a bit hard, it is a bit of that reactive...some of the comments they make are a bit racist...It is a hard one to think about. (Teacher 3, research interview, 5 December, 2011)

Working in a mutually supplementary way to Othering of the community is the perception that challenging this Other is empowering:

It is just amazing the students have embraced what they didn't know...I think it is because they aren't actually aware of what is outside of [this city] at times and it is about really challenging them and making them excited and engaged about the rest of the world essentially, not just Asia. (Teacher 8, research interview, 6 December, 2011)

It can mobilise students' interest to know more, however is still underpinned in significant ways by notions of exoticism:

I have found them very empathetic and willing to listen and quite surprised or shocked to see the experiences of other people that are totally removed from them – they are intrigued in a lot of cases. (Teacher 1, research interview, 5 December, 2011)

The inherent difference of Asia, as “*totally removed*” from students’ experiences points to absolute differences (Said, 2003), however further examination is needed here to determine if this is in part an effect of teacher-introduced constructs of Asian culture as a distinct entity characterised by visible manifestations (Wyatt et al., 2002). Similarly, ‘intrigue’ could be linked to exoticising Asia. Regardless of these tensions, these student responses have had positive impacts on teachers’ experiences, and potentially their efficacy for continuing to engage with Asia literacy.

A further complicating factor is a presumption that knowledge of Other fits within existing curriculum parameters. Within this heteroglossia Western knowledge is presumed to provide universal parameters into which other knowledges can fit (Williamson-Fien, 1994). An infusion approach to curriculum can exacerbate binarism with uncritical interjection of Asia into largely Western cultural frameworks, particularly when there is no acknowledgment of these frameworks (Williamson-Fien, 1994). Teacher responses about changes suggest an infusion approach:

it hasn't been a change or something added extra that I have had to do it has just sort of fitted in nicely sometimes with things we have been studying, it hasn't been a big change from what we have done to what we are doing now it is just I think I

have to remember it more to put it in – that kind of thing. (Teacher 3, research interview, 5 December, 2011)

Overall responses that outline, “*slight change*” (Teacher 9, research interview, 7 December, 2011) has “*sort of fitted in*” (Teacher 3, research interview, 5 December, 2011) and “*tweaked quite a few things*” (Teacher 5, research interview, 6 December, 2011) indicate a clear, yet limited curriculum adjustment rather than a substantial critical review. It also suggests limited engagement with theoretical work of reconceptualising cultural maps that “requires considerable effort” (Crozet et al., 1999, p. 4) and is “challenging” (Henderson, 2004a, p. 5). Tensions in teachers’ balance of needing “*more*”, as noted by Teacher 7, and enacting this through an approach that has required ‘less’ in terms of an infusion approach, resonates with the ambivalence noted between demands for cultural change and calls for stability in the policy document itself (Salter, 2013b).

Teachers’ discourse regarding the ‘trickiness’ of Asia literacy suggests both a conscious recognition that knowing Asia is complex and an unconscious awareness that significant theoretical work is required to engage with this ‘trickiness’. The identification of this theoretical work is masked by teachers’ cultural maps, which appear to be dominated by imperialist epistemologies of the Other that impact on how they imagine both Asia, and the students they teach.

I just don’t want to get it wrong.

This ‘trickiness’ also positions Asia as potentially unknowable in an authentic way.

Literature suggests that teachers lack Asia knowledge (AEF, 2001; 2010a; 2012e; FitzGerald, Jeffrey, Maclean, & Morris-Suzuki, 2002; Hill & Thomas, 1998; Salter, 2009b; Wilkinson &

Milgate, 2009; Wyatt et al., 2002). Analysis of teachers' responses suggests that Asia literacy is not just content knowledge of Asia, but how it is conceptualised that contributes to this 'trickiness'. A perception of inadequate knowledge and that there is a 'right way', and here the notion of 'right', is based on cultural authenticity, creating insecurity around Asia literacy:

you can have cultural literacy ... but that doesn't give you the perspectives inside the literacy, that doesn't give you the world view... I think true cultural literacy you do need the language. A lot of it doesn't translate, never does, not properly.

(Teacher 7, research interview, 6 December, 2011)

Asia literacy is positioned as cultural literacy (Muller, 2006; Muller & Wong, 1991) and dynamic conceptualisations of culture are difficult to capture, or "translate" and know, yet teachers still represent their role of teacher as 'knowledge giver'. The "things I push" (Teacher 9, research interview, 7 December, 2011), "put [it] in" (Teacher 3, research interview, 5 December, 2011), and the notion of being able to "give" (Teacher 4, research interview, 5 December, 2011) perspectives and experiences construct knowledge as something that teachers "transfer" (Teacher 7, research interview, 6 December, 2011), suggesting there is a body of Asia knowledge that can be discretely captured and delivered to students. Ultimately, teachers expect that they can know 'it' in some definitive way, to be "happily literate":

I don't think I am overly Asia literate, maybe some countries more than others but not to have that whole knowledge of all of Asia ... I couldn't say I am happily literate in all the areas. (Teacher 6, research interview, 6 December, 2011)

A flawed policy directive also contributes to this insecurity in its use of Asia literacy as a political slogan: appropriated for education and misleading in the implication that teachers need to be Asia literate (AEF, 2011b; MCEETYA, 2008), when it is impossible to be literate in all things Asian (Williamson-Fien, 1994) and curriculum manifestations remain unclear (Singh, 1995a) due to ambivalent directives (Salter, 2013b) that require Asia literacy to be “embedded in all learning areas” but with “varying presence” (AEF, 2011b, p. 2). The rhetoric of Asia literacy policy may be more difficult to navigate than engagement itself. Additionally, a prevalence of white middle class teachers (Babacan, 2007; House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Education, 2007) with Western frames of reference (Chen, 2010; Willinksy, 1998) further problematises conceptualisations and can be seen to contribute to insecurity. Similar to pre-service teachers that maintain silence around issues of race in mixed race company out of fear that they would say the wrong thing (Mosley & Rogers, 2011), teachers maintain caution around Asia out of fear they will ‘do Asia wrong’:

I guess when the concern is always about presenting information and presenting lessons in a way that is sensitive to all in the class ... I am a bit worried about that and obviously when you are dealing with people’s values and beliefs there is always a challenge. (Teacher 1, research interview, 5 December, 2011)

Responses implicitly position knowledge of Asia as Other to mainstream knowledge, albeit Othered in this instance to include, rather than exclude (Salter, 2013b), and therefore requiring ‘sensitive’ approaches that can be “scary” and a “challenge” for teachers.

I want to be able to do it I just don't know that I do it as effectively as I could and I might need help with that so obviously there is a bit of a scare factor ... we are going to have to work out ways in which to do that that will engage students and that we are not just touching on superficial stuff either, that we are looking at it in-depth and meaningful... That will be a concern and challenge for us as educators.

(Teacher 2, research interview, 5 December, 2011)

In addition, this knowledge is perceived as “new” and unknown phenomena, further contributing to insecurity:

I had to get the background ... stuff that I didn't necessarily know so I have had to bridge that gap myself and I think you can be a little bit nervous sometimes because what if you get it wrong? I just don't want to get it wrong. I want to make sure I am teaching with authenticity. (Teacher 6, research interview, 6 December, 2011)

Teachers struggle to find what they perceive as ‘authentic’ knowledge. This struggle challenges the epistemological limits of the cultural maps (Crozet et al., 1999) they use to make sense of their world, and the normative imaginaries their maps draw on. Going beyond these maps “requires considerable effort” (Crozet et al., 1999, p. 4), and questioning the barriers of these maps further contributes to notions of insecurity:

I think there is lot of fear with teachers about this being a priority because ...they feel they have a lack of knowledge and that is perhaps a real barrier. So in all the conversations we have had and in my own reflections, sometimes when you don't

want to do something poorly so you just don't so it ... if they feel a bit threatened because they don't know enough they will avoid it. That I think is the biggest barrier. (Teacher 6, research interview, 6 December, 2011)

A connection with travel is made to mediate this insecurity.

I suppose lack of knowledge on my part is one, like I say I am not well travelled and haven't ever travelled overseas. (Teacher 9, research interview, 7 December, 2011)

'Authentic knowledge' is represented as knowledge that is gained from personal experience with Asian culture, and preferably within Asia as this is more 'authentic'.

This equation of personal experience to authentic knowledge is made by both those who are consciously skilled and those who position themselves as being able to negotiate this knowledge:

I find it really challenging ...the first change I suppose is to be culturally literate yourself and I am not. I could give you several pages of facts about Asian countries but that is not the same as having their perspectives and you can read about their perspectives and that rich cultural... that is very hard to transfer... I have spent some time in certain Asian countries, I can do much better on the countries I have been in but the only way to know a thing is to be a thing - you can't escape that.

(Teacher 7, research interview, 6 December, 2011)

An ideal of authenticity; “*to be a thing*”, dominates teachers’ responses. Unlike teacher seven, others equate travel experience to authentic knowledge in ways that constructs those that have travelled to Asia as ‘experts’ in simplistic and problematic ways:

Some of them [teachers] are more well-travelled and so a lot of them have more knowledge than me. H for example has been to Japan and Thailand and these sorts of places so he has a wealth of knowledge. (Teacher 9, research interview, 7 December, 2011)

Teachers value travel as a hierarchical form (Dyer, 2010) of knowledge. A continuum from lived experience to research and reading (Dyer, 2010) is used to understand the link of being authentic. Knowledge of Asia is perceived to be created through travel as a lived experience and change agent that develops new knowledge, reconfigures curriculum and enriches pedagogy (Dyer, 2010) with unique learning opportunities not afforded by other forms of professional learning. Teacher four claims the most “*extensive*” experience, having travelled to China, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore and Russia. He takes up the notion of travel as change agent, claiming efficacy to negotiate notions of authenticity.

I ... did extensive travelling and from that extensive travel that is why I see the need to be able to understand...I feel like that is where I have gained my understanding from, is experiencing these different cultures and appreciating them

For this teacher, travel has enabled a more nuanced, rather than simplistic, construction of ‘authentic’ knowledge:

I don't think in any way we can truly, particularly at the moment, give a solely Asian perspective, considering I have been born and raised in a very Western culture, but we can hope to give the kids a hybrid experience and that is OK...it is very easy to say I am not Chinese so I cannot teach kids Chinese but I just think that is a bit of a cop-out ...there is no way I can hope to give them a truly 100% authentic experience but I don't think I have to.

(Teacher 4, research interview, 5 December, 2011)

Teacher 4 actively draws on notions of hybridity (Bhabha, 1995) using an example of 'Chinese' to construct a "hybrid experience" for students that is "OK" and appears to contest the territories of both a "very Western" and "100%" Chinese experience, however the construction of an "authentic experience" remains unchallenged.

On the back-burner.

Ultimately, the extent of this "trickiness" is considered too complex and the efficacy to negotiate authenticity 'too challenging' for young and beginning teachers. As 'receivers' of policy, these teachers are noted as looking more for explicit direction rather than attempting creative policy engagement, and are often shielded from policy by more experienced colleagues (Ball et al., 2011). Experienced teachers at the school reflect this tendency:

while we have tried to ask teachers to look at a range of different perspectives and a range of Asian perspectives, because of their youth and inexperience it has not been a major focus. ...once the National Curriculum comes in and it becomes more mandated then people will have to address it but I guess I have

put it on the back-burner because of the number of inexperienced staff that we have...I don't mean to be negative about young teachers but I think that there are behaviour issues that people are dealing with so to look at things on a deeper level requires that those behaviour issues are managed in the first instance before you can look at approaching those sort of tricky sort of subject matter. (Teacher 1, research interview, 5 December, 2011)

Here the intellectual work required to “look at things on a deeper level” is explicitly recognised, and implicitly the complexity of “tricky” Asia literacy that traverses constructs of Asia, culture and knowledge is acknowledged. For some, this work is considered extreme:

we have had a number of first year teachers this year in our department it has been whirlwind for them... some of them are just trying to still find their feet so that is interesting in itself and shifting curriculum focus, for them it is not a shift it is BANG! (Teacher 4, research interview, 5 December, 2011)

The connection between efficacy and travel resonates here, and a new call, potentially for more life experience that comes with age is introduced:

I think you need to know stuff. ...Beginning teachers, if they don't hit us with this knowledge, most of them can't get enough space in their life to get it, with the time they have...if they don't come to us knowing everything they need to know, and some do but most don't, then getting that to them in a way that they can use quickly is almost impossible. ...might help if they are a bit older too...or having travelled. (Teacher 7, research interview, 6 December, 2011)

With 38 years of experience between them, Teachers 1 and 4, as leaders of curriculum and Teacher 7 as a leader of pastoral care, position the task of reconceptualising cultural maps (Crozet et al., 1999) as ‘too challenging’, and novice teachers as limited in their “capacity for reciprocity and self-reflection” (Henderson, 2004a, p. 5). Here, the construction of the inexperience and inadequacy of novice teachers further demonstrates recognition of the demanding intellectual work implementation of Asia literacy requires. In positioning Asia literacy as a subject area suited for teachers with experience in sound classroom and curricular management, it also implicitly positions Asia literacy on a different curricular plane, as one ‘above and beyond’ the ‘basic’.

Challenging the binary trap

Curriculum is a site for power struggles and often a means of hegemonic power, especially in the way it represents peoples, histories and cultures. Moreover, curriculum codifies symbolic time and space in which identities are located. Asia literacy curriculum requires teachers to engage extensively with theories of culture. It poses difficult conceptual, methodological and practical questions for teachers and students, especially when trying to understand non-Western experiences through knowledge and curriculum developed by Western scholarship (Nozaki, 2009a). Theoretical work is implicit in developing a culturally responsive pedagogy and interculturally inclusive curricula as “complex tasks [that] demand an extended professionalism from teachers who are required to move beyond mere subject and pedagogical expertise” (Hilferty, 2008, p. 66).

The concept of imaginary (Anderson, 1983; Appadurai, 2001; Halse, 1999; Hill & Thomas, 1998; Mills, 2008) is significant to such complex tasks as it offers a means of analysing

teachers' thinking and ways of seeing the world. Chen (2010) describes cultural imaginary as "an operating space within a social formation, in which the imaginary perception of the Other and self-understanding are articulated" (p.111). Thus cultural imaginaries can contribute to perceived barriers to engaging with knowing Asia and impact on teachers' theoretical work needed to critique existing cultural maps. Cultural imaginary is the mediating link between a Western framework and agency. A Western framework, Chen (2010) contends, is dominated by imperialist subjectivities. Said (1993) provides theoretical connections to support this concept, identifying ideologies of dominant and subordinate entities in societal frameworks that support an immutable coloniser/colonised binary in Western thinking. Affirmation of identity is only possible in relation to these frameworks, and cultural imaginary conditions the vision and horizon of those situated within these frameworks, as in some way the coloniser or the colonised. Binaries evident in teachers' responses position Asia in the colonised position of Other and 'Asia knowledge' as a subordinate knowledge that can be "put on the back burner". Considering the Western framework in this way proves a useful lens for exploring teachers' responses as Western-orientated teachers dominate Australia's teaching profession. Perhaps teachers' cultural maps mistake residual imperialist notions as immutable truths?

A legacy of Australia's colonial history is an imperialist cultural imaginary that permeates Australia's national psyche. Hall (1992, p. 318) asserts that the discourse of 'the West and the rest' is one of the key processes in the formation of modernity, forging an identity for modern society for both those who employed it and were subjected to it. As one of these modern societies, Australia employs this discourse in a unique way due to its colonial history. Australia was established as a British colony and identified itself as an outpost of Britain, but is simultaneously aware that it was itself identified by Britain as an Other – a

relatively uncivilised outpost (Rizvi, 1997; Singh, 1996a). In this study, teachers' responses reflect this ambivalent identity in their identification of Asia as Other, while simultaneously identifying the community within which they teach, and in some way are a part of, as Other. For many years Asia was identified and demonised as Other (Broinowski, 1992; Hage, 2003; Jupp, 2004), perpetuated by policy such as the Immigration Restriction Act 1901.

Indigenous Australians as well as Australia's multicultural history prior to White Australia policy are also constructed as Other. Therefore, imperialism and colonisation are intertwined in Australia's cultural imaginary. In this study, teachers' responses reflect this ambivalent identity in their identification of Asia as Other, while simultaneously identifying the community in which they teach, and in some way part, as Other.

Australian curriculum representations are similarly entwined (Singh, 1995a). In the tradition of subaltern studies, the 'naturalness' of Western ways of doing things makes Asia recognisable only when it can be superimposed with Western categories and norms that see difference through the modes of perception of the West (Hall, 1992). The positioning of Asia as Other and the infusion approach Teachers 3, 9 and 5 cite, suggests superimposition. The uncritical interjection of Asia into 'natural' Western-orientated curriculum does not meet the growing call in education for critical reflexivity. Furthermore, Teacher 2's perception of Asia's diversity as a matter of 'competing' or 'contrasting' cultures aligns more with liberal notions of multiculturalism in Western –dominated societies where a dominant culture is privileged as a necessity for social coherence. This representation aligns with more liberal notions of multiculturalism in Western –dominated societies where a dominant culture is privileged as a necessity for social coherence (Curran, 2002; Hage, 2003; Jayasuriya & Pooking, 1999), a coherence which Teachers 6 and 7 assume Asia lacks:

I don't know how many ethnic groups there are in Thailand, 20? Burma is worse. (Teacher 7, research interview, 6 December, 2011)

Asia is such a contrasting area of the world, so you can't just assume that Asia will have the same perspective so you have to be aware that there are many different communities and many different beliefs within Asia. (Teacher 6, research interview, 6 December, 2011)

Asia is acknowledged as messy and complex, however this works to form a new binary: heterogeneous Asia that requires caution and increased efficacy to address, and by implication homogenous West. Yet as noted previously, the West is both “us” and “them”, in the positioning of the school community as Other, pointing to the heteroglossia (Bakhtin, 1981) of discourses surrounding Asia. Asia is inherently diverse: clashing countries and cultures positioned as problematic and complicated, rather than potentially syncretic and fluid as the realisation of heteroglossia suggests. Teachers’ cultural maps, which use the West as a universal reference, contribute directly to perpetuating the character of ‘tricky’ Asia as risky and difficult to know:

it is complex...the way somebody who lives in Asia...how they view the world through their own socio-cultural paradigm... we tend to pick things and try and at least become culturally aware of a perspective but I don't know that you can really transfer that perspective. (Teacher 7, research interview, 6 December, 2011)

This ‘trickiness’ is also felt by other cross-cultural initiatives. Harrison (2012) found similar connections were made with images of Aboriginal people in Australian classrooms.

Teachers’ imaginations were “dominated by their own self-image, one that oscillates between a sense of coherence, and feeling like they are not up to the job.”(Harrison, 2012, p. 8). Harrison (2012) takes the “position that teachers need to examine their own (psychological) framework that they apply to teaching rather than attempting to understand how Aboriginal people think and live” (p. 8) as it is this process that will allow teachers to learn about themselves and their own imaginary and why they represent Aboriginal people in the ways that they do. The need to problematise the task of embedding Indigenous perspectives in curriculum (Williamson & Dalal, 2007) , and the complexities of cultural interactions at the cultural interface (Nakata, 2007, 2010; Nakata et al., 2012; Williamson & Dalal, 2007) are well documented. This suggests that parallel cross-curriculum priority in the Australian Curriculum; “Aboriginal and Torres Strait histories and cultures” share similar tensions to “Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia”. What this then points to, is the need for teachers to cast a critical lens on the Western framework through which the Other – either Aboriginal Australia or Asia – is imagined. This moves the question from ‘am I doing [the Other] right’ to ‘what is my framework for constructing knowledge’, and then ‘how does this impact on how I represent [the Other]? Building on Chen (2010), this examination scrutinises the articulation of perceptions of the Other and self-understanding in the cultural imaginary, where the Other can be imagined in different ways.

Edward Said’s Orientalist project, as part of a postcolonial suite of theories, has previously provided the basis for questioning prevailing discourses of the Other in Asia literacy.

Postcolonial critiques of Orientalism are most commonly applied when identifying the Other in cultural conceptions or curriculum representations (Broinowski, 1992; Buchanan, 2002;

Hamston, 1996; Henderson, 2004a; LoBianco, 1996; Muller, 2006; Nozaki& Inokuchi, 1996; Pang, 2005; Rizvi, 1996; 1997; Singh, 1995a, 1995b). A focus on cultural binaries elucidates the development of cultural representations in Australian society and has potential applications for conversations regarding the inclusion of various subaltern and/or migrant cultures into Australian education and curriculum, however it proves insufficient here. Whereas a clear 'us' (Australia) and 'them' (Asia) binary can be seen historically and in teachers' responses, there is the added complexity of 'us' (teachers) and 'them' (Asia and the school community) in teachers comments and a growing dialogue of 'we' (Asia-literate Australia) in policy documents. While Said (2003) offers a theory of consciousness it tends to maintain an 'us' and 'them' binary which simplistic constructs of 'culture' support and Spivak (2012b) moves towards change by advocating negotiation with the structures at play to intervene, question and change the system from within, both tend to maintain an "us" and "them" binary which simplistic constructs of culture support. For the "we" to progress, there is a call for hybrid narratives in the implementation for Asia Literacy, for multivocal accounts (Singh, 1995b) or multiple narratives (Williamson-Fien, 1996) that create and demand complex and reflexive cultural spaces.

The tendency to see the world in terms of binaries which structure Western thought, neglects dialectical spaces (Ladson-Billings, 2003) such as knowing Asia. While positioning the West as a hegemonic and imperialising force offers a useful framework for critical analysis, it does not offer a way forward. It is here that I look to constructive, rather than destructive frameworks (Mosley & Rogers, 2011) and towards syncretism more than dualism. Mosley and Rogers (2011) refer to a "tragic gap" in racial education; a metaphorical space of what is and what should be, and the challenge for racial literacy to learn to live in that gap rather than

resolve it prematurely. This challenge resonates for Asia literacy, and similarly ‘Indigenous literacy’ – to learn to live in the gap between binaries and support teachers’ theoretical work.

Bhabha’s (1995) notion of hybridity, in which ‘denied’ knowledge enters the dominant discourse creating a hybrid that is neither ‘one’ or the ‘other’ but contests the territories of both, appears as a plausible educational theory regarding cultural understanding and Asia literacy. The concept of hybridity resonates in the responses of teachers that claim efficacy for cultural understanding:

we can hope to give the kids a hybrid experience and that is ok... there is no way I can hope to give them a truly 100% authentic experience but I don’t think I have to. (Teacher 4, research interview, 5 December, 2011)

Additionally, it also opens up great freedom as if the hybridity argument has any merit, transformation will never be uniform (Rizvi, 1997).

Bhabha (1995) questions how, once notions of culture have been critiqued and interrupted, they progress as “the very language of cultural community needs to be rethought from a postcolonial perspective” (p. 175). A common critique of postcolonial theory is that it is used by intellectual elites who presume the authority to “speak for others” and reinstate them, presuming their own voice of authority while critiquing the authority of Western epistemological practices (Henderson, 2004a). There is a tendency to deny human agency in this paradigm. It is here that Chen’s (2010) notion of critical syncretism provides a useful conceptual tool.

Critical syncretism seeks to expand human agency to offer multiple points for identity articulation, more than a colonised/coloniser dichotomy. It emphasises two facets: multiplicity and hybrid aspects of Asia. Resonating with the notion of social inquiry (Geertz, 1973), multiplicity looks at social and historical variations of a given nation – a picture of multiple axes of power (race, gender, class, etc) that continually intersect and (re)structure social relations, assigning people to particular identities and locating their differences through particular socio-historical contexts (Chen, 2010). Within these variations hybrid aspects (Bhabha, 1995), regions that have been colonised and from whence colonialism comes, are also examined. While these facets resonate with postcolonial theory, what Chen's (2010) cultural studies framework expands is the key responsibility of teachers' theoretical work to interrogate cultural understandings. More than a curriculum enclave, these approaches need to be applied to 'our' country as well contrapuntal analysis (Chen, 2010), as was pointed to by Harrison (2012). Additionally, this can further illuminate cross-cultural understandings of Indigenous Australians, Australia's internal Others (Nozaki, 2009a).

Not only does this bring attention to the importance of teachers' theoretical work, it also brings renewed focus to the construction of teachers' knowledge: to see knowledge as interpretive not known. Knowledge of Asia (or any complex cultural signifier) is always developing and cannot be claimed as 'known'. When it is positioned as something that can be 'known' and 'delivered', as it is in teachers' responses, it contributes to teachers' anxiety around 'getting it wrong'. To claim to 'know' in a definitive way, is not possible, as Williamson-Fien (1994) asserts, and invites the dangerous possibility of essentialised or fixated meanings. Teachers' theoretical work engages them in the navigation of frames of

reference and cultural spaces, continually searching ‘to know’ Asia rather than reaching a knowledge destination where they ‘know’ Asia.

This resonates in current literature with notions of cosmopolitanism; to possess a “positive, and enriched civic identity, one in which the person operates out of a global perspective, beyond the national and local levels” (Oikonomidou, 2011, p. 339). The notion of ‘possession’, however, suggests arrival at an end point at which one can own or control knowledge, which sits in contrast with the fluid and dialectical (Bakhtin, 1981) nature of syncretism. A more appropriate term for teachers engaging with this theoretical work may be “cosmonaut”, a traveller who has not reached a destination:

the dynamic identity of a cosmonaut, as a navigator, could relate best to that of a teacher who can utilise the multiple techniques available in his/her repertoires to reach multiple desired destinations... The multicultural educator as a cosmonaut would be able to holistically consider possible tools through a critical analysis and could successfully navigate the multi-layered spaces of education. (Oikonomidou, 2011, p. 340)

It is the navigation metaphor of the cosmonaut that works most powerfully as the key to agency within the heteroglossia (Bakhtin, 1981) of work at a cultural interface (Nakata, 2007, 2010; Nakata et al., 2012). Here teachers are required to move beyond an essentialised or fixed construct of Asia to recognise and negotiate that it is a construct. They are required to navigate multiple constructs: of Asia, culture, the Other, knowledge and the construction of their own cultural imaginary.

Asia literacy policy and its resultant curriculum present unique challenges for teachers.

Mechanisms of agency and restraint are evident. Teachers are enthusiastic to embrace Asia

literacy curriculum. The underlife of this policy intention reveals agency where teachers inflect curriculum with notions of hybridity and even deflect the initiative itself for novice teachers. There is also a dominant moment of restraint where teachers' cultural maps inhibit their engagement with Asia literacy as they fear "*getting it wrong*" as it is a "*tricky sort of subject matter*".

Key themes of "*authentic knowledge*" and "*not wanting to get it wrong*" highlight issues surrounding constructions of cultural knowledge of Asia. Attending to these themes opens new possibilities for Asia literacy. It suggests that Western cultural maps facilitate problematic binary thinking, which in turn makes it epistemologically difficult to imagine alternate and more fluid cultural identities. A cosmonaut approach that adopts fluid syncretism, however, uses social inquiry to negotiate multiplicity and dialectical spaces to travel new maps: pointing to the importance of teachers' theoretical work to navigate new cultural maps that actively employ these possibilities.

Conclusion

This chapter examined the representation of and teacher response to 'Asia literacy' in Australia. Knowing Asia is an emerging precedent for all teachers in Australia as "Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia" is a mandated cross-curriculum priority in the first Australian Curriculum. Teachers in this study were welcoming of this priority; however lacked confidence in their ability to engage with it as "*tricky sort of subject matter*". Assumptions that knowledge of Asia can be discretely inserted into curriculum created a seemingly insurmountable barrier for teachers. In turn, teachers can open new possibilities to theorise curricular responses to Asia literacy by attending to this barrier. This calls for a

transformation of knowledge in curriculum inquiry to ask how other constructs, or multiple constructs, or something ‘more’ than constructs can be used to know Asia.

Ultimately, the call to navigate new cultural maps further points to the interjection of counter narratives into discourses of knowing Asia. School teachers’ responses problematise the notion that Asia can be discretely identified and inserted into curriculum, and they go as far as to deflect ‘Asia literacy’, resisting it in the case of “*putting it on the back burner*” for novice teachers. The implication that can be drawn from counter-narratives in both *policy in context* in this chapter and *policy to context* in the previous chapter is that there is a dialogue, rather than a fixed representation, of knowing Asia. At Ibis State High School, this further contributes to the unsettled identity of ‘Asia literacy’, as teachers have not yet realised the transition in how they position themselves as ‘knowers of things’ that need “*authentic*” knowledge to “*do it right*”. And while their responses do not suggest that they know completely what they are doing, in respect to the theoretical work identified here, or are travelling on a clear path, their struggle with notions of authenticity and hybridity suggests that they are mobilising, readying for travel and reworking of cultural maps for knowing Asia. Furthermore, given that teachers in Australia are largely Anglo-Celtic and will likely remain so for a substantial part of the ‘Asian century’, Chen’s (2010) method theoretically nullifies ‘authenticity’ as a barrier to teaching Asia literacy.

Chapter Seven: Navigating the trajectory: reconceptualising ‘knowing Asia’

Introduction

The signifier ‘Asia’ evokes identities and images of a diverse geographical, cultural, religious, historical and linguistic region of the world. There is, and can be, no single, stable, universal notion of what Asia is. Thus, the task of knowing Asia must be a search ‘to know’ Asia, rather than of acquiring a definitive knowledge of what Asia ‘really is’. This chapter draws on the analyses of how knowing Asia is constructed at different points across the Asia literacy policy trajectory, mining those analyses for ways they might offer possibilities for reconceptualising ‘knowing Asia’ in Chapters Four, Five, and Six. By redeploing these analyses in light of Ashcroft’s (2001) account of how postcolonial identities might be reconceptualised, and Chen’s (2010) concept of critical syncretism, it seeks to transcend the limitations and problems in the ways ‘knowing Asia’ has been understood and enacted.

This exploration serves to offer an alternative approach for “curriculum...[as] a key site where...cultural imaginaries are produced, contested or transformed” (Lin, 2012, p. 170).

The redeployment and reconceptualisation of ‘knowing Asia’ also constitutes and demonstrates a reconceptualisation of the policy trajectory theory that attributes more weight to policy actors’ discursive agency in responding to policy than Ball’s (1993) original theory attributes, and demonstrates a recursive element in the relations between what Ball (1993) conceives as successive nodes in policy trajectory so that the policy trajectory itself loops back for the enactment ‘stage’ to impact on the initial (*policy as text*) phase. It does so by mapping the discourses of Asia and knowing Asia in the most recent policy text, the White Paper *Australia in the Asian Century* published in 2012 by the Commonwealth of Australia, and comparing them with those identified in earlier policy texts, whose analysis, presented in

Chapter Four, was based on the paper ‘The Problem in Policy: Representations of Asia Literacy in Australian Education for the Asian Century’ (Salter, 2013b) accepted for publication into the Asian Studies Review prior to the release of the White Paper (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012). This comparison demonstrates that dominant discourses of Asia literacy identified in Chapter Four persist in policy narratives, despite the ongoing repositioning of Australia in the ‘Asian century’. The White Paper provides a timely policy text through which to show how the struggles in representation Ashcroft (2001) sees in the development of hybrid postcolonial identity position can be used to show how acceptance of Asia literacy, slippages in the accounts of Asia and knowing Asia, and rejection of various aspects of Asia literacy as a way of knowing Asia within this text can be used to destabilise the very notion that Asia exists as a definable entity and that determinate secure knowledge of Asia can be inserted into the curriculum. Thus, the analysis of this chapter serves to open up space for a more adequate conceptualisation of Asia and of knowing Asia as a basis for Asia literacy in curriculum. This conceptualisation has implications for teachers as they respond to the policy imperative to ‘teach Asia’ in the emerging Australian Curriculum. It maps a possibility for teachers to navigate multiple frames of reference and cultural imaginaries, continually searching ‘*to know*’ spaces (Harvey, 2006; Lefebvre, 1991; Robertson, 2010) of Asia rather than reaching a knowledge destination where Asia can be ‘known’.

This thesis proposes a theoretical approach that promotes the synergy between heteroglossic (Bakhtin, 1981) discourses, the notion of critical syncretism (Chen, 2010) and the dilemma of the ‘stuck place’ (Nakata, 2012) at the ‘cultural interface’ (Nakata, 2007). The notion of capabilities (Sen, 1997) also offers a broader discursive framework for knowing Asia.

Reconciliation of both human capital and human capability in this framework creates space to

negotiate alternate positions for re-imagining the ‘solution’ for knowing Asia in Australian education (Salter, 2013b). Whilst the human capability theory acknowledges the human capital arguments in an economic agenda that tie education to the global economy (Ball, 2008) it does not represent economic goals as sufficient, nor does it close off space to move forward from the economic agenda. This thesis proposes an epistemological approach to inform policies as well as pedagogy, that conceptualises Asia not as a discrete notion of Asia, and that departs from a distinct ‘Asia’ policy agenda to one in which “interconnectivity” (Rizvi, 2008, p. 29) and heteroglossia (Bakhtin, 1981) are paramount in re-imagining Asia and Asia literacy. This approach then makes explicit “gaps and spaces for action and response” (Ball, 1993, p. 11) in and to Asia literacy policy. These gaps and spaces are taken up in the case study at Ibis State High School which is consistent with research that argues policies are mediated and enacted, rather than uncritically implemented (Ball et al., 2012). This enactment involves intellectual work. Supporting policy actors’ epistemological understandings can therefore facilitate their creative and reflexive engagement with policy. Further, an explicit space for policy actors to embrace, struggle with and transform policy at their localised site would support teachers’ concerns with authenticity, and develop their approaches in knowing Asia, and teaching Asia literacy. What the foundational work of the policy trajectory makes clear is that the task of knowing Asia draws attention to *how* this can be done, rather than merely *what* does Australia need to know to do this.

Reconceptualisation framework

A postcolonial reading of Asia literacy makes visible that what has remained uncontested in the struggle for Asia literacy is the dominant representation of knowing Asia. Key to this reading is the recognition that postcolonial studies was first conceived of as a methodology for analysing modes of imperial discourse of societies affected by the historical phenomenon

of colonialism (Ashcroft, 2001, p. 7). Australia's national consciousness has been inscribed by imperial legacies such as British colonisation and the White Australia Policy, the consequent disruption of which does not automatically render defunct the parallel inscription of Australian subjectivities and identities (Parkes, 2007; Salter, 2009a).

This thesis proposes a reconceptualisation framework and postcolonial reading of knowing Asia. It draws on Ashcroft's (2001) articulations of postcolonial transformation as a generative lens for destabilising utilitarian and economic imperatives. Key to this transformation is the "question of resistance...[that] has always dwelt at the heart of the struggle" (p. 13), a resistance that can support convergence (Nakata, 2012; Nakata et al., 2012): "conceived as something much more subtle than a binary opposition...the appropriation and transformation of dominant technologies for the purpose of re-inscribing and representing" (Ashcroft, 2001, p. 14). Ashcroft's original trajectory explores how identities and subjectivities are inscribed and colonised through the discursive power of the coloniser. In this thesis this trajectory is used to explore how constructs of Asia are inscribed and colonised through the discursive power of, and in policy. This inscription elicits four responses; acceptance, rejection, interjection and interpolation (Ashcroft, 2001; Parkes, 2007), used in this thesis to generate the reconceptualisation process represented in Figure 2 (see Chapter Three: Theorising the Research Dimensions of the Trajectory Strategy: Theorising Reconceptualisation).

1. Emergence & acceptance of Asia literacy as a curricular emphasis in policy.

The first response is marked by the introduction of Asia literacy into mainstream educational discourse with the commission and acceptance (Henderson, 2003) of the Rudd Report. Policy text analysis of Chapter Four mapped the dominant discursive articulation of Asia

literacy at its point of emergence and acceptance into mainstream policy was as an economic ‘solution’ (Salter, 2013b). This map can now be re-read in the context of Ashcroft’s (2001) first response to consider how discourses have been maintained or rebalanced in the most recent policy articulations. I draw on the latest policy, the White Paper *Australia in the Asian Century* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012), to argue that continuity of the discourse of Asia and Asia literacy with minor rebalancing of the fundamentals of policies across the 60 or so documents. The White Paper offers a distinct imagining of Australia’s future engagement with Asia. It was commissioned “to consider the likely economic and strategic changes in the region and what more can be done to position Australia for the Asian Century” (Australian Government, 2012a) and is described as a “national blueprint for a time of national change” (Henry, 2012, p. 3) and “roadmap for the whole of Australia” (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012, p. 1). Ken Henry’s (2012) admission, as leader of the White Paper task force, suggests the Australian populace is looking to Asia:

Not one of the submissions said this is not something Australia should be doing...in nearly three decades of policy work, this is the only project on which I have ever worked that has enjoyed anything like that sort of support and interest. (p. 5)

The three pillars of this policy work are economics, social and cultural considerations and political and security issues. Education is highlighted as central to these pillars:

Education...can’t be pigeon-holed as a social change...It is, and has always been, an economic activity also, with implications for the structure of the workforce. And education has implications also for political and security matters. (p. 6)

Asia literacy in schools forms a substantive contribution to realising this gateway to an Asia capable Australia in the White Paper. Significantly, the policy calls for a “step change in the understanding of Asia and the acquisition of Asia-relevant capabilities” (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012, p. 167). This Asia capable human capital approach is also perpetuated in the supporting policy environment. As the centrepiece of government policy, the White Paper is supported by an assemblage of policy and reports released by various government funded agencies and organisations; of particular note here is ACARA developing the Australian Curriculum in which the cross-curriculum priority ‘Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia’ sits, and the AEF which supports this priority in schools. The AEF (2012a, pp. 2, 22) included “Build up the Asia capability of Australia’s education workforce” as one of its three strategic interventions suggested in its submission to the White Paper. This submission positioned the term capability as stemming from the *Melbourne Declaration* (MCEETYA, 2008) in which ministers “agreed that the capability to understand and engage with the diverse countries of Asia is a vital twenty-first century skill-set...all young people need the capability to relate to and communicate across the cultures and countries of Asia” (AEF, 2012a, p. 4). It also makes reference to “school leader capability” (p. 9) “teacher capability” (pp. 10,12,14,18) and “language capability” (pp. 14,18). This submission also introduces a supply and demand metaphor into the lexicon of Asia literacy. “Demand” is noted 14 times in the document – both in stimulating and building demand and in regards to meeting increased demand. This supply and demand metaphor implies economic modelling characteristic of a neoliberal paradigm (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). It works to reinforce a perceived need to build up the Asia capability of Australia’s education workforce in a competitive economic market.

The mantra “learning about Asia should be business-as-usual for every Australian schools and every Australian student” (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012, p. 169) mirrors the rhetoric of the *Melbourne Declaration* call that “Australians need to become Asia literate” (MCEETYA, 2008, p. 4) and the AEF call for Asia literacy to be “a key part of the Australian school curriculum” (AEF, 2011b, p. 2). Similarly, dominant discourses of economic and human capital identified in Chapter Four prevail here. What is a change is that in this policy, there is a three-pronged strategy to achieve this:

- Engagement with at least one school in Asia to support the teaching of a priority Asian language,
- Full implementation of the Australian Curriculum including the cross-curriculum priority ‘Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia’, and
- Opportunities to undertake a continuous course of study of an Asian language.

This strategy will be supported by the implementation of the National Plan for School Improvement which will use funding as leverage (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012). Additionally, it is proposed that the cross-curriculum priority will be measured to “track how we are increasing Australia’s knowledge of Asia” (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012, p. 170), yet there is no indication of how this measurement will be made. While tertiary education is noted as part of the collaborative process to develop detailed strategies for studies of Asia and “boost student demand by increasing understanding of the benefits of studies of Asia, including Asian languages” (p. 170), and the importance of Asia specialists in the higher education sector is noted, the crucial link to teacher education is not made – neither the importance of integrating Asian studies or capabilities into teacher preparation nor acknowledgement that a lack of pre-service teacher engagement with Asian studies can contribute to perpetuating cycles of limited deep knowledge of Asia were noted.

‘Asia literacy’ enters hegemonic discourse by asserting an economic imperative in which Australia has to compete to be “a winner in this Asian century” (p. iii). This process positions knowledge of Asia as colonised knowledge that can be deployed to meet ‘Australia’s needs’ and facilitated by policy such as AEF position statements. The subtext of this inclusion is that the ‘solution’ (Salter, 2013b) suggests that it is all that is needed to invert reliance on Asia and assert Australia’s dominance in economy. Globalisation is implicated in this: though commonly cited as a key driver in Australia’s reorientation towards Asia it can potentially be a form of disguise for “imperialist conquest” (Chen, 2010, p. 2). This resonates with neo-colonialism, and opens the door for positioning Asia as the Oriental Other (Singh, 1996b): an economy that is now prolific and sophisticated, and requires a more strategic approach to penetrate and pillage (Singh, 1995a). Despite rhetoric that suggests otherwise, it also positions Australia as homogenous, failing to acknowledge the historical realities of Australia already engaging with Asia, or the realities of Asian-Australians (Broinowski, 1992; Hughes, 2012; Salter, 2009a; Singh, 1995b; Singh & Miller, 1995). Dominant discourses that set the conditions of acceptance of Asia literacy privilege knowing Asia for economic development rather than cultural illumination, however, slippages in policy generate conditions for other possible ways to know Asia.

2. Slippages and struggles in representations of knowing Asia.

I redeploy the slippages and struggles analysed in Chapters Four, Five and Six in this new context of reconceptualisation to make visible resistance to the Asia literacy ‘solution’ (Salter, 2013b) rather than outright rejection (Ashcroft, 2001). These slippages and struggles contest the dominant human capital problem construction of the ‘solution’ (Salter, 2013b) by challenging its relevance in different ways to reveal slippages and struggles in policy itself

and its localised articulation, in the process highlighting the diversity of competing constructs used to ‘know Asia’.

‘Knowing’ in policy

Critical analysis of policy as detailed in Chapter Four maps the struggles of ‘knowing Asia’ present since acceptance of Asia literacy onto the mainstream education agenda. Policy is littered with complex binaries that shape how Asia literacy is understood and rationalised; at the same time strategic and cultural in purpose (see Table 2), as also mirrored in the White Paper (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012) , and dominant and marginalised in curriculum reform (Table 3). Slippages generate ambivalence and uncertainty around knowing Asia rather than decisiveness in policy and have contributed to dialogue around Asia literacy stagnating; calling for reform yet meeting resistance in policy evidenced by these slippages (Salter, 2013b). A persistent slippage is an increasing focus on the binary of economy and competition/harmony across policy statements. As a result, policy calls become louder, frustrated by ambivalence manifest in these slippages.

Strategic	Cultural
Economic	Philanthropic
Competitive	Harmonious
Neoliberal	Cosmopolitan
Flattened Asia	Multi-vocal Asia

Table 2. Summary of discourses in strategic arguments for ‘knowing Asia’ in AEF policy.

Dominant	Marginalised
Same	Different
Reform	Status quo
Homogeneous Aust.	Heterogeneous Aust.

Table 3. Summary of discourses of curriculum reform in calls to ‘know Asia’ in AEF policy.

In the preparation of the White Paper Asia literacy was one of the most prominent issues raised in submissions (Henry, 2012) and was categorised under ‘improving Asia-relevant capabilities’ (see Appendix M). Henry’s (2012) explanation of capabilities further reinforces the strategic and economic discourse of the White Paper:

Asia-relevant capabilities have a hard edge. They’re the fundamentals that will drive economic growth in the years ahead. It’s shorthand for the skills Australians will need now, and into the future, if we’re to prosper as a result of the shift in economic and cultural activity in our region. (p. 10)

He also highlights their pervasive nature:

The concept...takes us well beyond the educational system. It includes having the right skills in our workforces; the right workplace settings to allow flexibility and agility in business; and knowledge of the legal, business and public sector environment of Asia nations. (p. 13)

Furthermore, the language of capabilities in the White Paper resonates with FitzGerald's (1988) prediction of Asian studies in the context of national education policy that is "somewhat utilitarian, even a little brash and 'streetwise': the kind of person to whom you would only marry your daughter to save the family fortune" (p. 9). Asia-capabilities are foregrounded only in as much as they can "shape our national future" (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012, p. ii), or, put more cynically, 'save the family fortune', as highlighted by the foreword in the White Paper, which makes clear an agenda of securing economic prosperity in which Australia needs to be a "winner", and "every Australian a winner too", a "winner in this Asian century" (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012, p. iii). 'Winning' however is problematic, as it implies there will also be 'losers' in the Asian century (Hunter, 2012). Here capability is underpinned by neoliberal discourses that construct aspiration in more pecuniary terms where subjects must 'win' to 'progress', and implicitly, the opportunity cost of not making lucrative use of Asia as a resource for 'winning'. Statements such as "The Asian century is an Australian opportunity" (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012, p. 1) position the Asian economy as a fertile and subservient site that exists *for* Australian interests (Singh, 1995a). Separate articles in *The Jakarta Post* have identified this positioning, arguing that "most of the points made in the document are written with the expectation that Australia will win out of closer ties with Asia without necessarily giving much back in exchange" (Hunter, 2012). Similarly, Anggraeni (2012) asserts that:

one cannot help seeing between the lines: 'Now that you show promise to be economically significant, we'd like to make friends with you' ... The desire to learn from Asian countries, it seems, is not motivated by the belief that they have some good things to teach Australia, but that Australia needs to know how they operate to avoid 'pitfalls' in doing business with them, or in dealing in other

matters, such as regional security. To think that countries in Asia are unable to sense this patronizing attitude is downright careless.

Although calls for challenges to a strict human capital approach can be found in the White Paper, applying the tactic of mimicry here to identify slippages and inconsistencies in the dominant discourse reveals tensions and ambivalence in this policy. The five key areas of the White Paper include:

- productivity including skills and education, innovation, infrastructure, tax reform and regulatory reform,
- Asia-capabilities as they can be developed primarily through education,
- commercial success,
- security and
- relationships.

The ‘hard edge’ (Henry, 2012) utilitarian focus of the first four areas is challenged by the more philanthropic and harmonious goals of the final area as “stronger relationships will lead to more Australians having a deeper understanding of what is happening in Asia”, yet qualifying this with the addendum that this is essential to ensure “access [to] the benefits of growth in our region” (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012, p. 3). Despite a focus on human capital, Henry (2012) does point to the importance of education, albeit in an aspirational way:

We do need to find ways to encourage our people, young and old, to engage with the region with greater understanding... The new Australian school curriculum provides a place to start... But more needs to be done... Ensuring all Australian students have the opportunity to learn about Asia will help create the demand for acquiring deeper

knowledge. It can act as a gateway for more Australians to move on to higher levels of study. (p. 12)

As Henry (2012) notes, the cross-curriculum priority ‘Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia’ is a good place to start, however as a “gateway” (p. 12) may prove to be problematic. Firstly, “while it includes West and Central Asia, in Australian schools studies will pay particular attention to the sub-regions of: North-east Asia...South-east Asia...South Asia” (ACARA, 2012a). While the priority regions do open up ‘Asia’ beyond the strategic development boundaries imposed by the White Paper, or the languages identified by the AEF (2012d), it still seeks to delimit Asia in geographical terms. Secondly, organising ideas are primarily history-focussed (see Appendix N), which could lead to inclusion of the priority where it “naturally and most powerfully fit” (AEF, 2012b) being interpreted in ways that delimit other foci, such as culture, religion and language. Finally, there is uncertainty in the curriculum where it states priorities “will have a strong but varying presence depending on their relevance to the learning area” (ACARA, n.d.a). This suggests ambivalence in the curriculum and reflects slippages found in the AEF’s own policy statements which have contributed to stagnating dialogue around Asia literacy (Salter, 2013b). Uniformly measuring, and by implication testing what Chapter Six identified as a complex theoretical space is precarious. It could increase the vulnerability of the priority to becoming tokenistic content merely to meet test requirements, rather than embedded practice. As the AEF (2012d) notes, making content available does not necessarily stimulate study. Additionally, the decision to use the general capabilities to assess, particularly the capability of Intercultural Understanding, likewise raises concerns about assessing complex theoretical spaces. Despite the privileging of three aspects that privilege more cultural than strategic arguments: empathy, respect, responsibility, it is unclear how these may be assessed, or even

if they can be, and if this will lead to tokenism rather than consistent critical engagement with the complexities of knowing ‘culture’; a term acknowledged as contested by ACARA too as indicated in the rationale for the Intercultural Understanding capability: “the nature and place of intercultural learning are by no means settled and the definition of the term ‘culture’ is itself not agreed upon” (ACARA, 2012b, p. 85). Engaging with this capability points to significant theoretical work for teachers to understand the capability themselves first before they look to engage students.

This further resonates with the AEF’s implicit suggestion to reconceptualise teachers’ cultural maps (Crozet et al., 1999) to help create demand for knowing Asia, which in turn points to the importance of complex negotiations with knowing Asia. In June 2012 the AEF released the report: *Building Demand for Asia Literacy: What Works* (2012d), which focuses on the ways to build demand among students, their parents and school leaders for Asia literacy. The report endorses a close link between studies of Asia and learning Asian languages, and in doing so ties its definitions of Asia to “six Asian languages...Vietnamese and Hindi added to the four national target languages – Chinese (Mandarin), Indonesian, Japanese and Korean.” (p. 6). The report “proposes that *not enough has been done to drive change through building demand*” [italics in original] (p. 2), highlighting the “*specific task related to studies of Asia is to build demand among practitioners to change some of the conventions of their practice*” [italics in original] (p. 2) three elements of which are:

1. *A persuasive personal encounter* [the media for which is varied]
2. *A clear course of action*...sanctioned and encouraged by an appropriate body or policy, and
3. *Collegial influence and support*. ([Italics in original] pp. 2-3)

The “best available evidence”¹ (AEF, 2012d, p. 7) cited in the report notes that “simply making content or focus on Asia available as an option in courses does not appear to be stimulating the study of Asia” (Wilkinson & Milgate, 2009, p. ii). Furthermore, a key observation is made that points to the importance of teachers’ engagement and theoretical work around Asia literacy, and compares it to theoretical and pedagogical work traditionally devoted to the key learning areas:

In terms of school personnel, it is necessary to consider the crucial affective complement to the acquisition of a new teacher perhaps, or a new program. That is, the interest and will to make the inclusion of studies of Asia and the teaching and learning of Asian languages core, standard educational business, treated with as much care and attention as, for example, Mathematics.(AEF, 2012d, p. 8).

Additionally, the need to “*familiarise learners with the target culture*” is highlighted, bringing “the narrative of the report full circle” (p. 31). This summarises the key message of the report that:

Most of the examples provided throughout this report are about familiarising young people with the target cultures in one way or another. The task is to build this into an anticipated, consistent and commonplace experience for young Australians. It will be then that the task of building demand is replaced as a focal point for action by other issues. (p. 31)

The report concludes by pointing directly to the importance of, what I have called following Crozet et al. (1999), teachers’ cultural maps, yet failing to address explicitly how they can be challenged in meaningful ways:

The frame of reference for the teaching of many Australian teachers (along with their cultural and educational backgrounds) is Europe, not *Asia*. This lends the task some very distinctive characteristics, as well as challenges, and significantly diminishes the research and recorded experience which can be drawn on. ([italics in original] AEF, 2012d, p. 33)

There is a seeming contradiction in the report that implicitly highlights teachers' theoretical work. On the one hand the report notes that engaging with the three elements will make no progress if teachers' cultural maps are not addressed and that support or funding will do little to shift teachers if they are locked in to a Eurocentric framework. On the other hand, the three elements of building demand point to teachers' epistemological knowledge that draws on cultural maps (Crozet et al., 1999) which can be reconceptualised through personal encounters, and are often crucial to challenging cultural misconceptions (Buchanan, 2004; Dyer, 2010; Halse, 1999; Hill & Thomas, 1998; Mills, 2008). Furthermore, a clear course of action and collegial influence can help support teachers in reconceptualising their cultural maps (Crozet et al., 1999) by giving the task space and time to be developed. This reading supports looking beyond Eurocentric frameworks to create demand for convergence (Nakata, 2012; Nakata et al., 2012) of alternate and multiple reference points, such as knowing Asia and re-orientating discourse to a human agency approach.

Current discourses of Asia literacy continue to situate it within a narrow human capital, rather than a more encompassing human capability approach, that is offered by Sen (1997). Yet, slippages in policy texts open up space to privilege these other readings. If developed using Sen's (1997) notion of capabilities, it could serve as a potential enabling practice for knowing Asia. Taking up Saito's (2003, p. 21) notion of 'freedom', positioning Asia literacy as an

economic imperative might construct negative representations of knowing Asia as ‘freedom from’ ineffectiveness, rather than enabling choice and agency in engaging with a ‘freedom to’ know Asia. Sen’s notion of capability expands on human agency in policy discourse of capabilities. His notion foregrounds productive capabilities to lead lives and capabilities ‘to know’; focussing “on the ability of human beings to lead lives they have reason to value and to enhance the substantive choices they have” (Sen, 1997, p. 1959). Sen (1993) differentiates human capital that “tends to concentrate on the agency of human beings in augmenting productions possibilities” from human capability that “focuses on the ability – the substantive freedom – of people to lead the lives they have reason to value and to enhance the real choices they have” (p. 293). As discussed in Chapter Five, a human capital model of Asia literacy is identified within the social contract that implicitly offers incentives of increased job opportunities if frogs endeavour to escape the well, potentially seeing “human beings in terms of their usefulness only” (Sen, 1997, p. 1960). Sen (1997) argues that “capability serves as the means not only to economic production (to which the perspective of ‘human capital usually points), but also to social development” (p. 1960), resonating with social covenant explored in Chapter Five. Foregrounding social development indicates “broadening that is needed is additional and cumulative, rather than being an alternative to the ‘human capital’ perspective” (p. 1960). In extending this language to the White Paper, those considered ‘Asia-capable’ “are not merely means of production (even though they excel in that capacity)” of Australia’s success in the Asian century, “but [are] also the end of the exercise” (p. 1960).

Primarily, a language of Asia-capability supported by Sen’s (1997) theory of human capability could be considered a step forward as it privileges choice and agency in knowing Asia, rather than dictate that one must ‘be Asia-literate’ in a definitive way (Williamson-Fien, 1994). Capability is represented as aspirational (Sen, 1987) and resonates with the link made

by school leaders in Chapter Five between Asia literacy and cultural capacity. This aspirational representation allows for increased dialogue on what it means ‘to know’ Asia, rather what is ‘known’ as teachers struggle with in Chapter Six. Furthermore, notions of agency enhance investigation of the complexity of engagement with Asia literacy. The notion of capabilities, “is designed to leave room for choice, and to communicate the idea that there is a big difference between pushing people into functioning in ways you consider valuable and leaving the choice up to them.” (Nussbaum, 2003, p. 40). Education can play a role in the expansion of capabilities through both the expansion of a child’s capacity or ability and expansion in opportunities the child has (Saito, 2003). Thus, it is reasonable to present a circular argument that “education which plays a role in expanding the child’s capabilities should be a kind of education that makes people autonomous” (Saito, 2003, p. 28) as “education enables people to yield capabilities, and these capabilities can be the means to develop economic growth, and again economic growth enables people to attain further capabilities” (p. 32). This autonomy is necessary to navigate knowing Asia, and a quality that could be argued is integral to efficacy of cultural understanding, as demonstrated by Teacher 4 in Chapter Six who positioned travel experiences as a change agent, demonstrating explicit efficacy to negotiate notions of authenticity (see Chapter Six: Teacher Talk: I just don’t want to get it wrong).

The notion of autonomy is also relevant to the positioning of frogs in Chapter Five where it was unclear if students were being encouraged to ‘jump’ and escape the well in ways they considered valuable for their own imagined futures, as in ‘freedom to’, or if they are being pushed out of the well to conform with leaders’ normative aspirations, as ‘freedom from’. Here again, the tensions highlighted in Chapter Five provide a basis from which to show that the “sense of ‘freedom’ used here should be understood as enabling rather than deficit – that

is, in terms of ‘freedom to’, rather than ‘freedom from’” (Saito, 2003, p. 21). Empowering students with Asia-relevant capabilities and getting them to use them are different matters. Similarly, teachers’ struggles with engaging with ‘tricky Asia’ in Chapter Six are relevant where they perceive their initial struggle with a ‘tricky sort of subject’ within a binary in which they will ‘get it wrong’, rather than something they will ‘get right’. It is not only the mere insertion of Asia-related content into the curriculum that matters, but the “need to develop the judgement of the person to be able to value in which way it is appropriate to use capabilities” (Saito, 2003, p. 29). This is pertinent whether it is school leaders who seek to develop these capabilities in their students, as in Chapter Five, or teachers themselves that seek efficacy in their ability to make their own judgements about knowing Asia in Chapter Six. Developing this judgement is a necessary precursor to navigating existing imperial epistemologies (Chen, 2010), and reworking cultural maps (Crozet et al., 1999).

Knowing in schools.

Chapter Five reveals that at the school site, slippage is evident in articulations of policy as both social covenant and social contract. Although human capital aspects of social contract offered at the site are discernible, school leaders take up the frog metaphor to imagine ‘knowing Asia’ through a dominant empowerment discourse that aligns more with social covenant. This also highlights a site of future struggle, as leaders’ normative imagining of ‘knowing Asia’ potentially delimits students’ ability to imagine their own versions of an ‘Asia literate’ future and jeopardises their autonomy (Saito, 2003) to exercise human agency in a way they choose, rather than are pushed to (Nussbaum, 2003). Furthermore, in Chapter Six teachers’ epistemological struggles over ‘authentic’ knowledge of Asia demonstrate further uncertainty around ‘knowing Asia’. It is difficult to ‘know Asia’ in a definitive way (Williamson-Fien, 1994) but to conceive it as complex might leave teachers to struggle in a

‘stuck place’ (Nakata, 2012). A ‘stuck place’ is one where the imperative to change paradigms is recognised, however the struggle to reconcile cultural and/or historical ‘baggage’ is seemingly insurmountable. While originally coined to describe the dilemma faced by Indigenous academics seeking to reconcile and negotiate how they are positioned as ‘Indigenous’, particularly the need to interrogate notions of polarised identities within Indigenous and Western scholarship, it is a relevant concept here as a way to conceptualise the epistemological crisis precipitated by the complexity of avoiding polarisation in an imaginary marked by binary thinking. Similarly, the conditions of Asia literacy are constrained by singularising tendencies of positioning Asia literacy as an Australian imperative; “to promote the study of Asia within Australia and by Australians...learned by Australian students, taught by Australian teachers and promoted by the Australian government” (Hughes, 2012, p. 3) and assumes teachers must be literate in all things ‘Asian’ (Williamson-Fien, 1994). The narrative possibility of Asia literacy is constrained by the premise of the Asia literacy ‘solution’ (Salter, 2013b) that Asia is so exotic and foreign that an entire educational program is warranted to engage with it. This premise perpetuates us/them and East/West binaries that polarise representations of cultural identity within Australia-Asia dialogue. Therefore, the ‘stuck place’ in the context of Asia literacy is a space to negotiate and ‘rework’ the polarisation of Australia and Asia.

Across the three contexts of the policy trajectory in this thesis there is also an evident struggle over the dilemma of ‘knowing Asia’ as an entity that needs either definition, location, or at times both. Common to all policy documents examined thus far is the use of pre-given themes or groupings that suggest fixed geographies (Appadurai, 2001, p. 8) for knowing Asia. Disrupting such pre-given themes is challenging. The struggles with authenticity, and ‘doing it right’ experienced by the teachers in Chapter Six, reflects tensions that Nakata

(2007) likens to a “tug-of-war...and both informs as well as limits what can be said and what is to be left unsaid in the everyday” (p. 12). Acknowledgement of diversity initially appears to support understandings of the problematic nature of defining Asia, yet the data reveal that for some, this diversity is perceived as part of the larger binary relationship between the West and Asia where the West is accepted as normative and Asia is presented as inherently, or in this case, *completely* different. Teachers, operating within this binary, position knowing Asia as epistemologically difficult and potentially intangible in a classroom setting. Teachers’ discourse of ‘trickiness’ suggests both their recognition that knowing Asia is complex and their inability to identify the theoretical work required to engage with this ‘trickiness’. A struggle for clarity in knowing Asia is evident: why Asia, what Asia, which Asia and who’s Asia? Identifying responses to the dominant discourse through slippages and sites of struggle reveals that exclusive representations of the Asia literacy ‘solution’ (Salter, 2013b) may neglect other transformative ways (Ashcroft, 2001) of knowing Asia.

3. Reception of Asia literacy policy.

Through the reception of Asia literacy policy alternative representations of ‘knowing Asia’ are imagined, and counter-narratives to the dominant economic rationale emerge through the localised enactment of policy. In ways that parallel my re-deployment of slippages in policy texts and the perpetuation of these slippages in policy enactment, looking to the ways school leaders and teachers work in this new context offered by Ashcroft demonstrates school agents’ “efficacy of *engagement*” [italics in original] (Ashcroft, 2001, p. 101). These actors mediate dominant discourses in enactment; pointing to the important role policy actors play in knowing Asia.

Chapter Five documents school leaders' take-up of the call for Asia literacy, appropriating and transforming it to suit their localised context in their take-up of the frog metaphor.

Leaders' efficacy to mobilise the school vision to negotiate perceived deficit in the school, to position aspiration as a cultural capacity for realising a collectively imagined future inserts a counter-narrative of 'knowing Asia' for liberation (Salter, 2013a). Implicit in this narrative is the benefit of increased human capital if frogs escape the well however leaders have resisted an explicit economic project that is language-driven, opting instead for a humanities driven approach.

Chapter Six documents how school teachers both embrace and resist knowing Asia, further problematising the notion that Asia can be discretely identified and inserted into curriculum. There are moments of agency where teachers inflect curriculum with notions of hybridity and even deflect the initiative itself for novice teachers. There is also a dominant moment of restraint where teachers' cultural maps (Crozet et al., 1999) inhibit their engagement with Asia literacy as they fear 'getting it wrong' as it is a 'tricky sort of subject matter'. While keen to 'bring it on', they deflect Asia literacy, resisting it in the case of 'putting it on the back burner' for beginning teachers. In this counter-narrative Asia is represented as a 'tricky sort of subject matter' for teachers in a stuck place (Nakata, 2012). For some this is too 'tricky' to engage with effectively which calls into question dominant policy accounts that suggest incorporating Asia in the curriculum requires minimal changes. As noted in Chapter Six, a parallel 'insertion' approach to incorporating Asia literacy into curriculum has resulted in limited engagement with the theoretical work of reconceptualising teachers' cultural maps (Crozet et al., 1999).

Destabilisation.

Alternative narratives of knowing Asia reveal a necessary but insufficient condition of representational practices. While counter-narratives call into question the dominant discourse and provide examples of how this discourse can be interrupted, they do not offer a way forward in overturning it. What these interjections do highlight is a dialogue, rather than fixed representation of knowing Asia, where Asia literacy is represented as a living utterance (Bakhtin, 1981) woven by particular socio-ideological consciousness. As counter-narratives they work as a form of resistance to open up the space of 'knowing Asia' and potentially redirect it, however the limitations of this strategy include its failure to engage with the problem of historical representation itself and a failure to critically explore the implications of the Asia literacy 'solution'. On the contrary, this calls for a destabilisation of the very forms through which the dominant discourse is produced, consumed and exchanged. This leads to the final aspect adapted from Ashcroft's (2001) lens: interpolation, which:

counters Althusser's proposition of the *interpellation* of the subject, by naming the process by which colonized subjects may resist the forces designed to shape them as 'other'. Interpolation describes the access such 'interpellated' subjects have to a counter-discursive agency. This strategy involves the capacity to interpose, to intervene, to interject a wide range of counter-discursive tactics into the dominant discourse without asserting a unified anti-imperial intention, or a separate oppositional purity. [italics in original] (p. 47)

There is a critical difference between what can be 'known', in a distinct way, and seeking more fluid ways 'to know'. This is a central tenet to the overarching argument of this thesis as it seeks to explore the interpellation of constructs of Asia in policy discourse. Cosmonauts (Oikonomidou, 2011) work with the latter as navigators of multilayered spaces in education.

Building on Chen's work in *Asia as Method* (2010), navigation work can be characterised by multilayered practices that generate a system of multiple reference points. The navigation motif is also often used to describe the experiences of Indigenous learners and educators. They are positioned as "navigators" (Nakata, Nakata, & Chin, 2008, p. 141) in the "cultural interface" where "things are not clearly black or white, Indigenous or Western" (Nakata, 2007, p. 9). Similarly, critical syncretism (Chen, 2010) advocates for a cultural interface where binaries such as Asian/Western, or Indigenous/Western, are recognised as an unnecessary polarisation of knowledge systems. Nakata (2007) suggests that navigating such interfaces is an intricate and complex endeavour, especially within the conditions of imperialist cultural imaginaries:

In this space are histories, politics, economics, multiple and interconnected discourses, social practices and knowledge technologies which condition how we all come to look at the world, how we come to know and understand our changing realities in the everyday, and how and what knowledge we operationalize in our daily lives. Much of what we bring to this tacit and unspoken knowledge, those assumptions by which we make sense and meaning in our everyday world...in intellectual discourse, translation [between ways of understanding reality] has already occurred. Indigenous knowledge is re-presented and re-configured as part of the "corpus" about us [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders peoples] and is already discursively bounded, ordered and organised by others and their sets of interests. (p. 9)

Asian knowledge systems may be subject to a similar discursive bind if representations of knowing Asia in both policy text and enactment are not critically interrogated, as previously

acknowledged in literature that documents the potential damage of Oriental legacies (Dooley & Singh, 1996; Hamston, 1996; LoBianco, 1996; Nozaki & Inokuchi, 1996; Williamson-Fien, 1996). Additionally, as Hughes (2012) notes, there appears to be

little evidence of the involvement of foreign, ‘Asian’ governments in the formulation of Asia literacy initiatives; of Asian educators in the teaching of Asia to Australian students; and existing Asia literacy [including knowledge of Asian languages] possessed by Australian school students is excluded from mechanisms which measure Australia’s Asia literacy. (p. 3)

Asia knowledge is potentially bound, ordered and organised within the polycyspeak ‘Asia literacy’ by government and economic human capital interests (Salter, 2013b). As Nakata (2007) notes, it is important to consider what happens when

knowledge is documented in ways that disembodies it from the people who are its agents, when the ‘knowers’ of that knowledge are separated out from what comes to be ‘the known’, in ways that dislocates it from its locale, and separates it from the social institutions that uphold and reinforce its efficacy, and cleaves it from the practices that constantly renew its meanings in the here and now. (p. 9)

Additionally, simplistic representations of imperialist Western frameworks embedded in cultural maps within which these representations are made, serves only to heighten epistemic tensions (Chen, 2010; Nakata et al., 2012).

Postcolonial theory offers a lens that emphasises navigating new maps for Asia literacy.

Drawing postcolonial discourse into approaches to intercultural education serves to:

emphasise the ‘inter’ acknowledging that in this inter-sphere questions of history, power and domination are not excluded, but, instead, raised and openly discussed...it should not be perceived primarily as a place of encounter but of negotiation and discussion”. (Fiedler, 2007, p. 55)

While Chen (2010) and Nakata et al. (2012, p. 132) agree that a critique of complex colonial histories and legacies is prerequisite in decolonising work, a further transformative step, as also advocated by Ashcroft (2001), is necessary. “Convergence” (Nakata, 2012; Nakata et al., 2012), rather than division, is needed, and “not as a one-way process” (Fiedler, 2007, p. 55). Convergence calls for human agency to employ effective strategies to explore complexities such as “more language and tools for navigating, negotiating, and thinking about the constraints and possibilities that are open at this challenging interface” (Nakata et al., 2012, p. 133). Epistemological critique that encourages participants to interrogate their own conceptual limitations, and the conceptual limitations of all the ideas and discussions put forward in the learning space is a key tool in this navigation for both Nakata et al (2012) and Chen (2010). Such a navigator could be “disposed more towards more uncertain, less resolved, but more complex critical analysis” (Nakata et al., 2012, p. 134) and appreciate the polyphony of discursive possibilities (as explored in Chapter Five) of this space where juxtaposition, supplementation, contradiction and interrelation (Bakhtin, 1981) are prevalent. Chen (2010) advocates for an “articulating agent” in such an analysis:

critical for building connections across structures...especially conscious of cultivating and even occupying identities defined by multiple structures. By operating simultaneously within different structures, the articulating agent is able to link different subject positions into an overarching struggle. (p. 99)

As the workforce of reform (Connell, 1991), school leaders and teachers are positioned as agents that can lead this navigation work. As discussed in the previous chapter, Bhabha's (1995) notion of hybridity is useful when contesting the territories of separate or totalising frameworks that work to engender binaries such as us/them, colonised/coloniser, East/West. Those without tools or efficacy to attend to hybridity (Bhabha, 1995) struggle to reconcile their position straddling what are traditionally positioned as oppositional paradigms, finding themselves to be in a "stuck place" (Nakata, 2012) where the binaries are perpetuated by singularising tendencies (Chen, 2010). This place resonates for the teachers in the previous chapter, where notions of Asia being 'too tricky' resonate with being 'stuck'. Key themes of 'authentic knowledge' and 'not wanting to get it wrong' highlight issues surrounding constructions of cultural knowledge of Asia, and the limits of teachers' existing cultural maps. Attending to these themes opens new possibilities for Asia literacy. Western-orientated cultural maps facilitate problematic binary thinking, which makes it epistemologically difficult to imagine cultural identities alternative to current conceptions of such identities.

What this points to are the tensions inherent in navigating new maps that grow "ever more real" in their engagement with Asia on its own terms, but "are much less true" (Winterson, 1989, p. 88) to an Asia imagined through Western knowledge systems. Destabilising binaries emphasises the living dialogue (Bakhtin, 1981) of discourses that seek to know Asia in ways that can both align with, and at the same time challenge, dominant discourse, as demonstrated by school leaders' translation of policy in locally specific ways in Chapter Five. As Nakata (2007) notes, it is the lived experiences of people such as the teachers in Chapter Six; enthusiastic to engage with Asia but struggling in a 'stuck place' with notions of authenticity and 'doing it right', that is the "point of entry for investigations, not the case under

investigation” (p. 12). Fiedler (2007) also suggests: “In such spaces dialogue concerning the difference ha[s] to be re-instated (taking historical baggage into account), rather than initiated, and identities ha[ve] to be re-negotiated, rather than formed or fixed” (p. 56). The dilemma of teachers in the previous chapter points to a crucial opportunity, rather than position of deficit, in the epistemological exploration of knowing Asia. Navigating the complexities of ‘tricky Asia’ from the “stuck place” (Nakata, 2012) leads to the search for enabling practices; modes of disrupting current thinking with acknowledgement that convergences of knowledge will include both diversions and collisions, and dares to position education as a site of inquiry and critical engagement with identity and difference (Fiedler, 2007).

Destabilisation seeks to develop capabilities (Sen, 1997) to navigate discourses of knowing Asia to open the cultural interface (Nakata, 2007). This resonates with Singh’s (1995b) call to incorporate a “multi-vocal account of places and peoples” (p. 7). Yet the premise of the Asia literacy project, initiated to include Asia in the Australian curriculum narrative, means the only “narrative possibility is to use the master discourse or nothing” (Kong, 1995, p. 93). Asia, despite school actors’ critical engagement with its inherent complexity, will always be subject to risks of being “flattened and depoliticised” (Kong, 1995, p. 95) in representations. It is difficult, especially for a Western-orientated workforce, to resist the temptation to normalise cultural contexts by making sense of them within colonial narratives (Prakesh cited in Williamson-Fien, 1996, p. 39). The dilemma of trying to open the narrative space and facilitate the cultural interface (Nakata, 2007) is not so much of explanation, but of navigation to “live out the experiential and the theoretical...to articulate a geography of the possible” (Kong, 1995, p. 94).

While positioning the dominant discourse as a hegemonic and imperialising force framed by Western cultural maps offers a useful framework for analysis, it does not offer a way forward, and it is here that most analyses end, identifying binaries and using them as a useful heuristic device but not offering a way beyond them. Thinking in binaries *is* the problem as it is epistemologically limiting (Lin, 2012): it potentially garners obsessions making it difficult to see beyond them, rather than questioning them. Binarism creates a form of “analytical impasse” (Chen, 2010, p. 217) which requires more than mere critique. As Ashcroft (2001) notes:

The remedy is not the ‘re-insertion’ but ‘re-vision’; not the re-insertion of the marginalised into representation but the appropriation of a method...In Bakhtin’s terms this means to re-inscribe the ‘heteroglossia’, the hybrid profusion...and, by so doing, to change our view. (p. 98)

The method I employ to ‘re-vision’ Asia literacy is a ‘reconceptualisation’ of the pre-existing cultural maps (Crozet et al., 1999) that have shaped knowing Asia as ‘knowing Other’, to seek to change the view of these “tangible maps” (Crozet et al., 1999, p. 4) to facilitate discursive agency to ‘knowing Asia’. I draw on Chen’s (2010) concept of critical syncretism to propose a way to re-vision Asia literacy.

4. Reconceptualisation of how ‘knowing Asia’ could be otherwise.

Reconceptualisation involves critical reflection of the epistemologies in dominant discourses, or in other words, reworking Australian cultural maps (Crozet et al., 1999) for engaging with knowing Asia. At its core it is meta-awareness of a Western-orientated framework through which knowing Asia is usually talked about. As previously noted, Asia literacy is “an

Australian construct, is defined from an Australian, Western perspective in accordance with the type of knowledge desirable for Australian students” (Hughes, 2012, p. 5). This construct recognises Asia only when it is compared to the West as a universal reference point. This reveals persistent binaries and ‘Othering’ in representations of ‘us’ and ‘them’: ‘we’ or ‘us’ Australians need to know about ‘them’, Asians, for these reasons, or ‘we’ find it difficult to know about ‘them’.

The tendency to see the world in terms of binaries which structure Western thought neglects dialectical spaces for knowing Asia and it does not allow Asia a ‘voice’ in this process or a mechanism to ‘speak back’ to un-interrogated notions of Asia. Borrowing from Mizoguchi Yuzo’s *China as Method*, Chen (2010) invokes ‘Asia as method’, where “Asia refers to an open-ended imaginary space...as an attempt to move beyond existing limits, and as a gesture toward something more productive...as a mediating process.” (p. 282). This method corresponds with the navigation metaphor introduced in the previous chapter and continued in this chapter, and moves away from the dominance of one reference point to instead engage with “constant inter-referencing and the dialectic of comparison” (Chen, 2010, p. 252) to “avoid judging any country, region, or culture as superior or inferior to any other, and to tease out historical transformations within the base-entity, so that the differences can be properly explained” (p. 250). Critical syncretism seeks to expand human agency to offer multiple points for identity articulation, more than a colonised/coloniser dichotomy:

Critical syncretism takes an alternative understanding of subjectivity as its starting point. Only through multilayered practices can one become others.

The aim is not simply to rediscover the suppressed voices of the multiple subjects within the social formation, but to generate a system of multiple

reference points that can break away from the self-producing neo-colonial framework. (p. 101)

Such an understanding is “careful not to make the mistake of setting up just one reference as the ultimate point against which to measure the self and others” (p. 107), highlighting reflexivity as a paramount concern to resist singularising tendencies. It emphasises two facets; multiplicity and hybrid aspects of Asia to “step out of the straitjacket of identity categories defined by the (former or neo) coloniser” (Lin, 2012, p. 160). Multiplicity generates a picture of multiple axes of power (race, gender, class etc) that continually intersect and (re)structure social relations, assigning people to particular identities and locating their differences through particular socio-historical contexts. Within these variations, hybrid aspects are also examined. Such multiplicity creates a heteroglossic construction (Bakhtin, 1981) of knowing Asia; an utterance that belongs to Australia and characterised by Australia’s unique engagement with Asia, but that actually contains mixed within it multiple utterances, multiple epistemologies and multiple reference points.

Within this construction there may be no formal boundaries between utterances. Integral to this is the blurring of traditional boundaries for cultural imaginaries. Chen’s notion of ‘cultural imaginary’ exists parallel to ‘cultural maps’ (Crozet et al., 1999), referring “to an operating space within a social formation, in which the imaginary perception of the Other and self-understanding are articulated” (Chen, 2010, p. 111). Making explicit the Australian cultural lens through which observation about others is made (Henderson, 2004a) requires making explicit historical representations of Asia that are heteroglossic (Bakhtin, 1981): “the complexity of the situation is the complexity of history. The past is inevitably appropriated to explain and respond to the present” (Chen, 2010, p. 178). It is widely recognised that Australia’s engagement with Asia has been marginalised due to historical and cultural

relations with Europe, the United States and Asia itself (Fitzgerald, 1995; FitzGerald, 1997; 2002; Jeffrey, 2003; Milner, 2009; Rizvi, 1996; Singh, 1995a, 1995b, 1996a) and imperialism as an “object of identification” (Chen, 2010, p. 178) has always been tied to the identity of colonised Australia. These identities have been so integral to Australia’s modern cultural imaginary that efforts to unsettle Australian settling colonialism are epistemologically problematic. It is therefore difficult to critically engage with this imaginary in genuinely reflexive ways. Ensuring that knowing Asia through critical syncretism acquires ‘normality’ is therefore problematised by this historical legacy and requires reconceptualisation beyond an imperial Eurocentric reference point.

Reflexivity is integral to this reconceptualisation. It is, by implication, calling for the re-orientation of Australian cultural maps (Crozet et al., 1999) through decolonisation of the Australian psyche, an:

attempt ... to reflectively work out a historical relation[ship] ... This can be a painful process involving the practice of self-critique, self-negation, and self-rediscovery, but the desire to form a less coerced and more reflexive and dignified subjectivity necessitates it. (Chen, 2010, p. 3)

An added complexity for Australia is that decolonisation refers to the former coloniser and other subaltern identities Western-orientated Australia seeks to colonise, in this case Asia, but also, for example, Indigenous Australians. Thus, the convergence (Nakata, 2012; Nakata et al., 2012) of critical syncretism (Chen, 2010) holds potential benefits both for Asian-Australian and Indigenous-Australian knowledge through contrapuntal analysis.

Conclusion

In appropriating critical syncretism as a conceptual framework for reconceptualisation, I acknowledge that Chen's foremost aim was not to de-colonise curriculum inquiry, however his critical insight and theory have significant import for critical curriculum and education work (Lin, 2012). Some facets of Australia have already been engaged in the call for critical syncretism. For example, in 2002, the Asian Studies Association of Australia argued for the repositioning and renewal of Australia's Asia knowledge in 2002 (Fitzgerald, Jeffrey, Maclean, & Morris-Suzuki, 2002). Also at this time, founder of the University of New South Wales (UNSW) Asia-Australia Institute Stephen Fitzgerald (2002) lamented the 'lost debate':

About the way Australia, and Australia at the level of policy and foreign relations between states, and business and university relations, discovered, engaged, enmeshed, became part - with, of, in, or about - Asia. It was about - not replacing the Western, never about replacing the Western - but about making a place alongside it for Asia by broadening the cultural horizons and changing the intellectual universe of Australians. (para 10)

In 2012, John Menadue (2012) likened this loss to Australia 'going on a long smoko', both "enriched and trapped by Anglo-Celtic culture" and reiterated that the "key is for Australia to be open...open to new people, new investment, new trade, new languages and new ideas" (p. 4).

This thesis aims to recover this debate to call for widespread mainstream reconceptualisation of 'knowing Asia'. This chapter highlights the importance of engaging in destabilisation of the dominant discourse, further pointing to the importance of theoretical work in curriculum enactment. Thus, to know Asia requires a disruption of the discourse of Asia as a unitary

construct with questions of what constitutes Asia and exploration of how such questions open up space for schools to engage with Asia literacy. This work, as Nakata (2007) suggests, “theorise[s] knowledge from a particular and interested position...to better reveal the workings of knowledge and how understanding...is caught up and is implicated in its work” (p. 12). School leaders and teachers are the workforce of destabilisation work; they can take up curriculum as a key site to transform existing cultural imaginaries as “the articulating agents and linking points of decolonisation”, and who at the very least “must strive to decolonise” (Chen, 2010, p. 113) themselves. This discursive work points to the positioning of educators as cosmonauts (Oikonomidou, 2011) and their work that requires them to chart new and all maps that inform their lives as theoretical and intellectual (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Giroux, 1985a, 1985b; Hudson, 2012; Macintyre Latta & Wunder, 2012; Smyth, 2001). More than a policy or curriculum enclave, this points to a genuine “step change” (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012, p. 167) needed for approaching knowing Asia: reconceptualising the Australian cultural imaginary through critical reflection on the Australian cultural map.

Notes

1. This evidence comes from an Australian Council for Educational Research study. The explanation of what makes this the ‘best’ is given in a footnote as follows: “There is very limited information available about what is actually taught in Australian classrooms. The virtue of this study is that it deals with defined syllabi with content students must study or choose from. Also, because of the public nature of this process, it is fair to expect that policy is more likely to be honoured in these subjects than in less clearly defined teaching practice. Thus this is likely to be a best case scenario.” (AEF, 2012d, p. 7).

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

Introduction

This study explored the notion that definitions of Asia are complex and therefore ‘knowing Asia’ in curriculum is a dialogic and dynamic process. The definitional problems of static notions of Asia and the difficulty and impracticality (Williamson-Fien, 1994, 1996) of the policy call to be Asia literate presents clear challenges for Asia literacy as a policy and curriculum imperative. This thesis examines this problematic nature and proposes instead the term ‘knowing Asia’, and recommends a conceptualisation of ‘Asia literacy’ as a process of ‘knowing’ that requires navigation of multi-layered spaces and constructs of Asia, rather than a knowledge destination where Asia can be ‘known’ in a unitary way.

In the proposed re-vision of Asia literacy, the process of ‘knowing’ opens up space to seek and traverse multiple directions, and identify guides in varied authors and voices. In ‘knowing’ too, this re-vision of Asia literacy therefore does not locate a fixed beginning to ‘know’ or an end-point that is ‘known’. As developed in Chapter Three, the methodology reflected this complexity through an iterative process that highlighted conceptual dialogue between critical bricolage, policy trajectory and an intersecting generative lens of reconceptualisation (Ashcroft, 2001) as complementary methods “grounded in an epistemology of complexity” (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005, p. 317). This methodology prioritised asking critical and theoretical questions rather than simple problem solving ones (Ball, 1993, p. 16). It did not attempt to explain Asia literacy policy, but instead explored Asia literacy policy as a social phenomenon using a case study approach to investigate localised complexity in conjunction with a broader critical analysis of relevant policy and curriculum documents. Furthermore, findings of this exploration are cross-examined through

a dialogic reconsideration across and between all contexts of the policy trajectory to offer an alternative conceptualisation of knowing Asia.

Navigating the key arguments

This study has identified and examined the interrelated discourses of Asia literacy that operate to mutually supplement, contradict, and juxtapose each other in both policy texts and enactment in schools. It has illuminated the dominant human capital paradigm that has persisted in shifting policies over time, particularly the economic discourse of Asia literacy and the constraint and agency that one group of school leaders and teachers experienced in their enactment of these policies. It has demonstrated that it is not the mere insertion of Asia-related content into the curriculum that matters, but the “need to develop the judgement of the person to be able to value in which way it is appropriate to use capabilities” (Saito, 2003, p. 29). This is pertinent whether it is school leaders who seek to develop these capabilities in their students, as in Chapter Five, or teachers themselves that seek efficacy in their ability to make their own judgements about knowing Asia in Chapter Six. Developing this judgement is a necessary precursor to navigating existing imperial epistemologies (Chen, 2010), and reworking cultural maps (Crozet et al., 1999) to find convergence (Nakata, 2012) in and around discourses of and about knowing Asia in Australian education.

Primarily, the framing of Asia literacy as a necessary ‘solution’ (Salter, 2013b) to Australia being a “winner” (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012, p. iii) in the ‘Asian century’ persists in policy. Acceptance of this ‘solution’ (Salter, 2013b) into the mainstream educational policy agenda was problematised as a neoliberal and neocolonial. The dominance of an economic rationale is seemingly impossible to resist. Bacchi’s (1999, 2009) critical policy approach and Bhabha’s (1984, 1995) notion of mimicry identified alternatives to dominant frameworks

found within the policy documents under study. Policy texts employ multiple constructs however their boundaries shift and their purpose oscillates between strategic and cultural ends.

Schools are then left to the task of negotiating these constructs through policy enactment. Indeed, policy implementation at school level is widely recognised as transformative enactment. The agency demonstrated by school leaders in enacting policy imperatives to ‘know Asia’ creates space to imagine localised narrative possibilities that negotiate and potentially challenge policy agendas. Accounts of policy work by school leaders in the school studied were heteroglossic and densely intertextual in their mobilisation and collocation of discourses. A metaphor of a frog in a well is taken up to translate policy in locally specific ways that make it much more than a template of externally devised policy. At the school level constructs for knowing Asia are appropriated and mobilised in a variety of ways adapted both to local social contexts and particular organisational imperatives and structures of the school. Agency to know Asia and participate in the dialogic (Bakhtin, 1981) nature of engaging with Asia is foregrounded in policy enactment.

Teachers’ negotiation of constructs of Asia further contributed to the reformation of the aims and objects of Asia literacy. Teachers in this study were welcoming of this priority; however lacked confidence in their ability to engage with it as “tricky sort of subject matter”. For some, the assumption that knowledge of Asia could be discretely inserted into curriculum created a seemingly insurmountable barrier to knowing Asia in more dialectical ways. In turn, it was suggested that exploring this barrier could reveal new opportunities to theorise curricular responses to Asia literacy. Key to this exploration is engagement with dialectal

and syncretic hybrid spaces (Bakhtin, 1981; Bhabha, 1995; Chen, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2003) in teachers' epistemologies for knowing Asia.

Engaging with these epistemologies requires substantial theoretical work to support teacher efficacy and destabilise dominant neo-colonial discourses of knowing Asia. Applying a theoretical lens to epistemologies serves to illuminate their workings; particularly how they can both influence and prescribe understanding (Nakata, 2007, p. 12). School leaders and teachers, as the practitioners at the centre of destabilisation work, as discussed in the reconceptualisation phase in Chapter Seven, are positioned as “articulating agents and linking points” (Chen, 2010, p. 113) in this discursive work that necessitates human agency (Sen, 1997). Positioning this work as policy ‘enactment’, to draw on a wider scope for theoretical sophistication than suggested by mere policy ‘implementation’ (Ball et al., 2012), allows actors in the school context to negotiate and appropriate policy constructs, and insert their own constructs of Asia. Reconceptualisation offers a lens for articulating the process through which school agents can challenge the human capital paradigm and imagine knowing Asia in alternative and multiple ways. Meeting this challenge draws on the dynamic nature of critical syncretism (Chen, 2010) at the cultural interface (Nakata, 2007) to move forward with and from various constructs of Asia to know Asia in a more dynamic way.

Finally, I draw on the Asian proverb of the frog in the well, used by school leaders in Chapter Five, to summarise what the study has found. Akin to the frogs in the well that see only a small circle of sky, Asia is represented through only a small circle in policy. This circle represents Asia through a Western-oriented and imperialist influenced cultural map: so dominant is this lens that it often does not draw on, represent or acknowledge itself or the possibility of an alternative lens offered by something broader than this small circle despite

Australia's multicultural history. This map is problematic for those seeking to know Asia, such as teachers in this study. Using existing maps to navigate their journey, they struggle to know Asia, positioning it as a 'tricky sort of subject matter' that they 'just don't want to get wrong'. This highlights the importance of understanding and engaging with teachers' epistemologies for knowing Asia. Before issues such as resourcing are taken up for current and future manifestations of Asia literacy, such as the cross-curriculum priority 'Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia' in the emerging Australian Curriculum, teachers' theoretical work in engaging with knowing Asia requires specific attention to develop their capacity for cultural reflection. This points to the importance of critical reflection on cultural mapping as part of teacher identity formation and requires the crucial step of broadening narrow cultural maps to engage teachers in this essential conceptual work. Australia, as the frog in the well, faces a critical juncture – it can stay in the well seeing only a small circle of sky, or, with expanded notions of human agency, it can escape the well to see more of the intricately multi-layered horizon.

Moving forward: this study and future possibilities

The pivotal dilemma in the findings of this study is the complex and dynamic task of knowing Asia and the significance of teachers' theoretical work in enacting this knowledge in schools. It demonstrated that teacher epistemologies – dominated by Western cultural maps – considerably impact on teachers' ability to navigate representations of Asia and Asian knowledge. More specifically, it showed that meta-awareness of a Western framework through which knowing Asia is usually talked about is beneficial to imagining Asia in ways that challenges the dominant human capital paradigm. It established the benefit of critical syncretism (Chen, 2010) to look for multiple reference points for articulation of knowing Asia, emphasising multiplicity and hybrid aspects of Asia. While this study has revealed that

knowing Asia is a potentially complex and difficult task for Australian teachers, further examination of this task would enhance current understandings and support implementation of the school-based strategy to engage with Asia outlined in the White Paper *Australia in the Asian Century* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012).

A limitation of this study is that it relied on the articulations of teachers' representations of knowing Asia through interviews of teachers in one school. Observation and analysis of teachers' representations of knowing Asia in the classroom, and in a variety of school contexts, could further demonstrate the complexity of knowing Asia and teachers' agency and constraint in doing so. An implication of this is also the opportunity to work with teachers and pre-service teachers to engage with the theoretical work highlighted by the study findings to find ways to challenge cultural maps (Crozet et al., 1999) and articulate tangible ways of practicing critical syncretism. Furthermore, qualitative research on students' engagement with knowing Asia is limited (see Hamston, 2006), and observations and interviews could also be extended to students to form a richer, multilayered analysis of the enactment of knowing Asia in schools. Following the statement in the White Paper (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012) to track Australian's knowledge of Asia through measurement of the strategy noted above, this could also contribute rich qualitative data to increase the validity of such a measurement.

Furthermore, given that the notion of critical syncretism (Chen, 2010) implicates the mapping of epistemologies of 'Australia' as well as contrapuntal analysis, findings of further exploration of knowing Asia could contribute to tangible discussions and strategies for realising convergence (Nakata, 2012; Nakata et al., 2012) of potentially dualistic knowledge frameworks on a broader scale. For example, as the origins of the term 'convergence'

suggest, notions of challenging imperial cultural imaginaries, challenging Western cultural maps and navigating multiple spaces of ‘knowing’ resonate in the conceptual frameworks of researchers exploring the intersections of Western and Indigenous cultures. Furthermore, Australian Indigenous knowledges contribute directly to this analysis as they are part of the pool of multiple reference points. Alternately, the research design deployed in this thesis could be relevant to exploring representations of ‘knowing Indigenous Australia’.

Whilst recognising the limitations of this study and the implications for further research, given the renewed impetus for Australia to engage with Asia in the ‘Asian century’, and the responsibility given to education to support this engagement, a study of this nature is a significant contribution. This study does two things: firstly it illuminates the human capital paradigm for knowing Asia evident across the globe (Pang, 2005; Singh, 1996b). While undoubtedly part of a larger response to global economic shifts, this paradigm positions the Asia literacy project in policy as a “neo-colonial project which aspires to understand the object of Australia’s economic desires” (Singh, 1995b, p. 9). Secondly, it uses a theoretical framework to explore epistemologies that both adhere to and challenge this paradigm. The study therefore contributes to the field of intercultural education through theorising a reconceptualisation of epistemologies to engage with ‘knowing Asia’. The call for navigation and dialogue further accentuates “the ‘inter’” in intercultural education as not only “a place of encounter but of negotiation and discussion” (Fiedler, 2007, p. 55).

Thus, the question of ‘where to next’ for ‘Australia in the Asian century’ is significant and highlights the need for empowering navigators to chart new, and multiple, maps. The question however is not what do we need to know to engage with Asia, but rather, how will

we do it in a way that challenges “constraints upon and limitations of thought” (Said, 2003, p. 42)?

Maps...

Many of the teachers in the study found themselves following “broken red lines marking paths that are at best hazardous” (Winterson, 1989, p. 88) in their direction towards the notion that there is a unitary construct of Asia that can be known in an authentic way, and in turn contributed to insecurity around ideas of authenticity and ‘getting it wrong’. Re-making teachers’ maps and navigating new paths requires intellectual work from school leaders and teachers to work beyond analytical and theoretical weaknesses in policy that represent Asia as unitary construct. School agents can navigate multiple references for knowing Asia to create dialectical comparison and work towards spatial richness that is largely unavailable in pre-existing cultural maps. This navigation work points not to fixed maps but the process of mapping itself to make transparent ‘subjective accounts[s]’ of seemingly immutable interpretations, to allow those engaged in this mapping to navigate and engage with even the most complex, dynamic and foreign ‘lay of the land’, and “potentially be changed by it” (Crozet et al., 1999, p. 4).

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Appendix A: Ethics Approval

This administrative form
has been removed

Appendix B: Invitation to Principal

Dear [REDACTED],

I am currently developing a proposal to submit to the James Cook University ethics committee and Education Queensland regarding research into the implementation of Asia literacy in schools. I would like to conduct research at your school, and if you are interested in being part of this research, I require a letter of support from you stating this.

For your information, here is an outline of my project and how I would like the school to be involved.

The project offers a critical analysis of, and response to, the debate of Asia literacy. It maps and analyses the policy development of Asia Literacy in Australia as well as compare the development with international contexts. The research scope also extends to planning and teaching curriculum in schools, documenting and analysing the perspectives of school leaders and teachers on the implementation of Asia literacy. The broad aims of this research project are:

1. Insights for policy responses to Asia literate curriculum.
2. Documentation of existing and emerging curriculum initiatives that facilitate the Asia literacy development of curriculum and schools.

The proposed project is organised into phases, with each phase being framed by one of the three parts of policy analysis framework, namely: policy as text, policy to context and policy in context (Ball, 1993). By conceptualising policy in this way this research project will develop a critical understanding of Asia literate policy trajectory; from Asia literate policy as text to what happens when Asia literate policy, which is a textual intervention into practice, is implemented. The policy to context and policy in context phases of the study require the collection of data from the field, which is when I would like to conduct research at [REDACTED].

This research will be conducted over a period of two years and involve the following:

- In 2011, interviews with [REDACTED] involved in the decision to initiate Asia literacy in the school context (interviews will include requests to nominate suitable interviewees for the next phase of interviewing);
- In 2012, interviews with two groups involved with planning and teaching Asia literacy: Relevant Heads of Curriculum and classroom teachers;
- The information gathered from this study is strictly confidential and participant names, the name of your school and other familiar locations in the area will not appear in the project outputs unless it is specifically requested to be identified. Alongside its primary use in my PhD thesis, the data gathered will be used in research publications and may be used to inform policy makers interested in engaging with Asia literate policy.

The research outcomes will be used in the following ways:

1. As the basis for my doctoral thesis.
2. To inform the implementation of the emerging national curriculum, particularly in regards to the key cross-curriculum dimension 'Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia'.
3. To inform teacher educators of the needs of pre-service teachers to have the discipline and pedagogical knowledge to engage with Asia literate curriculum.

As a school that is participating in the Leading 21st Century Schools: Engage with Asia (L21CS) initiative and has established whole-school processes for embedding studies of Asia into teaching and learning programs, including an Asian language program, and that seeks to foster the development of similar programs in feeder schools, I see [REDACTED] State High School as rich site for this research. In turn, this research can benefit the school by documenting its journey to becoming Asia literate and offering insights into the complexity of this journey that can be potentially considered during further development and also transferred to the implementation of future curriculum initiatives.

I know that [REDACTED] has made significant progress in becoming an Asia literate school and I would really appreciate the opportunity to study this progress further. If you are interested in being involved with this research please forward to me by email a letter of support expressing your interest in being part of this study.

Regards,
Peta Salter

Appendix C: Transcription protocol

TEXT FORMATTING

All interviews have been transcribed using the following formatting:

1. All text begins at the left-hand margin (no indents)
2. Entire document is left justified
3. Page numbers inserted at the bottom right-hand side of the page

Labeling

Individual interview transcripts include the following labeling information at the top of the document:

- Phase of study
- Interviewee identifier
- Date

Example:

Policy to context interview: Deputy Principal
Monday 30th May 2011

Documenting Comments

Comments or questions by the interviewer are typed in italics.
Any comments or responses from participants are typed in normal font.

Example:

So just to clarify, when you say 'we' do you mean the school or?

Yep.

CONTENT

Recordings were transcribed verbatim (i.e., recorded word for word, exactly as said), including any nonverbal or background sounds (e.g., laughter).

Nonverbal sounds typed in parentheses, for example, (laughs).

Mispronounced words are transcribed as the individual said them.

Pauses

If an individual pauses briefly between statements or trails off at the end of a statement, an ellipsis is used. A brief pause is defined as a two- to five second break in speech.

Example:

P: I think...every time we move a little bit forward I see things that I would like to do better and things that we need to go back and address

Questionable Text

When unsure of the accuracy of a statement or word made by a speaker, this statement is highlighted and a question mark placed after it enclosed with parenthesis. The page number of this occurrence is noted to ask the interviewee to clarify where possible when checking the transcript.

Example:

I also when I went to an Axo [?] conference last year on the Australian curriculum

Sensitive Information

If an individual uses their name or that of a colleague during the interview, it has been replaced with an appropriate identification label/naming convention.

Example:

I worked with DP on that...within some of the feeder schools that we have

REVIEWING FOR ACCURACY

All interviews have been transcribed initially by the interviewer, and then checked against the recording and revised accordingly. All transcripts were returned to interviewees for checking and alteration within two weeks of the initial interview.

Appendix D: Sample data analysis

The data analysis process involved the following process:

1. Interview transcription with initial notes on data themes
2. Teacher data grouped into broad categories with analytic notes on points of significance
3. Reflexive analysis of broad categories against identified points of significance and literature
4. Potential deductive themes identified across categories and respective points colour coded
5. Summary of deductive themes identified across broad categories
6. Reflexive application of interviewee's everyday terms as theme headings and analytic concepts, including introduction of one to address positive elements of data that did not align with existing themes
7. Restory of data, theory applied inductively
8. Final use as evidence

The following examples illustrate each of these stages:

1. Interview transcription with initial notes on data themes

And that is definitely something that comes across with the national statement for engaging with Asia...a broad understanding.
Yeah.

You mentioned before that you were looking to discourage stereotypes – are there any elements of Asia literacy that you have found have not been suitable, in terms of that broad understanding has there been anything, in terms of the visions from admin, is there anything that you thought doesn't fit with what is happening in English?

No, I can't isolate anything in particular that is at odds with what we are doing – I don't think so.

So your vision fits well with admin's?

Yes.

How have classroom teachers been involved the incorporation of Asian perspectives?

It varies from classroom to classroom, and I think that the way that the national curriculum is being implemented that is going to have to change, because I think that different teachers are at different stages and having lots of young teachers it is about choosing resources that they are comfortable with. So while we have tried to ask teachers to look at a range of different perspectives and a range of Asian perspectives, because of their youth and inexperience it has not been a major focus. I am more interested that they are using texts that they feel comfortable with using, so it has been varying degrees in different classrooms but I think we have started getting resources that are suitable for the implementation of this and looking at different Asian perspectives but I think that once the national curriculum comes in and it becomes more mandated then people will have to address it but I guess I have put it on the back-burner because of the number of inexperienced staff that we have.

assumption that beginning teachers are unable to engage effectively with AL.

Assumption that beginning teachers are unable to engage effectively with Asia literacy

Would it be fair then to say that you think that teachers need a certain level of expertise or confidence in their subject level to be able to incorporate Asian perspectives into it effectively?

Well I think so and to feel comfortable with the resource and to see that the resource is available there – I guess that relationship with their students as well, to get them to empathise that requires that there are basic levels of respect and there is that trusting relationship in the classroom because some of the students will obviously have what we would consider to have racist opinions and the teachers feeling confident to be able to deal with that is necessary and to be able to frame it in such a way that it is positive and that the messages that come out of the lessons are positive so I think that there is that level of understanding and that level of respect and that relationship in the classroom needs to be there.

job will be racist? conflicts with leader discourse that need to challenge sts - have rationalising why can't challenge sts. BARRIER.

Students will be racist? Conflicts with leader discourse that need to challenge students – here rationalising why can't challenge students - BARRIER

I think it is probably a combination of the two – to have their resources there but then to feel confident as to how that will approach it in the classroom and actually use that resource in the classroom and feel confident of a positive outcome and that would be really important – I think that it is both.

How do you think teachers in general are going to negotiate that balancing act?

It is a tricky one really, with teachers, I don't mean to be negative about young teachers but I think that there are behaviour issues that people are dealing with so to look at things on a deeper level requires that those behaviour issues are managed in the first instance before you can look at approaching those sort of tricky sort of subject matter so I think that that is a challenge to get beyond the classroom management issues in order to be able to have this respectful discussion and have positive outcomes – I think that is always going to be a challenge.

It is a challenge, but then always going to be a challenge – so never do it, or just do it & learn how to cope?

It is a challenge, but then always going to be a challenge – so never do it, or just do it and learn how to cope?

Do you think that that challenge is new in terms of something unique that comes out of Asian perspectives or something that has always been there?

No. I think that it is something that has always been there – there are lot so topics you could choose that could be challenging and that would involve the same sorts of problems. I don't think it is unique to Asian perspectives. Having said that I think that the kids are becoming more tolerant but I think getting kids to engage in a meaningful way you need to have that basic relationship and classroom management and respectful conversation and dialogue.

How have you found students responses to discussions of Asian perspectives – have you found them to be open, or has there been a bit of resistance?

Well, in the class that I have been teaching I have not found any problem with that. I have found them very empathetic and willing to listen and quite surprised or shocked to see the experiences of other people that are totally removed from them – they are intrigued in a lot of cases. I haven't had any problem with that but I would think that is just in senior classes, I don't know that that would necessarily translate in some junior classes and perhaps some other senior classes as well.

– inherently different?

Inherently different?

Is that maybe tied to a level of maturity?

Probably is, but I do think that with the CIS visit and the fact that the intercultural committee having their cultural day and things like that throughout the year that has gone a long way to helping to expose students to other cultures and other perspectives so it has really broadened their understandings so I think that has to be a positive thing and that will continue to play out and be a positive for the classroom as well.

idea of exposing / broadening 'narrow' sb.

Idea of exposing/broadening 'narrow' students

All of these other things happening at the same time are beneficial?

I think so- it really helps to broaden kids' perspectives.

What does the term Asia mean to you?

That's a tricky one. I would say a continent, many cultures, many different cultures. Obviously significant to Australia in terms of its proximity and our

2. Teacher data grouped into broad categories with analytic notes on points of significance

Categories:

- Responses
- Concerns
- HODs
- Perspectives
- Aspirations

Each has a priority but they differ widely:

- Exposure to texts
- Alignment with school key strategic process
- Communicating in workplace with clear vision for 'extension' languages in VET

<p>HODS</p> <p>'vision'/ prioritising</p>	<p>UNIVERSITY 2011</p> <p>No I wouldn't say that I have a distinct vision at this stage ... It is just exposing them to a range of different texts, a range of different cultures and being empathetic to situations and other people, both present and past situations. 1.2</p> <p>international mindedness is a key strategic priority for the school and for our department next year, so we look at how to embed that more effectively, so that is how we might prioritise it 8.4</p> <p>In terms of the emphasis on that communication competency that you have, how did you decide, was it mostly what fit with the syllabus?</p> <p>Yeah, we had a look at the competency and said, where can we really bring this in so we are not getting too far away, because we have time constraints and things like that but where it is most meaningful as well and it is not just seen as a special add on I suppose. Communicating in the workplace, and we found that they are a general sort of competency across most of our VET subjects, although there are slight differences between them they are all sort of the same. 9.4</p> <p>One thing I would like to investigate eventually is maybe a push more for VET kids to do a language, or to put some language into the VET subjects, at present language is really for students going to university and OP sorts of things, but I think language is going to become a really important part for VET kids, but how that is done, whether it is a basic conversation, that sort of level, rather than doing like the OP subject level, I am not sure, I would be interested in doing something like that. None of the competencies that kids have to do have that at the moment but I can see that down the track that that could come in. Just for some of our kids it would be great if it could be some of that conversation rather than it just being for smart kids...9.3</p>	<p>Each has a priority but they differ widely</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - exposure to texts - alignment with school key strategic priority - communicating in workplace with clear vision for 'extension' languages in VET. 	
<p>Classroom teacher involvement</p>	<p>having lots of young teachers it is about choosing resources that they are comfortable with. So while we have tried to ask teachers to look at a range of different perspectives and a range of Asian perspectives, because of their youth and inexperience it has not been a major focus. ...once the national curriculum comes in and it becomes more mandated then people will have to address it but I guess I have put it on the back-burner because of the number of inexperienced staff that we have. 1.3</p> <p>We have different teams, it is my role essentially to give the big picture and say this is our subject for the year, and then subject coordinators and team leaders then get together and go how can we make that a reality with what we have got? Every team member is heavily involved in the planning process and it is always going to continue like that, we are a very team orientated school, or department anyway. 8.4</p> <p>All of them have attended PD. I was very impressed at the start of this year, I think my department was most heavily represented at one of the PDs out of any of the departments so that was really good - they all have a keen interest in it. But again that is probably the depth that it has gone. No one has taken it on as an individual sort of love or anything like that but we have just looked at the programs where we can do that intercultural stuff. 9.4</p>	<p>teachers have been involved in process of looking at programs & finding space for AL in planning</p>	<p>Teachers have been involved in process of looking at programs and finding space for Asia literacy in planning</p>
<p>Issues for teachers</p> <p>'Hiding the ball'</p>	<p>I don't mean to be negative about young teachers but I think that there are behaviour issues that people are dealing with so to look at things on a deeper level requires that those behaviour issues are managed in the first instance before you can look at approaching those sort of tricky sort of subject matter - so I think that that is a challenge to get beyond the classroom management issues in order to be able to have this respectful discussion and have positive outcomes - I think that is always going to be a challenge... I don't think it is unique to Asian perspectives 1.4</p> <p>I think that is interesting because we have had a number of first year teachers this year in our department it has been whirlwind for them, the teachers that have been here for some time, some of them have had time to adjust this and really sort of take on board the initiatives, some of them are just trying to still find their feet so that is interesting in itself and shifting curriculum focus, for them it is not a shift in it is WANG!, there are so many agendas being driven, there really are at (school) just so many things we have to mess on, ...it can be almost a bit overwhelming, particularly for beginning teachers to do everything 4.8-9</p>	<p>Citizenship education- Dialogue with open exchange demands a lot from students and teachers, especially when the topics are complex - Veugelers 2011</p> <p>assumption(?) that beg teachers don't have prior knowledge of AL, bc their youth + inexperience makes it diff. to implement it if they don't have it</p>	<p>Veugelers 2011- moral and political in global citizenship</p> <p>low AL in Uni</p> <p>NALSAS 2001</p> <p>Hill-Thomas 1998</p> <p>implications for preservice teacher ed.</p>

Assumption (?) that beginning teachers don't have prior knowledge of Asia literacy, or their youth and inexperience makes it difficult to implement it if they do have it

Low Asia literacy in Uni
NALSAS 2001
Hill & Thomas 1998
Implications for preservice teacher education

3. Reflexive analysis of broad categories against identified points of significance.

Summary of teacher analysis

- Teachers ARE keen to engage and despite some differences agree on overall purpose (Aspirations), however lack of clarity (due to inherent complexity of endeavour – knowing Asia) contributes to inflated barriers – how does this impact on teacher agency?
- Discussion – contested/constructed knowledge of Asia, Asia literacy is seen as intercultural rather than multicultural (mc) but what can be taken from multicultural to enhance understandings of implementing Asia literacy? assumption that knowledge can be easily identified and discretely inserted into curriculum is problematic, this assumption ‘hides’ a lot of teachers’ work needed to make changes to curriculum

THEME	FINDINGS FROM DATA	ANALYSIS
RESPONSES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to teaching have been small – more refocussing than major re-working, often considered a ‘good fit’ • Rationale for change is human capital argument • Service learning (another school initiative) has been taken up as mechanism for implementation and to increase student engagement – connecting with cause/‘real’ people • Challenges include finding resources (but is negotiable with more time) • Encourage notions of diversity and discourage stereotypes • Support – a lot of rational-based whole school PD but perceived lack of support at subject level for some (intercultural committee problematic – space for critical discussion but none were ‘active’ members) • Students – perception that students are racist but overall student responses were positive – willing, intrigued, enjoy it, embraced, accommodating • Issues – consensus that beginning teachers have huge issues – lack knowledge, inexperienced, (too?) young. This is positioned as insurmountable, different to challenges which are identified with caveat that they could be overcome with more of teachers’ own work/research • Connection made between teacher knowledge/ confidence to engage with Asia and having travelled to Asia • Clearly open and positive to CCP 	<p>‘mere insertion’ of Asia into existing themes/curriculum implies uncritical injection of Asia into largely Western cultural frameworks – Williamsen-Fien 94 “Knowledge is neither neutral nor apolitical, yet is it generally treated by teachers as such” (Nieto in Hambel 2005) MC ed – 4 levels of integration of mc content – additive approach is pluralist rather than transformative, but potential tension here with service learning, which could be part of a social action approach (Banks 2001)</p> <p>‘engagement’ – core concept of global citizenship – Parmenter 11, normative framework of service learning is skills/content and civic values Butin 03 but dialogue surrounding it may be characterised as charity without critical reflexivity (Kahen & Westheimer 96) – ‘charity work’ may reinforce stereotypes of Asia as ‘other unable to help itself’, ‘third world’</p> <p>Connections to importance of ‘in-country’ experience – cultural immersion study tours and teacher pre-service placements in Asia enhance awareness of other cultures – Halse 99 Hill & Thomas 98, 02, Mills 08, Dyer 10. Links to connection between teachers and travel</p> <p>Refer to Asia-related knowledge (PERSPECTIVES) – while at first glance looks to acknowledge diversity there is not necessarily a sophisticated understanding – term Asia as problematic and difficult to define, resulting in questions around what, whose and which Asia to focus on – Williamsen-Fien 94, Broinowski 92, AEF 06, Singh 95</p> <p>A barrier or challenge that teachers have in mind, but is not necessarily realised? An inflated barrier?</p> <p>Linked to ‘inflated barrier’ about lack of knowledge? Implications for teacher ed – low levels of Asia literacy in uni NALSAS 01, Hill & Thomas 98</p> <p>Dyer 10 found travel develops new knowledge, reconfigures curriculum, enriches pedagogy (hierarchy of knowledge from lived exp to research and reading) – may also link to idea of being ‘authentic’ by creating ‘authentic’ knowledge through travel</p> <p>How does this contrast with ‘inflated’ barriers?</p>

HODS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum tensions – can’t just dump initiative and think people will do it and inherent othering in initiatives that other to include • Each has priority but commitment varies – from ‘I have put it on the back-burner’ to alignment with whole-school, to imaginative vision to push the boundaries of curriculum area (Language in VET) • Classroom teachers involved in planning 	<p>transition in how they position themselves as teachers ‘knowers of all things’ Hambel 2005</p> <p>How might this be related Asia-related knowledge – lack of clarity so left to a ‘whose’ version of implementation approach</p>
PERSPECTIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asian perspectives – diversity of Asia acknowledged but only to level of countries – not within country • Asia – similar to above, more than just a single entity – ‘it is so divers’ and used as just a geographic reference point for some • Asia literacy – not a familiar term for all • 2 competing discourses in rationale for including Asian perspectives – 1. Specific to Asia as economic/social imperative 2. to broaden ‘narrow’ students (alignment with school leaders’ vision) • Unable to identify/articulate whole school approach – vague notions around multiculturalism/global citizen but not ‘big umbrella thing’ ‘that brings it all together’ 	<p>Asia-related knowledge – lack of depth of knowledge or sophisticated understanding, mostly gathered through school PD (support at general rationale level)</p> <p>Appear to negotiated rationale according to what they see the purpose of education to be, though is underpinned by aspirations for initiative – below</p>

4. Potential deductive themes identified across categories and respective points colour coded

Themes:

- Teachers are keen to engage
- Aspirations for Asia literacy
- Lack of clarity around Asia literacy
- Inflated Barriers to enacting Asia literacy

5. Summary of deductive themes identified across broad categories

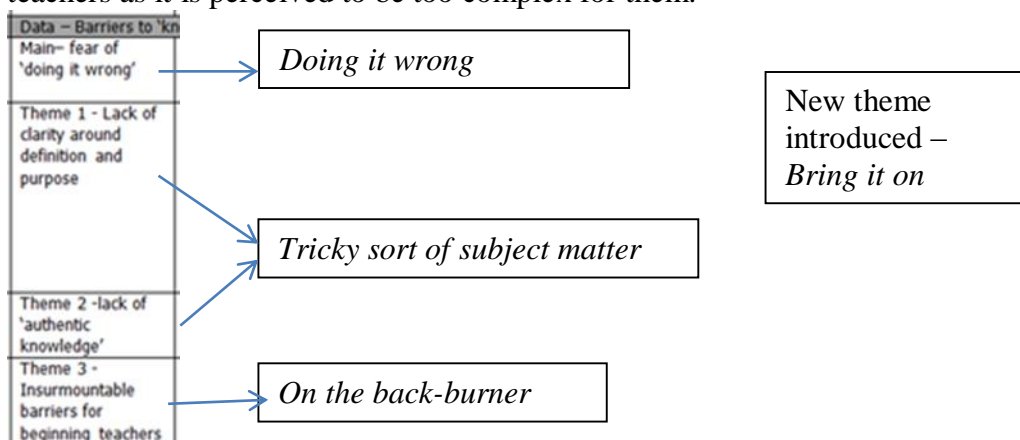
4	Data – Barriers to 'knowing Asia' in curriculum	
5.1	Main– fear of 'doing it wrong'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doing it 'wrong' – desire to teach with authenticity and without prejudice but perceptions that may not be able to do so
5.2	Theme 1 - Lack of clarity around definition and purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asian perspectives – diversity of Asia acknowledged but only to level of countries – not within country Asia – similar to above, more than just a single entity – 'it is so diverse' and used as just a geographic reference point for some Asia literacy – not a familiar term for all 2 competing discourses in rationale for including Asian perspectives – 1. Specific to Asia as economic/social imperative, 2. to broaden 'narrow' students (alignment with school leaders' vision) Unable to identify/articulate whole school approach – vague notions around multiculturalism/global citizen but not 'big umbrella thing' 'that brings it all together'
5.3	Theme 2 -lack of 'authentic knowledge'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connection made between teacher knowledge /confidence to engage with Asia and having travelled to Asia
5.4	Theme 3 - Insurmountable barriers for beginning teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issues – consensus that beginning teachers have huge issues – lack knowledge, inexperienced, (too?) young. This is positioned as insurmountable, different to challenges which are identified with caveat that they could be overcome with more of teachers' own work/research

6. Reflexive application of interviewee's everyday terms as theme headings and analytic concepts, including introduction of one to address positive elements of data that did not align with existing themes

Terms:

- Bring it on
- Tricky sort of subject matter
- Doing it wrong
- On the back-burner

Teachers are keen to “bring it on” and engage with Asia literacy, however the complex nature of this engagement is clearly acknowledged as a “tricky sort of subject matter”. Asia is positioned as complex yet knowable, but at the same time potentially unknowable in an authentic way. This positioning creates a potential paralysis around “doing it [Asia literacy] wrong”. Such is the difficulty of this task that it is put “on the back-burner” for novice teachers as it is perceived to be too complex for them.



7. Restory of data, theory applied inductively

Teachers are keen to engage with Asia – welcoming of the cross-curriculum priority

BUT

They lack confidence in their ability to engage. They deflect/resist and even ‘protect’ beginning teachers from it because it is ‘a big ask’ – Asia is so diverse, lack of clarity around what knowledge knowing Asia requires, lack resources and time to engage and experience to do it properly ‘authentically’, don’t want to risk ‘doing it wrong’. Assumption that knowledge of Asia can be complete and easily identified (eg. if they can get authentic knowledge, then they would be able to do this) creates a seemingly insurmountable barrier for teachers

The ostensibly overwhelming task to ‘know Asia’ can be approached in different ways that make it more practicable

HOW?

Two-pronged – how they construct knowledge (as neutral and able to be identified and discretely inserted into curriculum, which ‘flattens’ Asia) and how they construct their role as teacher (as ‘knower’ of this knowledge)

1. Move outside the trap of binarism. Perpetuation of the ‘West’ and ‘Rest’ binary as categories for knowledge still uses ‘West’ as normative reference point. Rather than get caught in a critique of ‘West vs Rest’, need to move outside this and engage more directly with complexity and messiness of knowledge – embrace ‘diverse’ Asia as diverse, rather than using ‘diverse Asia’ as a code for ‘too big and complicated’ (this comes from using West as a normative reference point). Teachers need to inter-reference, multiply frames of reference – strategy of critical syncretism
2. To see knowledge as interpretive not known. Knowledge of Asia (or any complex cultural signifier) is always developing and can’t be claimed as ‘known’ (if considered ‘known’ there is a danger of essentialised or fixed meanings) where person seeking to know needs to navigate frames of reference and cultural spaces, continually searching ‘to know’ Asia (cosmonaut) rather than reaching a knowledge destination where they ‘know’ Asia (cosmopolitan)
3. Impacts on how teachers see themselves. Information is not given as factual but interpretive – learning partnership. Teachers have not realised this transition in how they position themselves as ‘knowers of things’ that need ‘authentic’ knowledge to ‘do it right’.

8. Final use as evidence

On the back-burner

Ultimately, the extent of this “trickiness” is considered too complex and the efficacy to negotiate authenticity ‘too challenging’ for young and beginning teachers. As ‘receivers’ of policy, these teachers are noted as looking more for explicit direction rather than attempting creative policy engagement, and are often shielded from policy by more experienced colleagues (Ball et al., 2011). Experienced teachers at the school reflect this tendency:

while we have tried to ask teachers to look at a range of different perspectives and a range of Asian perspectives, because of their youth and inexperience it has not been a major focus. ...once the National Curriculum comes in and it becomes more mandated then people will have to address it but I guess I have put it on the back-burner because of the number of inexperienced staff that we have...I don't mean to be negative about young teachers but I think that there are behaviour issues that people are dealing with so to look at things on a deeper level requires that those behaviour issues are managed in the first instance before you can look at approaching those sort of tricky sort of subject matter. (Teacher 1, research interview, 5 December, 2011)

Here the intellectual work required to “look at things on a deeper level” is explicitly recognised, and implicitly the complexity of “tricky” Asia literacy that traverses constructs of Asia, culture and knowledge is acknowledged. For some, this work is considered extreme:

Appendix E: Information Sheet for Principal and Administration Staff



INFORMATION SHEET: PRINCIPAL

Project Title: Asia Literate Curriculum



Your school is invited to take part in a research project about the implementation of Asia Literate curriculum in schools. The study is being conducted by Peta Salter under the supervision of Associate Professor Melissa Vick and Dr. Lai Kuan Lim of the School of Education, James Cook University.

If you agree to be involved in the study, you and your staff will be invited to be interviewed. Interviews will be sought with Principals and Deputy Principals involved in the decision to implement Asia literate curriculum in the school, and Heads of Curriculum and classroom teachers involved in implementation in the classroom. It is anticipated that these interviews would proceed in two phases: in 2011 interviews with Principals and Deputy Principals (which includes request to nominate candidates suitable for interview in the next phase), in 2012 interviews with Heads of Curriculum and classroom teachers. The data gathered from all interviews will be used to provide context to Asia literate curriculum in your school. With the consent of the participants, interviews will be audio-taped, and should only take approximately 1 hour of their time. The interview will be conducted at your school, during school hours where possible. The sort of questions staff might be asked will relate to knowledge and understanding of Asia literacy within the school and implementation factors including leadership and teacher pedagogy. For example:

- How do you interpret the term 'Asia literacy'?
- How did you first become aware of the *National Statement for Engaging Young Australians with Asia in Australian Schools*?
- Why did you choose to implement Asia literate curriculum in your school?
- What elements of Asia literacy are included in the curriculum? Why are they important?
- What actions and changes were necessary to implement Asia literate curriculum?
- How have classroom teachers negotiated the shift in curriculum focus?

Participants may stop the interview at any time if they feel uncomfortable about any of the questions asked. Peta Salter will summarise the taped interview. A copy of the summary of interview will be returned to the participants within 14 days of the interview for checking and alteration.

Taking part in this study is completely voluntary and you can stop taking part in the study at any time without explanation or prejudice. You may also withdraw any unprocessed data from the study.

The information gathered from this study is strictly confidential and participant names, the name of your school and other familiar locations in the area will not appear in the project outputs unless it is specifically requested to be identified. Alongside its primary use in Peta Salter's PhD thesis, the data gathered will be used in research publications and may be used to inform policy makers interested in engaging with Asia literate policy.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact Peta Salter or her primary supervisors A/Prof Melissa Vick and Dr. Lai Kuan Lim.

Please retain this information sheet for your own records. Thank you for your participation in this project.

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Appendix F: Information sheet for School Administration



INFORMATION SHEET: ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Project Title: Asia Literate Curriculum

Your school is invited to take part in a research project about the implementation of Asia Literate curriculum in schools. The study is being conducted by Peta Salter under the supervision of Associate Professor Melissa Vick and Dr. Lai Kuan Lim of the School of Education, James Cook University.

If you agree to be involved in the study, you will be invited to be interviewed. The interview, with your consent will be audio-taped, and should only take approximately 1 hour of their time. The interview will be conducted at your school, during school hours where possible. The sort of questions you might be asked will relate to knowledge and understanding of Asia literacy within the school and implementation factors including leadership and teacher pedagogy. For example:

- How do you interpret the term 'Asia literacy'?
- How did you first become aware of the *National Statement for Engaging Young Australians with Asia in Australian Schools*?
- Why did you choose to implement Asia literate curriculum in your school?
- What elements of Asia literacy are included in the curriculum? Why are they important?
- What actions and changes were necessary to implement Asia literate curriculum?
- How have classroom teachers negotiated the shift in curriculum focus?

Participants may stop the interview at any time if they feel uncomfortable about any of the questions asked. Peta Salter will summarise the taped interview. A copy of the summary of interview will be returned to the participants within 14 days of the interview for checking and alteration.

Taking part in this study is completely voluntary and you can stop taking part in the study at any time without explanation or prejudice. You may also withdraw any unprocessed data from the study.

The information gathered from this study is strictly confidential and participant names, the name of your school and other familiar locations in the area will not appear in the project outputs unless it is specifically requested to be identified. Alongside its primary use in Peta Salter's PhD thesis, the data gathered will be used in research publications and may be used to inform policy makers interested in engaging with Asia literate policy.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact Peta Salter or her primary supervisors A/Prof Melissa Vick and Dr. Lai Kuan Lim.

Please retain this information sheet for your own records. Thank you for your participation in this project.

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Appendix G: Consent form for Principal



This administrative form
has been removed

**Appendix H: Consent form for School Administration, Head of
Departments & Classroom teachers**



This administrative form
has been removed

Appendix I: School leader interview questions

Policy to Context Interview Questions

Perspectives:

1. What does 'Asia Literacy' mean to you?

What is your understanding of what Asia literacy is? What key points or elements does it encompass?

2. Where or how did you gain this understanding of 'Asia literacy'?

Has this understanding come through professional development or your own readings/interest?

3. Is Asia Literacy relevant? Why?

*Do you think Asia literacy is a relevant initiative for Australian schools?
For your school?*

4. What factors do you see as critical in driving Asia Literacy?

What role do you play in regards to Asia Literacy?

Do you see yourself as a critical agent in promoting Asia literacy in the school?

If so, why and what would you like to do?

What are the key points that make Asia literacy relevant or that help it gain momentum in terms of being relevant to schools?

Do you see yourself as someone who has played a key role in introducing Asia literacy to the school?

5. *I realise that this next question is a broad question and can incorporate many different dimensions - How are changes to social and cultural contexts influencing what you are doing?*

What is your understanding of the term ‘globalisation’?

Asia Literacy is often promoted as a response to globalisation and the school itself has responses to globalisation – what is your understanding of globalisation?

The Melbourne Declaration makes reference to the global economy, global citizens and globalisation – what is your understanding of globalisation as suggested by this document?

Responses:

1. How did Asia literacy get to be on school agenda?

What key staff were involved in this development?

Has the inclusion of Asia literacy in the National Curriculum (cross curriculum priority) influenced decisions to put Asia literacy on the school agenda?

2. How did you first become aware of the *National Statement for Engaging Young Australians with Asia in Australian Schools*?

What is your understanding of this priority?

How does it relate to the school’s priorities and vision?

What are the common points between the statement's priorities and the school's priorities?

3. What elements of Asia literacy are included in the school curriculum?

Who decided this?

How have they been prioritised?

Why are they important in this school context?

Going back to your understanding of Asia literacy (as previously defined in perspectives), what key elements that you identify with Asia literacy are evident in the school curriculum?

What vision do you have for Asia literacy in the school? What do you imagine it will look like at a classroom level?

Are you using your understanding of Asia literacy as a reference point here or the school's definition?

4. Have any elements of Asia literacy been considered not suitable for the school? Why?

Who decided this?

5. What did you use to inform your decisions?

Policy statements e.g. The National Statement for Engaging Young Australians with Asia in Australian Schools? The Melbourne Declaration?

National Curriculum documents – e.g. cross curricula priority

Information or readings from groups or associations outside the school context? E.g. P&F or Asia Education Foundation staff? Critical friend from outside the school context?

Opinions or contributions from others within the school context e.g. staff – whole of school or key classroom teachers?

6. What actions and changes were necessary to respond to Asia literate curriculum? What have been the issues and/or challenges faced?

Actions – professional development of staff, curriculum audit, contact with outside agencies

Changes – to curriculum, work programs, resources used

7. How have classroom teachers been involved in changes?

How have classroom teachers negotiated the shift in curriculum focus?

Have classroom teachers had to change their approach – pedagogy, knowledge, resources used, to accommodate the introduction of Asia literacy?

8. Can you nominate relevant Heads of Curriculum and classroom teachers for interview in the next phase of my investigation – enacting Asia literacy in the curriculum?

9. How does the school respond to globalisation?

Asia Literacy is often promoted as a response to globalisation, can you identify for me how the school responds to globalisation generally, or other initiatives/foci in the school that respond to globalisation?

Concerns/Aspirations

1. Do you have any concerns about the process of including Asia literacy in the curriculum?

Potential problems that the initiative may uncover? Risks (for the school, for teachers) that may arise or have to be taken to cater for Asia literacy?

2. What outcomes would you like to see from Asia Literacy?

What outcomes do you think you will see? – From a national level to a school level.

3. What opportunities do you see Asia literacy offers to your students?

Are these opportunities worthwhile for the school to pursue?

Why?

Appendix J: Invitation to participate in study

The study was initially presented and introduced to the staff at a whole school meeting and followed up with an email to staff identified in interviews with school administrative staff:

Content has been removed

Appendix K: Information sheet for Heads of Department and classroom teachers



INFORMATION SHEET: HEADS OF CURRICULUM/CLASSROOM TEACHERS

Project Title: **Asia Literate Curriculum**

<p>Your school is invited to take part in a research project about the implementation of Asia Literate curriculum in schools. The study is being conducted by Peta Salter under the supervision of Associate Professor Melissa Vick and Dr. Lai Kuan Lim of the School of Education, James Cook University.</p>	
<p>If you agree to be involved in the study, you will be invited to be interviewed. The interview, with your consent will be audio-taped, and should only take approximately 1 hour of their time. The interview will be conducted at your school, during school hours where possible. The sort of questions you might be asked will relate to knowledge and understanding required to plan for and teach Asia literacy. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do you interpret the term 'Asia literacy'?• What, if any, actions and changes were necessary to incorporate Asia literacy into your planning?• What impact has the incorporation of Asia literacy had on your teaching?	
<p>Participants may stop the interview at any time if they feel uncomfortable about any of the questions asked. Peta Salter will summarise the taped interview. A copy of the summary of interview will be returned to the participants within 14 days of the interview for checking and alteration.</p> <p>Taking part in this study is completely voluntary and you can stop taking part in the study at any time without explanation or prejudice. You may also withdraw any unprocessed data from the study.</p>	
<p>The information gathered from this study is strictly confidential and participant names, the name of your school and other familiar locations in the area will not appear in the project outputs unless it is specifically requested to be identified. Alongside its primary use in Peta Salter's PhD thesis, the data gathered will be used in research publications and may be used to inform policy makers interested in engaging with Asia literate policy.</p>	
<p>If you have any questions about the study, please contact Peta Salter or her primary supervisors A/Prof Melissa Vick and Dr. Lai Kuan Lim.</p> <p>Please retain this information sheet for your own records. Thank you for your participation in this project.</p>	
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Appendix L: Classroom teachers interview questions

Policy to Context Interview Questions

Responses:

1. How do you define or explain the term 'Asian perspectives'?
2. What, if any, actions and changes were necessary to incorporate Asian perspectives into your teaching?

What drove you to make these changes?

How was the decision to change made?

Have there been any difficulties/issues? How have you overcome these?

Planning, materials, teaching, students

2. Are there particular representations of Asia that you seek to encourage/discourage through your teaching?

What perspectives of Asia do you share with your students? How do you do this?

What do you include in your planning? How much time do you allocate to it in lessons/units?

What are your observations of students' responses to discussion of Asia?

3. What support have you received?

PD, discussions with colleagues (frequency – time and space to engage in critical discussions?)

Questions for HODS only:

10. What perspectives of Asia are included in the school curriculum/your department?

How was this decided?

How have they been prioritised?

Why are they important in this school context?

What vision do you have for Asia literacy in the school? What do you imagine it will look like in your department?

Are you using your understanding of Asia literacy as a reference point here or the school's definition?

To what extent has taking up Japanese as LOTE impacted on departments' decisions? Has there been a focus on Japan to capacity build?

11. Have any elements of Asia literacy been considered not suitable for your department?

Why? *How was this decided?*

12. How have classroom teachers been involved in changes?

How have classroom teachers negotiated the shift in curriculum focus?

Perspectives:

6. What does the term 'Asia' mean to you?

7. How do you interpret the term 'Asia literacy'?

What is your understanding of what Asia literacy is? What key points or elements does it encompass? How do you feel about how it is spoken about?

8. Where or how did you gain this understanding of ‘Asia literacy’?

Has this understanding come through professional development or your own readings/interest? How have admin introduced/initiated this agenda?

9. Do you think Asia Literacy is a relevant initiative for your school and students? For your subject area? Why? What knowledge is it important for your students to have?

What are the key points that make Asia literacy relevant or that help it gain momentum in terms of being relevant to schools?

10. What is your understanding of the term ‘globalisation’? Does your understanding of globalisation shape your teaching of Asia literacy? How do you treat the issue of globalisation in your planning/classroom?

Asia Literacy is often promoted as a response to globalisation and the school itself has responses to globalisation (CIS school, Internationalising the curriculum) – what is your understanding of globalisation?

Concerns/Aspirations

4. How do you feel about Asia literacy being included in the National curriculum as a cross-curriculum priority?

5. Do you have any concerns about the process of including Asia literacy in your teaching?

Potential problems that the initiative may uncover?

Risks (for you as teacher or students) that may arise or have to be taken to cater for Asia literacy?

6. What understanding and perspectives do you want students to take away from your classroom/teaching about Asia?

Appendix M: Summary of submissions

(Australian Government, 2012b, p. 1)

This high-level summary attempts to capture the community's response to the 17 December 2011 Issues Paper calling for submissions. It draws out observations and issues raised by 246 submissions received by 9 March 2012. The summary is organised into four main themes, each with sub-categories (Table 1).

Table 1: Submission themes

Theme	Major components
IMPROVING AUSTRALIANS' ASIA-RELEVANT CAPABILITIES (more than 150 submissions)	Asia literacy is more than language fluency Workplace Asia-relevant capabilities Asian language training in decline Strategies to increase Asian language proficiency Strategies to increase Asia-relevant capabilities
PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE LINKS (more than 160 submissions)	General engagement attitudes towards Asia Strategies to enhance people-to-people links International education Strategies for an enhanced international education sector Research, science and technology
ASIA'S RISE (more than 90 submissions)	Growth prospects Development assistance Resource security Food security Climate change and clean energy Strategic power and bilateral relationships
AUSTRALIA'S COMPETITIVENESS (more than 60 submissions)	Trade and investment policy Growth sectors Skilled labour Infrastructure Tax and regulation systems

Appendix N: Cross-curriculum priority Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia

(ACARA, 2012a)

This priority will ensure that students learn about and recognise the diversity within and between the countries of the Asia region. They will develop knowledge and understanding of Asian societies, cultures, beliefs and environments, and the connections between the peoples of Asia, Australia, and the rest of the world. Asia literacy provides students with the skills to communicate and engage with the peoples of Asia so they can effectively live, work and learn in the region.

What encompasses Asia?

Asia can be defined in geographical terms, but it can also be described in terms of cultural, religious, historical and language boundaries or commonalities.

While it includes West and Central Asia, in Australian schools studies of Asia will pay particular attention to the sub-regions of:

- North-east Asia, including China, Mongolia, Japan, North Korea, South Korea and Taiwan
- South-east Asia, including Indonesia, Myanmar (Burma), Thailand, Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore, Vietnam, Laos, East Timor, the Philippines and Cambodia
- South Asia, including India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and the Maldives.

Organising ideas

For each cross-curriculum priority, a set of organising ideas reflects the essential knowledge, understandings and skills for the priority. The organising ideas are embedded in the content descriptions and elaborations of each learning area as appropriate.

Code	Organising ideas
Asia and its diversity	
OI.1	The peoples and countries of Asia are diverse in ethnic background, traditions, cultures, belief systems and religions.
OI.2	Interrelationships between humans and the diverse environments in Asia shape the region and have global implications.
Achievements and contributions of the peoples of Asia	
OI.3	The peoples and countries of Asia have contributed and continue to contribute to world history and human endeavour.
OI.4	The arts and literature of Asia influence aesthetic and creative pursuits within Australia, the region and globally.
Asia-Australia engagement	
OI.5	Collaboration and engagement with the peoples of Asia support effective regional and global citizenship.
OI.6	Australia is part of the Asia region and our histories from ancient times to the present are linked.
OI.7	Australians play a significant role in social, cultural, political and economic developments in the Asia region.
OI.8	Australians of Asian heritage have influenced Australia’s history and continue to influence its dynamic culture and society.