

**Human Rights Education: Transformative Learning Through
Student Participation in Extracurricular Activities at School**

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This research received the approval of the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee.

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Abstract

This research involved a comparative case study analysis of the informal extracurricular human rights education programs in a school in Australia and a school in Asia. The research questions explored how and why schools implement teaching and learning about human rights; the impact that learning about human rights through informal extracurricular activities has on the development of student skills, attitudes, knowledge and understanding as cosmopolitan citizens; and the extent to which learning about human rights through participation in informal extracurricular activities achieves transformative learning for students.

The research methodology involved qualitative approaches to data collection through interviews and observations of students and teachers in the two school settings. The data was analysed by building an explanation about the particular cases through thematic analysis and by reference to the pedagogy of human rights education (Tibbitts, 2002) and the theory of transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991).

Although the case studies did not provide examples of transformative, widespread social changes about human rights as a result of the actions taken by students in the extracurricular groups in the two schools, they did provide examples of personal transformative learning which occurred for students in terms of their skills, attitudes, knowledge and understandings about human rights issues. There was also evidence of an increased understanding of the practical and institutional barriers to undertaking meaningful action in the area of human rights.

The case studies also demonstrated that because these activities were implemented within the informal realm, rather than as part of the formal classroom curriculum, students were given the opportunity to have control over what and how they learned that crossed subject curriculum boundaries. This enabled students to participate in learning that was

meaningful for them because they were interested in the human rights issues, and provided an internal motivation to learn because they had a stake in the outcome.

Another finding from my research was the importance of the role played by the teacher. Despite the fact that the groups in the case studies were student-led and students enjoyed the autonomy and peer support that this provided, there were many examples where the guidance and resources provided by the teacher gave the groups a focus that enabled transformative learning to take place. However, there were also instances where the students felt disempowered by the teacher and were denied ownership over the successes and failures they experienced. Therefore a recommendation from this research is that increased professional development be provided to teachers involved in human rights education programs, in order to develop their understanding of the more equal power dynamic that needs to exist between students and teachers in order to ensure its successful implementation.

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

‘Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home - so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person; the neighbourhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm, or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.’

(Roosevelt, E. (1958). In Our Hands: Speech delivered on the tenth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights).

Eleanor Roosevelt’s view on the critical importance of human rights being enacted in small places encapsulates the central purpose of this study, namely to explore how human rights are enacted in the ‘small place’ of a school. As Roosevelt, one of the authors of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR, 1948) explains in the quote above, in order for human rights to be protected internationally, they need to be understood and upheld in people’s everyday lives. My research aims in particular to explore whether learning about human rights through student participation in informal extracurricular activities impacts on the transformative capacity of students to enact change about human rights issues.

The focus of my research is therefore on human rights education in schools, which is still an evolving field of educational theory and practice. It has gained increasing prominence since the 1970s, and has links with other fields of research such as peace education, citizenship education and global education. Research about human rights education can be divided into three categories: the theory, the implementation and the outcomes of human rights education (Tibbitts & Kirchsclaeger, 2010). These categories will be adopted in my research as a way of conceptualising this field.

According to Kalantzis and Cope (2008), social, cultural and technological changes have thrown into question the relevance and appropriateness of traditional models of formal education. They argue that twenty-first century learning environments need to be:

‘... more engaging, more effective and more appropriate to our contemporary times and imaginable near futures... one-size-fits all schooling may have worked in the past as a form of social control and a strategy for selecting the few into higher education... Our contemporary designs for learning must accommodate the differences in knowledge, life experience and motivation amongst our learners.’
(p. xvii).

The importance of my study therefore in its contribution to understanding whether students who choose to participate in informal extracurricular human rights activities (as opposed to learning about human rights through the formal traditional classroom curriculum) enables them to experience a transformational understanding of human rights issues and an enhanced sense of global and cosmopolitan citizenship (Osler & Starkey, 2003, 2005).

This thesis will investigate two school case studies in different countries, one in Australia and one in Asia. It will examine and compare the way students engage in opportunities to be informed and active citizens about human rights issues through their involvement in informal extracurricular school activities.

The research questions explored in this study are:

1. How and why do schools implement teaching and learning about human rights?
2. What impact does learning about human rights through informal extracurricular activities have on the development of student skills, attitudes, knowledge and understanding as cosmopolitan citizens?
3. To what extent does learning about human rights through participation in informal extracurricular achieve transformative learning for students?

In this chapter, an overview will be provided of: the definition of human rights and human rights education; the theoretical context of my research; the research methodology; my personal motivation for undertaking this study; and the justification for the study, before concluding with a chapter outline of the thesis.

1.2 The definition of human rights and human rights education

In order to understand the definition and pedagogy of human rights education it is important to examine the definition and theory of the concept of ‘human rights’ itself. The UDHR (1948) was drafted as a response to the horrors of World War II (such as the Holocaust) in the hopes that such atrocities would never be repeated (Nikel, 1987). The development of the Declaration was the first demonstration by the countries of the world that they could band together in order to recognise ‘the existence of human rights and fundamental freedoms transcending the laws of sovereign states’ (Osler & Starkey, 1996, p. 2). However, the ideas underpinning the UDHR (1948) were not conceived of in the twentieth century: the golden rule of Judeo Christian belief, that one must treat others as you would like to be treated, is echoed in Article 1 of the Declaration (Ishay, 2008). The drafters of the Declaration also drew upon texts such as the French Declaration of the Rights of Man (1789) and the American Bill of Rights (1789) in order to formulate the

rights which were to be protected (Nickel, 1987). The human rights which are expressed in the Declaration are described as ‘universal’ because they are based on the common values which all human beings are said to share, namely that each person is entitled to have their dignity respected, and that this is the ‘foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world’ (Preamble, UDHR, 1948). The Declaration includes the following articles:

Article 1.

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2.

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Article 3.

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

(United Nations General Assembly, 1948).

Despite the widespread recognition of human rights in the world today because of documents such as the UDHR (1948) and other international human rights documents such as the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR, 1966) and the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989), a glance at a newspaper anywhere in the world demonstrates that human rights abuses continue. These are often perpetrated by countries against their own people, despite the fact that those states are signatories to human rights documents and therefore bound by international law. For example, North Korea has signed the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (1966) and the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989) and yet its citizens are routinely denied the

right to a fair trial, which is in contravention of Article 2 of the ICCPR (Human Rights Watch, *World Report on North Korea*, 2012). As a result of cases such as this, the United Nations has placed an increased emphasis on the importance of human rights education, as a way of ensuring that people know about their own rights and can advocate for their protection for themselves and other people.

The concept of human rights education derives from Article 26(2) of the UDHR (1948), which states that ‘education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms’. Cardenas (2005) argues that the UDHR (1948) enshrines not only the right *to* education (‘the full development of the human personality’) but also the right *to* education *about* human rights (‘the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms’). Subsequent human rights instruments such as the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989) have also contributed to the emerging field of human rights education, by placing an obligation on governments to make the principles and provisions of the Convention widely known by appropriate and active means to adults and children (Article 42).

The most recent recognition of the significance of human rights education occurred when the United Nations Human Rights Council adopted the *Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training* (2011). Article 2(1) of the Declaration defines human rights education as:

‘...all educational, training, information, awareness-raising and learning activities aimed at promoting universal respect for and observance of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and thus contributing, inter alia, to the prevention of human rights violations and abuses by providing persons with knowledge, skills and understanding and developing their attitudes and behaviours, to empower them to contribute to the building and promotion of a universal culture of human rights.’

Through the case studies, my research will endeavour to test this definition by examining whether the knowledge, skills, understandings, attitudes and behaviours of students who experience human rights education can transform them to be agents of change about human rights issues.

Human rights education is a concept that should be a critical concern for education providers at the state, national and international level. The recognition of its importance has developed since the UN Commission on Human Rights named 1995-2004 the *United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education* (UNDHRE), with the aim of strengthening support for human rights education at both the local and national levels within countries. However even with the commitment of the United Nations to human rights education, it has been widely accepted, especially by the United Nations itself, that ‘despite some modest successes, the UNDHRE lacked direction and impact and failed to prepare a sound basis for securing human rights education internationally’ (Print, Ugarte, Naval & Mihr, 2008, p. 120). This was because most countries failed to implement human rights education within their national educational systems in a systematic and meaningful way.

However, despite this, the Australian government has demonstrated an increased recognition of the importance of human rights education through some recent policy documents. These include the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (MCEETYA, 2008) and the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship Draft Paper* (Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority (ACARA), 2012). These will be discussed further in the literature review and the first case study chapter.

1.3 The theoretical context of my research

My study draws upon a number of theories to guide this research. Firstly, it refers to the ‘pedagogy of human rights education’, which emphasises that in order for successful learning outcomes to be achieved, the *way* human rights is taught is equally as significant as *what* is taught (Tibbitts, 2002; Jennings, 2006; Evans, 2006; Mihr, 2007). These

theorists argue that it is difficult to learn about rights and freedoms if students are taught in a didactic or non-consultative manner, and where the rights that are being learned about are not being realised or actioned within the classroom itself (Tibbitts, 2002). The learning and practice of human rights needs to enable students to both learn knowledge relevant to an understanding of human rights, and to have authentic and challenging experiences that develop their behaviours, dispositions and actions about human rights. Human rights education should therefore provide opportunities for young people to develop and practise the skills and values that ensure they develop respect for human rights and the responsibilities of citizenship through all aspects of school, including opportunities outside of the formal classroom. These ideas are embodied in Article 2(2) of the United Nations *Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training* (2011), which states that human rights education must encompass:

- (a) Education *about* human rights, which includes providing knowledge and understanding of human rights norms and principles, the values that underpin them and the mechanisms for their protection;
- (b) Education *through* human rights, which includes learning and teaching in a way that respects the rights of both educators and learners;
- (c) Education *for* human rights, which includes empowering persons to enjoy and exercise their rights and to respect and uphold the rights of others.
[emphasis added]

This ‘about, through and for’ pedagogical approach to human rights education will also be utilised as an analytical frame for my research as a way of exploring the skills, attitudes, knowledge, understandings and behaviour of students who are involved in human rights education through informal extracurricular activities.

Secondly, I will be discussing and analysing the connections between the theories of transformative pedagogy (Mezirow, 1991) and human rights education (Freire, 1970;

Giroux, 1983; Tibbitts, 2002) in my case studies. Human rights education, with its emphasis on transformation, empowerment and participation, has been strongly influenced by Freire's (1970) theory of critical pedagogy. The influence of Freire's (1970) ideas is especially evident in the concept of 'education through' human rights, where teachers and students are encouraged to treat one another with equality, respect and dignity. Such a conceptualisation of human rights education means that it cannot occur solely by teachers adding it as a topic within classroom teaching and learning activities; rather such approaches need to be implemented through all aspects of school life, including the school's vision and values and through activities such as student-led lunchtime and after school extracurricular activities. Mezirow (1991) is credited with initiating the theoretical field of transformative learning, which is predicated on the idea that individuals can be transformed through a process of critical reflection. Human rights education can enable deep learning to occur through learner-centred participation in practical action, so my study aims to explore how and if such transformations can and do occur. The concept of transformative learning will be explored in the literature review chapter and analysed in the case study chapters.

The third theoretical frame that is pertinent to my study is the concept of cosmopolitan citizenship (Osler & Starkey, 2003, 2005), which will also be explored in the literature review in order to establish its connection to human rights education. Osler and Starkey (2010) propose that human rights should constitute the basis of common citizenship values, which they term cosmopolitan citizenship. They argue that this is particularly important because globalisation has meant individuals have assumed multiple identities beyond that of loyalty to a nation state, and cosmopolitan citizenship requires consideration of the implications of belonging to a world community rather than to just a particular nation. Osler and Starkey's (2010) work has informed my research, as I will investigate whether the students in the case study schools do develop as cosmopolitan citizens through their participation in informal extracurricular human rights education activities. Further, I am interested in probing additional factors that contribute to the development of their cosmopolitan citizenship, such as students' prior life experience and

family background, in order to establish the relevance and importance of these links with their engagement with human rights, social action and transformative practice.

Finally, the literature review chapter will explore the concept of informal learning and its relevance to the practice of student participation in extracurricular activities, and also to the concept of human rights education and transformative education. In particular, I will explore how learning about human rights and informal learning share a learner-centered approach that promotes participation and collaboration with a practical application, and places the responsibility for learning with the participants. In addition, human rights education, transformative learning and informal learning all challenge the formal educational paradigm about how learning should take place, and this notion is further explored in the literature review.

1.4 The research methodology

The two case study schools examined in my research each offer opportunities for students to participate in informal extracurricular activities about human rights, but in different ways. The case studies were therefore chosen because of their ability to illuminate the research questions and provide a comparison between them. The use of a case study design was chosen as the appropriate methodology because the study involved overt observations of a contemporary phenomenon, and the research questions posed can be described as ‘how’ and ‘why’ type questions (Yin, 2009).

This case study research, with its focus on the transformative potential of student participation in action about human rights, is situated within a socially critical paradigm (Macdonald, Kirk, Metzler, Nilges, Schempp & Wright, 2002). The socially critical paradigm is concerned with the balance between the powerful and the powerless, which mirrors the concerns examined in my study, namely the capacity of individuals and groups to understand human rights issues and thereby to try and enact change. Two theoretical frames were used to analyse the data collected: the pedagogy of ‘about, through and for’ human rights education as described in the *Declaration on Human*

Rights Education and Training (2011) and Mezirow's (1991) theory of transformative learning.

The student participants in this research were invited to participate because (for case study 1) they were members of the lunchtime human rights groups (Amnesty International, the Gay and Straight Alliance and the Aboriginal Reconciliation Committee) at Elizawood College or (for case study 2) they were members of the afterschool Model United Nations group at Australian International School. Permission for the students to participate in my research was obtained from the students and their parents after the students volunteered to be involved. For Case Study 1, three students and four teachers were interviewed and observed and for Case Study 2, four students and two teachers were interviewed and observed.

This research involved conducting semi-structured interviews with students and teachers in the two case study schools about their experiences with human rights education. It also involved observing the informal extracurricular activities and analysing relevant school policies and documentation as a way of triangulating my research. The analytic technique that was utilised in this study was to build an explanation about the particular case (Yin, 2009). Interviews were transcribed and coded according to the themes arising from the research questions, and a descriptive narrative was then constructed. Explanation-building and pattern-matching (Yin, 2009) was used as the data analysis method and thick description was provided of each case.

The limitations of my research included that drawing comparisons between the two case study schools might not be valid because of their different programs and locations. Also I was unable to obtain the same number of student and teacher participants in each case study. In addition, the study was short-term and so only provided instances of practice at a particular point in time and place which might not be applicable to other situations; however it was not my intention to generalise to populations but rather to theoretical propositions. Another limitation was that due to time restraints and the nature of the students who volunteered to be interviewed, the data collected may not be representative of the experiences of other students and teachers who were involved in the informal

extracurricular human rights programs. In terms of the ethics of my study, informed consent was gained from both the adolescent participants and their parents or guardians before they participated. Participants were not offered any incentives or coercion, and the confidentiality of responses was ensured through the use of pseudonyms. There was no prior relationship between the student participants and the researcher.

1.5 My personal motivation for conducting this research

The motivation for this study arose from my experiences as a volunteer in the non-governmental organisation (NGO) Amnesty International and as a secondary school teacher. As a volunteer at Amnesty International, I was interested in finding ways to motivate and inspire students to become involved in action about human rights issues that could lead to change. My interest in this topic began through my experiences as the leader of Amnesty International's Children's Rights Group in Victoria between 2002 and 2006. The aim of the Children's Rights group was to raise awareness about children's rights through both advocacy and education, and in particular to increase the understanding of the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989). To this end, the group lobbied the Federal Government through a letter writing campaign to develop and implement a National Plan of Action for Children (as each signatory country is required to do under the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*), and for the establishment of a National Commissioner for Children and Young People (it should be noted that neither of these lobbying efforts were successful).

In addition, I was involved in writing and producing a Children's Rights Education Kit for distribution to the one hundred Amnesty International school groups that meet regularly across Victoria, Australia. These groups are student-led and involve students writing to governments about particular human rights abuses which have occurred within their country and imploring them to respect the individual's human rights as outlined in the international human rights documents that the countries have signed. This information is provided to the groups by the Victorian branch of Amnesty International. The Children's Rights Education Kit also provided additional materials to the groups

which contained materials and activities on particular topics such as child refugees, child soldiers and child labour. The kit was designed to give students some background information about children's rights issues and also contained ideas on how to undertake action, how to be an effective campaigner and how to raise awareness about human rights more generally. The kit was designed for students from Years 7-10, and was distributed to schools who attended Amnesty International's Victorian Schools Conference. This conference is a yearly event attended by over 100 Victorian students who are involved in an Amnesty International lunchtime group at their school. Feedback provided at subsequent conferences indicated that the kit was moderately successful. The groups reported that they appreciated being given more guidance and advice about how to be effective campaigners, and also appreciated the opportunity to learn more about particular topics rather than writing letters on disparate topics and not learning more about the context in which they arose. Whilst the kit itself was a modest contribution by the volunteers in the Children's Rights Group, it acted as a mini-trial for the paid campaign staff, who then developed a downloadable School Action Pack available from the Amnesty International Australia website and other resources about human rights education for schools.

In the past, many of the schools involved in the Amnesty International Schools Conference in Victoria were from the Catholic sector. Catholic schools were traditionally a staunch supporter of Amnesty International as a part of their commitment to social justice. However, in 2007 Amnesty International changed its neutral stance on abortion to one that supported abortion in cases of rape or incest. The Catholic Church argued that this infringed upon the right to life, and as a result many Catholic schools no longer support an Amnesty International group, which reduced the number of students who attended the Schools Conference quite dramatically. This example illustrates the contested and controversial nature of rights, which is a debate that will be explored in the literature review chapter.

As well as providing information to these students about current human rights issues, the schools conference also provided a forum for like-minded young people to meet together

and discuss what action could be taken to raise awareness and try to create change. I was very interested to observe the enthusiastic interaction and friendship generated between students who all had shared a passion for promoting human rights, despite their varied socio-economic backgrounds, school sectors and geographic locations. The conference enabled students from different schools who would not otherwise know each other to work together on activities and events to raise awareness about human rights on behalf of Amnesty International. As a workshop leader, I could use my own experiences (in unsuccessfully lobbying governments on behalf of the Children's Rights Group for the National Plan of Action and for a National Children's Commissioner) as an example of the realities and frustrations associated with trying to create change. Through the development of the Children's Rights Education Kit and my work at the conferences, I could see that there was a need for rigorous practitioner research in human rights education, and these early experiences I was involved in did inspire my interest in this study.

As a secondary school teacher, I was interested in observing students who became involved in social justice activities, and questioning what inspired and motivated their involvement. I observed how students who were involved in NGOs, such as Amnesty International and the Oaktree Foundation, brought knowledge and understanding with them to the classroom which greatly added to the richness of discussions and motivated other students to further their understanding of the issues. I was also interested in whether the context of this learning, which was taking place within the classroom but also within the wider school experience (through extracurricular activities) impacted upon the depth of the learning that was taking place. I was also interested in the multiplicity of contexts where the issue of human rights arose in classrooms, as well as how the language of human rights permeated through social justice activities conducted within the school but outside the classroom. I noticed that many students who were highly engaged by the notion of human rights were not only keen and vocal students in the classroom about these issues, but also heavily involved in many other social justice activities both within and beyond the school. I was intrigued by the impact different contexts and spaces had on student learning, and how this influenced students to become

involved in informal extracurricular activities as a way of trying to enact change. It was therefore my combined experiences as both a classroom teacher and as a volunteer with Amnesty International which sparked my interest in exploring this topic.

1.6 The justification for my research

This study is important because it explores how and why students develop an interest in human rights issues, and the impact that their involvement can have on creating change in their thinking, raising awareness about the issues and transforming their knowledge and actions as cosmopolitan citizens. This has implications for schools who are interested in developing students who are active citizens within the local and wider community and who want to undertake meaningful action about social justice issues. More broadly, the research is important as it will contribute to the discussion about how schools can develop active cosmopolitan citizens within local, regional and global communities, since this is a high priority amongst education policy makers and education leaders and teachers internationally, as part of the core business of what schools should aim to do as set out in documents such as the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (MCEETYA, 2008). Australia has dedicated considerable resources to developing Civics and Citizenship Education over the past decade, including a *National Assessment Program in Civics and Citizenship* (NAP, 2010). This involves testing a sample of Year 6 and Year 10 students from across Australia every three years on their civic knowledge and understanding and the skills and values needed for active citizenship, and also includes references to human rights education (some of the results of the NAP will be compared with the findings in the case study chapters). However, I am specifically interested in investigating the way that human rights education occurs in the microcosm of student participation in extracurricular activities, since this particular aspect is under-represented in the literature.

1.7 Chapter Outline

Chapter one introduces and outlines the aims of the study, the research questions, the theoretical context, the research methodology, the motivation for the study and the justification for the research;

Chapter two provides a literature review focused on the pedagogy of human rights education, the theory of cosmopolitan citizenship, the theory of transformational learning and the theory of informal learning;

Chapter three provides an outline of the research methodology, a justification for the data collection methods and data analysis, and the validity and limitations of the study;

Chapter four presents the findings of the first case study;

Chapter five presents the findings of the second case study;

Chapter six provides a comparison between the case studies; and

Chapter seven provides the conclusions of and recommendations from my study.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Human rights education is an evolving field of research that has gained increasing recognition over the past few decades (Andreopoulos, 1997). This has been driven by the work of both the United Nations and NGOs such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch who have recognised the key role that education plays in understanding and protecting rights. Amnesty International's website (2013) states that:

‘...human rights education is fundamental for addressing the underlying causes of human rights violations, preventing human rights abuses, combating discrimination, promoting equality, and enhancing people's participation in democratic decision-making processes’.

The field of human rights education has not developed in isolation; rather it draws upon existing bodies of research in related areas such as civics and citizenship, peace education, global education, critical pedagogy and transformative theory (Reardon, 1997). This review explores the contemporary research and literature on human rights education and transformative learning as a way of establishing the place of my study within the broader literature and Australian government policy context. The review also examines research pertaining to the meaning and characteristics of cosmopolitan citizenship and informal learning, since these concepts are also critical to the focus of my study. The review concludes by commenting on the links between these concepts in relation to the research questions. Although a large body of research already exists in both human rights education and transformative learning theory, much of the contemporary literature about human rights education in schools focuses on teacher-

delivered classroom curriculum rather than on student participation in informal extracurricular activities, a gap to which my research endeavours to contribute.

2.2 Human Rights Education

This review commences with an examination of the literature pertaining to the theory and pedagogy of human rights education. It also canvasses the relationship between human rights education and the development of cosmopolitan citizenship, and the policy documents relating to the implementation of human rights education in Australia.

2.2.1 The theory of human rights education

The aim of human rights education is to promote awareness and protect the rights accorded to all people by the UDHR (1948) (Tibbitts, 2002). In reviewing the literature in this area, it is evident that human rights education is often defined in a very broad way, so much so that it has been described as a ‘slogan in need of a definition’ (Osler and Starkey, 2010, p. 15). It is therefore timely that the United Nations has provided some guidance as to the meaning of the term through the *Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training* (2011).

Before examining the definitions of human rights education evident in the literature, it is instructive to first unpack the contested theories about the concept of ‘human rights’ itself. It is evident from reviewing the literature that there is disagreement amongst theorists about the presumption that human rights are universal. Donnelly (2003) argues that the universality of rights is based on the essential moral nature common to all human beings, meaning that such rights exist regardless of whether they are exercised or removed. However, Otto (1999) questions the notion that the universality of rights is an essential part of the human condition, arguing instead that rights only exist when they are exercised or removed, and therefore do not inherently dwell in each person. This argument is based on the Foucauldian idea that ‘liberty is a practice rather than an institutional or legal guarantee, and must be exercised in order to be attained’ (Otto,

1999, p. 10). This idea has implications for the importance of human rights education, because it follows that rights only exist if people know about them (through means such as education). Ignatieff (2001) also rejects the argument that there is something inherently important about human beings that entitles us to dignity and respect, and argues that the paradigm of modern human rights has developed into a secular religion, that confuses how we would like human beings to be with how they really are. Post-colonial theorists such as Darian-Smith and Fitzpatrick (1999) argue that the human rights paradigm imposes an exclusionary, hegemonic European agenda, which links human rights with democracy under the guise of universality, which denies the plurality of the human condition particularly regarding religious and cultural practices. An overview of the literature about human rights therefore reveals a robust and complex philosophical and moral debate about the nature and universality of rights and the implications for a just society.

There is also debate within the literature about whether human rights are indivisible and interdependent. Otto (1999) notes that the drafters of the UDHR (1948) (capitalist countries such as United States and the United Kingdom) were accused by communist Poland and Russia of setting up a hierarchy within the Declaration which gives primacy to civil and political rights (such as the right to vote and the right to freedom of expression) as opposed to economic, social and cultural rights (such as the right to housing, education and ethnic languages). The communist countries argued along Marxist lines that civil and political rights legitimise self-interest, whereas economic, social and cultural rights are concerned with the broader needs of the community and should therefore be given equal recognition and status within the Declaration (Otto, 1999). This debate is relevant for human rights education providers, particularly NGOs such as Amnesty International, which have traditionally privileged civil and political rights over economic, social and cultural rights, although it should be noted that Amnesty International has now changed their mandate to include campaigning for economic, social and cultural rights (Amnesty International USA, 2001).

A common theme which emerges from the literature is the recognition that strengthening respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms seems ‘uncomplicated and attractive on the surface’ (Tibbitts, 2002, p.160). Yet human rights are constantly being denied. The question therefore arises: is there any point in having an aspirational document such as the UDHR (1948) about the protection of human rights if it is constantly being breached? And does knowing about (or raising awareness about) rights make any difference in ensuring their protection? Supporters of human rights education would argue that it does, in particular because knowledge can lead to advocacy when rights are denied (Tibbitts, 2002). My thesis explores these ideas by examining whether learning about human rights in the particular context of student-led human rights groups leads to transformative learning and action.

2.2.2 The pedagogy of human rights education

Many of the common themes and definitions which have been developed in the human rights education literature have been adopted by the United Nations in the *Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training* (2011). Article 2(2) states that the pedagogy of human rights education should include:

- (a) Education about human rights, which includes providing knowledge and understanding of human rights norms and principles, the values that underpin them and the mechanisms for their protection
- (b) Education through human rights, which includes learning and teaching in a way that respects the rights of both educators and learners
- (c) Education for human rights, which includes empowering persons to enjoy and exercise their rights and to respect and uphold the rights of others.

The *Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training* (2011) emphasises that *how* human rights education is taught has equal significance with *what* is taught, and therefore the concepts of empowerment and transformational change are integral to the successful implementation of such a program. Therefore the *Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training* (2011) embodies a strong theme which can be traced through the literature, namely that the pedagogy of human rights education should be ‘about, through and for’ human rights. Tibbitts (2002) describes ‘learning about’ human rights as developing knowledge and understanding through a focus on the history, content and relevance of human rights documents and the controversies and conflicts of human rights in the international debate; whereas ‘learning for’ human rights emphasises respect and responsibility, and empowers and encourages participation in the transformation of community life and society.

It is also evident from an analysis of the literature that most theorists agree that there are different models of human rights education. However, the conceptualisation of what is involved in each model differs between theorists. Tibbitts (2002) argues that there are three models which represent an idealised framework for understanding contemporary human rights education practice. The first model is a values and awareness model, which can be described as ‘education about’ human rights. Under this model, information about the content of human rights is delivered in a formal education setting such as a school civics lesson. Tibbitts (2002) argues that it is a threshold requirement for human rights education programs to reference the key United Nations human rights documents (such as the UDHR (1948) and the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989)); without reference to these instruments, human rights education is indistinguishable from other fields such as peace education or global education. Tibbitts (2002) argues that the implicit message of this model is that mass support for human rights will continue to bring pressure upon government authorities to protect human rights. The main emphasis of this model is to attract the interest of the listener, rather than to encourage the development of advocacy skills in the learner. Therefore a challenge for this model is that it risks exposing learners to human rights issues in a superficial way, through limited content knowledge, without influencing attitudes or developing skills. However, it may

prime certain individuals who are predisposed towards the message of human rights to become involved in advocacy (Tibbitts 2002).

Similar to Tibbitts (2002), Mihr (2007) also argues that there are three levels at which human rights education can be conceived, and characterises the first as a cognitive model. As in the values and awareness model described by Tibbitts (2002) above, the cognitive model provides basic knowledge and information about universal human rights standards through the major international documents such as the UDHR (1948). The case study chapters will examine the extent to which the human rights education opportunities observed in the two case study schools meet the definitions of this first model as described by Tibbitts (2002) and Mihr (2007).

The second model described by Tibbitts (2002) is the accountability model of human rights education. The focus of this model is on human rights law and its protection mechanisms, and it is typically directed at professionals who work with vulnerable populations (for example in a refugee camp) where they might be monitoring and reporting human rights abuses. Implicit within this model is the idea that social change is necessary and that reform can be achieved through human rights education (Tibbitts, 2002). This model is less relevant to the case studies explored in my research as it does not include human rights education in schools.

Jennings (2006) conceives of the second model of human rights education as being an intellectual approach, which is relevant to a school-based cohort. This model of human rights education requires students to reflect critically on the conception, content and interpretation of rights, including the potential and the limitations of human rights and suggestions for reform. This model would for example encourage an exploration of the tensions that exist between respecting diverse cultural and religious practices such as female genital mutilation and asserting the universal norms of human rights (Jennings, 2006).

Also included in this model is a reflection about the extent to which the style of teaching embodies the content of the human rights values which are being taught (the idea of ‘education through’ human rights). For example, a program aimed at school children might be criticised if it failed to include the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989) in its selected human rights documents. In particular, human rights education programs should reference Article 12 of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, which states that children have the right to participate in decision making that affects them such as being involved in decision making about what they are learning and why. Thus, a thorough evaluation of a human rights education program should consider whether the teaching method adopted by the teacher demonstrated respect for the inherent dignity and equality of all students, which would be reflected in the way the teacher treated the students and how the students treated the teacher and each other. Evans (2006) argues that this model also necessitates a consideration of the broader environment in which the program took place, such as whether the rules and regulations of the institution and the leadership positions of the institution complement or undermine or support the human rights program in place at the school. The relevance of this model is examined in the case study chapters when answering the research question about how teaching and learning about human rights is implemented in schools.

The third model described by Tibbitts (2002) is the transformational model, which aims to empower individuals to recognise human rights abuses and to commit to their prevention (the idea of ‘education for’ human rights). According to Tibbitts (2002), this model is predicated upon the notion that the learner has some personal experience of human rights violations, which has predisposed them to become promoters of the human rights of others (for example a refugee or a victim of domestic violence). This definition is not particularly relevant to the cohort of school student participants in my research. Also, this approach seems somewhat problematic if it is dependent upon the learner having experienced abuse, as it seems to put the responsibility back on the victims to be the change makers. However, Tibbitts (2002) does state that aspects of the transformational pedagogy can be relevant to a school setting, particularly the implementation of an ‘interactive pedagogical approach that is linked more strongly with

attitudinal or behavioural change than with a pure lecturing approach' (p. 162). It is this approach that will be explored in the case study chapters when addressing the research question 'what impact does learning about human rights through informal extracurricular activities have on the development of student knowledge, skills, attitudes and understanding as cosmopolitan citizens?'

Similar to Tibbitts' (2002) transformational model, Mihr (2007) argues that the direct and indirect experience of injustice and other abuses can serve as a link between cognitive knowledge and emotional reaction. Under this conceptionalisation, human rights education can change people's attitudes and behaviours if it elicits a personal and emotional reaction against human rights abuses. Under Mihr's (2007) definition, the individual would not themselves have to have experienced a human rights violation (as compared with Tibbitts' (2002) definition); rather they would just need to have had an emotional reaction to learning about someone who had experienced a human rights violation, which then inspired them to learn more and to take action to stop it happening to others. Osler and Starkey (2010) point out that although an understanding of rights is a complex philosophical feat, the denial of rights engages an immediate emotional response. For example, even very small children have a keen sense of injustice when their rights are infringed. However, it could be argued that it is problematic to encourage learners to feel guilty or upset about their safer and more privileged life that they have been born into; then again perhaps it is the responsibility of those more fortunate to advocate for those who are less so, rather than leaving it to the victims themselves.

According to Evans (2006), the transformative model of human rights education aims to reach beyond knowledge to change the lives of students. Jennings (2006) argues that while knowledge of the principles outlined in the various human rights instruments is crucial, is not necessarily sufficient to bring about the compulsion to take action. Similarly, Osler and Starkey (2010) argue that human rights education implies a deeper understanding of human rights principles, which includes the encouragement of a commitment to social justice and solidarity with those whose rights are denied, the

development of critical thinking skills, and the skills to effect change ('education for' human rights).

Overall, a review of the literature suggests that neither 'education about' human rights nor 'education through' human rights are sufficient to fully embody human rights education, as it is also necessary to provide 'education for' human rights. This requires the development of values that comply with human rights and the encouragement of activism to achieve human rights aims. However, Evans (2006) argues that such a transformative approach may come into conflict with the intellectual approach, if it leads to pressuring students to abandon a critical perspective in order to advocate or advance human rights; at some point, the revolutionary aims of transformative human rights education may cross the boundary from education into a form of indoctrination. These ideas will be explored in the case study analysis. Evans (2006) also argues that the task of assessing whether a program has been transformative for students is a very complex one, as compared with assessing whether students have remembered and understood the content of human rights documents.

2.2.3 Cosmopolitan citizenship and human rights education

Human rights education has traditionally been conceptualised as a part of citizenship education (Torney-Purta, 2004). However, Osler and Starkey (2003, 2005), the seminal theorists in this area, conceive of human rights as forming the backbone to what they call cosmopolitan citizenship, which is citizenship based on recognition of our shared humanity. Osler and Starkey (2003) argue that many governments believe that their obligation to provide human rights education is fulfilled by the provision of civics and citizenship education classes within schools. However, they argue that most governments use civics and citizenship education as a platform for *national* citizenship about the rights and responsibilities that derive from membership of the sovereign state, rather than providing education about the rights of *democratic* citizenship per se. Therefore Osler and Starkey (2003) argue that there is a need for a new conversation about the definition of citizenship, as the interconnected processes of globalisation have

eroded the notion of loyalty to a particular nation state. They advocate that the concept cosmopolitan citizenship provides secular societies with a set of explicit, shared values derived from the universally recognised standard as set out in the UDHR (1948) (Osler & Starkey, 2010). They write that the compelling attraction of the Declaration derives from its capacity to provide an alternative account of what binds human beings together, beyond theories of nationalism, namely respect for the dignity of every human being. Cosmopolitan citizenship can therefore be conceptualised as a practice of everyday citizenship engagement by which each individual can participate in working alongside others to make a difference, a concept which closely mirrors the aims of human rights education (Osler & Starkey, 2010).

Much citizenship education is directed towards young people as citizens in waiting, which can lead to a deficit model of citizenship education, where young people are acted upon as subjects who need to be educated (Osler & Starkey, 2003). By contrast, Osler and Starkey (2010) argue that education for cosmopolitan citizenship enables young people to perceive of themselves as current citizens with rights and responsibilities locally, nationally and globally. They argue that learning about cosmopolitan citizenship does not take place exclusively in the classroom; it also occurs in the wider school experience, in families and in the wider community, and teachers need to be aware of and encourage sites of citizenship learning beyond the school. Ultimately, citizenship requires a sense of belonging, which can be acquired through home, school and community life, and these notions will be explored in the case study chapters.

The concept of cosmopolitan citizenship is particularly relevant for this thesis because it not only encapsulates the importance of human rights education within a globalised world, but also recognizes that *how* and *where* it takes place (in spaces beyond the formal classroom) is crucial. The processes of globalisation mean that students are increasingly likely to live and work alongside others from different social and cultural backgrounds, who do not necessarily share the same beliefs or values as them. In addition, not all students are citizens of the country in which they reside, so it is not appropriate to draw on a singular national, cultural or religious tradition in order to establish a framework of

principles for living and working together in the community of the school, or to prepare students for living in the wider communities they will encounter beyond school. It is therefore feeling a sense of solidarity with people who are different from you in your own community that is the crucial indicator of cosmopolitan citizenship (Osler & Starkey, 2010). This is particularly relevant for the participants involved in this research, because many of them are citizens of one country who are residing in another country (third culture kids) and who interact regularly with other students of diverse backgrounds. The extent to which the young people interviewed and observed for this research possessed the characteristics of cosmopolitan citizenship will be discussed in the case study chapters.

2.2.4 Human rights education policy in Australia

Tibbitts (2002) argues that the increasing profile of human rights education in recent decades is related to both the increasing democratisation and globalisation of the world. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) has drawn a direct connection between significant political developments (such as the ending of apartheid in South Africa, the fall of the Berlin Wall in Germany, the democratisation of the former communist states in Western Europe and the disintegration of the Soviet Union) and the expansion of human rights education as part of a 'third wave' of democratisation which upholds the rule of law and the separation of powers (Tibbitts, 2002). In recent times the United Nations has also increased the profile of human rights education, for example by naming 1995-2004 the *Decade for Human Rights Education*, with the aim of strengthening support for human rights education at both the local and national levels within countries, and NGOs such as Amnesty International (which have traditionally spearheaded human rights education) have also increased their commitment to it during this period. Despite these efforts, in many countries there has been little political backing at a national level for human rights education and therefore few qualified examples of an increased commitment to it (Osler & Starkey, 2010).

However, recently the Australian government has made increasing references to human rights in its policy making. In 2010 it released *Australia's Human Rights Framework* (Commonwealth Government, Federal Attorney-General's Department, 2010). This Framework is based on the recommendations of the National Human Rights Consultation Committee, and it outlines a range of key measures to protect and promote human rights in Australia, of which the centrepiece was A\$12 million in funding to NGOs such as Amnesty International for the preparation and delivery of human rights education programs to the Australian community over three years.

Another example of an increased commitment to human rights education by the Australian government is evident in the draft *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship Draft Paper* (ACARA, 2012), which forms part of a new Australia-wide curriculum that is being developed across all learning areas in schools. This document specifically refers to human rights as part of the guiding principles:

‘10 b) The values on which Australia’s democracy is based include freedom of the individual, government by the people through a representative parliament, free and fair elections, the rule of law, equality of all before the law, social justice and equality, respect for diversity and difference, freedom of speech and religion, lawful dissent, *respect for human rights*, support for the common good, and acceptance of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

...

15. As an international citizen, Australia has commitments to United Nations conventions, including *human rights declarations* and international obligations. An awareness of the political and legal systems of other countries enhances students’ understanding of their own system of government.’ [emphasis added] (p. 3).

The *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship Draft paper* (ACARA, 2012) also states that the important knowledge and understanding included in the Australian curriculum will include:

‘20 e) Key elements of Australia’s legal system and legal processes including the purpose of laws, constitutional principles, legal rights and responsibilities, the rule of law, and the ways in which Australia’s legal system contributes to democratic principles, *human rights* and freedoms.

20 f) Rights and responsibilities of citizens, *including human rights (civil, political, social, economic, cultural)*, as well as the right to dissent, critique and communicate, and the ways in which individuals, groups and governments exert influence on civic debate and citizen engagement’. [emphasis added] (p. 12).

This demonstrates that the Australian Government recognises that citizenship education in a democracy involves human rights education as one of its core elements.

Another relevant policy document is the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (MCEETYA, 2008), agreed by all Federal and State Education Ministers. The document states that education should enable young Australians to be active and informed citizens who possess (among other things):

- moral and ethical integrity
- an appreciation of Australia’s social, cultural, linguistic and religious diversity, and have an understanding of Australia’s system of government, history and culture (Goal 2, p. 2-3).

This policy is relevant for my research because it also acknowledges the importance of learning which takes place outside the classroom. The *Melbourne Declaration* (MCEETYA, 2008) states that students, parents, carers, families, the community, business and other education and training providers, as well as schools, have responsibility for promoting the intellectual, physical, social, emotional, moral, spiritual and aesthetic development and wellbeing of young Australians. This places learning in a broader context in contrast to earlier Declarations for schooling such as the *Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty First Century* (1999) which

focused on the formal classroom environment. It could therefore be argued that the *Melbourne Declaration* (MCEETYA, 2008) provides recognition of the importance of learning that occurs in places such as informal extracurricular activities.

2.3 Transformative Learning

As discussed above, human rights education is not merely about valuing and respecting human rights, but it is also about fostering personal action in order to guarantee these conditions. Many human rights educators are convinced that the work they do is empowering and transformative, and so human rights education can be conceived through a transformative learning framework (Tibbitts, 2005). This section of the review explores the literature relating to the origins and definitions of transformative learning theory, and examines its relationship with human rights education.

The origins of transformative learning theory can be traced to Dewey's seminal work *Democracy and Education* (1917). Dewey argued that the starting point for all learning, whether formal or informal, must be the emergent understanding of the learner in contexts which are relevant to them. He developed approaches to real-life problem solving that 'emphasised the importance of working in a community of enquiry based in action to forge a shared understanding that could form the basis for future action' (Baumfield, 2003, p. 178). Dewey argued that the goal of education was not the passive transmission of facts, but rather that learners be active agents in constructing their own meaning-making. My research draws upon Dewey's pedagogical principles, as it is concerned with learning that takes place by student participation in informal extracurricular groups, where self-selected learners work towards raising awareness and taking action about human rights issues.

The Brazilian educationalist Freire drew on the work of Dewey in developing his philosophy of critical pedagogy in his influential work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970). Critical pedagogy is a domain of education and research that studies the social, cultural, political, economic, and cognitive dynamics of teaching and learning, and which

emphasises the impact that power relationships can have on the educational process. A Freirian approach involves the process of conscientisation, whereby learners achieve a deepening awareness of both the sociocultural reality which shapes their lives and their capacity to transform that reality through action (Nazzari, McAdams & Roy, 2005). This involves reflecting and acting upon the world in order to transform it (Freire, 1970). In other words, reflection only becomes truly critical when it leads to some form of transformative social action.

Freire (1970) was particularly concerned about the 'banking' model of teaching and learning, where the teacher is perceived as an authoritarian figure who possesses ultimate knowledge which must be transferred to, or banked, in the student's mind. Critical social theory is therefore a radical call to educators to develop a repertoire of action strategies with the long term aim of shifting power, where the teacher is not an all-knowing seer but rather where students develop their own meanings which are relevant for them. Giroux (1983) further developed Freire's (1970) ideas, by arguing that a radical view of knowledge is one that instructs the oppressed about their situation as a group within a particular relationship of domination and subordination. Such knowledge would provide a motivational connection to action that could alter the existing power dynamics between the teacher and the learner.

Critical pedagogy provides a challenge to the existing power relations that exist within the student/teacher dynamic because it argues for democracy as a *method* of teaching, rather than as just the *goal* of education (Tsolidis, 2001). Freire's (1970) work identifies how learners can discover power within themselves to act upon situations as subjects rather than as objects to be acted upon, so that it is understood that both students and teachers have agency within the classroom (Nazzari et al, 2005). This is particularly relevant for my research which explores how students learn about human rights through their participation in extracurricular activities, rather than within a formal classroom.

Whilst Freire (1970) rarely referred explicitly to the concept of human rights, his view of the dialogue between teachers and students and his emphasis on education as a means to

achieving dignity is in keeping with the philosophy of human rights (Osler & Starkey, 2010). Print et al (2008) argues that human rights education, with its emphasis on transformation, empowerment and participation, has been strongly influenced by Freire's (1970) theory of critical pedagogy. Both human rights education and critical pedagogy also provide opportunities for exploring the tensions between respecting diverse cultural practices and asserting the universal norms of human rights (Jennings, 2006) which is connected with the intellectual model of human rights education discussed earlier in this literature review. The influence of Freire's (1970) ideas is especially evident in the concept of 'education through' human rights, where teachers and students are encouraged to treat one another with equality, respect and dignity.

Mezirow (1991), who is credited with initiating the theoretical field of transformative learning, further developed Freire's (1970) ideas by arguing that individuals can be transformed through a process of critical reflection. Mezirow (2000) has defined transformative learning as:

'the process by which we call into question our taken for granted frames of reference to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action' (p. 5).

Mezirow (1991) argues that an essential practice for transformative learning is a learner-centered approach, which promotes participation and collaboration with a practical application, and where responsibility for learning lies with the participants. Mezirow's (1991) transformative learning theory can explain how

'... learners make sense or meaning of their experiences, the nature of the structures that influence the way they construe experience, the dynamics involved in modifying meanings, and the way the structures of meanings themselves undergo changes when learners find them to be dysfunctional'. (p. xii).

Therefore in order for learners to change their meaning schemes, they must engage in critical reflection of their experiences, which in turn leads to perspective transformation. Similar to Freire (1970), Mezirow (1991) argues that the purpose of critical reflection is to externalise and investigate power relationships and to uncover the dominant hegemonic cultural assumptions that exist. This involves questioning and reframing an assumption, or taking an alternative perspective that up until that point has been accepted as representing common sense wisdom. This process can be described as learners experiencing a disorienting dilemma, which is a life event that causes them to pause and question their underlying beliefs and assumptions; critical reflecting upon the disorienting dilemma to expose the limitations of their understanding; addressing those limitations by acquiring new knowledge, skills or attitudes; and transforming the learner by providing him/her with fresh perspectives and a powerful means for enacting improvement.

According to Brookfield (1995), Freire was more concerned about social transformations, whereas Mezirow (1991) is mainly concerned with personal transformations. However, Mezirow (1991) acknowledges that learners who share in this transformative experience can affect change by affiliating with like-minded persons who are also devoted to change, which may help to change the system collectively. This discussion will be explored in the case study chapters, as human rights education involves moving beyond the individual learner into social action and change within the wider community.

According to Meintjes (1997), there are a number of elements that should be apparent in a transformative human rights education experience. These include the ability of students to recognise the human rights dimensions of a given conflict; an expression of awareness and concern about their role in the protection or promotion of these rights; a critical evaluation of the potential responses that may be offered; an attempt to identify or create new responses; a judgment or decision about which choice is most appropriate; and a recognition of responsibility and influence in both the decision and its impact. The extent to which these aspects are apparent in the schools in my study will be discussed in the case study chapters.

In line with Freire's (1970) and Mezirow's (1991) theories, Cardenas (2005) argues that the transformational model of human rights education is inherently revolutionary, because if it is implemented effectively it has the potential to generate social opposition, alongside rising demands for justice and accountability. However, such an approach can be problematic in practice. According to Suarez (2007), a tension can arise for human rights educators who use it as a critical pedagogical tool to challenge the power relations within schools and other communities, as it involves them undermining their own status within the classroom which can be very challenging for teachers and school institutions. This view is one which I intend to look for during observations at the case study schools when addressing the research question 'to what extent does learning about human rights through student participation in informal extracurricular activities achieve transformative learning for students?'

2.4 Informal learning through student participation in extracurricular activities

In this section of the literature review, I examine whether student participation in extracurricular activities can be characterised as informal learning and the implications this has for transformative learning. Secondly, the literature about learning through participation in youth action groups is discussed in relation to the research questions.

2.4.1 The pedagogy of informal learning

As part of the process of formulating my research questions, I reviewed existing literature about informal learning to see whether this concept described what I observed when students participated in extracurricular activities focused on human rights at school.

Theorists have provided numerous definitions of what constitutes formal, non-formal and informal learning and education. Coombs and Ahmed (1974) differentiate between formal, non-formal and informal education:

‘Formal education: the highly institutionalised, chronologically graded and hierarchically structured education system, spanning lower primary school and the upper reaches of the university.

Non-formal education: any organised, systematic, educational activity carried on outside the formal system to provide selected types of learning to particular subgroups in the population, adults as well as children.

Informal education: the lifelong process by which every person acquires and accumulates knowledge, skills, attitudes and insights from daily experiences and exposure to the environment – at home, at work, at play; from the example and the attitudes of the family and friends; from travel, reading newspapers and books or by listening to the radio or viewing films or television’ (p. 1).

LaBelle (1982) argues that informal and formal education should be viewed as predominant modes of learning rather than (as Coombs and Ahmed (1974) imply) discrete entities. Kalantzis & Cope (2008) also describe informal learning as endogenous learning that occurs in the real world, and does not involve formal curriculum, as compared with institutional education that is deliberate, systematic and goal oriented. In a similar way McGivney (1999) describes informal learning as ‘learning that takes place outside a dedicated learning environment and which arises from the activities and interests of individuals and groups, but which may not be recognised as learning.’ (p. 10). A useful definition of the differences between the modes is provided by Scheerens (2009), who argues that formal education is defined from the viewpoint of the system, whereas informal education is defined from the viewpoint of the learner.

In their definitions, Coombs & Ahmed (1974), Kalantzis & Cope (2008) and McGivney (1999) all acknowledge the relevance of context and space in defining the type of learning that is taking place. McGivney’s (1999) definition of informal learning seems to match what I intend to observe in my study of student participation in extracurricular activities. The concept of informal learning seems to be the most relevant

conceptualisation, because although the groups under observation are supported by the formal educational institution of a school, within the groups themselves there is no set curriculum and no assessment set by teachers (or other external educational institutions), and if the students were not interested in organising the groups then they would not exist. The groups depend upon the capacity and motivation of students to take care of their own learning, therefore they can be defined as informal learners. Informal learning has clear links with both human rights education and transformative learning, as they all emphasise the importance of empowering the learner to participate in real world action.

Jeffs and Smith (2005) argue that informal learning should no longer be regarded as an inferior form of learning whose main purpose is to act as the precursor of formal learning, but rather it needs to be seen as valuable in its own right. The importance of informal learning as an area of research within schools has been enhanced by an international comparative study which was conducted in seven European countries by the European Commission, entitled *Informal Learning of Active Citizenship at School* (Scheerens, 2009). The focus of this research was on the informal learning about citizenship which takes place for students during their daily experiences at school but outside the classroom. Scheerens (2009) argues that the values and norms of school life provide an exercise ground for important dimensions of civic behaviour that exist in wider society, and it was hypothesised that the microcosm experience of learning to operate and create change within an organisational structure enables students to ‘learn about the rules of the game, what it means to be part of an organisation and what civic behaviour in such a setting requires’ (pp. 25-26), which echoes the thoughts of Roosevelt (1958) in the quote at the beginning of this thesis. One of the findings of Scheerens’ (2009) research was that participation in a variety of extracurricular activities created a strong sense of community among participants, which enabled them to meet and collaborate with others for a common cause. This study is very relevant to my research because it legitimises the importance of investigating the learning about active citizenship which takes place informally through student involvement in extracurricular activities.

2.4.2 Learning through participation in youth action groups

As part of the process of completing this literature review, I looked for research that would help me classify what I would observe in schools involving the participation by students in extracurricular activities about human rights. After reviewing the literature related to service learning (Fehrman & Schutz, 2011; Kahne & Westheimer, 2006), it became obvious that my study did not fit into this category. Service learning programs, which are a major movement (particularly within the United States) involve an altruistic approach to community engagement which focuses on charities and volunteering. The targets of service learning projects are often viewed as clients in need of services, for example homeless people in need of food. In this way it can be argued that service learning reinforces a deficit model of community engagement, where clients are passive recipients rather than active collaborators. Service learning is also typically geared towards student success, where students are encouraged to feel good about volunteering their time and efforts to help others less fortunate (Kahne & Westheimer, 2006). In particular, the majority of service learning projects avoid engagement with issues related to power, and do not tend to examine the root causes of issues such as homelessness. Therefore human rights education differs from service learning because the former aims to challenge the existing power relationships that deny people their human rights, whereas the latter is based on a charity model which could be characterised as the powerful acting upon the less powerful, albeit with altruistic aims in mind. Whilst the schools which I intend to observe in my research do engage in many service learning activities, this is not the focus of my research.

A more relevant research area than service learning is the literature on youth participation, which is the active engagement of young people in their communities (Bessant, 2004). While my literature review does not have the scope to fully explore this field, some aspects of this area do pertain to my study of student participation in informal extracurricular activities about human rights. Youth social action groups involve young people themselves researching a problem or issue and becoming an expert, and then coming together with other like-minded young people to organise public actions that

garner media attention through activities such as rallies, marches and sit-ins (Alinsky, 1971). Alinsky (1971) also describes the importance of securing small wins early in a campaign as a way of building confidence and engagement among youth and instilling the belief that social change is possible. These aspects of youth participation are relevant to my research since I intend to explore how students take action about human rights issues and how they cope with the difficulties of creating real change.

Fehrman and Schutz (2011) identify a key challenge for youth social action groups, which they call the catch-22 of youth civic engagement. They describe how social action projects aim to enhance the belief of students in their own capacity to solve community problems, yet authentic engagements with real world institutional power tends to reduce their confidence and increase their cynicism about their capacity to be change makers, and thus reduce their desire to participate in social action in the future. Kahne and Westheimer (2006) also note that teachers or other adult allies often make sure students do not encounter any significant barriers to success in these types of projects, even though this may actually mislead them about the realities of the unequal power relations that exist in wider society.

The research undertaken by Fehrman and Schutz (2011), which involved studying a school-based community change project in Wisconsin, USA, is relevant for my research. The aim of that program was to nurture active democratic citizenship by teaching young people concepts and skills for engaging in authentic public work. Students chose a focus for their project (such as homelessness) and were encouraged by their coaches (who were college students acting as mentors) to engage directly with power and with the forces that prevent significant social change occurring in their area. Fehrman and Schutz (2011) noted that:

‘During the first year... we felt like we mostly failed to really engage students in practical social action efforts. The magnitude of the topics students decided to address... simply overwhelmed students... [they] could not figure out how to actually *do* something that felt significant’. (p. 2).

The coaches were also uncertain about their role, in particular whether they should directly intervene or act more as a facilitator when students encountered difficulties, as it was ostensibly a student-led project. Fehrman and Schutz (2011) concluded that assisting students to set definable and achievable goals was the most practical strategy for addressing the catch 22 dilemma of youth social action projects: for example rather than having the goal of eliminating homelessness in the town they focused instead on providing a graffiti wall for homeless teenagers to use. Fehrman and Schutz's (2011) research is relevant for my research, because it looks at the successes and failures that occurred in the implementation of a social action project, and the adult support that needs to be provided for young people in order to achieve success.

2.5. Conclusion

The central concern of this chapter has been to explore the literature, including current Australian government policies, related to the fields of human rights education, cosmopolitan citizenship, transformative learning and informal learning. The literature about human rights itself revealed a robust and complex philosophical and moral debate about the nature and universality of rights, and the implications this has for a just society, and this in turn has influenced the competing conceptualisations of human rights education. In particular, human rights education can be implemented as 'education about, through and for' human rights. Osler and Starkey (2003, 2005) have expanded further on the idea of human rights education, and argue that it should form the framework of what they term cosmopolitan citizenship, where universal human rights norms form the basis of citizenship rather than loyalty to a nation. The literature about the extent to which human rights education can lead to transformative learning has also been examined in this chapter. Finally, the extent to which the learning that takes place through student participation in extracurricular activities can be classified as informal learning was discussed, as was the relevance of youth social action projects. The specific methods, tools and conceptual frameworks utilised in the study are the focus for the following methodology chapter.

Chapter Three

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the methodological approaches utilised in my study in order to answer the research questions posed. I examine the theoretical framework for the research, justify the use of case study as a research method and explain the method of data collection. In this chapter I also discuss the way the data was analysed and how the validity of the data was ensured through triangulation. The chapter concludes with a discussion about the impact of the reflexive identity of the researcher, the limitations of the research and the ethical issues raised by my study.

This study investigated the involvement of secondary school students in informal extracurricular activities connected to a range of human rights concerns. The aim of my research was to explore whether such activities led to learning which was transformative for the students involved. It focused on two case study schools, one in Australia and one in Asia.

3.2 The theoretical paradigm of the research

This research, with its focus on the transformative potential of student participation in action about human rights, is situated within the socially critical paradigm. The assumptions underpinning socially critical research involve a commitment to social justice, equity, inclusivity and social change (Macdonald, Kirk, Metzler, Nilges, Schempp & Wright, 2002). The purpose of socially critical inquiry is to challenge the status quo and impart social change, through first changing individual and group consciousness (Creswell, 2008), which is also the purpose of transformative learning and human rights education which is the focus of my research. The socially critical paradigm

is also concerned with the balance between the powerful and the powerless, which mirrors the concerns being examined in this study, namely the capacity of individuals and groups to understand human rights issues and thereby to try and enact change.

Two theoretical frames underpin my study and were used to analyse the data collected: the pedagogy of ‘about, through and for’ human rights education as described in the *Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training* (2011); and Mezirow’s (1991) theory of transformative learning.

The *Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training* (2011) describes the human rights education as involving ‘education about’ human rights, which includes providing knowledge and understanding of human rights norms and principles, the values that underpin them and the mechanisms for their protection; ‘education through’ human rights, which includes learning and teaching in a way that respects the rights of both educators and learners; and ‘education for’ human rights, which includes empowering persons to enjoy and exercise their rights and to respect and uphold the rights of others

These analytical frames are used in the case studies in order to analyse the data collected in the context of the research questions. In addition, the findings in the *Australian National Assessment Program - Civics and Citizenship Report* (2010) are used as a point of comparison with the findings in the case studies about human rights education.

3.3 The use of a case study methodology

Case study methodology involves the collection of exploratory, descriptive and explanatory qualitative data (Yin, 2009). The qualitative data which is collected in a case study involves perceiving what is happening in key episodes or testimonies, and then representing happenings with direct interpretations and narratives, which are then used to optimise understanding of the particular case (Stake, 1995).

The use of a case study is appropriate for my research which is explanatory, strives to answer ‘how’ and ‘why’ type questions and is focused on contemporary events (Yin, 2009). Case studies do not involve manipulation of behaviours as might occur in an

experiment, but rather enable the words and actions of people to be observed in a naturalistic setting as a way of allowing the researcher to build up a complex and layered picture of meaning (Creswell, 2008).

3.4 Justification of the selection of case studies

In the initial phase of my research, I concentrated on observing and interviewing students involved in the informal extracurricular human rights activities in one school (Elizawood College), with the intention of using the data to develop a critical case study based on deep, rich description and analysis. I chose this school as the basis of my research because it offered a number of opportunities for students to participate in informal extracurricular activities about human rights. (This was ascertained when I was employed as a secondary teacher at the school prior to conducting my research). It was my understanding, through observation, research and discussion with others, that this school was unique in providing so many of these opportunities, and it therefore seemed an ideal school to be the subject of my case study analysis.

A common concern about case studies is the validity of generalising the results from a particular case to a wider population. However, Yin (2009) argues that case studies are ‘generalisable to theoretical propositions and not to populations’ (p. 15). Stake (1995) also notes that while it can be useful to try and select a case study which is typical, ‘the first criterion should be to maximize what we can learn’ (Stake, 1995, p. 4). Therefore, at first I decided that it was more interesting and instructive to investigate a school that provided varied opportunities for students to be involved in informal extracurricular activities about human rights, rather than a school which would not have provided such a rich source of data. Therefore the justification for focusing on a single school case study was that there was clear evidence that it represented a critical case to test the theoretical propositions.

However, as my case study analysis progressed, I began to think that a cross-site analysis which compared how a different school engaged students in informal extracurricular activities about human rights would greatly add to the depth of my study and allow for rich comparison. This process is typical of qualitative research, which often takes on an

emergent design as the research progresses (Creswell, 2008). According to Yin (2009), the evidence provided by multiple cases is often more compelling and the study is therefore regarded as being more robust. This is particularly important as validity is a concern for explanatory case studies which cannot be directly replicated. Case study researchers can run the risk of concluding that there is a causal relationship between two factors, when in fact the research design has neglected a third factor which may have impacted on the phenomenon (Yin, 2009). The use of a multiple case study design means that the findings in one case study can corroborate or refute the findings in the other, which mitigates against some of the limitations inherent in a single case study.

Personal circumstances also meant that during the course of my research, I moved from Australia to Asia. This allowed me to investigate whether there was a school in the city where I was living that engaged in human rights education through informal extracurricular activities. I discovered that the Australian International School (AIS) offered an extracurricular activity called the Model United Nations, which deals with human rights issues. I conducted further research through the school's website, and read the mission statement of the school which is 'to provide a world class international school where students, through active participation, achieve their personal best to become skilled, healthy, influential and responsible international citizens'. This provided further reason for me to include this school as a case study in my research, as it specifically aims to encourage the active participation of internationally minded citizens. The Principal granted me permission to include the school as my second case study and it was added to my ethics certificate. This enabled me to develop a multiple case study design, which illuminated the research questions through a comparison of two schools in different countries which both provided informal extracurricular human rights education opportunities. Although the second case study was not an exact replication of the first, due to the different opportunities provided by the schools, the interviews, observations and document analysis from both schools proved to be a rich source of data from which to address the research questions. (After completing my research at AIS, I was employed there as a secondary school teacher).

The first case study was conducted at a private school in a capital city in Australia (referred to in this study by the pseudonym 'Elizawood College'). This Christian school has over 2000 girls from kindergarten to Year 12, and has a large international student population and boarding facilities. This school teaches both the state based Certificate of Education and the International Baccalaureate Diploma (IB) at Years 11 and 12. This school was chosen as the focus of the first case study analysis because of its capacity to illuminate the research questions posed. Not only does the school support a number of lunchtime groups which focus on human rights issues, it also directly links its mission to international human rights standards. The website of Elizawood College states that it is a member of the *United Nations Global Compact* (2005), which 'seeks to align business operations and strategies everywhere with ten universally accepted principles in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption'. These factors mean that this school represents a critical case for testing the theoretical propositions discussed, namely human rights education and the extent to which it enables transformative learning to occur.

The second case study school is a private co-educational international school in a large Asian city, which will be referred to in this study by the pseudonym 'Australian International School' (AIS). The school has about 1,100 students from kindergarten to Year 12, and has been operating since 1996. The school is funded entirely by school fees and fundraising events, as it receives no financial support from any government. The school teaches the New South Wales Higher School Certificate (HSC) as well as the International Baccalaureate Diploma (IB) at Years 11 and 12. About 70% of the students at the school are Australian or New Zealand passport holders, however about 30 nationalities are represented in the student population. The focus of this research was the Model United Nations, which was run as an extracurricular activity after school.

The student participants in this research for each case study were invited to participate in my research because they were members of the lunchtime human rights groups (Case Study 1) or the afterschool Model United Nations group (Case Study 2). At the meetings of the groups, I outlined what my research was about and asked for any volunteers who were willing to be observed and interviewed. The students who volunteered were then

given explanatory statements (see Appendix A) and consent forms (see Appendix B) for themselves and their parents to sign and return. The teacher participants were invited to participate in my research because they were associated with the extracurricular groups or because they were in a leadership positions within the school that gave support to the groups.

3.5 The method of data collection

In case study research, interviews are an essential source of information (Yin, 2009). This research involved conducting semi-structured interviews with students and teachers in the two case study schools about their experiences with human rights education. It also involved observing student participation in informal extracurricular activities and analysing relevant school policies and documentation. The interviews were semi-structured in that participants in both case studies were asked a common set of questions, however, often the responses by participants led to further questioning by me as the researcher in order to build on my understanding of their experience.

The advantage of a semi-structured interview was that it gave me flexibility as a researcher to pursue interesting and relevant avenues which were raised by the interviewee which I had not canvassed in my pre-prepared questions. In order to determine whether transformation had taken place, probing and detailed questions were necessary, for example, ‘students might rate a particular session as the best because the teacher had a good sense of humour, but a session that the student did not enjoy may be the most transformative because it altered their world view’ (Evans, 2006, p. 62). In each case study, I conducted an in-depth interview with pre-prepared questions for each participant, and then I continued throughout the term to ask follow-up questions in response to my observations about what was happening. The interviews were audio-recorded (and later transcribed) and hand-written notes were also taken during the interviews. I chose to interview participants individually rather than through a focus group because some questions were of a sensitive nature, for example questioning students about whether they believed they shared the same values as their parents. Throughout the observation and interview process, I aimed to not only record what was

happening, but to also examine its meaning in order to understand the situation at hand using the theoretical frames discussed in this chapter. In this way, qualitative data was collected in a minimally invasive way (Stake, 1995).

Table 1 provides a summary of the timetable of the data collection process for each case study.

Table 1: Timetable of data collection

Phase 1: Elizawood College	Phase 2: Australian International School
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visited the school twice a week during Term 1 and Term 3 2010 - Observed the meetings of 3 groups - Interviewed and observed 3 students - Interviewed 4 teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visited the school twice a week during Term 2 2012 - Observed the Model United Nations meetings and the conference - Interviewed and observed 4 students - Interviewed 2 teachers

Table 2 provides a summary of the questions asked of the student participants in the interviews.

Table 2: Interview questions asked of the student participants

Purpose	What do you think is the purpose of this group? How successful do you think the group is in achieving this aim? Do you think the school is supportive of this group?
Attitude and motivation	How and why did you become involved in this group? How long have you been involved?

	<p>What factors influenced you to become involved?</p> <p>Are your friends involved in the group?</p> <p>Do you intend to stay involved the group?</p> <p>What do your parents think about your involvement in the group?</p> <p>Were you interested in human rights issues before you joined the group or only because of your involvement in the group?</p>
Skills	<p>What skills have you gained from being involved in this group that you did not have before?</p> <p>How did you obtain these skills?</p>
Knowledge	<p>What knowledge about human rights have you learned from this experience that you did not have before?</p> <p>How did you obtain this knowledge?</p> <p>What issues did you enjoy learning about the most about and why?</p>
Student Leadership	<p>Did the fact that this group was student run make a difference in how it operated and was organised?</p> <p>Did this influence what and how you learned about human rights issues?</p> <p>How would you describe the role of the teacher in this group?</p> <p>Did the teacher impact upon your learning?</p>
Understanding and emotions	<p>How did your involvement in this group make you feel about human rights issues?</p> <p>Did your feelings change as a result of your involvement in the group?</p>

<p>Transformations</p>	<p>What have you enjoyed most about being involved in this group?</p> <p>What have you enjoyed the least?</p> <p>Has your involvement in this group changed you?</p> <p>Have your new understandings led you to take any actions about human rights issues that you would not have otherwise?</p> <p>How would you have you gone about doing this?</p> <p>What has influenced you the most to take action?</p> <p>Has this experience been satisfying or frustrating? Why?</p>
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3.6 The analysis of the data

A limitation of collecting case study data through interviews and observations is that it can lead to a vast array of unwieldy data. In order to cut through the data, the information needs to converge in a triangulating fashion as a way of providing corroborating evidence and therefore enabling weight to be given to the findings (Yin, 2009).

The analytic technique that was utilised in this study was to build an explanation about the particular case (Yin, 2009). Interviews were transcribed and coded according to the themes arising from the research questions, and a descriptive narrative was then constructed. Explanation-building and pattern-matching (Yin, 2009) were used as the data analysis method and thick description was provided of each case. According to Yin (2009) the process of explanation-building involves a series of iterations: making an initial theoretical statement or an initial proposition about policy or social behaviour; comparing the findings of an initial case against such a statement or proposition; revising the statement or proposition; comparing other details of the case against the revision; and

comparing the revision of the facts to a second, third, or more cases (p. 143). The findings from this process are discussed in the case study chapters.

3.7 My reflexivity as a researcher

Reflexivity about my own self-location (such as my class, gender and ethnicity) and the way that this influences my position has been used as a way of validating the research methodology, because it demonstrates my awareness of the problematic nature of the research process. This is particularly so in this study because a socially critical perspective accepts that all knowledge is value-laden, and emphasises the importance of making explicit the assumptions that influence the research (Giroux, 1988). For Pillow (2003), reflexivity can take many forms, each of which is problematic if used as a way of providing validity and truth in qualitative research. In order to apply the first of Pillow's (2003) reflexive strategies, namely recognition of self, I would need to acknowledge that as an Australian, white, middle-class, female teacher of human rights who has a privileged Western ideal of how life should be, which is unattainable for many millions of people. However, Pillow (2003) acknowledges that this reflexive approach is predicated upon the assumption that the researcher is a unified self who is ultimately knowable, when this is in fact impossible.

The second reflexive strategy identified by Pillow (2003) is recognition of the other, where good researchers know and understand not only themselves, but also the subjects of their research. Implicit in my research questions is my ideological bias that human rights education is a positive pursuit which schools should support. As a researcher, I was keen to allow students to speak for themselves about their experiences of human rights education. However, if for example a research subject questioned the value of learning about human rights because it perpetuates a Western conception of the relationship between the individual and society, my own ideological bias about the universal nature of human rights might influence my interpretation of their response.

The third strategy identified by Pillow (2003) is reflexivity as truth, where researchers believe they are right because of the degree of reflexivity they have employed, such as the use of triangulating the methods of data collection in order to provide validity about the results (Yin, 2009). This strategy is also problematic because even though as a researcher I have triangulated the data in order to support my research questions through an examination of the observational data, interviews and documentary evidence, contradictory data could still be conveniently ignored. The final strategy discussed by Pillow (2003) is reflexivity as transcendence, where researchers take into account their knowledge of themselves, the other and truth, and then transcend them all, which allows them to be released from their own subjectivity as a researcher. While Pillow (2003) acknowledges that this is in fact impossible, researchers should not be satisfied with just ticking off that they have 'been reflexive' as a way of reaching a valid or true conclusion, without critically analysing how that reflexivity has taken place. In the case study chapters, I reflect upon my reflexivity as a researcher.

3.8 The limitations of my research

There were a number of limitations identified in this research. Firstly, the research was conducted in two schools in two countries who had implemented very different extracurricular activities about human rights education, so I recognise that drawing comparisons between them might not be valid. Therefore in my analysis chapters I am careful to avoid generalisation or unwarranted comparisons. Secondly, the study was short term, so I avoided drawing any conclusions about how the informal extracurricular human rights activities might affect student learning over time; rather the case studies providing an instance of practice in a particular point in time and space. Thirdly, due to time restraints and the nature of the students who volunteered to be interviewed, I did not interview a representative cross-section of students and teachers who were involved in the human rights programs at the schools and so the experiences captured may not be typical of others who were involved. Fourthly, the case study schools chosen were both private independent schools so I do not claim that the results could be generalisable to other schools in the wider education community.

3.9 The ethical issues involved in my research

All qualitative research has to consider the ethical implications of conducting the study. The two case studies in this research both involved interviewing adolescent students, therefore it was essential that informed consent was gained from both the participants and their parents or guardians. The participants were invited to volunteer to be involved in the research after it had been explained to them what it is was about and what it involved in terms of interviews and observations. There was no coercion or incentives offered in exchange for their participation, and there was no prior relationship between the participants and the researcher which might have impacted on the data collection process. As a way of guarding the confidentiality of responses when interviewing participants, I chose to interview participants individually rather than through a focus group. I was also conscious that my research was being conducted within the socially critical paradigm; by conducting one-on-one interviews with individuals I tried to avoid creating any inequalities, such as having a public forum where marginalised students may have felt excluded or silenced (Bickmore, 1993). Participants were assured that pseudonyms would be used to obscure their identity once the research was completed, and they were also informed of their right to withdraw from the research at any time. Participants were invited to read the research once it was completed.

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the methodological approach adopted in my research, including its positioning within a socially critical paradigm, the theoretical framework of the research, the use of a case study methodology, the justification of the selection of particular case studies, the methods of data collection and analysis, my reflexivity as a researcher, the limitations of my research and the ethical issues associated with it. The next chapter will provide the findings of the first case study.

Chapter Four

Case Study of Elizawood College

4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines in detail how human rights education is enacted at Elizawood College through student participation in extracurricular human rights groups. In the chapter, I explore the purpose of the learning, the influences that impact upon the learning, the spaces and timeframes where learning occurs, the supports which encourage learning and the learning outcomes achieved. In particular, the data is analysed in terms of the insights provided to the research questions posed:

1. How and why do schools implement teaching and learning about human rights?
2. What impact does learning about human rights through informal extracurricular activities have on the development of student skills, attitudes, knowledge and understanding as cosmopolitan citizens?
3. To what extent does learning about human rights through participation in informal extracurricular achieve transformative learning for students?

The theoretical framework discussed in the literature review, including the pedagogy of ‘about, through and for’ human rights education as described in the *Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training* (2011) and Mezirow’s (1991) theory of transformative learning are used to analyse the data collected by drawing on the interview transcripts, observations and documentation, and then discussing the patterns and themes that emerge in relation to this case study. Finally, judgments are made about whether and how the students achieve the transformative learning goals of human rights education.

4.2 The context of Elizawood College

This section provides an overview of the context of the first case study school, Elizawood College. It also provides an overview of the extracurricular human rights groups that operate in the school as a way of addressing the first research question: how and why do schools implement teaching and learning about human rights?

In order to understand how and why human rights education has been developed and enacted in this school, it is necessary to briefly explore the history, culture and mission of the school. Elizawood College is a large independent all-girls school in a capital city in Australia. The school has over 2000 students from Prep to Year 12, and has offered a Christian based education for girls for more than a century. The school offers a wide range of programs within the curriculum in addition to those required by the state education authorities, such as French immersion, the International Baccalaureate and vocational studies in hospitality. The school is open entry, meaning that the academic performance of students is not assessed prior to enrolment. The school has an excellent academic record; in 2012, 48% of the Year 12 (HSC and IB) students received an Australian University Tertiary Admissions Ranking (ATAR) of 90 or above, placing them in the top 10% in Australia. The school fees in 2012 for a Year 12 student were approximately A\$24,000, making it one of the most expensive schools in the state. The school has boarding facilities on campus and has over one hundred international students enrolled from many countries, but predominately from within Asia. Having a multiplicity of cultural identities has been described by Osler and Starkey (2003) as one of the hallmarks of cosmopolitan citizenship.

Elizawood College has a substantial social justice program (which could be classified as ‘service learning’), and has a full time staff member who is employed to manage these programs. For example, all Year 10 students are required to undertake 10 hours of community service which they have to organise and complete out of school hours, and this service is noted on their reports. These activities include working in charity opportunity shops, volunteering at soup kitchens for homeless people, helping in nursing

homes, assisting at camps for disabled children, participating in fun runs and completing the 40 hour famine. The school has also raised an enormous amount of money through fundraising for various charities, which in 2009 amounted to over A\$200,000. Human rights is a topic that is addressed in the formal classroom curriculum at Elizawood College in subjects such as Geography, English, History, Civics, Legal Studies and International Politics, but only in an ad hoc way that often depended upon whether it was a particular area of interest of the teacher. Therefore for most students at Elizawood College, their main exposure to the concept of human rights would arise through their voluntary participation in the extracurricular human rights groups offered at the school.

This school was chosen as the focus of a case study analysis because of its capacity to illuminate the research questions posed. In addition to its social justice program outlined above, the school also supports three extracurricular student-run groups which deal with human rights issues, which are Amnesty International, the Gay and Straight Alliance and the Aboriginal Reconciliation Committee. Another reason that this school was chosen is because its mission statement directly links its ethos to international human rights standards. For example, the school website states that Elizawood College is a member of the *United Nations Global Compact (2005)*, which ‘seeks to align business operations and strategies everywhere with ten universally accepted principles in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption’. According to the *Global Compact (2005)*, ‘businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses’.

The mission statement of the school outlines ten aims, three of which are relevant for this research. The relevant aims are:

- to provide opportunities for students to participate actively in decision making;
- to develop a sense of cultural heritage and an understanding and appreciation of the multi-cultural nature of Australian society and its place in the world; and

- to develop a strong sense of social justice which translates into commitment to community service and action.

It can be argued that the mission statement of Elizawood College reflects some of the elements involved in cosmopolitan citizenship (Osler & Starkey, 2003), for example it emphasises that the school enables young people to recognise that they have rights and responsibilities locally, nationally and globally, and that such citizenship learning occurs in spaces beyond the formal school classroom. The mission statement of the school also echoes some the aims set out in Goal 2 of the *Melbourne Declaration for Schooling* (MCEETYA, 2008), namely that education should provide young Australians with moral and ethical integrity, an appreciation of social, cultural, linguistic and religious diversity, recognition of the importance of indigenous culture, a commitment to the national values of democracy, equity and justice, and encourage participation in Australia's civic life and as responsible global and local citizens.

Elizawood College describes itself as being internationally-minded, and it has created a policy document to support this. This document states that:

‘... to facilitate the College in becoming an Internationally Minded School the UNESCO Declaration of 1996 has been adopted to help develop: a sense of universal values for a culture of peace; the ability to value freedom and the civic responsibility that goes with it; intercultural understanding which encourages the convergence of ideas and solutions to strengthen peace; skills of non-violent conflict resolution; skills of making informed choices; respect for cultural heritage and protection of the environment; and feelings of solidarity and equity at the national and international level’. (School website, 2010).

The school website further explains how this policy of being internationally-minded has been implemented at Elizawood College:

‘... we reinforce and support the values and messages of being internationally-minded in every aspect of day to day school life, from the classroom, to the playground, to the library, and back home to friends and families. Through activities such as cultural exchanges for teachers and students, our Ngukurr/Arnhem Land exchange program, professional development for staff, our membership of The Global Compact, Amnesty International club, the Gay and Straight Alliance and the Aboriginal Reconciliation Committee, we are actively experiencing, supporting, valuing and celebrating diversity in our community, not just talking about it’. (School website, 2010).

These factors mean that this school represents a critical case for testing the theoretical propositions discussed in the literature review in relation to human rights education, cosmopolitan citizenship, transformative pedagogies and informal learning and how these concepts can be enacted in authentic ways in schools.

4.3 The extracurricular human rights groups at Elizawood College

The particular focus of this research was on three student-led groups which met at lunchtimes at the school, which had different human rights agendas but which had the common aim of creating awareness about human rights issues and encouraging participating in action that could lead to change. These groups are an example of how the school’s mission statement has been put into practice, particularly the aim of developing a strong sense of social justice which translates into a commitment to community service and action. The groups studied were Amnesty International, the Gay and Straight Alliance and the Aboriginal Reconciliation Committee. Although the groups were supported by the formal educational institution of the school (through the provision of a supervising teacher, school email accounts to enable communication between members and a venue), the groups were student-led and had no set curriculum or assessment; if the students were not interested in running the groups then they would not exist. The groups depended upon the capacity and motivation of the students to initiate their own learning. The groups therefore met the definition of informal learning as described by McGivney

(1999), namely that ‘learning that takes place outside a dedicated learning environment and which arises from the activities and interests of individuals and groups’ (p. 10). The Vice Principal, Mrs Evans, described the school’s attitude to these groups:

As a school, we really value the student voice and we think that being supportive of these groups is a way for students to follow their interests and engage in the ‘real world’ in a way that they might not be able to through their classroom lessons.

This quote also triangulates with the mission statement of the school (Yin, 2009) as it provides evidence of the school supporting opportunities for students to participate actively in decision making, and to developing a strong sense of social justice in students which translates into commitment to community service and action.

4.3.1 The Amnesty International group

The Amnesty International group at Elizawood College is one of hundreds of school groups which exist across Australia (and in many other countries) which are supported by the NGO Amnesty International. Amnesty International campaigns to protect the rights of all people as stated in the UDHR (1948) and other international human rights documents. The aim of the group at Elizawood College was to raise awareness about human rights issues through understanding and disseminating the rights protected through international human rights documents and to participate in action which could lead to change about these issues. Therefore, exploring the activities of this group is clearly relevant for this investigation as it meets the definition of human rights education given by Tibbitts (2002) by referring to international human rights documents. The school groups are supported by the state based office of Amnesty International. Information for school students is obtained through Amnesty International’s website, which provides a downloadable ‘school action pack’ that provides updates about previous campaigns, good news stories about successful campaigns, information about current campaigns, petitions about particular cases of human rights abuses and tips and suggestions for taking action.

(This action pack is the updated version of the kits which I was involved in producing in 2003).

The Amnesty International group at Elizawood College has been in operation for the past 10 years. The group meets fortnightly at lunchtimes, and is open to all students from Years 7-12. At the time of the data collection, the group had 20 members on its email distribution list, and at most meetings I observed there were about eight students in attendance. The group had a leader who was elected by the other students in the group. There were no other official roles (such as treasurer and secretary); rather, members of the group volunteered to complete such tasks as they arose. Upcoming meetings were advertised through the student daily bulletin, an agenda was emailed to members of the group prior to the meeting and minutes of the meeting were emailed to the group afterwards. At most meetings that I observed, the students wrote letters to governments about human rights violations that were occurring against individuals in their countries, including the international human rights conventions that had been breached by these actions. The students also organised other awareness raising and fundraising activities. A teacher from the school (Mrs Blackmore) volunteered to support the group and usually attended the meetings and provided guidance and logistical support (such as booking venues). This teacher did not receive a time or monetary allowance from the school to undertake this role.

4.3.2 The Gay and Straight Alliance

The Gay and Straight Alliance was formed at Elizawood College in 2009. It is one of a number of similar groups that have been formed in schools within the state to support same-sex attracted students. This group had about seven students who regularly attended the monthly lunchtime meetings. At the time of data collection, there were 20 students on its email distribution list which informed them of upcoming meetings and activities. As the name of the group suggests, both gay and straight students were welcomed as members of this group. The group did not have a formal leader or other positions of responsibility, however a teacher (Mrs Jones) was assigned to the group by the school,

for which she received a time allowance of one period a fortnight. The aims of the group were to overcome homophobia within the school community, and to campaign for equality for same-sex attracted people in the wider community. The Gay and Straight Alliance is relevant for this research about human rights education because through its activities, the group explicitly situated its activities under Article 1 of the UDHR (1948), which states that ‘all human beings are born equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood’. Therefore, exploring the activities of this group is clearly relevant for this investigation as it meets the definition of human rights education given by Tibbitts (2002) by referring to international human rights documents.

4.3.3 The Aboriginal Reconciliation Committee

The Aboriginal Reconciliation Committee at Elizawood College began in 2008. The aim of the Committee, according to the student handbook was to:

‘... broaden students’ knowledge of indigenous issues, to offer students a forum whereby they could express their thoughts and feelings about indigenous issues, to engage and harness students’ enthusiasm about indigenous issues, and to establish social justice objectives so that students could actively contribute to improving the injustices enacted upon Aboriginal people’. (School handbook, 2010).

At the time of data collection, the Aboriginal Reconciliation Committee had approximately 20 members, and about 10 students from across Years 7-12 attended the fortnightly lunchtime meetings. The Aboriginal Reconciliation Committee had a student leader who was elected by the other members of the group. This group is relevant for this research about human rights education because of its aims to raise awareness within the school about how the human rights of Aboriginal people have been breached and to develop avenues for students at the school to take action about this issue. The group explicitly promoted Article 2 of the UDHR (1948), which states that ‘everyone is entitled

to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race'. Therefore, exploring the activities of this group is clearly relevant for this investigation as it meets the definition of human rights education given by Tibbitts (2002) by referring to international human rights documents. The school assigned a teacher (Miss Smith) to the Aboriginal Reconciliation Committee to provide logistical support and guidance to the group. This teacher received a time allowance from the school of one period per fortnight for this role, and the school also supported her to attend professional development conferences about Indigenous education.

Therefore it can be argued that these three groups are based on promoting the protection of human rights, and aim to give students the skills, attitudes, knowledge and understanding to become human rights promoters and defenders. Therefore these groups meet the definition of human rights education. The extent to which the learning gained through these groups was transformative will be discussed in the remainder of this chapter.

4.4 The collection and analysis of the data

Three students were interviewed and observed as part of this case study in Term 1 and Term 3 of 2010. The students volunteered to be involved after the purpose and scope of the research had been explained to them, and the permission of their parents to be involved was granted. The student participants were three females from Years 10, 11 and 12 who were involved in one or more of the groups described above. The students were interviewed individually and they were also observed at the lunchtime meetings of the various groups which met in school classrooms.

The first student participant in this research was Catherine, a Year 12 student. Catherine presented as a very thoughtful student who was passionate about promoting human rights. Catherine was the leader of the Amnesty International group and was also a member of the Gay and Straight Alliance and the Aboriginal Reconciliation Committee.

The second student participant was Lisa, a Year 10 student who was a member of the Gay and Straight Alliance. Lisa identified herself as a gay person and she was instrumental in lobbying the school to establish the Gay and Straight Alliance. Lisa was involved in a number of other similar networks and organisations outside of school and presented as an outgoing and engaging young person who was passionate about this issue.

The third student participant was Natalie, a Year 11 student who was a member of the Aboriginal Reconciliation Committee. Natalie presented as a quiet and thoughtful student who became interested in the rights of Aboriginal people after experiencing an exchange program organised by Elizawood with a school in Arnhem Land, in the Northern Territory of Australia.

The involvement of these students in a human rights group is not typical of other high school students in Australia. According to the Australian National Assessment program (Civics and Citizenship Years 6 and 10) Report 2010, only 7% of the 6409 Year 10 students surveyed indicated that they had been involved in an activity associated with human rights in the previous 12 months.

The three teachers associated with each of the groups were also interviewed as part of this research (Mrs Blackmore: Amnesty International, Mrs Jones: Gay and Straight Alliance and Miss Smith: Aboriginal Reconciliation Committee). Each teacher indicated that they were interested in the issues raised by the particular group they were associated with. The teachers described their role with the groups as that of a facilitator, and they provided logistical support to the groups (for example, booking the venue for the meeting and putting notices in the school newsletter). The Vice Principal (Mrs Evans) was also interviewed about the role of the school in supporting these groups.

The analytic technique that was utilised in this case study was to build an explanation about the particular case (Yin, 2009). Interviews were transcribed and coded according to the themes arising from the research questions, and a descriptive narrative about the

groups was then constructed under the areas of skills, attitudes, knowledge and understanding. Explanation-building and pattern matching (Yin, 2009) was used as the data analysis method and thick description was provided of each case.

4.4.1 The development of student skills

This section explores the impact that learning about human rights through informal extracurricular activities had on the development and transformation of student skills. Through my observations and interviews, it was my impression that the main skill that students gained through their participation in these groups was in the area of advocacy.

At a meeting of the Amnesty International group, I observed an example of how the students learned that advocacy about a particular cause can be difficult when working within an institution such as a school. The meeting began with Catherine urging the other members of the group to think creatively about ideas for raising awareness about human rights for Candle Day, which is the major annual fundraising event for Amnesty International in Australia. One student suggested that a Year 7 student be put in a mock cage in the plaza at lunchtime, as a representation of what was happening with refugee children in detention centres, and that members of the Amnesty group could distribute leaflets with information about this issue to other students at the school who came to see what was going on. The leaflet would contain information about what could be done to stop this situation, and would include a letter that could be sent to the Immigration Minister (which Amnesty International had provided to the school group) explaining how the detention of children was in breach of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Many students were very enthusiastic about this idea, however the teacher liaison for the Amnesty group, Mrs Blackmore did not think it was appropriate. When interviewed about this, she explained:

I liked the idea of this, but I was worried about the reality of putting a 12 year old girl in a cage. I thought it might be a breach of the Occupational Health and Safety Policy, which identifies 'confined spaces' as a hazard.

As a result of the teacher's concerns, the students decided to instead to put a doll inside the mock cage as a representation of a child in detention. In reflecting on this incident, Catherine (the leader of the Amnesty International group) said:

At first I was annoyed at what Mrs Blackmore said about our idea, because the cage wasn't real anyway and no one would have got hurt! But then I thought that maybe she was right- we can't try and promote human rights by taking away someone's right to freedom, even if it was only pretend. And I think we still got to make the point to the other students about how wrong it is to lock up asylum seeker children.

This example demonstrates a number of important points in light of the research questions posed. Firstly, it is an illustration of how advocacy skills have to be nuanced in order to be effective, and that this sometimes involves compromise. Kahne and Westheimer (2006) have described how authentic engagements with real world institutional power can reduce students' confidence and increase their cynicism about their capacity to be change makers, and thus reduce their desire to participate in social action in the future. However, this did not happen in this case, as the students compromised from their initial proposal and still managed to get their point across. Secondly, it is also an example of how this student has internalised an understanding that the pedagogy of human rights education needs to be 'education through' human rights (Tibbitts, 2002); that is, the method by which human rights education is being promulgated needs to itself reflect and uphold the values of human rights. This example therefore provides evidence about the type of human rights education pedagogy that has been implemented through student participation in this extracurricular activity. Thirdly, this example also echoes Mezirow's (1991) process of transformative learning, which involved Catherine experiencing a disorienting dilemma ('what's wrong with putting a student in a cage?'); critically reflecting upon the disorienting dilemma to expose the learner's limitations ('perhaps restricting this student's freedom is actually a breach of her rights'); addressing those limitations by acquiring new knowledge ('putting a doll in the cage instead of a student would get the message across just as well'); and

transforming the learner by offering a fresh perspective ('it is important that we do not breach a student's human rights in the name of trying to uphold and protect the rights of others'). This example provides evidence of how the experiences of participating in the Amnesty International group at Elizawood College led to the development and transformation of advocacy skills for this student.

At a meeting of the Gay and Straight Alliance, I also observed the development of advocacy skills amongst the student members of the group. Each meeting began with the students discussing how homosexuality had been portrayed in the media in the preceding fortnight in newspapers and on television. For example, at one meeting that I observed the group were discussing a recent newspaper article about gay and straight alliance groups in secondary schools in the state, which included a reference to their own group. The students were upset by the patronising tone adopted in the article, and felt that it reinforced stereotypes, particularly of young gay men. They decided to write a letter to the editor about this on behalf of the Elizawood College Gay and Straight Alliance, pointing out that articles such as this undermined the very aim of these groups, which was to overcome homophobia. The teacher Mrs Jones was very supportive of this idea and the students spent a considerable amount of time preparing their letter. However the letter was not published in the newspaper. In reflecting on this incident, Lisa said:

I was really disappointed that our letter wasn't printed in the paper. I thought we made some good arguments. I guess the newspaper doesn't want to mess with the general public's idea that all gay men are really camp and into musical theatre. It makes me think how hard it is to change people's ideas, particularly when you can't even be heard. Anyway Mrs Jones suggested that we write an article about gay/straight alliances in schools for the school newsletter and write about how articles such as the one in the newspaper perpetuate stereotypes about gay people, so that is what we did.

This example demonstrates Lisa's developing understanding about the difficulty of successful advocacy, and demonstrates that perseverance is a crucial element in

developing this skill. This experience is similar to that described by Fehrman and Schutz (2011) who wrote that students found it difficult to ascertain how to actually do something that felt significant, and how difficult it was to navigate around institutional obstacles in order to reach their goal. In this instance, the students attempted to overcome institutional barriers by working within the school community which was supportive, and which still met the aim of overcoming homophobia within the school community, rather than in the wider community which proved to be more difficult. This example reflects the observations made by Kahne and Westheimer (2006) that teachers often make suggestions to ensure that students do not encounter any significant barriers to success in these types of projects. This example also echoes Mezirow's (1991) process of transformative learning, which involves experiencing a disorienting dilemma ('why wouldn't they print our letter in the paper?'); critically reflecting upon the disorienting dilemma to expose the learner's limitations ('perhaps they don't want to upset the general public's stereotypical perception of gay people'); addressing those limitations by acquiring new knowledge ('changing people's ideas in the wider community is a difficult process when you face institutional barriers'); and transforming the learner by offering a fresh perspective ('we could still try and overcome people's homophobia but in a smaller community by putting an article in the school newsletter'). This is therefore an example of how the experiences of participating in the Gay and Straight Alliance at Elizawood College led to the development and transformation of advocacy skills for this student.

In conclusion, it can be seen through these examples, that students developed their capacity for advocacy about human rights through their participation in these groups, which led to a transformation in their skills and understanding, and their capacity to make meaning from their own actions (Mezirow, 1991).

4.4.2 The development of an attitudinal disposition for change

My study also aimed to explore the impact that learning about human rights through extracurricular activities had on the development and transformation of student attitudes. According to Tibbitts (2002), encouraging an attitudinal disposition towards advocacy

and change is a crucial part of ensuring that human rights education can be transformative. As a result of the fact that the members of the various groups were self-selected (that is, students chose to devote their lunchtimes to this activity rather than it be mandated by the school that they do so), I conjectured that most of the students involved in these groups had a *pre-existing* attitudinal disposition towards advocating to uphold human rights, rather than such a disposition being formed *because* of their participation in the groups. I was also interested to understand how and why this attitudinal disposition had developed in these students: for example, whether it had been encouraged by their families. The student participants were asked to explain their motivation for joining the groups. Catherine explained her motivation for joining the Amnesty International group, the Gay and Straight Alliance and the Aboriginal Reconciliation Committee:

I wanted to work with other people who feel as passionately about these issues as I do, because it is easier to create change with others than by yourself! My family has always been interested in these issues and they really encouraged my interest in human rights.

According to the Australian National Assessment Program Civics and Citizenship Years 6 and 10 Report (2010), there is a positive association between students who talk with their family about political or social issues and levels of student knowledge and action. However, unlike Catherine, only 32% of the 6409 Year 10 students surveyed indicated that they had at least weekly talks about political or social issues with their family. Lisa described her motivation for initiating and joining the Gay and Straight Alliance at Elizawood College:

I was sick of feeling like an outsider at school. I knew there were other people like me. So I thought it would be great if we could join together and see if we could make others see that we are just normal people.

Natalie described her motivation for joining the Aboriginal Reconciliation Committee:

I had never really thought much about Aboriginal people until I went to Arnhem Land on the school trip. I was so shocked by what I saw in terms of how some Aboriginal people had to live in Australia today. It really made me determined to do something about it.

So it appears that these students already possessed an attitudinal disposition for change prior to their involvement in these groups, and their subsequent participation in these groups helped to foster this pre-existing attitude. Their pre-existing attitude was developed because of factors including the influence of their families, their own experiences of discrimination or their observation of the discrimination suffered by others. This finding supports Mihr's (2007) argument that the direct and indirect experience of injustice (such as discrimination) and other abuses can serve as a link between cognitive knowledge and emotional reaction. Under this conceptualisation, human rights education can change people's attitudes and behaviours if it elicits a personal and emotional reaction against human rights abuses. According to Mihr (2007), the individual would not themselves have to have experienced a human rights violation; rather they would just need to have had an emotional reaction to learning about or meeting someone who had, which then inspires them to learn more and to take action to stop it happening to others, as was the case with Natalie of the Aboriginal Reconciliation Committee.

Mrs Blackmore, the teacher liaison for the Amnesty International group, identified another reason why she thought students were motivated to join these groups:

I think the reason that some students join groups such as Amnesty is because they are socially isolated and it gives them somewhere safe to be at lunchtimes. They know they are not going to be bullied at a human rights meeting.

It can be argued from this statement that there is an implicit understanding by students that their rights will be respected within this group, which is an example of an 'education through' human rights approach (Tibbitts, 2002, Evans, 2006) It should be noted that this

statement made by the teacher about the reasons behind the motivation of students joining the group was not verified in the interviews I conducted with the students (Yin, 2008); then again in terms of understanding my own reflexivity as a researcher, perhaps it is not the type of information that an adolescent would volunteer to a stranger who was interviewing them (Pillow, 2003).

One of the problems with human rights education is its ability to develop an attitudinal disposition for change in those who do not already have a pre-existing attitude. According to Catherine:

One of my motivations in joining these groups was to try and find ways to get other people to care as much about these issues as I do. Even though the other people in the groups are great, it is hard for 10 students to try and influence the other 2000 in the school. Sometimes the meetings can be frustrating because everyone agrees, but nothing gets done. It seems to me that other people take a lot of convincing! So we have to look at the big picture issues and then try and find a way to take action at a very local level, in order to try and raise awareness in the wider community.

Freire's (1970) critical theory states that social transformation can only occur through a process of conscientisation, which involves reflecting and acting upon the world in order to transform it. In light of Catherine's comments, it may be that although members of the Amnesty International group may themselves be going through the process of conscientisation which can be personally transformative (in terms of Mezirow's (1991) model of transformative learning), the wider aim of questioning the dominant social and cultural power relationships, as required by Freire's (1970) conceptualization, is absent. In this sense, groups such as this can be described as preaching to the converted, because they allow for transformative learning experiences for students who already have a disposition for change, rather than encouraging such a disposition in the wider community.

4.4.3 The development of student knowledge and understanding

This section addresses the question of whether learning about human rights through student participation in extracurricular activities leads to the development and transformation of student knowledge and understanding about human rights. It also addresses the question of how an 'education about' approach to human rights education has been implemented through student participation in extracurricular activities in this particular school context. According to Tibbitts (2002), learning about human rights should focus on the content and relevance of human rights documents and the controversies and conflicts of human rights in the international debate.

One of the aims of the Amnesty International group at Elizawood College was to increase student understanding about international human rights standards and documents, which is an example of 'education about' human rights. At the meetings I observed, students would often write letters to a government protesting about the unlawful detention of a particular citizen of that country. Using information which had been provided to the group from Amnesty International, the students would include reference in their letters to the particular human rights instruments which had been breached by the government in the particular case, such as the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (1966). According to Catherine:

I have learned a lot more about these things [international human rights instruments] through my involvement in this group than I have in my classes at school.

This demonstrates that Catherine has enhanced her knowledge and understanding about international human rights through her participation in the Amnesty International group.

Another example I observed at a meeting was when the students in the Amnesty group at Elizawood College wrote a letter to the Australian Immigration Minister requesting that children be removed from detention on Christmas Island and outlining how such

detention contravened the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989) which Australia has signed and ratified. This example led to an interesting discussion in the meeting about the enforcement of human rights. I observed the following exchanges between members of the group and Catherine.

Student: *I don't want to write this letter. It is too political and too controversial. Can't we write letters to other governments, just not Australia?*

Catherine: *Even though Australia has a much better track record on human rights than other countries, they still have to be accountable for what they do. Human rights abuses are not just things that take place somewhere else.*

Student: *But what is the point of writing these letters? They will just get thrown away.*

Catherine: *No that is not true! I found this quote in the Amnesty student action pack from a politician in Sierra Leone. It said 'I have a message for Amnesty International: please keep sending letters. The only thing I can rely on to help convince the cabinet to spend money on our prisons is the pressure from Amnesty International'. So you see there is a point to what we are doing, and we have to keep trying otherwise human rights abuses will keep happening.*

This example demonstrates that human rights education activities such as participation in this Amnesty International school group can lead students to transform their knowledge about the protection of human rights. According to Mezirow (1991) the process of transformative learning involves experiencing a disorienting dilemma ('why write letters to countries pointing out that they have breached the human rights of their citizens when they are just going to ignore it anyway'); critically reflecting upon the disorienting dilemma to expose the learner's limitations ('letter writing is one way of making governments accountable'); addressing those limitations by acquiring new knowledge ('It is important that someone tries to hold governments to account otherwise human rights

abuses will continue’); and transforming the learner by offering a fresh perspective (‘one letter might not make a difference but many letters might lead to change’).

Another example of the development of student knowledge occurred when I observed a meeting of the Aboriginal and Reconciliation Committee. The students were discussing the activities they had planned at school for National Reconciliation Week, which included both awareness raising and fundraising activities. The activities included the screening of a documentary entitled ‘First Australians: Freedom For Our Lifetime’, a fundraising BBQ, a lunchtime performance by an Aboriginal hip hop band and a demonstration of indigenous cooking by chefs from Charcoal Lane, a restaurant which enables Aboriginal young people to gain work experience in a real work environment. Other students at the school were asked to donate a gold coin in order to participate in the National Reconciliation Week activities organised by the Aboriginal Reconciliation Committee. At the meeting I observed, the students discussed where they would donate the money raised. The student leader of the group showed the other members of the committee a number of websites of different Aboriginal charities and organisations, and asked them to choose which one they thought should receive the donations collected. Natalie explained to the group that her preference was for a charity called ‘Indigenous Community Volunteers’, because it ‘works in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to design and implement community development projects’. Natalie felt strongly that it was important for local indigenous people to decide how the money would best be spent, ‘unlike what so many governments have done in the past’, and so the rest of the group agreed to donate the money raised to this group. This is an example of how the students in the group developed their knowledge about the importance of Aboriginal people having control over their own resources, in line with Article 1 of the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (1966) which emphasises the importance of the self-determination of all peoples. These examples demonstrate that an ‘education about’ human rights approach was evident in these extracurricular groups, which provided students with knowledge about international human rights documents and the principles that underpin them.

I also observed an example of the development and transformation of student understanding at a meeting of the Aboriginal Reconciliation Committee. The students in the group discussed making a banner to hang in the plaza during National Reconciliation Week. One of the students said that she would be happy to make an Aboriginal dot painting as a background to the words 'National Reconciliation Week'. However the teacher Miss Smith said:

I don't think you can just make up a dot painting. None of us are Aboriginal and I don't think it would be very respectful. Aboriginal paintings have a special meaning for Aboriginal people. They are not just a random collection of dots.

As a result of this, the other students in the group agreed that they would not try and replicate an Aboriginal painting on their banner. According to Natalie:

We didn't mean to be disrespectful, we just didn't think about it from their point of view.

This example shows how the students developed their understanding about Aboriginal culture through their involvement in the Aboriginal Reconciliation Committee, in line with the school's mission statement that students 'develop a sense of cultural heritage and an understanding and appreciation of the multi-cultural nature of Australian society and its place in the world'. This is also an example of how student knowledge was transformed through their participation in this group. Mezirow's (1991) process of transformative learning involves experiencing a disorienting dilemma ('what is wrong with us making an Aboriginal dot painting'); critically reflecting upon the disorienting dilemma to expose the learner's limitations ('I am not an Aboriginal person so I can't make Aboriginal art'); addressing those limitations by acquiring new knowledge ('Aboriginal paintings have a special meaning for Aboriginal people'); and transforming the learner by offering a fresh perspective ('it would be disrespectful for me as a non-Aboriginal person to make an Aboriginal dot painting'). In addition, this example also demonstrates how the students are developing an understanding of other cultures, which

is also an important tenet of becoming a cosmopolitan citizen as it involves respecting diversity between people according to gender, ethnicity and culture (Osler & Starkey, 2003). It is interesting to note that this transformation did not occur as a result of the student's interacting with Aboriginal people themselves, but rather as a result of the guidance provided by the teacher associated with the group.

4.4.4 The impact of student leadership on transformative learning

This section will address the research question about the impact that learning about human rights through student participation in extracurricular activities has on the transformative learning outcomes for students.

According to Evans (2006), the extent to which the style of teaching reflects the content of the human rights values that are being taught is paramount, which is the idea of learning education through human rights. The informal extracurricular human rights groups at Elizawood College could be described as implementing this pedagogy of 'education through' human rights, because the groups are run by students (with some teacher support). It was my observation that the groups operated very effectively under their student leadership. Decisions were generally made democratically through voting via a show of hands. The students were mainly respectful and cooperative towards the student leaders. Most of the groups worked hard to encourage students from lower year levels to join the groups, to ensure succession planning so that there would be student leaders of the group in future years. It was my observation that within some groups the teacher played a larger role in managing the group than in others.

Each of the student participants in my research were asked to reflect upon the fact that the group was run by students rather than teachers. Catherine (leader of the Amnesty International) said:

I do appreciate the support that Mrs Blackmore gives the Amnesty group. Although the group would still run if the teacher wasn't there, she does help us

quite a bit. But sometimes I get the sense that she thinks that she is the one in charge.

Similarly, Mrs Blackmore (the teacher liaison for the Amnesty International group) said:

My role is to provide guidance and logistical support to the group. But sometimes they need a bit of a push along to make decisions and get things done.

As seems to be the case here, Suarez (2007) noted that a tension can arise for human rights educators when it challenges the power relations between teachers and students, as it involves teachers undermining their own status within the classroom which can be very challenging for them. Therefore even though the Amnesty International group is ostensibly a student run group and is promoted as such by the school, in many ways it does reflect the unequal power dynamic between students and teachers that exists in a more formal classroom arrangement.

Another example of the unequal power dynamic which existed between the students, teachers and the school occurred at a meeting that I observed of the Gay and Straight Alliance. The group discussed how the members had recently attended a rally about same sex marriage rights in the city. A student from the Gay and Straight Alliance at Elizawood College had spoken at the rally, and photos of this were subsequently printed in the school newsletter. The student who spoke at the rally also told the group how after her speech at the rally she had been contacted by Joy FM radio station and asked to be a guest speaker for a segment about young gay people. The student involved had received a letter of congratulations from the Principal about her participation in the rally, and a link to the interview transcript was provided on the school intranet so that other students could hear it. In this way, the school was supportive of the activities undertaken by the group. However, a tension was also apparent between the students in the group and the school. Lisa (Gay and Straight Alliance) said:

When the group first started it was called 'the gay group' and many students came to the meetings and shared their experiences of coming out and also talked about their experiences about being bullied. However the teacher [Mrs Jones] and the school did not think this was a good idea because they were worried that students might feel pressure to tell the rest of the group about their experience of coming out which could lead to more bullying. The school made us change the name of the group to the 'Gay and Straight Alliance', and since then not as many students have come to the meetings.

Mrs Jones (the teacher liaison for the Gay and Straight Alliance) said:

I talked with the school counsellors and they were concerned that the group was becoming a forum for 'coming out' stories, which might lead to bullying. The Vice Principal told me that the group was supposed to be more about campaigning for positive attitudes which celebrate diversity rather than as a peer support group, so that's when we decided on the name change.

The language in this quote is revealing: Mrs Jones describes how 'we decided on the name change', which is a reference to her and the Vice Principal in consultation with the counsellors, rather than the students themselves having a say in this decision making process. In terms of triangulating this evidence (Yin, 2009), this seems to be in contradiction to the mission of the school which states that students will be provided with opportunities to participate actively in decision making, and also in contradiction to Article 12 of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989) which states that that children have the right to participate in decision making that affects them.

I observed another example of the tension between the students in the Gay and Straight Alliance and the teachers and administrators in the school when the group planned activities for an upcoming Same Sex Attracted Youth Day. To celebrate this day, the Gay and Straight Alliance planned to speak at a school assembly about how casual examples of homophobia could be hurtful (such as the derogatory use of the word gay).

They also planned to have a lunchtime event involving a band playing, a stall with rainbow cake, rainbow badges and bracelets and a banner. The student Lisa also suggested that the stall give out information leaflets which had been sent to the school from the Gay and Lesbian Switchboard, which is a free counselling help line. However, Mrs Jones wanted to consult with the school counsellors about whether this was appropriate. It was later decided by the school that the pamphlets would not be included at the stall, much to the unhappiness of the members of the Gay and Straight Alliance who argued that this was an important way of supporting same sex attracted students who might not otherwise know about this service or have other ways of gaining support. These examples demonstrate the tension that can arise between students and teachers when teachers are reluctant to cede power to students over decision making (Suarez, 2007). Although the group is ostensibly student-led, in reality the students did not have autonomy and were subject to the authority of the school under whose auspices the group was formed, even though it was an informal extracurricular activity that was not part of the formal curriculum.

It could be argued that these examples indicate that the school is somewhat confused about the role it should play: on the one hand the school recognises the importance of students having a voice about this issue (in line with the school's mission statement) and so it encouraged and supported the formation of the Gay and Straight Alliance; but on the other hand it wanted to put limits on student decision making about what the group could do, especially in the area of gay rights for young people. It could be argued that the school wanted to be supportive of the idea of gay rights in a theoretical way ('education about' human rights) but not in a practical way that might involve students supporting each other in their rights and transforming the ideas of others about young gay people ('education through and for' human rights).

These examples are the opposite of Kahne and Westheimer's (2006) findings that teachers or other adult allies often make sure that students do not encounter any significant barriers to success in these types of projects, even though this may actually mislead them about the realities of the unequal power relations that exist in wider society.

Rather, the unequal power relations between adults and young people that exist in the wider society have been mirrored within the school in these examples.

In terms of the Aboriginal Reconciliation Committee, it was my observation that the group was predominately led by students, with some input from the teacher. For example, I observed a presentation at a school assembly by some members of the Aboriginal Reconciliation Committee group about their experiences on the school exchange program with a community in Arnhem Land, Northern Territory. The slide show began with depictions of Aboriginal artwork, and a brief overview was given of the policy behind the stolen generations and the impact it has had on generations of Aboriginal people. The presentation included quotes from the Australian Reconciliation Convention and the formal apology to the stolen generation. The slideshow also included poems and artwork depicting the Dreamtime, and uplifting quotes from Tania Major, an Aboriginal woman who was the 2007 Young Australian of the Year. In this way, the presentation tried to fulfil one of the aims of the Aboriginal Reconciliation Committee, namely to demonstrate positive aspects of Aboriginal culture rather than just the negative images so often portrayed in the media. This presentation was an example of one of the aims outlined in the school's mission statement, namely to develop a sense of cultural heritage and an understanding and appreciation of the multicultural nature of Australian society and its place in the world, which could be conceptualised as an example of cosmopolitan citizenship (Osler & Starkey, 2003, 2005). The students also told stories about what they had learned on their trip, and they also showed some photos of their experiences. However, I noticed that all the photos included in the slideshow were of Elizawood College students, and there were no photos of any Aboriginal students. This oversight seemed somewhat at odds with the aim of the Aboriginal Reconciliation Committee, namely to allow for greater intercultural awareness between the students at Elizawood College and the students from Arnhem Land. When I asked the teacher, Miss Smith, about my observation she said:

I thought the same thing! I wish they had showed me the slide show first before they presented it at assembly and I would have told them to include some photos of

Aboriginal students. But in some ways I think it is revealing- these privileged white students think that they are joining the Aboriginal Reconciliation Committee to be able to help others, but actually the main thing they get out of it is feeling good about themselves.

This comment is interesting, because it raises the point outlined by Brookfield (1995) that while involvement in groups such as this might enhance student skills, attitudes, knowledge and understanding, that does not necessarily mean that it leads to a Freirian (1970) style social transformation. These comments about the Aboriginal Reconciliation Committee also reflect some of the similar concerns raised in the literature about service learning, namely that students are encouraged to feel good about volunteering their time and efforts to help others less fortunate (Kahne & Westheimer, 2006), without any reflection about the unequal power dynamics that exist between privileged white urban children and Aboriginal children living in remote communities in northern Australia, nor are students given concrete ways to actually try and help or change the situation.

4.5 Conclusion

Through my observations and interviews, a pattern emerged that Elizawood College is a school struggling with the tension between trying to be progressive in terms of allowing students the freedom to develop as internationally minded citizens but at the same time being essentially a conservative institution. While Elizawood College does have very strong exemplars of a commitment to social justice, human rights education and empowering student voice, there were instances that have been discussed in this chapter, of either teachers or school leaders reasserting control over the extracurricular human rights groups when they perceived that the actions of students might lead to controversy.

Chapter Five

Case Study of Australian International School

5.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the human rights education and learning of students through the Model United Nations group at the Australian International School (AIS). This chapter provides an overview of the case study school and the Model United Nations activity as a way of exploring the research questions about the type of human rights education pedagogy in place, as well as how the development of student knowledge, skills, attitudes and understanding can impact on transformative capacity of the learner to enact change.

5.2 The context of the Australian International School

In order to understand how and why human rights education has been developed and enacted in this case, it is necessary to briefly explore the history, culture and mission of the school. The Australian International School (AIS) has been in operation since 1995. It is a co-educational, non-denominational school that has grown rapidly; starting with just 25 students it has now grown to a population of about 1,100 students from kindergarten to Year 12 in 2012. About 70 percent of the students are Australian or New Zealand passport holders, however there are more than 30 nationalities represented within the school, as well as many local residents. The school is open entry, meaning that the academic performance of students is not assessed prior to enrolment. The majority of classroom teachers are from Australia or New Zealand or expatriates from another English-speaking country such as the United Kingdom, however there are some local citizens employed (mainly as Chinese language teachers). The school is not-for-profit and non-denominational, and is run by a Board of Governors. The school receives no government funding and is therefore solely reliant on parental contributions for its

running costs. In addition to annual school fees (A\$15,000 for a Year 12 student), each student is required to provide a debenture of A\$12,000 which is refunded when students leave, minus annual deductions. Many large employers include school fees and debentures for the children of employees as part of their salary package as a way of recruiting and maintaining their workforce. The school was granted the land on which the school stands by the government, which is keen to support international schools as a way of encouraging expatriate workers to relocate to the city with their families. A defining feature of the school is that it has a highly transient population, as many families are in the city for a finite period of time before returning to their country of origin. Enrolment in the school is competitive and there is a long waiting list for prospective students. The government requires that new arrivals to the city be given priority over local citizens on international school waiting lists, again as a way of encouraging expatriate workers to move to the city. The school board is currently undertaking a feasibility study to establish a second campus in order to meet increased demand for student places. The school operates on the Australian school calendar of January-December (rather than the September-July northern calendar which is used by other international schools). This is also attractive for Australian families, as it makes it easier for students to transition back to Australia at the beginning of a school year.

The mission statement of the AIS provided on their website is ‘to provide a world class international school where students, through active participation, achieve their personal best to become skilled, healthy, influential and responsible international citizens’. The mission statement also states that the school is committed to the principles of excellence; cohesion and diversity; to being a community of learners; developing all students intellectually, socially, physically, spiritually and ethically in congruence with Australian culture; and to encouraging lifelong learning within the international community. AIS also has a ten point values star which it has printed on a poster that is featured in every classroom, which states that the school believes in and practices the values of creativity, excellence, respect, honesty, diligence, collaboration, trust, responsibility, integrity and equity.

Grimshaw and Sears (2008) write that many international schools ‘share an ideology of promoting international understanding and world peace’ (p. 260). The Model United Nations group at AIS, which is the focus of this study, is one example of how human rights education has been developed and enacted within a particular school community. AIS also provides students with a number of other opportunities to be involved in social justice issues. For example, students can spend a week in Cambodia building houses for villagers; participate in World Vision’s 30 hour famine; volunteer to read to students at a local school for disabled students or organise activities to raise money for victims of natural disasters. According to the school newsletter:

We believe that, by leading by example and encouraging participation, our students will gain a better understanding of important social issues, the value of supporting worthy causes, and develop into aware and socially responsible members of the global community (21 March, 2012).

The curriculum of AIS from Preparatory to Year 12 is set by the New South Wales (NSW) Board of Studies in Australia. In Years 11 and 12 the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma is offered as well as the NSW Higher School Certificate (HSC). Although the topic of human rights may be covered in the formal classroom in subjects such as Geography, History, English and Legal Studies, there is no curriculum requirement that the fundamental principles of human rights and mechanisms for their protection be covered. Therefore, for most students at AIS, the only exposure they would have to these ideas is through their involvement in the Model United Nations group.

The school has a strong academic record: in 2012, 37% of their Year 12 students (HSC and IB) received an Australian University Admissions ranking (ATAR) of 90 or above, placing them in the top 10% of all applicants to Australian universities. Although teachers at the school are required to register with the local Board of Education, this body does not oversee the implementation of the curriculum at the school or set any professional development requirements for teachers at international schools. This places the school in an interesting space, of being in but not of the city where it is situated.

In terms of identity, my first impression when stepping through the gates was how remarkable it was that the school has created an atmosphere so similar to other Australian schools and yet be so far away. As a way of emphasising its Australian identity, the school uniform is green and gold; the school newsletter is called 'Dhanara' (which is an Aboriginal word for message stick) and the school song refers to the Southern Cross and the outback. In some ways the school could be said to emphasise a stereotypical version of Australia, which probably does not equate with the experiences of most students who attend schools in large capital cities in Australia and who live a very urban existence, not dissimilar to that of local students. It is also interesting to observe that a significant proportion of the student population at AIS are Australian in terms of their passport identity, but many have never lived in Australia, do not have an Australian accent and consider the city where the school is located to be their home. At AIS, the classes are taught in English and proficiency is a requirement of admission. Mandarin language classes are also offered every day and are compulsory in the primary school.

The terms 'global nomads' and 'third culture kids' have been coined to describe students such as many of those at AIS who have multiple cultural identities (Carter & McNulty, 2012). This is because they have lived a significant part of their developmental years in one or more countries outside their passport country because of their parents' occupation. Researchers such as Grimshaw and Sears (2008) have found that third culture kids often feel that they do not fully belong to the culture of their home country nor to the culture of their place of residence, but rather occupy a third place. As a result, an important aspect of the work of international school educators is helping children cope with the sense of cultural disjuncture and alienation resulting from the constant changes in their lives and the impact on their sense of identity and belonging.

Having a multiplicity of cultural identities, as third culture kids do, has been described by Osler and Starkey (2005) as one of the hallmarks of cosmopolitan citizenship. The stated mission of AIS could also be conceptualised as promoting the ideas of cosmopolitan citizenship, as it aims to 'provide a world class international school' where students learn 'through active participation to be 'influential and responsible international citizens'.

AIS is a school that has a dual identity as both Australian and yet also Asian. However, sometimes the values of these cultures can be in conflict. For example, a value which influences the culture of the school is the importance of hard work, particularly in terms of education. The Vice Principal Mr North said:

Of course we want to encourage our students to work hard at their studies. However we still want to maintain the Australian sensibility that life is about balance. We are very explicit to our parent body about the importance of students (particularly those in primary school) having free time to play and explore, rather than always having lots of homework or other activities after school.

This example is indicative of the dual cultural demands at play within the school, where the Asian value of hard work can be oppositional to the Australian values of having a work/life balance and learning through play. This example demonstrates that there can be difficulty finding agreement about what constitutes a universal value that cosmopolitan citizens can share.

Whilst international schools provide many advantages in terms of students being exposed to a broader understanding of the world and their role in it, it can also present many practical challenges. According to Ms Somers, the teacher facilitator for the Model United Nations group who is also a History and Legal Studies teacher:

It can be confusing teaching an Australian curriculum while in a different country. In particular, I have to be careful to use the term 'there' rather than 'here' when referring to Australia, otherwise students don't know where I am referring to.

The extent to which the school provides opportunities for students to actively participate to become influential and responsible cosmopolitan citizens will be discussed in this chapter.

5.3 The Model United Nations

This section provides an explanation of the operation of the Model United Nations program in international schools and justifies why it can be considered an example of human rights education. It also provides an overview of the Model United Nations program at AIS.

5.3.1 The Model United Nations in international schools

Many international schools and universities all over the world participate in the Model United Nations activity. The objective of the Model United Nations is to seek through discussion, negotiation and debate practical solutions to the various problems of the world, such as questions of human rights. The Hague International Model United Nations (THIMUN) Foundation organizes annual conferences in The Hague and in Singapore where students participate in a five day simulation of a United Nations General Assembly or Security Council session. THIMUN is a non-profit educational foundation and a non-governmental organization which has roster consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. The conferences involve thousands of students from hundreds of international schools preparing resolutions, lobbying and debating issues as delegates of particular countries or NGOs such as Amnesty International.

The purpose of the Model United Nations as set out on the THIMUN website is that it enables students to:

...learn to break away from narrow, national self-interest and develop true international cooperation. The research and preparation required, the adoption of views and attitudes other than their own, the involvement and interaction with so many other young people from around the world, all combine to give the young people a deep insight into the world's problems to make them aware of the causes of conflict between nations and to lead them to a better understanding of the

interests and motivations of others. Thus, in a small way, the THIMUN Foundation, through its conferences, attempts to fulfil the aims and goals set by the founders of the United Nations in the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations: 'to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours'.

The THIMUN website also quotes from former Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, who said in 2002:

The fact that THIMUN exists to uphold the values of the United Nations among the young is particularly important, since it is from the young that we should draw our energy and inspiration as we strive to make the United Nations effective and responsive to the needs of the people worldwide.

In this quote, Kofi Annan alludes to the capacity of the young people who are involved in the Model United Nations to affect change by drawing on their 'energy and inspiration' to help make the United Nations 'effective and responsive'. Even though each Model United Nations conference has a different topic (which might not be specifically a human rights issue), there is always a human rights element to each issue which is debated (for example, if the topic was climate change then the human rights implications for populations who live on low-lying islands in the Pacific would be discussed). The topic chosen by the Co-Chairs of the Model United Nations group at the AIS for their in-school conference was Protecting Children in Conflict Zones. Clearly this topic is about human rights, and includes both the rights of child soldiers and civilian children affected by conflict. It was the preparations for and the conference itself which formed the focus of my observations and interviews for this case study.

The research and preparation for the particular Model United Nations conference at AIS that is the focus of my case study involved participating in a learning activity aimed at promoting human rights, and also aimed to give students the knowledge, skills and attributes to become human rights promoters and defenders. Therefore it meets the

definition of human rights education as defined by the *Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training* (2011).

It should be noted that there are similarities between the purpose of the Model United Nations and some of the aims outlined in Goal 2 of the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (MCEETYA, 2008). This states that students should be active and informed citizens who ‘participate in Australia’s civic life and be responsible global and local citizens’, as well as promoting the ‘intellectual, physical, social, emotional, moral, spiritual and aesthetic development and wellbeing of young Australians’. Therefore the Model United Nations, the *Melbourne Declaration* (MCEETYA, 2008) and the mission statement of AIS have a similar purpose, namely to encourage responsible global citizenship.

5.3.2 The Model United Nations at AIS

The Model United Nations group at AIS has existed for the past eight years. The group that I observed for the purposes of this research met once a week after school for one and half hours in Term 2, 2012 and for a half day at the end of the term for the in-school conference. The meetings took place in a large double classroom, and the conference took place in the school auditorium. The group was comprised of 52 students from Year 7 to Year 12, 21 girls and 31 boys. Two students, a boy and a girl, led the group and had the title of Co-Chairs. A teacher, Ms Somers, agreed to be the teacher facilitator for the group for which she received time release of two periods per week. Each year, the group participates in a number of events, such as organising a Model United Nations conference within the school, attending a Model United Nations conference with other international schools in the same city and attending annual international conferences in Singapore and Malaysia.

The members of the Model United Nations group were all volunteers who chose to be involved in this extracurricular activity after school. However, the teacher facilitator Ms Somers had asked other teachers in the school to encourage particular students who they

knew were interested in world affairs to become involved in the group. Participation in the Model United Nations group was also advertised through notices in the school newsletter, and presentations were given at school assemblies by current students in order to encourage other students to join. Therefore anyone who was interested was welcome to join, up to a maximum of 50 students. The Model United Nations group therefore met the definition of 'informal learning' as described by McGivney (1999), because its existence depended on the interest of the members of the group.

The students worked in pairs as junior/senior delegates to represent the point of view of the country to which they were allocated by the Co-Chairs. This enabled the older, more experienced students to assist those who were new to the group to gain confidence and to learn how the group operated. It also acted as a succession plan for the group, the idea being that Year 7 students who enjoyed their experience would then stay involved in the group for the remainder of their time at high school and could become future leaders.

5.4 The collection and analysis of the data

All of the students involved in the Model United Nations at AIS were invited to participate in my study. Four students volunteered to be involved after the purpose and scope of the research had been explained to them, and the permission of their parents to be involved was granted. The student participants were two females and two males from Years 7 to 11 who had varying levels of experience in the Model United Nations group. The students were interviewed individually and they were also observed at their weekly after school meetings and at the end of term conference.

The first student participant in this research was Chloe, a Year 7 student. Chloe presented as a friendly and earnest student, who was very enthusiastic about her participation in the Model United Nations Group which she had just joined. Chloe has lived in Holland, England and Canada before moving to the city where the school is situated where she has resided for a number of years. Her family has no connection with

Australia, and she spoke with an unusual accent which has developed as a result of her peripatetic life.

The second student participant was Emma, a Year 10 student. Emma presented as a mature and articulate student who is an excellent public speaker and is passionate about human rights issues. Emma has been involved with the Model United Nations for the past four years. Emma was originally from Perth, Western Australia and had lived in the city where the school is situated for the past four years.

The third student participant was Thomas, a Year 11 student who had been elected as Chair of the Model United Nations by the other students in the group. Thomas presented as an extremely intelligent and thoughtful student who could clearly articulate the complexities inherent in human rights issues. Thomas has been involved with the Model United Nations for the past six years. Thomas is of Chinese descent and was born in the city where the school is situated.

The fourth student participant was Robert, a Year 11 student. Robert presented as a laid back and unenthusiastic student who freely admitted he joined the group as a way of accruing hours for the Creativity, Action and Service (CAS) component of the International Baccalaureate (IB) course. Robert's family is originally from Australia but he has lived in the city where the school is situated for fifteen years.

Two teachers were also interviewed as part of this research. Ms Somers was the teacher liaison for the group, a position she had held for the past five years. She was allocated two teaching periods per week for this position by the school. Her role involved providing the student leaders of the group with support and encouragement, supervising the students during their weekly after school meetings, providing institutional support such as booking rooms and equipment, organising guest speakers and also distributing information from the Model United Nations organisation to the group. Her role also involved organising the travel to the international conferences which she also attended,

and her flights and accommodation were paid for by the school. Ms Somers described her motivation for being involved in the Model United Nations as follows:

Personally I am really interested in human rights issues. Since I have been living here I have been volunteering at the Refugee Advice Centre, helping people prepare their refugee applications. I asked to be a part of in the Model United Nations program at school because I saw it as a way to help students become interested in international affairs, and to think about things beyond themselves.

The second teacher interviewed was the Vice Principal, Mr North. His role included overseeing all the extra-curricular activities provided by the school, approving student travel to conferences and organising school assemblies.

Data was also collected from my observations of the weekly meetings of the group. Each weekly session had a particular focus as part of the pre-conference preparation as follows:

- Week 1. Introduction to the Model United Nations program
- Week 2. Brainstorming session about the topic and suggestions for what could be done to help vulnerable children
- Week 3. Guest speaker who was a former child soldier from Liberia
- Week 4. Researching the country allocated to each pair of students
- Week 5. Public speaking tips and examples
- Week 6. Writing resolutions on behalf of countries
- Week 7. Writing opening speeches
- Week 8. Lobbying and merging resolutions between countries
- Week 9. Parliamentary procedure and dress code for the conference
- Week 10. The conference

5.4.1 The development of student skills

This section explores what skills students have developed as a result of their participation in this activity. It was evident from the interviews and observations that the students gained a wide range of skills from their participation in the Model United Nations. In particular, they were given practice in developing their research skills and their public speaking skills. It also gave students the opportunity to develop their social skills through interacting with older or younger students who they would not otherwise have known. Students were expected to be independent learners, as they were responsible for researching and preparing the country resolutions and opening speeches without any input from a teacher and without having the incentive of it being assessed by a teacher. The student Chairs of the group also commented that the experience had helped them to develop their organisational skills through learning how to manage a large group of students of varying ages. I observed that this task was made easier for them because of the culture that had been created within the group, which was a very respectful one, and the students were very willing to be guided by the student Chairs.

In a school newsletter, AIS justified why they offer the Model United Nations in terms of the skills that students gained through their involvement:

In today's globalised society, giving students an understanding of the world around them, including opportunities to explore and debate important global issues, is an essential part of an overall education. We believe that exposure to such higher-level concepts and discussions leads to greater maturity and helps students develop into responsible international citizens that can make a greater contribution to society beyond their own personal success. One of the ways in which we do this is by offering students the opportunity to participate in the Model United Nations (MUN) program, a simulation of the real United Nations that engages students' intellects and imbues them with many skills that carry over into other areas of their lives, including their studies. Students taking part in MUN activities research current events and issues affecting the world, such as

climate change and the environment, human rights, poverty and cross border disputes and gain an understanding of international relations and diplomacy, the role of the UN, its operations and its agenda... Part of our mission is to enable students to graduate as skilled, influential international citizens. MUN is yet another platform used to achieve this goal; one that enables students to participate, learn and develop. (7 March, 2012)

The school therefore directly links the participation by students in the Model United Nations to their mission statement.

AIS also publically promotes the participation of its students in the Model United Nations group, and articles about it feature prominently in school newsletters, magazines and the prospectus. In addition, at Speech Day at the end of each year, one student who has been involved in the Model United Nations is given the International Citizenship award. The school therefore makes a clear connection between the skills and learning that students gain through their involvement in the Model United Nations group and their mission to enable students to be influential global citizens.

In terms of the support that the school has given to the Model United Nations, Ms Somers commented:

The school has been supportive of the Model United Nations group up to a point. They have given me total autonomy, time release to attend conferences and they also paid for me to attend a professional development conference in Singapore. They also agreed to my idea that there be a prize at Speech Day for International Relations given to a student who had contributed the most to the Model United Nations group that year. But I feel they could provide more active support such as paying for some expenses for students so they can attend the overseas conferences and represent the school, particularly as AIS is very keen to use the Model United Nations group in the school marketing materials. I would also like there to be more human rights extracurricular groups at the school such as

Amnesty International, but the Principal feels that having the Model United Nations is enough.

In response, the Vice Principal Mr North said:

The school is very proud of the student's achievements in the Model United Nations, and is keen to encourage the program. I know Ms Somers would like even more support but she has to look at it from my point of view, and I have to juggle lots of competing demands for time and resources in a crowded curriculum. One proposal which the school is considering is accepting sponsorship from a large corporate bank to help pay for students to attend the conferences held overseas.

In conclusion, Ms Somers said:

I know some other international schools are properly integrating the Model United Nations program through the entire curriculum, not just running it as an extracurricular activity. They really see it as part of their commitment to developing their students as 'international citizens', whereas I think it is somewhat tokenistic here.

The students interviewed as part of this research also reported that they had gained many skills through their involvement in the Model United Nations group. Chloe (Year 7) said:

Being in this group has helped me to be more independent, more aware, learn to cooperate and make more friends.

The social benefits of the activity were corroborated by the comments of Ms Somers:

One of the great things about this program is that students get to learn from each other. There are not many opportunities within the school for cross-age

interaction, and it is great to see the friendships that develop between younger and older students.

Emma (Year 10) described what she has gained from her involvement in the group:

It has helped me to understand how the world works, and it has really improved my debating skills. Also I have made friends with people in other year levels that I would never have met otherwise.

Another development that was evident in terms of skills was the ability of students to argue a point of view they do not agree with. According to Emma (Year 10):

It is difficult to argue against what you believe in, especially when you have to represent a country that is a human rights abuser. But you have to find a way to do it, and it actually really helps to understand an issue if you can see the arguments on both sides.

Thomas (Year 11) commented that:

The Model United Nations has really helped to improve my research skills and my public speaking skills. Since becoming involved I have also paid a lot more attention to the news. Most of my friends have no idea what is going on in the world.

Robert (Year 11) also noted that:

Some of the stuff I have learned through the Model United Nations has helped me in my classes at school, especially public speaking and thinking on my feet.

Ms Somers described the skills that she thought students gained from participating in the group:

I know that students gain a lot of content knowledge from their participation in this group. I get feedback from other teachers who say that students in their classes will often comment 'I learned that in the Model United Nations'. I also think that students gain maturity through their participation in this group, even through simple things such as the fact they have to wear 'business attire' to the conference. And I have watched students from when they are twelve years old grow in self-confidence and improve their public speaking skills enormously as they continue their involvement in the group over the course of a few years.

It was also my observation that many students developed from hesitant and reluctant public speakers in the early group sessions to being confident and articulate advocates of the point of view of their country at the conference, which triangulates with the comments made by the teacher (Yin, 2009).

Another reason for the success of the group was that the culture of the school valued academic prowess. According to Thomas (Year 11):

Other students respect you for being in the Model United Nations. It is not just for dorks and you don't get beaten up or anything! We do better against other schools at Model United Nations conferences than we do in lots of sporting competitions and the school really celebrates our success.

This comment is an example of education through human rights being enacted, as there was an understanding amongst the members of the group that everyone was valued and respected.

In conclusion it seems that the interviews with students and teachers and my observations support the claims made in the school documentation about the capacity of the Model United Nations group to improve the social, research and public speaking skills of students.

5.4.2 The development of an attitudinal disposition for change

According to Tibbitts (2002), encouraging an attitudinal disposition towards advocacy and change is a crucial part of ensuring that human rights education can be transformative. The teacher Ms Somers described the different motivations for students who choose to become involved in the Model United Nations group as follows:

Most of them are quite bright academically and pretty confident and articulate public speakers. They have a range of motivations for becoming involved in the group, from wanting to change the world to wanting to use it on their resume to help them get into an Ivy League university.

When interviewing the student participants, I was interested in whether they had been inspired to advocate about human rights issues *because* of their participation in the group, or whether they had a *pre-existing* attitudinal disposition towards advocating to uphold human rights, and whether their attitude was influenced by their family or because of other reasons.

Chloe (Year 7) joined the group after a teacher noticed her interest in world affairs and suggested she might like to become involved. In addition, her older sister had been involved in the group in a previous year and had enjoyed the experience. Chloe also said:

My parents have always encouraged us kids to have a strong sense of right and wrong. They wanted me to become involved in the group to help me know more about what is going on in the world, and to have an outlet for how I feel about some of the terrible things that happen.

This demonstrates that Chloe is a student who had a pre-existing interest in human rights and other international issues *before* her involvement in the Model United Nations group, mainly due to her family's encouragement, and has developed an attitudinal disposition

towards trying to affect some change about human rights abuses which upset her emotionally.

Emma (Year 10) joined the Model United Nations when she was in Year 7. When asked about her motivation for joining, she said:

I have always been very conscious of the world around me and the many injustices in it, and a friend told me about this group and said I should join.

When asked about her family's influence on her involvement, she said:

My parents are not really interested in these issues, but they are supportive of my involvement. Before I became involved in this group I found out about these types of issues from the internet because I joined some online petition groups.

This quote demonstrates that Emma has a developing dispositional attitude for change, as she sought out some like-minded people who were trying to encourage change through collecting signature for online petitions. According to the Australian National Assessment program (Civics and Citizenship Years 6 and 10 Report 2010) report, only a small percentage of Year 10 students have used the internet in the way that Emma has in order to discuss civic issues, as only 5% of Year 10 students indicated that they would do this at least once a week.

Thomas (Year 11) stated that he also had an interest in world affairs prior to joining the Model United Nations. When asked about his family's influence on his involvement, he commented that:

I have very different views to my dad on some human rights issues. For example we have heated dinner table conversations about the merits of the death penalty. I think our arguments have helped me to be a better debater in the Model United Nations conferences! And I appreciate that he pays for me to go to conferences

overseas, which is pretty expensive. I would really like to get involved in human rights issues once I leave school but I know dad would not like that to be my main thing. In terms of human rights it is kind of interesting living in a place like this that has lots of freedoms, but which is ultimately controlled by China which is one of the biggest human rights abusers in the world.

This quote is interesting, because it demonstrates that it is not only when family discussions are agreeable that young people's attitudes can be formed, but they can also develop as a result of being forced to defend a point of view against an opposing side. It is also interesting that this student has applied what he has learned about human rights through his involvement in the Model United Nations group to the context of his own life and the wider political situation in China.

Robert (Year 11) said of his underlying interest in the issues discussed at the Model United Nations group:

I already knew quite a lot about these issues before I joined because we always watch the news at home every night.

Robert's experiences are similar to those reported in the Australian National Assessment Program (Civics and Citizenship Years 6 and 10, 2010) report which found that 81% of Year 10 students watched the television news at least weekly.

It was my observation that in general, the students had a very positive attitude towards their involvement in the group, and were enthusiastic participants in the weekly sessions and at the conference. Perhaps this was because they were not a random group of students, but instead were self-selected as a result of their pre-existing interest in world affairs, and also because they had a large stake in how the activity ran and were therefore responsible for ensuring that it was a success. Ms Somers noted how the attitude of one student changed over time:

I overheard one student last year, who was always very distracted in the sessions, saying how she was only got involved in the group because she wanted to have a trip to Singapore to go handbag shopping! But after attending the conference she became really interested and more mature and this year she volunteered to give a speech at a school assembly to encourage others to get involved.

It is perhaps not surprising that students who choose to join an after school extracurricular group that involves researching and debating international issues have a pre-existing interest in such issues. However, this raises the point that perhaps human rights groups such as the Model United Nations are merely ‘preaching to the converted’ by engaging students who are already interested in these issues, rather than informing and influencing a wider audience in the school community. It is therefore likely that a large cohort of the AIS student population, who do not have a pre-existing interest and who do not choose to become involved in the Model United Nations group do not have exposure to the knowledge, understandings and skills of human rights education in their time at this school, as it is not taught within the formal curriculum. It is interesting to consider that the school promotes the Model United Nations group so heavily and links it so directly to its core mission and yet it is only offered as an extracurricular activity for a limited number of students.

5.4.3 The development of student knowledge and understanding

In terms of the pedagogical approach to human rights education it was my observation that the Model United Nations group at AIS included the three elements of about, through and for human rights education (Tibbitts, 2002 and Evans, 2006). The Model United Nations group involved ‘education about’ human rights because it required students to research human rights principles as set out in documents such as the UDHR (1948), as well as investigating the mechanisms which help to protect human rights both nationally and internationally. It also involved education through human rights because rather than a teacher or the school dictating what was learnt or done, the students themselves had autonomy over the way the group operated, and the decision-making power over what

they learnt was vested with the student leaders, who had been democratically elected by the student members. In this way the operation of the group embodied human rights principles by respecting the rights of the learners. Finally, the activity also involved some elements of 'learning for' human rights, as it empowered students to exercise their own rights and respect the rights of others.

Tibbitts (2002) describes how learning about pedagogy of human rights education usually occurs within the context of a civics lesson or other formal classroom subject that is delivered via teacher instruction. It was my observation that although the students were learning about the content of human rights by reading and researching documents such as the UDHR (1948) and the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989), this group differed from the usual formal classroom model of content transmission, because the students themselves were directing their research for the purpose of discovering the position on the issue of the country they were representing. It was very apparent from my observations that students were gaining knowledge about human rights through their involvement in the group. For example, Chloe (Year 7) said:

Before this, I did not even know there was a special United Nations Convention that protects children.

It was also my observation that many students exhibited an impressive grasp of the relevant international legal instruments and how they would be interpreted by the governments of the particular country they were representing, which was knowledge they had gained through their participation in the group, as it is not specifically taught within the formal classroom curriculum. For example, during the conference, a resolution was debated which contained a clause which proposed that all governments should support the creation of a NGO that would collect data about the recruitment of child soldiers in each country. The delegates of the United States and Uganda argued forcefully that this would amount to a breach of sovereignty. By lobbying other countries, they convinced enough other countries of the merits of this argument so that this clause was struck out when put to a vote. Another example was when the delegate of Syria argued that the

Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) represented a Western conception of human rights, which is an ongoing debate amongst human rights theorists (Darian-Smith & Fitzpatrick, 1999). The student delegate additionally argued that the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989) was not relevant in the current armed conflict in Syria as it was an extraordinary situation where it was necessary, in order to obtain peace, to kill children if they were in proximity to rebel fighters. The fact that these examples accurately depict the current views of these countries means that it is reasonable to assume that the students gained this knowledge through their research and involvement in the weekly Model United Nations sessions, rather than it being knowledge they already possessed prior to their involvement.

It could be argued that Emma (Year 10) experienced a transformation in her knowledge about human rights through her involvement in the group:

I am representing Liberia, a country that has child soldiers but which has also signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child which bans child soldiers. At first I thought, what is the point then of having the Convention at all? But then I thought, it is important, because it gives countries like Liberia something to aim for. And I have found out in my research that things have been getting better in Liberia since the conviction of their leader Charles Taylor for war crimes. After all, you don't get rid of traffic lights just because some people go through the red! But what you have to do is make sure that people get caught when they break the rules, and that is something the UN is not very good at.

This example echoes Mezirow's (1991) process of transformative learning, which involves experiencing a disorienting dilemma ('what is the point of having a Convention banning child soldiers when a country which has signed it has child soldiers?'); critically reflecting upon the disorienting dilemma to expose the learner's limitations ('I suppose it is important that there are human rights standards set out in a Convention that countries can aspire to uphold'); addressing those limitations by acquiring new knowledge ('my research shows that Liberia is trying to stop child soldiers and things are improving

there’); and transforming the learner by offering a fresh perspective (‘the problem is not the Convention itself but its lack of enforceability’). This is one example of how the Model United Nations can lead to the transformational experience in terms of student knowledge.

Thomas (Year 11) wrote a report for the school newsletter about the former child soldier who was a guest speaker at a Model United Nations session. In this article, Thomas demonstrated a sophisticated knowledge and understanding about the enforceability of international conventions which he gained through his involvement in the Model United Nations:

Some people question what the point of ‘rights’ are when they are breached all the time and atrocities continue. But it is important to recognize that clear, rigorous standards have already been adopted at the international level to ensure the protection of children. The problem then is not so much the existence of rights but rather how they are implemented and upheld. It is important that individual countries create practical methods for protecting children, such as through legislative reform or measures to prevent conflicts from ever taking place, which would tackle the root cause of problems such as child soldiers.

These examples and my observations provide triangulating evidence (Yin, 2009) to support the claims of the school that the Model United Nations ‘engages students’ intellects’, enables ‘students to graduate as skilled, influential international citizens’ and ‘enables students to participate, learn and develop’ (School newsletter, 7 March 2012). It also provides insight into how learning about human rights through student participation in informal extracurricular activities can lead to a transformation in student knowledge and understanding, which could be described as developing cosmopolitan citizenship based on an understanding of the principles of human rights.

Mihr (2007) argues that a transformation in understanding can only occur if a personal and emotional reaction against human rights abuses is elicited in an individual, but it does

not have to have been a direct experience of a human rights violation. Mihr's (2007) theory has much in common with Tibbitts' (2002) transformative pedagogy and Article 2(2)(c) of the *Declaration of Human Rights Education and Training* (2011) which describes education for human rights as empowering people to uphold the rights of others.

An example of this occurred in the third week of the term when the teacher Ms Somers organised for a guest speaker to address the Model United Nations group about his experiences as a former child soldier in Liberia. The guest speaker described how he had been kidnapped, drugged and forced to kill people, including his own family members, from the age of eight. Before the arrival of the guest speaker, Ms Somers said to the group:

What you are going to hear about is a serious and sad topic, you may find it challenging and emotional and it may make you feel uncomfortable. But that is often when the best learning happens.

The interviews that I conducted with students after the presentation by the guest speaker revealed that it did indeed have a significant emotional impact on the students, which further informed their understanding of the issue of child soldiers. Thomas (Year 11) recalled that:

Listening to his story was the most powerful experience I have had in the five years I have been involved in the Model United Nations group. I think it really provided a reality shock for many students, including myself. While researching the problems faced by children living in war zones I had encountered some very disturbing facts, and had seen some terrible photos of children with guns, but on some level I don't think I truly believed the severity of the problems until I heard him share his personal experiences of being tortured and forced to kill. Hearing him talk about the emotional scarring that he experienced was an especially powerful moment for me. It really made me understand that the topic we are

debating for the Model United Nations is more than just an educational exercise, it is an actual pressing world issue affecting the lives of individuals in many countries around the world.

Chloe (Year 7) also had an emotional reaction to the guest speaker:

I felt frightened hearing his story. I thought, he was a child soldier when he was my age, this could have happened to me. I had seen photos of child soldiers when doing my research, but actually meeting a person and hearing his stories made it a lot more real.

Emma (Year 10) had a slightly different reaction to the guest speaker:

Hearing his story made me feel very sad, but I didn't cry because he didn't cry and he was being really brave and it actually happened to him. It definitely affected me and I talked to my parents that night about what I could do to help people like him.

Even Robert (Year 11) who appeared nonchalant whilst the guest speaker was talking, was affected to some degree:

I found the guest speaker's story pretty touching but I already knew a lot about that stuff from watching the news.

It was my observation when watching the students that in general they seemed fascinated by the guest speaker, and they listened very carefully to his stories which were quite shocking. They also asked many questions at the end of the presentation, including 'what do you think we can do to help child soldiers?' In fact they asked so many questions that the session finished 45 minutes later than usual. The teacher facilitator Ms Somers said:

I was very pleased with how the students behaved during the guest speaker's presentation. They seemed quite mesmerised and I did not see anyone who was checking their emails or phones! I also thought the students were respectful in the relevant questions they asked him, rather than just displaying a voyeuristic interest in his shocking experiences. I hope they were not too deeply affected by what he talked about, but instead uplifted and amazed by his resilient spirit in the face of such adversity.

The experiences of the students after hearing the guest speaker's story provides support for Osler's (1998) theory about the influence that an emotional response can have on learning. This is illustrated by comments including that it was the 'most powerful experience I have had in the five years I have been involved', 'it really provided a reality shock for many students, including me', 'this could have happened to me', 'hearing his stories made it a lot more real' and 'his story made me feel very sad...[and it made me think about] what I could do to help people like him'. By eliciting an empathetic response through hearing about a human rights abuse, these students have transformed their understanding of what happens when human rights are breached, by seeing the effect it had on another person who they had seen and talked to. This example supports Mihr's (2007) view that transformation occurs when individuals have had an emotional reaction to learning about someone who had experienced a human rights violation, which then inspires them to learn more and to take action to try and prevent it happening to others. Therefore the indirect experience of injustice can serve as a link between cognitive knowledge and emotional understanding.

However, it was my observation that exposing young people (many of whom were only 12 years old) to horrific stories such as those spoken about by the guest speaker could lead students to feeling guilty or upset about their safer and more privileged life. Chloe demonstrated an instance of this view in commenting:

I was really upset and frightened when I got home after the guest speaker and I talked about it with my parents at dinner. But they got angry with me because

they didn't want me to talk about it in front of my little sister in case she got scared too.

Advocates of the 'education for' approach to human rights education might argue that it is the responsibility of those who have not experienced human rights abuses to advocate for those who have, rather than leaving it to the victims themselves. However, this example demonstrates that eliciting an emotional reaction in order to transform understanding can be dangerous and problematic, and may not always be in the best interest of the child.

5.4.4 The impact of student leadership on transformative learning

A key feature of the Model United Nations at AIS is that it is run by students who were elected by the group as Chairs and also that it is not part of the formal curriculum of the school.

The role of the teacher facilitator for the Model United Nations group is an interesting one, as it involves ceding most of the responsibility to the student leaders, while still providing support and guidance when required. Ms Somers commented:

My role in the Model United Nations program is different compared to my role as a classroom teacher. It is a student run group, so I support the Co-Chairs in running the sessions and the conference. If I had to describe the 'power' arrangement, I would draw it as a squashed triangle with me sitting alongside the Co-Chairs and the students in the group underneath that. Whereas in a classroom where I am the 'teacher', I see myself as at the top of a much sharper triangle with the students underneath. Students have volunteered to be involved in this group so I do not expect to have to deal with any behavioural issues, and the students know that is not my role here.

According to Suarez (2007), human rights education can be a critical pedagogical tool used to challenge the power relations within schools between students and teachers (Freire, 1970). This can lead to difficulties for some teachers who feel they have to undermine their own status within the classroom in order to fully implement human rights education. However, in this case it was my observation that Ms Somers was very aware of her different role and embraced the different power relationship that it created between the teacher, the student leaders and the students in the group. This teacher also expressed her understanding and commitment to Article 12 of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989) by allowing children to be involved in decision making that affects them, such as what they learn about.

It was my observation that the 52 student members of the Model United Nations group were very attentive to the two student leaders. Each session had roughly the same structure. Firstly, the session would begin with an update from the Chairs about a current event in the world which was relevant to the topic of the conference (such as the impact on children of the armed uprising in Syria), followed by some discussion amongst the group. Secondly, the Chairs would put a number of random topics up on the board (such as ‘why I hate the city during hot weather’) and then students would be called upon to present a one minute unprepared speech to the group on the topic. The aim of this was to give students practice at public speaking. Thirdly, each weekly session had a particular focus as part of the conference preparation, as outlined above.

The student leaders addressed the group from the front of the room at the beginning of the session, but otherwise circulated around assisting members of the group as required. The teacher sat to one side. It was particularly impressive to observe the on-task behavior of the students, as it was such a large group ranging in age from Year 7 to Year 12. Possibly this was aided because the students sat at desks and worked in pairs as junior/senior delegates to represent the point of view of a particular country they had been allocated by the Chairs, so therefore they were not necessarily sitting in friendship groups. It was my observation that the student leaders managed the class discussions well and the students were very engaged. The Chairs did not teach the members of the

group by providing content about the issue or the countries being researched, but rather guided them with suggestions for relevant websites to investigate. The Chairs also proof read the resolutions that students had prepared and made suggested changes. The Chairs encouraged the members of the group to finish their research and preparation within the sessions rather than completing it at home in their own time as homework.

These observations were supported by the interviews conducted with students about the impact that the student leadership of the group had on how they learned. Chloe (Year 7) commented that:

I think the Co-Chairs do a great job. They are always well organized and approachable. They don't teach us or test us they just guide us and then you have to do it by yourself which makes you be more independent. The teacher is there but she doesn't check your work, you are more motivated to learn and do your work because you don't want to let the other students down on the day of the conference.

Emma (Year 10) said:

I hope I can be Chair of the group one day, I would love it! You get to talk to the other students about what they are learning about and preparing and how to make it better. The Co-Chairs this year are really respected by the group and everyone listens to them. Sometimes you want to learn more when you hear about something from someone your own age, rather than from an adult. You think if they know it, I should know it too. When I first started I didn't even know where Uganda was! It is interesting that I have learned so much when there aren't even any tests or exams.

Thomas (Year 11) remarked:

I have really enjoyed the experience of being elected Co-Chair this year. It is great to be able to help other students to be involved and to learn more about issues like children in conflict zones. The students in this group are very motivated and focused which has made our job easier in running the sessions and the conference. We have tried to make the sessions fun and we want everyone to feel like they are part of a special team. I like the way this activity gives students lots of responsibility over their learning, which makes it more enjoyable. The relationship with the teacher is also very different. She is more like a facilitator than a teacher. She guides us when we need it but mostly it is up to us. We are the ones who check that everyone understands what is going on.

Robert (Year 11) said:

The students who run the group are my friends so I don't really see them as 'leaders'. The teacher definitely takes a back seat though and the conference is totally run by the students.

It was my observation that it took some time for the students to realise that the teacher played a different role within the meetings of this group. A number of times students would approach Ms Somers and ask her to correct their work. She would reply:

If you feel that you have done your best work, then I trust you. I don't need to see it. But I am sure the Chairs would be happy to look over it for you if you want it checked.

This is an example of education through human rights, where *how* human rights are taught has equal significance with *what* is taught (Tibbitts, 2002 and Evans, 2006). The students who chose to participate in this group had a great degree of autonomy over what they learned and how they learned it; the learning was purposeful (as it led to the conference); despite the fact there was no formal examination of the material learned the students were motivated to learn because they did not want to let down their peers; and

the learning was directed by fellow students rather than by a teacher. Ms Somers said that:

Considering that it is a voluntary activity and there is no formal assessment, I have been amazed at how motivated and hardworking most the students in the Model United Nations group have been. I think part of it is because the activity is a collaborative one, where students work in pairs to represent the views of a particular country and have to negotiate with other 'countries' to reach a consensus. This means that there is positive peer pressure to do the work or otherwise you are letting down your team, which is motivating.

This example provides support for Freire's (1970) argument against the 'banking' model of education, where the teacher is an all-knowing authoritative figure and the students are passive recipients of knowledge. In terms of explanation-building (Yin, 2009), it is interesting to note that a pattern emerges as Chloe, Emma and Thomas all commented that the *lack* of a teacher figure or any formal assessment actually encouraged them to take *more* responsibility for their own learning, particularly as they wanted to gain the approval of their peers which was a powerful motivator. By contrast, it was interesting that Robert noted that because the student leaders were his friends he did not perceive them as having any authority over him. I observed that in comparison with the other students who were interviewed, Robert was a lot less enthusiastic about the Model United Nations activity, which can perhaps be traced to his motivation for joining the group in the first place (as a way of fulfilling the requirements for his IB Diploma).

In terms of a pedagogical approach, it was my observation that the Model United Nations group at AIS was successful in helping students to learn about the content of human rights ('education about'), and that this was implemented in a way that respected human rights ('education through'), because students had agency over how and what they learned. However, the Model United Nations group was less successful in terms of education for human rights that actually led to transformative action and change. Chloe's (Year 7) comments about her experiences in the Model United Nations group are

instructive in terms of the values and dispositions she gained through her participation in the group, and the capacity she felt it gave her to take action in the future. She noted:

I have learned a lot and become more aware of what is going on in the world, which has made me want to help people who aren't as lucky as me. I feel that learning about issues like child soldiers is the first step to being able to try and stop it happening. It will be easier to do something about it when I am older because then more people listen to you and take you more seriously.

Chloe's views reflect those of the Model United Nations organisation, which is that raising awareness about human rights issues itself constitutes a form of action, as it is difficult to act unless you are informed. Thomas (Year 11) had a similar view:

Students can start by spreading awareness, as many people do not understand how serious the issue is. The internet is a great way of achieving this. For example there are sites like 'Avaaz' where people can sign a petition which can then be presented to governments and the United Nations to show there is support for a particular action. If more people recognized the safety of children in war zones as an issue worth dealing with, perhaps our voices can be heard at a national or even an international level.

Emma (Year 10) had a different view:

I have found it frustrating to learn about issues like child soldiers but then not know what I can do to help. Realistically, what can I do? I am a 16 year old girl living in Asia. I can't just march up to a dictator in Liberia and tell them to stop using child soldiers. I can't even donate money to organisations that try and stop it happening because I don't have a job. But I am a believer that if enough people all do some small things it can make a big difference which is why I am a vegetarian.

Ms Somers also described some of the frustrations students have with the Model United Nations in terms of turning their learning into action:

One of the problems with the group is that students can get very involved and interested in learning about an issue like child soldiers, but then feel quite powerless about what they can do about it now that they know about it, and the Model United Nations program doesn't really provide many avenues for that.

This correlates with the sentiments of Robert (Year 11):

It's all just a lot of talk. No one actually DOES anything that will make any difference to anyone. One of the things I have realised from being in the Model United Nations group is that there is no one authority that controls the world, and the UN is actually pretty powerless. I found this quite shocking.

In some ways, the frustrations that the students have expressed about the difficulty of transforming their learning into 'education for' human rights is reflective of the frustration in the wider community with the United Nations inability to effectively stop human rights abuses. In terms of transformative learning, perhaps the frustrations that these students have experienced in trying to create change is useful, as it mirrors the difficulties experienced in the wider community when trying to create change and may enable them to persevere despite setbacks (Kahne & Westheimer, 2006). It also recognises that developing awareness and understanding is an important starting point for creating change.

5.5 Conclusion

Tibbitts and Kirchsclaeger (2010) argue that at the individual level, human rights education programs should instil an understanding of one's own human rights and the rights of others; an awareness of human rights issues; the development of empathy and

care for the human rights problems of others; a sense of personal agency in promoting human rights; the application of human rights principles to one's private life and relationships; and increased personal realization of human rights. As has been demonstrated in this chapter, the student learning experiences of the Model United Nations group at AIS achieve many of these learning achievements that are fundamental to purposeful human rights education. One concern that I have expressed in this chapter is that it is only the volunteer students who commit to human rights education as an extracurricular activity after school hours. If the school were to enable more students to participate in the Model United Nations (for example by incorporating it as part of the curriculum as some other international schools do) it could enrich the learning of all students at the school as international, cosmopolitan citizens.

Chapter Six

Comparison of the Case Studies

The two case study schools are both large private schools which provide opportunities for students to participate in informal extracurricular human rights education activities. However, the implementation of these programs differs between the schools, so it is pertinent to undertake a comparative analysis in order to develop further understanding of the learning outcomes achieved in light of the research questions posed. In this chapter, I discuss and compare what makes the school contexts different, and draw some conclusions about what the impact of these differences are on the human rights learning outcomes for the students.

Elizawood College and the Australian International School (AIS) have markedly different approaches to the development and enactment of human rights education through the participation of students in informal extracurricular activities. At Elizawood College, the students met fortnightly at lunchtime sessions to discuss a particular aspect of human rights, whereas at AIS the students met weekly after school to prepare for a Model United Nations conference about a particular human rights issue. At Elizawood College, the groups had no set curriculum, assessment or deadlines, so the groups were entirely dependent upon the student's interest in maintaining them. By comparison, at AIS the activities of the group were focused on preparing and participating in a school based conference.

Before comparing the extracurricular human rights opportunities provided by the schools, it is important to recognise the differences that exist between the two settings which may have impacted on the development and enactment of human rights education at the schools. Elizawood College is an all girls' school, whereas AIS is co-educational. This is relevant because according to the Australian *National Assessment Program Civics and Citizenship Years 6 and 10 Report* (2010) report, more girls than boys at Year 10 believe

that social movement related citizenship such as human rights protection is important. However I observed that at AIS more boys than girls chose to be involved in the Model United Nations, and more students overall were involved in the Model United Nations at AIS than the human rights groups at Elizawood College. It was therefore not my impression that gender played a major factor in the participation of students in these activities.

The schools' mission statements also reveal a different approach. Elizawood College specifically references the concept of human rights through its membership of the *United Nations Global Compact* (2005), which means that it supports and respects the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights, whereas AIS makes no reference to human rights in its mission statement. However, the mission statement of both schools refers to the importance of developing global citizens. The stated aims of Elizawood College also seem to be more community focused: for example 'to develop a sense of cultural heritage and an understanding and appreciation of the multi-cultural nature of Australian *society* and its place in the world' and 'to develop a strong sense of *social justice* which translates into commitment to *community service* and action', whereas the aims of AIS seem more individualistic: 'students, through active participation, achieve their *personal best* to become skilled, healthy, influential and responsible international citizens' [emphasis added]. Perhaps this difference can be explained by the fact that Elizawood College is a school based in a Christian religious tradition, whereas AIS is a secular school. Religious schools traditionally have a strong social justice focus (Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy, 2005), and I observed examples of the way that Elizawood College prioritised the service of others in chapel services, assemblies and a community service program.. By contrast, the culture developed within the student population at AIS seemed to be more individualistic, with many less fundraising and community service activities on offer. Perhaps this was because the students at AIS are 'third culture kids' who are less aware of the society in which they live but rather live in their own space that it neither here (Asia) nor there (Australia) which means they are disconnected from the communities of both. Yet more students chose to be involved in the human rights extracurricular activities at AIS than they did at Elizawood College, and it arguably

involved a bigger commitment because it was after school rather than just attending a meeting at lunchtime at school. Perhaps this can be explained by the fact that the Model United Nations program assists students in developing their academic skills, which is highly valued in international schools in Asia.

It is interesting to compare the sense of cultural identity projected by each school: Elizawood College, which is situated in a capital city in Australia, has a policy of being ‘internationally minded’ and emphasises its multicultural student population; whereas AIS, situated in a large Asian city emphasises its Australian-ness, although many of its students are third culture kids who either are not Australian or have never lived in Australia or are locals. In different ways, each school could be said to embody Osler and Starkey’s (2003, 2005) idea of cosmopolitan citizenship which involves feeling a sense of solidarity with people who are different from you in your own community.

Some commonalities were apparent across both schools in terms of the extracurricular human rights groups. For example, at both schools the groups were led by students who had chosen to be involved in the activity, which involved them giving up their own time either at lunchtimes or after school. It was also apparent that both schools valued the activities of the groups by providing them with support such as a venue to meet in, means of communication and a teacher liaison to assist the groups. (However, neither school had implemented human rights education within the formal curriculum).

The approach to human rights education in the two schools was also very different. At Elizawood College, there were three separate small groups each dedicated to a particular human rights cause, whereas at AIS there was one large group of students who had the common aim of attending a conference about a particular human rights issue. This seemed to impact on the sense of identity of the groups: the small groups of students at Elizawood College seemed to have trouble maintaining their focus and drive, whereas the one large group at AIS seemed to have a real sense of group identity and purpose. Some of the groups at Elizawood College did not have an official student leader and often had to be assisted by the teacher; whereas at AIS the students were very enthusiastic and

mainly worked independently of the teacher under the direction of their appointed student leaders. Perhaps the greater size of the group at AIS helped to create a sense of belonging, and also having the conference at the end of the term gave the group a sense of purpose and a goal to aim towards. By contrast, the groups at Elizawood College had rather vague, evolving goals, which were sometimes connected to community-based events, but the students had little means for assessing their level of success or impact. This seemed to affect the level of motivation and satisfaction that students gained from their involvement in the groups at Elizawood College. Another interesting distinction that became apparent in the interviews with students at both schools was that at AIS it was prestigious to be involved in the Model United Nations and something to be proud of amongst ones peers, whereas at Elizawood College some of the students involved were described their teacher as being socially isolated in relation to their peers.

The skills that were developed by students through their participation in the human rights education activities at the two schools were also quite different. At Elizawood College, students learned to improve their advocacy skills by trying to create awareness and change about human rights issues. Part of this learning involved negotiating institutional and bureaucratic barriers to change. It is arguable that having exposure to real world advocacy within a formal classroom environment is limited, so opportunities to gain these skills through informal groups such as those at Elizawood College are important. By comparison, at AIS the students learned skills that are traditionally associated with the learning that takes place within a formal classroom environment, such as public speaking, research, and the ability to synthesise and present arguments based on evidence. It was my observation that the involvement of students in the Model United Nations at AIS helped them to develop their knowledge and skills as independent and self-motivated learners with limited teacher involvement, in a forum outside of the formal classroom and with intrinsic motivation rather than the rewards of formal assessment, however with less opportunity to create real world change.

Almost all of the students involved in the groups at both schools indicated through the interviews and observations that they had a pre-existing interest in human rights issues

prior to their joining the group. So although many of them did display an attitudinal disposition for change, it was difficult to ascertain whether the students already possessed this prior to their involvement in the group or whether it formed as a result of their involvement. However, it was evident that most students were motivated to join such groups either through the influence of their families or because of a personal or witnessed experience of some sort of injustice which sparked a desire to create change which their participation in the activity fostered further.

It was evident that the development and transformation of student knowledge differed between the schools. At AIS, the students gained a substantial amount of knowledge about specific human rights international documents, and how they are enforced, because of the nature of the Model United Nations activity undertaken. However at Elizawood College, the knowledge which students gained about human rights instruments was more implied than explicit and arose on an ad hoc basis depending on the group and the issue they were interested in. This was also evident in terms of student understanding: for example, the students at the AIS for example gained an enormous insight into the issue of child soldiers through hearing explicitly about the experiences of a guest speaker; by comparison, the understanding about human rights abuses gained by the groups at Elizawood College was often somewhat removed from the reality of the issue (for example the experiences of Aboriginal Australians).

Both schools provided teachers to support the human rights groups. However, the role played by the teacher differed, and this seemed to impact on how human rights education which was implemented in each school. At Elizawood College, there was some evidence of an 'education through' human rights pedagogy, as the groups were managed by the students themselves (and an education through approach involves learners having their rights and views respected). This gave students the opportunity to participate in some decision making about way in which to take action and raise awareness about human rights issues, in line with the school's mission statement. However, as some of the examples from Elizawood College demonstrated, it seems that the teachers and administrators at the school struggled to implement the altered power dynamic between

students and teachers that is the hallmark of an ‘education through’ human rights pedagogy (although it should be noted that there were also instances where the teachers provided valuable support and guidance to the students). By comparison, there was a much more equal power dynamic evident between the teacher and the students at AIS which seemed to enable the students to be independent learners, in line with an ‘education through’ approach to teaching and learning.

Overall, the extracurricular human rights opportunities provided at AIS could be described as being predominately ‘education about’ human rights, as the students in the Model United Nations focused on researching the relevant content of human rights documents as a way of responding to the issue of children in conflict zones on behalf of a particular country. The action undertaken by the students in the Model United Nations could be described as manufactured because it involved students pretending to represent the views of a particular country about a human rights issue in a pretend session of the United Nations.

However, it is arguable that the student experience at AIS in fact led to more powerful and transformative personal learning outcomes for students than those experienced by students at Elizawood College, which adopted more of an ‘education through’ and ‘education for’ human rights approach. This is in contrast to the claims by Tibbitts (2002) that human rights education needs to involve more than learning about human rights in order to be effective. On the other hand, it could be argued that the activities undertaken by the students at Elizawood College, although less effective in terms of learning outcomes, at least had the *potential* to help people and raise awareness in the wider community in a socially transformative way (such as writing letters to governments condemning their human rights abuses); whereas at AIS the activities undertaken were mainly beneficial for the individuals involved rather than the wider community, although it may have primed some students to become involved in advocacy at a later date.

It is my conclusion that there needs to be more recognition in the literature that in practical terms the pedagogies of ‘about, through and for’ human rights education are not

mutually exclusive, and their success depends upon the setting, audience, and implementation of each program, rather than establishing a hierarchy of effectiveness between the approaches.

In this chapter, I have discussed the fact that there were very real differences in the spaces and contexts of the informal extracurricular human rights activities implemented in the two case study schools. In the final chapter I draw some conclusions about the theory, implementation and learning outcomes of human rights education and make some recommendations for further research for school teaching and learning programs in the field of human rights education.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

Young Australians are not disengaging from politics. They are just not joining the parties anymore... [at] my own organisation, the Oaktree Foundation, we have got more than 100,000 volunteer members who are passionate about taking action on the issues they care about. That's more than, I believe, the membership of every political party combined. Young people ...are mobilising in unprecedented numbers for the issues that they care about.

(Viv Benjamin, 18 March, 2013, ABC TV)

I was very interested to watch this panel member on an Australian current affairs program discussing her work as a young social activist, as she was a former student of mine at Elizawood College, whose passion and commitment to human rights issues was one of the inspirations for my research. I undertook this study because of my belief that it is the responsibility of schools to implement human rights education programs as a way of developing the capacity of students to transform their understandings about human rights issues, and contribute to their development as global citizens. My first research question was therefore focused on how and why schools implement teaching and learning about human rights. Prior to this research, I had limited understanding of the complexities involved in understanding student learning through informal extracurricular programs related to human rights. Through my literature review, I found that there is limited existing research focused on student learning in these kinds of school based programs. Therefore I thought my study could make an important contribution to this area.

In terms of my second research question, it was evident from my study that powerful learning in terms of skills, attitudes, knowledge and understandings can occur through informal extracurricular human rights activities. This needs to be recognised, better

understood and valued by schools. Indeed these case studies could be classified as an example of the type of learning which ACARA (2010) is focused on developing in the new Australian Curriculum, as it applies across subject-based content and helps to equip students to be lifelong, cosmopolitan learners in a globalised world.

The findings from the case studies further demonstrated that because these activities were implemented within the informal realm, rather than as part of the formal classroom curriculum, students were given the opportunity to have control over what and how they learned that crossed subject curriculum boundaries. This enabled students to participate in learning that was meaningful for them because they were interested in the issues, and provided an internal motivation to learn because they had a stake in the outcome. However, this type of learning should not be restricted to informal extracurricular activities; schools should create many more opportunities for students to negotiate the focus of curriculum around contemporary issues that are pertinent to their lives. There is a need to increase agency for students within formal classroom learning so that they are involved in deciding what and how they learn and what forms assessments might take.

A recommendation from my study is that informal human rights education activities could be further developed in school communities in order to include more students, rather than being voluntary activities that only cater to an interested group of self-selected students. However, it would be necessary to undertake a larger study with further case studies to be able to make valid, generalisable conclusions about the impact that an increased rollout of these types of programs could have in varied school contexts.

Another finding from my research is the importance of the role played by the teacher in human rights education in informal contexts. Despite the fact that the groups in the case studies were student-led and students enjoyed the autonomy and peer support that this provided, there were many examples where the guidance and resources provided by the teacher gave the groups a focus that enabled transformative learning to take place. However, there were also instances where the students felt disempowered by the teacher and were denied ownership over the successes and failures they experienced. Therefore a

recommendation from this research is that increased professional development be provided to teachers involved in informal human rights education programs. This could be a way of developing their understanding of the more equal power dynamic between students and teachers that is required in order to ensure the successful implementation of these kinds of programs, so that students can achieve genuine voice and the right to participate and express their opinions freely.

In terms of my third research question, the case studies did *not* provide examples of transformative behaviours in relation to human rights as a result of the actions taken by students in the extracurricular groups in the two schools. However the study *did* identify examples of personal transformative learning which occurred for students in terms of their knowledge, understandings, skills and attitudes about human rights issues. There was also evidence of increased understanding amongst the students of the practical and institutional barriers to undertaking meaningful action.

The power of these personal learning transformations is not to be underestimated. To paraphrase Roosevelt (1958) (as quoted at the beginning of this study), while the contributions of each individual to promote and respect human rights within a school extracurricular group might seem insignificant, without concerted citizen action to uphold human rights close to home in places such as schools and local communities, we shall look in vain for the protection of human rights in the wider international community. Although over fifty years old, this attitude has resonance for twenty-first century learners, as negotiating personally transformative learner outcomes at the local level has implications for schools whose mission is to develop internationally minded global citizens who understand their rights and responsibilities in local, national and global contexts.

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Appendix A: Explanatory Statement to Students

MONASH University



Explanatory Statement: Students

Date

Informal Learning Beyond The Classroom: Secondary School Human Rights Education

This information sheet is for you to keep.

My name is Genevieve Hall and I am conducting a research project with Dr Libby Tudball, a senior lecturer in the Faculty of Education at Monash University, towards a Master of Education degree. This means that I will be writing a thesis, which is the equivalent of a short book.

I have chosen you to be a potential participant in my research because you are involved in a human rights group at your school, or you are learning about human rights in a subject you are doing at school.

The aim of this study is to investigate your experiences of learning about human rights informally outside the classroom and within subjects at school.

A possible benefit of this research for participants is that it may help to support young people to be active and informed citizens who are interested in participating in action which leads to change about human rights issues.

This research involves participating in a focus group and an interview, which will be audio taped.

The data collection will be completed over a six month period in 2010. The interview and focus group will take about 30 minutes each, and will be conducted at lunchtimes.

There should be no inconvenience or discomfort being involved in this research. No payment or reward is offered for being involved in this research.

Being in this study is voluntary, and you are under no obligation to consent to participate. However, if you do consent to participate, you may only withdraw prior to the beginning of the focus group.

The reporting of the data will not reveal your identity, as pseudonyms (false names) will be used. If you wish, you will be given a transcript of data concerning you for your approval before it is included in the write up of the research. Storage of the data collected will adhere to University regulations and kept on University premises in a locked filing cabinet for 5 years. A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.

If you would like to be informed of the aggregate research finding, please contact Genevieve Hall at

████████████████████

<p>If you would like to contact the researchers about any aspect of this study, please contact the Chief Investigator:</p>	<p>If you have a complaint concerning the manner in which this research CF10/0422-2010000198 is being conducted, please contact:</p>
<p>Dr Libby Tudball Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Education Monash University Victoria 3800 Tel: ██████████ Email: ██████████</p>	<p>Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC) Building 3e Room 111, Research Office Monash University VIC 3800 Tel: ██████████ ██████████ ██████████ Email: ██████████</p>

Appendix B: Permission Form for Students

Consent Form - **Students**

Title: Informal Learning Beyond The Classroom: Secondary School Human Rights Education

NOTE: This consent form will remain with the Monash University researcher for their records

I agree to take part in the Monash University research project specified above. I have had the project explained to me, and I have read the Explanatory Statement, which I keep for my records. I understand that agreeing to take part means that:

- I agree to participate in a focus group conducted by the researcher Yes
 No
- I agree to be interviewed by the researcher Yes
 No
- I agree to allow the interview to be audio-taped Yes
 No
- I agree to make myself available for a further interview if required Yes
 No

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

I understand that any data that the researcher extracts from the focus group and interview for use in reports or published findings will not, under any circumstances, contain names or identifying characteristics.

I understand that I can request a transcript of data concerning me for my approval before it is included in the write up of the research.

I understand that any information I provide is confidential, and that no information that could lead to the identification of any individual will be disclosed in any reports on the project, or to any other party.

I understand that data from the interview and focus group will be kept in a secure storage facility and accessible to the research team only. I also understand that the data will be destroyed after a 5 year period unless I consent to it being used in future research.

Participant's name

Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian name

Signature

Date