"But we're not a multicultural school":

Local spaces, cultural difference and the challenges of intercultural education at one Australian secondary school

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Ethics statement

This project has been approved by the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee. The Committee was satisfied that the project met the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research.

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Abstract

In recent years, Australia, like other immigration nations, has become an increasingly multicultural nation, demanding policy responses that generate social cohesion between diverse groups in heterogeneous communities. Intercultural education has been proposed as a response to increasing diversity in schools and classrooms. Through this study I sought to better understand the challenges of intercultural education in Australia.

In the current Australian curriculum, intercultural education, described as 'Intercultural Understanding', is positioned as a mechanism for cultivating positive relationships between diverse cultural groups. However, in practice intercultural understanding is often framed as learning *about* culturally diverse others—in particular, often learning about minority peoples from the perspective of the dominant group. In this ethnographic case study, I explored the experiences of six teachers, over half a year, at Hillside High—a government high school in the outer-east of Melbourne, Victoria—to better understand intercultural work from the perspectives of teachers. During my time at Hillside High School, I examined the ways cultural difference was produced in school spaces—including in classrooms, curriculum, and everyday spatial relations—and how these productions shaped opportunities for intercultural work.

Data for the study was generated through fieldwork, which included interviews and focus groups where teachers described their experiences of intercultural work and their relations with cultural difference. Analysis of the data focused on three central axes: (i) productions of space; (ii) positionality and practice; and (iii) curriculum work. Drawing on the work of Henri Lefebvre (1991; 2004), I found that productions of space created dominant rhythms that devalue cultural difference and marginalize intercultural education as an education priority. This was especially clear in the way the formal curriculum requirements related to intercultural understanding were associated with the subject area of languages other than English—a space typically associated with cultural difference and systematically devalued across the school. Complicating the rhythms that shape spatial relations were the ways teachers were positioned personally and professionally by their own experiences, values and attitudes towards cultural difference, and the varying degree to which teachers believed teaching intercultural understanding was or was not 'their job'. Productions of space and teacher practice came together to produce hierarchies of value that complicated and further narrowed how intercultural curriculum work played out at Hillside High.

This thesis contributes to an understanding of how intercultural work is deeply shaped by local spaces, and how localised layers of complexity shape and constitute intercultural work as precarious. The study argues for a re-imagining of intercultural education through a ‘praxis of difference’ (Moss and Matwechuk, 2000). A praxis of difference provides a framework for exploring the conditions that produce complex relations between cultural groups and an approach to intercultural education that engages rather than shies away from the complexities and ambiguities of intercultural relations.

Declaration

This thesis is an original work of my research and contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

Tanya Davies

Date: 16/03/2021

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I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which I live and work – the Boonwurrong people of the Kulin Nation. I acknowledge that this land was stolen and that I have enjoyed the privileges of growing up white in this place, with this land. I acknowledge that as part of my schooling I was not taught or told the stories of the violent frontier wars, or the local stories of country. I acknowledge that it is in part from this place of ignorance that I understand my responsibility as an educator to attempt to engage with, to teach and to cultivate complex stories of selves and others that acknowledge the deep entanglements of histories and myths, of relationships, of social-political-cultural action and of diverse productions of knowledge. And I acknowledge the absolute necessity of traditional ways of knowing, of stories of country, as well as those of culturally diverse people in this multicultural nation, to make meaning through the lives we share in this place and in this time together.

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We are all visitors to this time, this place.
We are just passing through.
Our purpose here is to observe, to learn, to grow, to love.
And then we return home.

Australian Aboriginal Proverb

Chapter 1

Racism and relations with cultural difference in Australia: Making the case for understanding intercultural experiences in Australian schools

1.1 Introduction

On December 11, 2005, the crisp winter air was settling in over Southern Japan. The early evening light was dwindling and I was huddled in my tiny unit with the kerosene heater pumping watching the national news broadcast—it was good practice for my sketchy Japanese. I lived in a remote rural village and had become accustomed to speaking and listening to the local *hōgen*, or dialect. As such, listening to the formal Japanese of the national news was a real challenge, and finding it too hard I went out to the kitchen and opened the fridge, searching for some unnamed and unknown satisfaction. From the other room, I recognised the distinctive 'O-su-to-ra-ri-a de…' and curiously tuned back into the television, wondering: Why was Australia on the local news?

Bulletin news programs in Japan tend to report almost exclusively on local and national events so it was rare for world news unrelated to Japan to be reported. In that moment I didn't need polished language skills to piece together what was happening; the images and the few words I could decipher said it all. Although horrified, I couldn't turn away. There, beamed into my tiny house were pictures of Cronulla Beach, Sydney, which had become an epicentre of rioting, violence and disorder. Black and brown Australians—particularly of Middle Eastern appearance—were being targeted and mobbed, bashed and abused by gangs of white Australians claiming that Cronulla belonged to them. Slogans—'Wogs out of 'Nulla' and 'we grew here, you flew here'—were painted onto bare white chests, the Australian flag was being worn as a of symbol of territorial belonging, and many brandished their postcode and the southern cross, tattooed on shoulder blades and forearms as an assertion of their right of place. Right-wing broadcasters were accused of dog-whistling and inciting violence in the days before the riots. It was evident the streets in parts of Sydney were in chaos. In the days and weeks that followed, long silenced issues of culture and difference between multiculturalism and an imagined Australian identity came raging to the surface. The Cronulla riots—still the most public display of violent anti-immigration sentiment seen in decades—can be read as a reminder of white Australia's tenuous possession and authority in this stolen land (Moreton-Robinson, 2015). The Cronulla riots also brought into sharp focus the contestation between rights of place and notions of identity and belonging.

As a young working-middle-class white Australian woman I was shocked. This story did not represent the Australia I knew and loved. This story did not represent the Australia that opens its heart to strangers, that has been built on the back of opportunity created for and by migrants, and that celebrates multiculturalism as the great achievement of my young and bold country. At least, that's what I wanted to believe. On closer reflection, however, I knew this darker side of Australia existed in the shadowlands and that Cronulla had brought this part of Australia into the light. In that moment I saw how growing up in a white working-middle-class family in a predominantly white community I was sheltered from the real struggles diverse others live in claiming their right to belong and be called Australian. And if I'm honest, I know there are parts of my own upbringing that resonated with the basic principle that Australia is a white country, and others who are not white, are not really and can never really be 'true' Australians. In that moment I saw how the casual reference to culturally and ethnically diverse Australians in derogatory terms was a normalised way of representing culturally diverse others, and that these signifying acts reproduce and assert white privilege (Elder, et al, 2004; Grant, 2016; Hage, 1998; Nicolacopoulos and Vassilacopoulos, 2004). Watching that news report in Japan was a crystalising moment. And it made me feel deeply uncomfortable and ashamed. In this discomfort, however, I found myself urged to better understand issues of identity and belonging in Australia, particularly through my role as a teacher. That feeling has continued to this day in the ways my work as an educator might challenge the reproduction of dominant narratives and stereotypes assigned to those deemed not to fit into the imaginary of Australian identity (Dervin, 2016; Rizvi, 2011; Taylor, 2004).

Before continuing, it is useful to briefly engage with the concept of the imaginary as a way to consider the symbolic forms that bond people through ideas of culture and nation. The idea of an imaginary is grounded in the notion that "sociality is not just based on the modern ideal of reason but also on imagination" (Dervin, 2016, p. 23). Taylor (2004) defines imaginaries as "the ways that people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others" (p. 32). While for Rizvi (2011), the imaginary is “tacit and unconscious, and is adhered to by a group of people in an unreflexive manner” (p. 228). The imaginaries of nations, then, can be grasped through the signs and symbols appropriated to capture a feeling, or an imagined essence of what it means to be part of a particular collective. Although dominant representations of national imaginaries and embodiment of national identity may be contested in local settings in relation to specific practices and experiences, dominant productions of nation and other are often deeply rooted and unconscious.

In the years since Cronulla, there has been a rise in populist anti-immigration sentiments globally (Hartwich and Becker, 2019; Rizvi, 2019), and in Australia the struggles over national identity and belonging have been deeply contested (Grant, 2019). Beyond the significant difficulties this poses for governments, civil society and communities everywhere, these struggles also pose real challenges for schools and teachers working in state education systems; struggles that I experienced in my own work as a high school teacher.

A few years after Cronulla, once I had returned to Australia, I found a job teaching English at a public secondary school on the south-east suburban fringe of Melbourne, a growth area that had long been associated with families in low socio-economic circumstances and predominantly ‘white’ blue-collar workers. At the time, the demography of the community was changing as immigrant and refugee families moved into the region—families predominantly from Afghanistan and the South Sea and Pacific Islands. The changing composition of the community was reflected in the school with tensions between ‘new-comers’ produced as ‘outsiders’. It was common to witness harassment, particularly of the Afghani students, and racialised behaviour was normal. And yet the school did not have, and was not required to have, a clear or formal policy or plan to address inappropriate behaviour. Indeed, it was reasonably common to see staff members engaging in racist talk in the presence of students, and at times with students. The following vignette describes an incident from my time at the school. This incident still provokes my thinking about the unofficial school curriculum and the ways teachers mediate competing aspects of their work:

> *It was that time of year when there is a stillness in the air, when you can hear the creak of the land as it stretches to absorb the returning warmth. The cicadas are just starting to hum on the breeze and the flies buzz with a frantic lease on life. The senior students had finished, the 10s were in their final week, and the others were*

> *treading water until the summer break. Reports were in and there was a universal calm that acknowledged we had made it through another year. I was on yard duty when Nasiba, one of my year 10 English students, came over. She wanted to thank me for the year and insisted that I share her lunch with her – a simple Afghani bread filled with mince and spices. As we spoke of her journey to Australia, the family and friends she had left behind, and the sadness in not being able to return to her homeland any time soon Kyle, another of my year 10 students, swaggered past and yelled, "Wha'd'you wanna eat Lebo food for? I'll give you something tasty to chew on…" and gesticulated crudely towards us as he swaggered away laughing.*

When I think about this moment—this 'event of space' (Massey, 2005)—from the perspective of the present, I find myself wondering about the way some experiences are elusive and the challenges difficult to put a finger on, and yet seem to permeate school spaces in such ordinary ways. In this moment, as Kyle's teacher I felt a deep sense of betrayal: a betrayal of the Kyle I felt I had come to know. As Nasiba's teacher, and as a teacher more generally, I felt a responsibility to respond, to 'address' in some way what had happened. Here was a clear case of inappropriate behaviour—racist and sexualised—towards a young female student and towards a female teacher. This moment happened so casually in an education institution designed to build respectful relationships and protect marginalised students from such experiences. Yet, here I was wondering 'what should I do?' Looking back now, I don't think I 'dealt' with this incident in the most productive way and I still think about how I might have responded differently. What remains clear to me, however, is the way the difficulty in addressing these kinds of moments is nested in the tension between local school settings and the broader social and political horizons (Lefebvre, 2004) that help shape them—such as the events I've invoked at the beginning of this chapter. Even though events like Cronulla are major watershed moments, they contribute to discourses of identity and belonging that are taken up or challenged in local and everyday settings such as schools. The schoolyard incident with Kyle and Nasiba, and many others like it, are couched in the everydayness of racialised behaviours and attitudes that are so deeply normalised they often slip by unnoticed or uncontested (Hage, 2014; Wilkinson, 2008) until they culminate in events like Cronulla.

Schools are sites of intercultural tensions despite the best efforts of educators to make schools safe and inclusive. Afterall, schools act as meeting points of diverse views and experiences in ways reflective of society more broadly. In the face of increased populism and right-wing nationalistic sentiments, Australians are grappling with how to live “some sort of common life together without retreating into warring tribes” (Hall, 2007, p. 151). It seems in moving forward, a major challenge for Australia is to find a way to reconcile where we have come from as a nation in order to imagine what we may yet become. And schools and educators have a role to play here. At the heart of this study is the question ‘what makes teachers’ intercultural work so complicated?’ Through one localised ethnographic case study I attempt to address this question by examining the tensions between local and global productions of cultural differences, personal and professional positionalities of teachers, and the role of education as a democratising force as well as a utilitarian and economic tool of nation-building. It is in the relations of these tensions where the challenges of intercultural education can be understood.

1.2 The study

This study is about the ways local productions of cultural difference shape opportunities for intercultural work in schools. In order to understand the challenges teachers’ face in doing intercultural work, it is important to understand the conditions under which they are doing it. This study focuses on productions of cultural difference at one public high school; the ways teachers are positioned personally and professionally to engage in intercultural work; and how intercultural curriculum work is translated in relation to school spaces. Part of the broader horizon of this study is how teachers navigate the everyday normalisation of racism in schools and the extent to which this impacts intercultural work. In the current Australian curriculum, the Intercultural Understanding general capability has been introduced to formalise the inclusion of intercultural understanding into the curriculum. This study levers off the Victorian curriculum—derived from the Australian curriculum—and assumes that in the Intercultural Capability comprising an assessed component of the current Victorian curriculum, there is an expectation that teachers are doing intercultural work. The literature, however, consistently suggests that the capabilities are treated as add-ons or boxes to be checked

(Biesta and Priestley, 2013; Gilbert, 2019). Part of the challenge teachers face is the tension between subject area content and the development of skills and processes through the capabilities. This can be thought of as a struggle over what young people should learn and notions of what kind of person they should be nurtured to become (Lingard and McGregor, 2014; cf Biesta, 2009). In taking a deep dive into the conditions that shape intercultural work in one Victorian high school, insight into the way local spaces—as part of a wider horizon—shape and complicate opportunities for intercultural work can be garnered.

This study is focused on productions of space and relations with cultural difference in order to better understand the ways intersecting spaces shape intercultural work. As such, I do not examine specific practices of inclusion towards culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse students. While the nuances of accommodating the learning needs of diverse young Australians through inclusive education is an important area of study that would benefit from further research, this is quite a distinct and separate field. This study does not do this work.

In order to examine the local productions of space that shape opportunities for intercultural work, the project is guided by the following research questions:

1) What kinds of experiences do teachers have interpreting, translating and enacting the Intercultural Capability?
2) What kind of evidence is there of intercultural work beyond the Capability?
3) What role do physical and social spaces play in shaping the intercultural work of teachers?

These questions attempt to make inroads into the ways local contexts and teacher positionalities contribute to intercultural curriculum enactment. As well as being interested in the ways the local and global intersect to produce the intercultural in particular settings, I am concerned about the conceptual complexity of intercultural education and the trappings of dealing with the Intercultural Capability curriculum as a matter of content, rather than as an ongoing process that traverse difference.

1.3 A case for examining intercultural education through the relations of space

The literature maintains that intercultural education, at its core, is about cultivating positive relations between diverse cultural groups (Dietz, 2018; Guilherme and Dietz, 2015). Despite this, the literature also shows that intercultural education is often reduced to celebratory productions of cultural diversity (Gorski, 2008; Maylor, 2010) rather than a critical examination of locations of power in and across dynamic inter-group relations. For schools and teachers who are juggling State and Federal education priorities, the administrative and accountability requirements of meeting standardised metrics, and the competing pressures of resources and time, this work is further complicated by the social practices and associated norms that produce communities, schools and classrooms, as well as culture and cultural diversity in particular ways. Considering this, the ways schools engage with intercultural education is shaped by relations with cultural difference in local communities and the way these intersect with broader socio-political discourses. As such, this thesis sets out to better understand the ways local productions of cultural difference shape opportunities for intercultural work at one school and the kinds of challenges teachers navigate in doing it.

The *Doing Diversity* report (Halse et al, 2015) is the most comprehensive study conducted into the enactment of the national Intercultural Understanding capability in Australia and has been instrumental in informing my study. The *Doing Diversity* study took a longitudinal (two-year) innovative approach that set out to (1) understand the experiences of educators in enacting Intercultural Understanding; and (2) build the capacity of educators to develop intercultural capabilities across nine public and three independent primary and secondary schools. The study iteratively generated data to understand the different schools' experiences through staff survey, observation and interviews, while building capacity through professional development, feedback and whole-school coordination of programs. The report indicated that while "the curriculum was important in building students' knowledge, particularly in relation to the principles of multiculturalism…experiences outside of the classroom were decisive in forming the attitudes and behaviours necessary for respectful intercultural relations" (Halse et al, 2015, p. 22). That is, the reach of the curriculum was limited. The everyday spaces of young people (and teachers) and their experiences beyond school 'decisively' contribute to the ongoing development of young people's intercultural capabilities. The authors of the study argue "the relationship between students' intercultural capabilities, where they live (geographic location) and other areas of academic and social life has rarely been examined" (Halse et al, 2015, p. 19). In an attempt to address this gap, the authors examined Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011 census data on parental background, home location, socio-economic-status and advantage with young people's intercultural capability. Halse et al's analysis drew some tentative conclusions about the connection between geography, class, background, academic achievement and intercultural capability. However, the analysis does not examine or account for the way relations with cultural diversity in and across local spaces constitute local intercultural practices. Gruenewald (2003) proposes "as occupants of particular places with particular attributes, our identity and our possibilities are shaped" (p. 621). Taking this as a departure point from the *Doing Diversity* report, my study examines the ways relations in and across space shape the enactment of the Intercultural Capability curriculum in one school and the ways the relational spaces beyond school contribute to the form intercultural work takes.

In order to support a spatial approach to this study it is useful to map the broad context of multiculturalism and relations with diverse cultural groups in Australia. This context composes the horizons (Lefebvre, 2004) within which relations with cultural diversity are taken up and/or challenged in local spaces as well as the conditions under which public schools operate.

1.4 Constructs of whiteness, multiculturalism and the Australian imaginary

The Cronulla riots and the schoolyard incident with Kyle and Nasiba—one a watershed moment, the other, localised and almost banal in its everydayness—share an ease with which non-white others are produced racially and disparagingly. Of particular interest for this study is the way culturally diverse people and groups are constructed in opposition to an ambiguously constructed homogenous white national imaginary. That is, constructions of Australian identity and belonging are hinged on notions of whiteness despite modern Australia being an immigration nation with a rich and diverse cultural heritage. The construction of Australian identity in this way hails back to colonisation and, once federated, the legislation of the 'white Australia' policy. Despite much progress, echoes of denying Indigenous sovereignty and productions of 'white Australia' continue to haunt modern Australia (Hage, 1998; Moreton-Robinson, 2015; Nicolacopoulos and Vassilacopoulos, 2004, Pascoe, 2014; Tavan, 2005). I am not going to provide a detailed historical overview of race relations in Australia however, it is relevant that the Australian imaginary continues to be constructed through a lens of 'whiteness' in opposition to Indigenous and diverse non-white groups.

In the 1970's Australia progressively rescinded the *Immigration Restriction Act 1901*—which had previously restricted the intake of immigrants to those from white backgrounds (commonly called the 'white Australia' policy), to adopt a fairly aggressive immigration program. As part of this political move, diversity and multicultural discourses in Australia emerged as a tool to reimagine national identity (Castles et al 1988; Stratton and Ang, 1994; Walton et al 2018). In differentiating the image of modern Australia from a 'white Australia' of the past, reorienting Australian national identity towards an image of liberal pluralism couched in notions of opportunity and a 'fair go' became a cornerstone of the multicultural Australia narrative (Gunew, 2004). Multicultural discourses are commonly taken up to promote the ideal of an inclusive and equitable society within the "individualist ethos of nationalist liberal-democracies" (Hesse, 2000, p. 1). In Australia, these discourses tend to celebrate the cultural embellishments diverse cultural groups bring to Australia's social fabric, rather than embodying the diverse origins and entanglements of who Australians are as a nation of diverse peoples (Gunew, 2004; Moreton-Robinson, 2015; Nicolacopoulos and Vassilacopoulos, 2004). However, as a result of increased diversity, a shared sense of identity has become unstable and the perceived threat of culturally diverse others has become an anchor for fear.

While narratives of fear about non-white others dominate discourses related to immigration and national security (Devetak, 2007), national policy documents such as Australia's multicultural statement, *Multicultural Australia: United, strong, successful* (Australian Government, 2017), tell a different story. *Multicultural Australia* declares that "we are defined not by race, religion or culture, but by shared values of freedom, democracy, the rule of law and equality of opportunity" (p. 3). These shared values are hinged on the individualist logic of liberal pluralism and are reflected in the nation's educational goals for young Australians (Council of Australian Governments Education Council, (Education Council), 2019). Yet, as Moreton-Robinson (2015) argues:

> All citizens have equal rights, but not all citizens have the resources, capacities, and opportunities to exercise them equally. Race, class, gender, sexuality, and ableness are all markers that circumscribe the privileges conferred by patriarchal white sovereignty within Australian society (p. 139).

The notion of shared values through which Australians are rhetorically defined obscures the positioning of whiteness in the moral sensibilities of these values. On this point Nicolacopoulos and Vassilacopoulos (2004) argue "whiteness functions as the unacknowledged socially and institutionally embedded norm that defines the human condition" (p. 34). These values are difficult to argue against, appearing as universal and neutral. To this end, even though Australia promotes itself as the "most successful multicultural nation" (Australian Government, 2017) who is "united in difference" (Victorian Government, 2017), the production of so-called 'shared' values is a manifestation of the 'mainstream' 'white nation space' within which non-white others can be positioned at will (Elder et al, 2004). As such, culturally diverse individuals and groups continue to be tenuously positioned as external to Australia's body politic and national imaginary, enabling notions of cultural diversity in education to be hinged off the idea that culturally diverse others synonymously stand for non-white others. Walton et al (2018) argue that "the shift from a white Australia to a multicultural Australia has not coincided with shedding a dominant cultural imaginary of Australia's so-called 'core' foundation as white and Anglo" (p. 133). In an examination of the multicultural discourses championed by former Prime Minister John Howard, Moreton-Robinson (2015) argues:

> The tolerance extended to migrants is tied to their commitment to the economic and social values of the nation, not their cultural differences. And it is only the "good bits" from the tributaries that he [John Howard] wishes to retain (p. 147).

Gunew (2004) poses "the 'migrant or minority as problem' is a prevailing trope and emphasis is consistently placed on compatible differences and the need to obey the laws and conform to the mores of the new country" (p. 17). As such, culturally diverse others are positioned as 'perpetual foreigners' and as 'tributaries' (Moreton-Robinson, 2015;

Nicolacopoulos and Vassilacopoulos, 2004) whose cultural contributions to Australia are often tolerated and celebrated, but never fully enmeshed into the discourses of national identity (Gunew, 2004; Moreton-Robinson, 2015; Walton et al, 2018). Hage (1993) argues the tropes of Australia's multicultural imaginary belong "to a long Western colonialist tradition of exhibiting the national self through the exhibiting of otherness" (p. 123). These discourses are produced by and reify the normativity of white privilege to further engrain 'us' and 'them' dichotomies (Hage, 1998; Kostogriz and Tsolidis, 2008; Moreton-Robinson, 2015; Walton et al, 2018). This not only has implications for social cohesion in times of social disruption, but raises serious questions about the capacity of public institutions—such as schools—to further intercultural understanding in Australia.

1.5 Intercultural education and the nation-building project of schools

Dervin and Gross (2016) argue that:

> In times like ours where the 'other' tends to be stereotyped, rejected, detested and sometimes abused, it is urgent to find new ways of dealing with the issue of interculturality from a renewed perspective. Education has a central role to play here (p. 2).

Much intercultural literature agrees that interculturality broadly refers to the set of relations between diverse cultural groups (Dietz, 2018). As the opening examples demonstrate, relations between diverse cultural groups are situated in space and time, and nested within networks of power and discourses of identity and belonging. The dynamic nature of relations between cultural groups and the ways cultural others are 'stereotyped, rejected, detested and abused'—at times by those in power—makes for a challenging environment for educators to foster positive inter-group relations. One key tension for educators is the contradictions in constructions of culturally diverse groups in public debate and the unifying 'happy point' (Ahmed, 2012) of intercultural education as produced in formal curriculum and policy documents (see 2.5). These tensions intersect with local productions of cultural diversity in ways that cannot be accounted for through the Intercultural Capability curriculum, but rather play out in informal and incidental ways in schoolyard and teacher talk. Playing into this tension is the competing role of schooling and the ways schools are understood to contribute to the construction of a coherent national identity and a commitment to national values.

Schools are understood to play a role in the cultivation of cultural knowledge, identity and belonging (Bernstein, 1996; Biesta, 2011). Part of this includes the way ‘others’ are defined and produced through curriculum and the social practices of school spaces. There is sufficient research to suggest government provided schooling promotes nation-building and singular national-identities (Osler, 2015; Reid et al, 2009) through school subjects, texts, curriculum and systems of organisation and administration. Apple (1982) and others have written extensively about cultural reproduction in educational institutions, with particular focus on the complexity of the “actual processes” (p. 3) at specific educational sites. For Apple (1982; cf Bernstein, 1977), the role of education in legitimising knowledge and the relationship this has with power outside of education is one that must be closely examined. Along these lines, Steinberg and Kincheloe (2009) strongly advocate for a critical multicultural education focused on social justice. The authors argue for the importance of addressing issues of power, with particular focus on the way whiteness has the “ability to camouflage itself to the point of denying its own existence” (Steinberg and Kincheloe, 2009, p. 5). What Steinberg and Kincheloe (and other critical multiculturalists, cf Frankenberg, 1993) unmask is the way productions of whiteness imply cultural neutrality and the ways, in Steinberg and Kincheloe’s (2009) words, “references to people of colour, but not to white people, as “ethnics” tacitly imply that ethnicity does not influence the identities and lifestyles of whites” (p. 5). This is important because if the position of ‘whiteness’ in intercultural relations remains invisible and unexamined, the trope of ‘minority as problem’ (Gunew, 2004) can be sustained and the power dynamics that constitute intercultural relations are not considered as potentially problematic or harmful (Boler and Zembylas, 2003).

This is of concern for intercultural education in Australia because of the ways the Australian imaginary is constructed around a white patriarchal core and non-white culturally diverse others are racialised and produced as external to this reference point. While this dominant image may be contested in local spaces, the ways the symbols that reinforce an image of white Australia are maintained and produced in local school settings creates a point of tension for intercultural education. As discourses surrounding cultural difference in Australia become increasingly complex and divisive, the relationship between competing ideas of what it means to be ‘Australian’ and the proclivity of dominant cultural (re)production through school curricula are issues worth examining. As such, understanding the ways cultural diversity is produced in local spaces, the ways local productions of difference interact with broader socio-cultural and political horizons, and the ways teachers are positioned to navigate these intersections is important for better understanding how intercultural education might be approached from a ‘renewed perspective’.

1.6 Conclusion

Ten years on from that schoolyard incident with Kyle and Nasiba I’m still left wondering how it might be possible to deconstruct and reconstruct that ‘event of space’ (Massey, 2005) without falling into the trap of positioning Nasiba, Kyle and myself in opposition. Despite being conflicted, my first reaction was to assign Kyle to racist motives, framing him as a perpetrator, and Nasiba and myself as victims. At the time I recognised that this would not be productive, yet I felt completely unprepared to make sense of the moment in other ways, and ill-equipped to address the matter differently. This was partly due to my own lack of confidence—I was still a relatively new teacher, and the school leadership team, while sympathetic, was ultimately dismissive of this kind of casual behaviour. I wanted to be able to ‘go there’, to engage with these kinds of moments in a critical way—but I didn’t know how. This study is as much about me coming to terms with what happened then, as it is about understanding the mobile boundaries of intercultural understanding: the places that shape and frame intercultural encounters and the ways young people might learn to relate across cultural difference. This study not only seeks to traverse the points of tension between these spaces, but considers how an intercultural education serious about cultivating an equitable and socially cohesive future might be achieved.

In seeking to better understand how local spaces contribute to the complexities and/or create opportunities for intercultural work, this study takes an in-depth ethnographic approach to develop a case of one Victorian government secondary school. In order to think through these issues, I bring theories from critical cultural studies (chapter two) together with the sociology of space (chapter three), in an attempt to produce an account of the intercultural that is situated within Australian discourses of multiculturalism and national identity, and local nuances of one school setting. I spent six months at Hillside High School (pseudonym), emersed in the daily goings-on of classes and the spaces in-between (see chapter four). I interviewed and conducted focus groups with six teachers and compile and construct texts from their experiences of productions of cultural difference and intercultural education around three core axes: productions of space; positionality and practice; and curriculum (see chapters five, six and seven). I use Lefebvre's (2004) methodology of rhythmanalysis to interpret and discuss the data with sensitivity to positionality and hierarchies of value. Finally, I advocate for approaches to intercultural education that conceptually places difference at the heart of developing self-other relations that are sensitive to and supportive of cultural differences (see chapter eight).

Chapter 2

Conceptualising the intercultural in education: Identity, culture and difference

> *Hillside High School looks like many other public schools in suburban Melbourne. Its ad hoc arrangement of original school buildings built in the 1930s lays bare the fiscal constraints challenging many public schools—demountables and tacked on building upgrades, tired classrooms and furniture marked by years of service. Yet, when buzzing with activity, this school, as with all schools, has its own unique rhythm and ecosystem. During my time at the school, I was reminded of my own experiences in schools through the everyday references to race and culture. Fen, one of the school's Art teachers and a participant in the study, told me about an incident when another boy called his friend, an Australian Malay, a 'dirty Abo'. In Japanese class I observed white students adopting generic Asian accents to mockingly respond to listening exercises. In an international food studies class, students ridiculed Indians as 'curry munchers'. Over the months I spent at Hillside I observed many such incidents. Fen expressed the dilemma: "what I find interesting is how entitled some kids feel about expressing their opinion, or the (lack of) etiquette around expressing a point of view… but you know, like, where would you rather kids have these conversations?" At this school, the teachers who participated in the study told me that engaging with racist behaviours such as these is a necessary part of their everyday work, and they recognise that this behaviour makes intercultural work in schools difficult. It quickly became clear to me, however, that this view was not shared across the teaching staff and that some teachers had very different views. One expressed their view of the curriculum requirement to teach intercultural understanding as "this is not my job!" These strong differences in view make me wonder how teachers come to understand their role as curriculum workers—where the development of attributes of respectful citizens via intercultural understanding are a core aim of the current Australian and Victorian curriculums. What might drive teachers to do this work? And how can teachers and young people engage with these issues safely?*

2.1 Introduction

The opening vignette, adapted from my fieldnotes, captures a sense of teachers' views about their responsibilities towards the intercultural education requirement in the current Australian and Victorian curriculums. It also says something about how teachers' work at this school regularly requires them to mediate everyday racism and how common such behaviour can be in schools. There are both those who insist it is their job to address culturally inappropriate and racist behaviour and believe that the Intercultural Capability is important, and those who argue that teaching the Intercultural Capability in the curriculum is not their job. In describing just a few of these moments in one school, the vignette suggests the ways cultural identity, race and difference are valued and represented differently. It also points towards the tension between intercultural work as a formal curriculum directive understood through the Intercultural Capability, and the more ambiguous intercultural work of the hidden curriculum. In addition, the opening vignette alludes to how these tensions might shape the way intercultural work—as a curriculum imperative—is valued or taken up. Understanding how cultural diversity is produced, signified and valued in particular school spaces, and understanding the mediating work of teachers across these spaces to develop intercultural understanding is a central purpose of this study.

This chapter develops an account of the intercultural in education within current Australian education policy and curriculum. I examine key literature in the field of critical intercultural education to problematise universal notions of the intercultural that position intercultural dispositions and the formal Intercultural Capability requirement unreflexively in relation to notions of shared democratic values and the pursuit of social cohesion. While advocating the development of intercultural dispositions as tools to realise democratic aims and social cohesion are worthwhile educational goals, I argue that intercultural understanding requires an examination of positioning within social structures to understand the nature of intercultural relations. Such reflexivity is not explicitly engendered in the positioning of intercultural education requirements and while providing scope and vision for intercultural education, allow for narrow representations of culture and difference. Such representations gloss over historical conditions and existing inequalities that produce particular relations across cultural differences. I argue that in failing to account for the way local productions of cultural difference inform intercultural education, token celebrations of ambiguously identified culturally diverse others are likely to be relied upon in the name of intercultural education. I argue that this approach to intercultural education ultimately undermines the democratic aims the development of intercultural understanding is proffered to achieve.

2.2 Local-global tensions in the production of the intercultural

Before examining the literature, it is prudent to provide some initial clarification of terms. Throughout the thesis I use the term intercultural education to refer generally to the various policy imperatives, curriculum directives and diverse programs and activities that may be understood as intercultural and that occur in schools. The Intercultural Capability refers to the formal curriculum directive of the Victorian curriculum (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA), 2017) – this is my main reference point for formal curriculum requirements in this study, however it must be noted that the Victorian Intercultural Capability is derived from the Intercultural Understanding general capability in the Australian curriculum (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), 2016). I use the terms intercultural understanding, intercultural capabilities and intercultural dispositions to refer to the particular skills and competencies expected to be achieved through intercultural education. And I use the term intercultural work to refer to the complex practices and relations of teachers enacting intercultural education. In ways similar to the concept of curriculum work (see 3.4), the notion of intercultural work attempts to capture the complex layers of labour, including emotional labour, that are embedded in the doing of intercultural education.

In current policy and curriculum documents intercultural education is positioned as a mechanism to cultivate positive relations between diverse cultural groups (ACARA, 2016; Deardorff, 2006; Dervin and Gross, 2016; Dietz, 2018; UNESCO, 2006; VCAA, 2017). In this sense, intercultural education is posed to initiate a kind of transformation in the understanding and relationship between different cultural groups (Marginson and Sawir, 2011). As such, the literature suggests intercultural education is about examining and understanding the ways we—individuals, teachers, young people-—relate across and cultivate positive attitudinal and relational shifts towards cultural difference. In a general sense, this is a productive baseline for thinking about what intercultural education should aim to do. Yet, it’s not that simple in practice. Schools are complex social ecosystems where intercultural understanding is built in relation to national and local representations of cultural difference through relations and practices that have been developed over time. In drawing on the work of Bhabha (1994), intercultural education might usefully be understood as an exercise in exploring the spaces between locations of culture. Hall (1993a; 1993b) argues it is in the in-between spaces of culture where meaning is constructed. It is clear from the literature that intercultural education is not positioned as a study of the objects or practices of diverse cultures—'exotic' food or 'strange' cultural activities—although multicultural 'food' days in schools often pass for a kind of intercultural education program (Gunew, 2004; Gorski, 2008). Marginson and Sawir (2011) suggests that education that seeks to increase awareness of diverse cultures rather than positively influence the relationship between cultural groups can helpfully be differentiated as cross-cultural, rather than *inter*cultural. Therefore, intercultural education aims to emphasise how culture informs the ways people understand the world, and of finding ways to positively relate to others who are positioned differently in the world (Guilherme and Dietz, 2015).

There has been much debate about the ways in which intercultural understanding may be cultivated (and assessed), including through cross-cultural communication (Deardorff, 2006), intercultural competence (Dervin and Gross, 2016) and global competence (OECD, 2018). Aman (2018) argues the intercultural is founded on the assumption that "we have obligations to others" (p. 2). Some scholars go as far as to suggest "interculturality can provide the basis for new democratic projects working for the mutual thriving of all humanity" (Aman, 2018, p. 2; cf Meer and Moodood, 2012). Interculturality here is taken as the ways intercultural understanding is embodied and acted upon in everyday social acts. The reality of cultivating intercultural understanding, however, is far more complex. As Aman goes on to argue, the concept of the intercultural is "epistemologically loaded" (p. 3), and in particular what and who is constituted as other within the idea of the intercultural is a major problem as 'the other' is constructed and positioned within 'mainstream' imaginaries (Aman, 2018; Dreamson, 2017; Elder et al, 2004; see 1.4). The notion of the intercultural tends to be deployed universally and without concrete context. This is very often the case when it's being used to promote a path to social cohesion (Aman, 2018; Gorski, 2008; Guilherme and Dietz, 2015). Yet, as with Dervin (2016), my study acknowledges that there is no such thing as a neutral notion of the intercultural, and that "interculturality is a point of view, not a given" (p. 2). It is in this way that the way the intercultural is taken up is necessarily shaped by local contexts and the ways universal conceptualisations of the intercultural interact with local histories, practices and traditions (Bhabha, 1996; Gunew, 2004; Hall, 1993b, 1996). This includes the ways diverse cultural groups are represented in local contexts, as well as the interaction between local and global discourses of difference that are both mobile and unstable.

In Australia, the intercultural is taken up within the conflicting discourses that both celebrate and criticise multiculturalism amidst the silenced and unreconciled acknowledgement of a violent colonial history. As discussed in chapter one, discourses of nation, national identity and cultural diversity in Australia continue to privilege whiteness, despite whiteness itself being heterogenous and contested. These broader conditions enable and encourage a surface understanding of cultural differences which are then “paraded as apolitical ethnic accessories celebrated in multicultural festivals of costumes, cooking and concerts” (Gunew, 2004, p. 17). Simultaneously, discourses that celebrate the contributions of tributary migrant communities to the economy are elevated, rather than the many ways Australia’s diverse communities enrich Australian culture (Moreton-Robinson, 2015). Castles et al (1988) suggest “our image of multicultural Australia is meant to be at the level of Trivial Pursuit: song and dance, food and folklore” (p. 55). The construction of cultural difference in these ways largely constitutes the dominant reference point for the intercultural in schools and school curriculums as it has become deeply embedded in the ways cultural difference is nominally produced and positioned in this country.

Understanding how ideas related to cultural diversity are positioned politically, socially and educationally are important because the intercultural hinges on particular productions of cultural diversity which are made meaningful within the nation and also in local settings (Anderson, 1983). Discourses of race and culture position cultural diversity in relation to the ‘mainstream’ image of Australian identity (Elder et al, 2004). In Australia, the term ‘cultural diversity’ has become synonymous with non-white others and as such a brief engagement with the concept of ‘whiteness’, and in particular, the situated ‘social geography’ of whiteness is useful (Frankenberg, 1993). The trouble with a term like whiteness is the risk of unproblematically homogenising the notion of being white. I concur with Frankenberg’s (1997) analysis that takes whiteness to be locally constructed under particular circumstances, as an “ensemble of local phenomena complexly embedded in socioeconomic, sociocultural, and psychic interrelations” (p. 1).

In Australia, the primary reference point for whiteness is that of Briton-Australians and, as Nicolacopoulos and Vassilacopoulos (2004) argue, dominant productions of 'white Australia' "ambiguously locate certain migrant groups as white-non-white and white-but-not-white-enough" (p. 34). These formations tend to position First Australians and non-white peoples on the periphery—as external others—and produces the nominal reference point from which diverse cultural groups are represented and positioned. These ambiguous locations of (white) self and (non-white) other are produced through situated social relations of space and create the cornerstone for identity production.

In terms relevant to my study, Frankenberg (1993) argues that "*social* geography suggests that the physical landscape is peopled and that it is constituted and perceived by means of social rather than natural processes" (p. 43). That is, physical spaces such as communities and schools are produced socially through local relations and sites of social action. These relations operate within broader socio-cultural horizons (Lefebvre, 2004) of the nation-space and shape the way constructs such as whiteness come to be understood and normalised. Schools, as spaces deeply embedded in the communities they serve, are shaped by social relations within and beyond the community—the here and the elsewhere. It is therefore important to examine how notions of race—including whiteness—contribute to the ways the intercultural is constructed in local sites. Engaging with these issues offers a way to better understand the local and more distant forces that shape the enactment of intercultural policy and curriculum in particular school settings.

Discourses of race, culture and difference play out in schools through complex mixes of policy, curriculum and human relations (school texts and systems, talk, and relational practices). In their study of how primary school aged children learn to talk about cultural diversity in classroom settings, Walton et al (2018) found that teachers relied on constructs of white Australian identity to signify and discuss cultural difference. This is important for my study because it demonstrates the ways dominant values and assumptions are embodied through everyday social practices, including the "invisible ways in which one complies with dominant ideology" (Boler and Zembylas, 2003, p. 75). While non-dominant teachers and students likely resist dominant productions of cultural difference, the naturalising forces of liberal individualism "will encourage people not to recognize how institutionalised sexism, racism, homophobia and the like has affected oneself and others" (Boler and Zembylas, 2003). For migrant groups, this is in part a product of the expectation to conform to the ‘laws and mores’ of a new country (Gunew, 2004), but also demonstrates how dominant values become internalised and common place (Boler and Zembylas, 2003; McLaren, 1998).

The ways dominant values become internalised is in part related to the discourses and histories that individuals inherit, as well as the community and institutional practices people are inculcated into, often through schooling. The Walton et al (2018) study cited above encompassed four primary schools in metropolitan Melbourne (Australia) with different racial, ethnic, cultural and linguistic profiles. All teachers were from white Australian backgrounds. The study found that conversations about cultural diversity also raised questions of racism and national identity, in which whiteness as a referent was normalised (Walton et al, 2018). Walton et al suggest that in their study “unexamined issues of whiteness served to reinforce dominant conceptualisations of Australian national identity as white and Anglo” (p. 136). Based on these findings, the authors advocate for a reflexive approach to discussing cultural diversity and national identity “whereby teachers reflect on their own positionality in racialised social systems” (Walton et al, 2018, p. 144). Of particular interest for my study is the importance of teachers’ sensitivity to the particularities of their school communities, suggesting that “students in a majority white school may need more support to understand white privilege and issues of racism” (p. 144). This insight points towards the ways cultural reproduction can occur without critical reflection when dominant cultural assumptions and values are not held up for interrogation alongside those that are different. This also points to how experiences with cultural diversity shape the ways individuals embody or challenge dominant discourses through dialogic interactions between self and others, in this case students and teachers (eg. Hall, 1996). These findings are important for my study as it demonstrates how dominant constructs of the national self and other can be reproduced in schools to sustain rather than challenge existing relations with culturally diverse groups.

In the sections that follow, I examine how the intercultural is produced and understood in current supranational education agendas and within Australian education policy and curriculum.

2.3 The intercultural in education policy: International, national and local

Supranational intercultural education policy

The shape of the intercultural education agenda, and Australian education policy more broadly, is influenced by supranational agendas. Before examining Australian education policy and curriculum, I provide an overview of supranational organisations and frameworks that carry influence in Australia. Supranational organisational frameworks shape both globally minded policy and formal curriculums that are produced and enacted locally. These include:

- United Nations (UN) Charter of Human Rights (1947)
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990)
- UN Sustainable Development Goals (2020)
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) guidelines on Intercultural Education (2006)
- Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) testing regime (that now includes a 'global competence' strand).

These supranational charters, conventions, guidelines and regimes contribute to the construction and shape of a globally-minded outward-looking education in Australia. That is, because Australia participates in the international education market—both through the exporting of educational services and participating in international regimes for ranking educational performance—supranational agendas materialise in local settings through policy settings and curriculum priorities that position Australian education within broader discourses of the democratising force of education. The Intercultural Understanding general capability in the Australian curriculum is one example of this influence, as are international league tables that rank Australia's educational performance against international benchmarks and standards (Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE), 2020). While it is not within the scope of this study to engage in a detailed discussion of the international policy networks (Ball, 2016) that contribute to the way interculturality is incorporated in education, these policy networks do play a role in producing the universal language and structures that construct the imperative of intercultural education in Australia.

For example, UNESCO frames intercultural education around the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the provision of quality education for all. The guidelines for developing intercultural education programs (UNESCO, 2006) position human rights and equity as foundations for an intercultural education that promotes social justice. Aman (2018) suggests that intercultural ideals are justified as an education priority by supranational bodies “as a revolutionary new way of facing the challenges created by the increasing heterogeneity of pupils in various member states” (p. 2). The framing of the intercultural in this way resonates with the promotion of intercultural understanding in Australian education as an instrument of democracy and social cohesion. Yet, questions about what constitutes being intercultural and how education can reconcile past injustices to cultivate a shared value for humanity remain absent from such documents and remain highly contested.

The opt-in ‘global competence’ strand in the PISA testing regime offers one mechanism to promote the cultivation of and reflection on desirable intercultural dispositions in young people (OECD, 2017). The inclusion of ‘global competence’ in PISA adds a new level of imperative for governments—and for schools, teachers and students—competing on the world education stage in developing the capacity for students to build positive intercultural relations “on the basis of a shared respect for human dignity” (OECD, 2017, p. 4). However, while the definition of ‘global competence’ has been carefully constructed to invoke a sense of a shared humanity, some scholarship suggests the very development of the ‘global competence’ learning goal and assessment tool in the PISA tests signals a continued ideological tension between ‘the West’ and ‘the rest’. In particular, by way of ‘others’ seen not to fit—in broad terms—within the aspirations of Western economical, technological and social global advancement (Aman, 2018; Priestly and Philippou, 2018).

Intercultural education as promoted by supranational bodies such as the UN is viewed as a mechanism for democracy and social justice. However, it is important to recognise the position from which this is being promoted as, for example, in colonized nations such as Bolivia intercultural education is seen as a tool for decolonization, which aspires towards a different kind of democratic aim than that posed by Eurocentric authorities (Aman, 2018). An intercultural education towards decolonization would make for an interesting future examination in the Australian context, but lies beyond what is possible within this study. What the idea of intercultural education for decolonization brings into sharp focus, however, is that in the promotion of the intercultural "a critical gaze must be turned on the geopolitics of knowledge" (Aman, 2018, p. 4) in order to ask *what* does intercultural education set out to achieve and *for whom*? Coming back to education in Australia, the language of democracy, social justice and equity, alongside notions of social cohesion are adopted in local policy and curriculum documents to construct an optimistic vision of harmony and inclusion.

Australian intercultural education policy

In Australia there is a tension between the way the intercultural in education is positioned as a tool of democracy and social cohesion, while discourses of cultural diversity propagate ideals of "united in difference" (Australian Government, 2017) and simultaneously signify non-white others as external to the national imaginary. In attempting to understand what this tension means for teachers' intercultural work, an appreciation of ideals related to intercultural understanding in the national Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (Education Council, 2019) is useful. This document aims to set out the priorities for Australian education over a ten-year period and an understanding of its focus and role is central to appreciating the way the intercultural is prioritised in national and state curriculums.

The 2008 Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (MCEETYA, 2008) (herein, the Melbourne Declaration) set an aspirational national vision and focus for education in Australia and has become a cornerstone of curriculum development in Australia. The Melbourne Declaration was preceded by numerous iterations that have been reviewed and updated every ten years, and the newly revised Declaration has recently been ratified. The new Declaration, the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration (Education Council, 2019), as with past iterations, sets up a broad aspirational agenda for policy makers, curriculum authorities, schools and teachers in Australia. Both the Melbourne and Alice Springs Declarations (2008; 2019) have outlined the commitment of Australia's federal and state education ministers towards two main goals aimed at "improving educational outcomes for all young Australians" (Education Council, 2019, p. 2). While both iterations of The Declaration do not translate directly into departmental or school level policy, each Declaration has been intended to inform and shape the priorities of education policy, curriculum and practice across Australia. The Melbourne Declaration's goals to (1) promote excellence and equity in education and (2) to enable creative and confident learners, have been carried forward largely un-amended in the Alice Springs Declaration. My interest here is on the second goal, the commitment to its achievement and the descriptors that signify success.

The second goal in the Alice Springs Declaration is made up of three parts; all young Australians are to become:

- Successful learners
- Confident and creative individuals
- Active and informed members of the community (p. 8).

Each of these parts is outlined with a series of descriptors that detail what achievement of the particular goal looks like. In describing "active and informed community members" (Education Council, 2019, p.8) the Declaration describes the dispositions that young people are expected to develop through their formal schooling. These attributes include "moral and ethical integrity" and "empathy", suggesting young people "work for the common good" and "improve natural and social environments". Related specifically to cultural diversity, the Declaration encourages young Australians to "appreciate and respect" and "value and celebrate" cultural diversity and "understand, acknowledge and celebrate the value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures". These dispositions are framed by a "commitment to national values of democracy, equity and justice". It is intended that these characteristics are to be supported by the development of personal qualities including "a sense of self-worth", "a sense of self-awareness," "personal values and attributes such as honesty, resilience, empathy and respect for others," the ability to "relate well to others" as well as a "sense of belonging, purpose and meaning that enable them [young people] to thrive in their learning environment" (Education Council, 2019, p. 6). When packaged with the descriptors for developing 'active and informed community members' these characteristics evoke an aspirational and positive sense of participatory citizenship and democratic values, while affirming the role of school education in the development of these values in young people.

It is difficult to argue against the general intent of these dispositions. However, they are opaque in terms of the assumed normativity of notions such as empathy and the common good. They also do not articulate the diverse ways teachers and young people as situated social actors are positioned to engage with them. That is, an explication of what empathy or the common good looks like in relation to the concept of cultural diversity from a range of perspectives in Australia is not offered. In addition, the role of assumed or normative constructs of cultural difference in the way intercultural relations are valued relative to a 'common good' are not explained. In glossing over (Hemmings, 2011) terms such as cultural diversity and common good, questions that ask, 'common good for who?' are deflected and interrogating one's own positionality within the power arrangements that position diverse others in relation to local imaginaries can be avoided. The opacity of these terms allows the normative position of the white Australian self and the non-white other to be taken for granted or taken to imply that non-white others require inculcating into 'white' common sensibilities (cf Carr and Lund, 2009). In addition, the ways different communities are positioned to value, acknowledge, appreciate, respect and finally celebrate cultural diversity will necessarily differ. It seems clear that The Declaration presents active and informed community members through a lens of 'harmonious pluralism' (Mohanty, 2003), whereby if young Australians could attain sufficient dispositions of respect, empathy and appreciation for difference, social cohesion will naturally and inevitably follow. Of course, the work of social cohesion is never that simple and it cannot be conceived as the work of schools and teachers alone. Yet, it is in local classrooms where teachers attempt to cultivate these dispositions with young people across diverse histories and mobile identities where such a harmonious pluralism becomes far more complicated.

I now turn to briefly survey relevant Victorian education policy, before looking specifically at the Intercultural Capability curriculum.

Victorian intercultural education policy

As public schools in Australia are administered by State and Territory governments, it is expected that the specific policies to which schools must adhere are produced by state and local authorities. State and local school policies should ideally reflect the priorities of the Declaration adapted for local conditions. In Victoria, this process is administered by the Department of Education and Training (DET). Departmental required school policies related to cultural, linguistic and religious diversity are bundled into the *Wellbeing and Learning* and *Education for All* (DET, 2019) policies and tend to focus on inclusive education practices. Both of these policies place cultural identity on the periphery, suggesting "all members of every school community are valued and supported to fully participate, learn, develop and succeed within an inclusive school culture" (DET, 2019). This can be traced to ideals of individualist liberal pluralism adopted in Australia, but fails to acknowledge that while all Australians are supposed to have access to equal opportunities, not all Australians have equal capacity to engage or make the most of such opportunities (Moreton-Robinson, 2015; see 1.4).

In relation to identity, the *Education for All* policy "acknowledges that some children and young people have intersecting identities or additional needs that schools may need to take into consideration" (DET, 2019). The policy goes on to focus on the provision of equitable opportunities as framed by health, wellbeing and disability. And while the DET provide information on multicultural education and suggest state "schools should make sure multicultural perspectives are incorporated into all aspects of school life" (DET, 2018) there is no requirement for schools to implement multicultural education policies or frameworks. This creates a challenge for schools. The Declaration and Victorian Department of Education position the development of positive and healthy relationships across cultural difference as an important component of education, and yet without the requirement for Victorian public schools to implement policies in this area, schools and teachers may simply deal with the intercultural as a matter of curriculum content—or knowledge—at the level of 'Trivial Pursuit' identified earlier, rather than as part of a multicultural school culture that works to build positive intercultural relations.

While policy positions, guidelines and declarations of various sorts clearly provide a range of discourses related to the intercultural, and shape a context within which there is an imperative for education systems and authorities to consider the intercultural, there is still a need to understand how these mechanisms are translated on the ground. As I've suggested at the beginning of this chapter, it is necessary to conceptualise the intercultural in relation to normative constructions of culturally diverse groups. Such an approach encourages the conditions and contradictions that constitute existing intercultural relations to be examined and sharpens the focus of the intercultural on local relational spaces, rather than on ambiguously fixed sites of difference. It is necessarily in the enactment of social and educational policy in relation to local settings that the democratising intent of the intercultural can be realised and normative productions of cultural diversity can be explored. Examination of the research literature in the field of intercultural education provides a range of critical insights into the ways the intercultural has been taken up and understood in diverse school settings. Before a critical engagement with this literature, I provide a critical reading of the Victorian Intercultural Capability curriculum.

2.4 The Intercultural Capability curriculum: A critical reading

In 2009 educational stakeholders engaged to map and design Australia's first national curriculum. In 2015, the Victorian government released their state-based iteration of the national curriculum for Victorian schools, and other states have since developed their own versions of the Australian curriculum. Both the national, and state-based iterations of the formal curriculum aim to set "expectations for what all young people will be taught, regardless of where they live in Australia, or their background" (ACARA, 2016). The national curriculum lays out what it calls 'learning areas', 'cross-curriculum priorities' and 'general capabilities', encompassing knowledge and skills, with stages of development detailed in 'content descriptors' across a 'learning continuum'. The strands in the curriculum have, to some degree been developed in response to the goals of the Melbourne Declaration (2008), including the inclusion of the cross-curriculum capabilities that are focused on developing the social and emotional dispositions detailed in The Declaration (2008; 2019).

The general capabilities are expected to be incorporated across all subjects from the first to the tenth year of schooling, contributing to the development of young people's sense of self and belonging. Skills and dispositions framed in the ethical, creative and critical thinking, social and emotional, and intercultural capabilities of the Australian curriculum demonstrate ACARA's efforts at encouraging schools and teachers to balance disciplinary knowledge with the development of desirable social attributes. Within the Australian curriculum, Intercultural Understanding—and the other general capabilities—are not individually assessable, rather they are tagged to other content areas across the curriculum where the capabilities can be expected to be incorporated. This is somewhat different in Victoria where the capabilities are both embedded across subject areas and explicitly assessed as part of the VCAA's assessment and reporting requirements. While the mandate to report on the Intercultural Capability in Victoria is intended to increase the stake that teachers and young people place on the Intercultural Capability, assessing and reporting on the cross-curriculum capabilities adds a layer of administrative complexity to an already conceptually challenging task. While there are structural challenges in embedding and assessing and reporting on the Intercultural Capability across the curriculum, it is clear that ACARA and the VCAA see intercultural understanding as an important part of the education of young Australians.

ACARA (2016) justifies the Intercultural Understanding capability in the current national curriculum as:

> an essential part of living with others in the diverse world of the twenty-first century. It assists young people to become responsible local and global citizens, equipped through their education for living and working together in an interconnected world.

ACARA (2015) suggest intercultural understanding "cultivates values and dispositions such as curiosity, care, empathy, reciprocity, respect and responsibility, open-mindedness and critical awareness, [to] support new and positive intercultural behaviours". Similarly, the rationale for the Intercultural Capability in the current Victorian curriculum (VCAA, 2017) outlines three aims for students in line with the national rationale:

- demonstrate an awareness of and respect for cultural diversity within the community
- reflect on how intercultural experiences influence attitudes, values and beliefs
- recognise the importance of acceptance and appreciation of cultural diversity for a cohesive community.

The Victorian curriculum framework goes on to articulate how these goals are to be achieved and assessed across a 'learning continuum'.

The learning continuum is divided into five bands covering: Foundation to Level two, Levels three and four, five and six, seven and eight, and Levels nine and ten. These five bands correspond to Australian year levels of schooling from ‘Prep’ (first year of school) through to Year 10 (age 15-16) in secondary school. The curriculum describes what students are expected to achieve at each band and defines the achievement standard related to each band. The expected outcomes at each band describe the relational processes of developing intercultural capabilities in young people. For example, ‘describe and distinguish’ what is familiar and different; ‘compare and explain’ the influence of cultural practices on relationships; explain how cultural practices may change over time; and ‘critically analyse the complex and dynamic interrelationships between and within cultures’ (VCAA, 2017). These descriptors are indicative of the reflexive nature of understanding the spaces between cultures—as described in the Victorian curriculum—where people connect and diverge and make meaning. The curriculum objectives are clearly tailored towards understanding the functions of culture in daily lives and how to relate across a culturally complex and interconnected world. Yet, enacting the curriculum in order to achieve the described outcomes is complex.

In a report on a field trial of the curriculum in 2012 the then Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD, 2012) foreground the complexity of understanding intercultural relations as follows:

> The development of ICU is a process that is ongoing through childhood, adolescence and adulthood. It involves having cognitive and emotional capabilities and is measured by the extent to which someone has acquired certain levels of critical cultural awareness, culturally respectful attitudes and developed positive skills for interacting across cultural groups (p. 9).

The field trial report acknowledges that acquiring the critical cultural awareness deemed necessary for intercultural understanding is developed over time in order to navigate the complexity of living in a culturally diverse and interconnected world. The report recognises that to develop intercultural understanding, young people must also develop other desirable capabilities, such as critical and creative thinking, social and emotional and ethical capabilities. However, these capabilities are often tagged to core curriculum areas in isolation, rather than thought of together—as necessarily informing each other.

While ACARA and the VCAA expect that a whole-school, cross-disciplinary approach to the capabilities that explicitly embeds intercultural skills and knowledge into teaching and learning programs—alongside the other capabilities—across school subjects and across year levels, this is not the case. As Gilbert (2019) argues, the process of embedding the capabilities into subject areas in cross-disciplinary ways complicates curriculum planning, lending the capabilities to be treated as 'add-ons' and included in an arbitrary fashion. Part of the problem is the lack of guidance on how to incorporate the capabilities across the curriculum in meaningful ways within more rigid organisational structures of school subjects (Lingard and McGregor, 2014; Sinnema and Aitken, 2013). While the Intercultural Capability curriculum is not prescriptive in its directive, and rather attempts to leave space for schools to imagine how to incorporate the capabilities in ways that are relevant to local school contexts, schools are not equally equipped or motivated to address the challenges of integrating the intercultural capability as a whole school priority. As such the Intercultural—and other—capabilities tend to be dealt with in a check-box manner in local settings.

An example is useful here. The Queensland School Reform Longitudinal Study (QSRLS) (Lingard, et al, 2001) reviewed classroom curriculum and pedagogic practice across 1000 lessons to inform school reform in Queensland prior to the Australian Curriculum coming into effect. The authors argue that a focus on content coverage constrained teachers' freedom to engage with cross-curriculum capabilities in the classroom. In addition, the ways cross-curriculum knowledge and skills are taken up is shaped by the value attached to them by social actors within the school, and within the domain of dominant knowledge (re)production. Drawing on the findings from the QSRLS report, Lingard and McGregor (2014) argue that "insufficient awareness in respect to issues of differences in the classroom, including culture-based differences around ethnicity and Indigeneity" further constrain teachers' cross-curriculum work. The authors propose pedagogies that "worked with and valued differences would make a difference to the learning of all students" (p. 93–94). The work of Lingard and his colleagues over more than a decade map an ongoing tension between an education focused on cultivating what students should learn and what they ought to become through a national curriculum that attempts to do both, in a system that values standardised rankings and high stakes test outcomes. While the challenges described tend to result in the capabilities being enacted in ad-hoc ways, pedagogies and teacher practices that embrace difference (see Trifonas, 2003) present an opportunity to imagine the Intercultural Capability—and intercultural education more broadly—anew.

It is clear there is a tension between the universalising tendencies of policy and curriculum objectives and the differences that emerge in enacting these directives in local settings. The Declaration (Education Council, 2019) and Intercultural Capability curriculum provide broad frameworks for developing the intercultural in response to local settings, however the intercultural in schools has a tendency to be approached in a check-box fashion as an issue of knowledge *about* diverse others rather than an issue of learning how to *relate to* diverse others. This tension is in part one of curriculum structure and organisation, but also a more complicated question of what constitutes curriculum work—this will be discussed in chapter three. While the formal curriculum and policy documents provide a well-intended overview of the intent of the Intercultural Capability, the conceptual detail and supporting resources on how to approach the complexities of understanding and cultivating positive intercultural relations in a cross-curriculum approach lacks coherence (Gilbert, 2019). As a result, the capabilities get tagged and tacked on to the core learning areas in extemporary ways.

Next, I examine the critical intercultural education literature. I argue that the way the intercultural is deployed through education policy and curriculum documents in universalising ways allows for narrow productions of culture and difference that do not engage with the relational focus of the intercultural. As such, I argue for an engagement with the ways the cultural difference is produced at a local level that explores ambiguity and contradiction in intercultural relations.

2.5 Making the case for a critical intercultural education that explores difficult knowledge

The literature on critical intercultural education seeks to examine how signifiers—such as diversity and the intercultural—produce the intercultural as a tool for democracy and social justice while simultaneously concealing ideological assumptions about culturally diverse others (Aman, 2018; Gorski, 2008; Walton et al, 2013). Yet, if intercultural education is taken as understanding and developing positive relations between diverse cultural groups, then the conditions that produce particular kinds of relations need to be examined. Importantly, it is worth asking: what kinds of conditions are conducive to producing positive intercultural relations? And what conditions sustain intercultural tensions? Applying these questions to the Intercultural Capability—as embedded into core subject curricular across a whole-school—it can be anticipated that teachers and young people will encounter difficult knowledge (Britzman, 1998; 2000; Zembylas, 2014; Zembylas and Bekerman, 2019). In this section I consider how institutional discourses of cultural diversity and the intercultural inhibit the ways difficult knowledge might be engaged through intercultural work in local schools.

Briefly, I engage with the concept of difficult knowledge. Britzman's (1998) concept of difficult knowledge has been taken up by many scholars as a way to theorise ambiguity in shared histories or experiences, and how these can be told from contested positionalities in ways that trigger an affectual response (see Zembylas, 2014 for a comprehensive overview). Zembylas and Bekerman (2019)—drawing on Britzman—argue "difficulty is not solely emerging from the content of the issue itself, but it is experienced in the affect, that is, the emotional response brought out by the content" (p. 157). In relation to education, the concept of difficult knowledge attempts to address traumatic representations in curriculum and engage with the ways teachers and young people navigate competing accounts of history or experience. In Australia, an example would be the way at least 50,000 years of Indigenous Australian history continues to be somewhat bypassed in curriculum enactment, or that Australian history continues to be primarily taught from the white coloniser/settler perspective. According to Zembylas (2014), the concept of difficult knowledge must push curriculum work beyond binary "either-or" representations of events/groups—such as between Indigenous vs settler/coloniser perspectives—towards a negotiation of "both-and" that engages psychic and social notions of affect. This would entail being open to diverse accounts of events being studied and navigating the emotional terrain of accounts that may cause discomfort—such as considering Australian colonial history as an invasion story. Negotiating a position of 'both-and' in intercultural education would recognise the provisionality of diverse experiences that emerge from the diverse ways individuals are situated in the world.

As discussed earlier in the chapter, intercultural education is often positioned within notions of a moral obligation to fellow humans (Aman, 2018). Yet this obligation tends to be couched in diversity discourses that position concepts such as the intercultural as the 'happy point' (Ahmed, 2012) of difference and gloss over the real difficulties of traversing difference. For Zembylas (2018), a central question for teachers working with and across difference is how might teachers engage with difficult knowledge to "negotiate competing moral truths, when this effort obviously fails to provide adequate 'answers' or 'solutions'?" (p. 157). I will return to this question when I examine curriculum work and pedagogy in chapter three. However, it is productive to consider the role an engagement with difficult knowledge might play in cultivating an intercultural education that does more than celebrate the 'happy point' of diversity or simply acknowledge cultural difference. To further this point, I now draw on a selection of critical intercultural literature to focus on the neutralising forces of the intercultural in education to place difficult knowledge at the core of a critical intercultural education.

As discussed in the previous section, intercultural education is typically supported by national and supra-national bodies as a tool to forge positive relations between culturally diverse peoples. Despite this, intercultural education has been criticised by critical intercultural scholars as part of a suite of global priorities attached to neo-liberal capitalism which comprise a "new western expansionism" (Priestley and Philipou, 2018, p. 151). Such arguments note that while well intended (Gorski, 2008), intercultural education tends to further dichotomise 'us' and 'them' relations as a result of failing to address the structures and relations that continue to produce inequality. As such, much critical intercultural scholarship argues that even though intercultural education strives to foster democratic values and dispositions that support socially cohesive futures, intercultural education is undermined by the very structures that produce the intercultural as an educational agenda.

Aman (2018) is critical of the power structures and knowledge traditions that underwrite intercultural education. Aman argues that in failing to address power imbalances, intercultural education can become a tool for acculturation, suggesting "the more *we* know about *them*, the easier it is for *us* to approach *them,* to respond to *them,* to integrate *them*" (p. 3). To this point Mohanty (2003) argues diversity policy documents are elusive in the ways they "bypass power as well as history to suggest a harmonious empty pluralism" (p. 193). And furthering this argument still, Alexander (2005) suggests diversity policies are agentic in the "manufacture of cohesion" (p. 135). That is, diversity policies create an illusion of processes towards cohesion but often gloss over the structures, histories, practices and decisions that sustain hierarchies of cultural dominance and power. Teachers work within the systems that simultaneously produce the ideal of diversity as a position of inclusion, while also positioning culturally diverse others as external to the body politic as well as to the school and classroom communities they must be included in. Given this double positioning, it is unsurprising that teachers take up varying positions of resistance or engagement with issues of cultural diversity and intercultural education in schools and the extent to which they see it as their responsibility to cultivate intercultural understanding in young people.

There are many reasons why teachers may or may not take up intercultural education through a critical lens. Zembylas (2017a) argues that teachers are embedded in structures of social and cultural power, whereby “race and racism, national identity and nationalism, are affective modes of being embedded in historically specific assemblages, which are practiced in schools and the society” (p. 500). These affective modes are constructed through “taken-for-granted beliefs and emotions” (Zembylas, 2017b, p. 660) that when unexamined, sustain dominant representations of knowledge, cultural difference and ambiguously shared histories. Gorski’s (2008) review of intercultural education discourses and practices in the US suggests intercultural education often maintains the stereotypes it sets out to challenge. Gorski argues that celebratory approaches to intercultural education demonstrate “the extent and limits of our commitments to a genuinely intercultural world” (p. 516). Gorski’s position echoes that of the UN in that intercultural education constructed without social justice and equity at its core “can be seen as a tool, however well-intentioned, of an educational colonisation in which inequity and injustice are reproduced under the guise of interculturalism” (p. 517). According to Gorski, if intercultural education is to develop a commitment to democratic values and social cohesion, teachers are required to take up a critical position in relation to the knowledge systems that maintain patterns of the dominant cultural group. For Zembylas, this would entail examining dominant productions and positionings of history, experience and knowledge and sitting with the discomfort of contested experiences of difficult knowledge—particularly for the ‘mainstream’ cultural group. How this plays out in public schools is shaped by the local conditions that produce particular relations with cultural difference and the ways education directives such as intercultural education are translated in particular schools.

In a systematic and comprehensive review of research related to in-school approaches to intercultural education, Walton, Priest and Paradies (2013) maintain that intercultural understanding:

> Is not only about acquiring objective knowledge about other cultures; rather it is located in the interactive and experiential spaces in which an understanding of self and ones' own culture is developed in relation to an understanding of people from other cultures (p. 182).

In coming to this conclusion, Walton et al (2013) found that intercultural understanding competences "were limited to an increase in cultural knowledge, general awareness of cultural diversity and short-term shifts in attitude" (p. 185). What remains unclear is the extent to which behavioural changes might persist over time. Crucially, their review indicates that "a critical approach to talking about cultural and racial diversity is needed to develop ICU [intercultural understanding] beyond awareness of diversity" (p. 185). Aman (2018) argues a critical intercultural education requires inquiry into the geopolitics of knowledge production and meaning making that legitimate the intercultural education agenda. Aman (2018) argues that "epistemological, historical and political discourses are interwoven and work together to sustain an order that allows European cultural patterns and ways of knowing to universalise themselves" (p. 4). Aman (2018) goes on to claim that the intercultural education agenda implies a "commitment to inclusiveness" (p. 4) which Dreamson (2017) argues should incorporate "the mutual interaction of different worldviews" (p.83). While this position is ideologically supported in policy and curriculum documents, the 'mutual interaction' of different worldviews in classrooms with students from diverse backgrounds is far more complex as this requires acknowledging that experiences of intercultural relations cannot be taught as 'either-or', but rather 'both-and' (Zembylas, 2014). Alongside the emotional labour (see 3.5) of navigating difficult knowledge, the way ideas like culture and the intercultural are defined in curriculum and policy documents contributes to the lack of cohesion in translating the Intercultural Capability in schools.

Definitions of key concepts is important because it shapes understanding and therefore possible action. In the current Intercultural Capability curriculum in Victoria, key concepts are not adequately defined. This is supported by Gilbert (2019) and others who argue that the capabilities in general have been conceptually underdeveloped. To better support teachers, a framework of terms that sets boundaries for guiding teachers intercultural work would be helpful. In the glossary section of the Intercultural Capability, VCAA describes the intercultural as simply "what occurs when members of two or more different cultural groups interact or influence one another in some fashion" (VCAA, 2017). Taking this definition as a reference point, it is possible to see how multicultural celebrations in schools come to pass as intercultural education. While VCAA's definition is functional, it does not offer any clues to the complexity of the concept or allude to the difficulty in cultivating positive intergroup relations. This definition is characteristic of the 'happy point' of diversity Ahmed (2012) laments. I argue it is more useful for teachers to be readily provided with a nuanced definition that helps teachers identify some provisional boundaries of intercultural work. The Intercultural Capability field trial report (DEECD, 2012) poses intercultural understanding as:

> The skills to critically reflect on one's own culture as well as positive, cooperative, and respectful interactions between people of diverse cultural backgrounds at both an institutional and interpersonal level (DEEWR, 2009). It is closely related to the acceptance of cultural diversity, critical awareness of racism and effective cross-cultural conflict resolution (p. 9).

It is this last sentence that is crucial. By explicitly linking intercultural understanding to 'acceptance of cultural diversity', 'critical awareness of racism' and 'effective cross-cultural conflict resolution' intercultural education is positioned more strongly as a mechanism to deal with difficult knowledge and promote action towards socially just and socially cohesive futures. This is important, because without adequate conceptual frameworks to support teachers intercultural work, intercultural education can be reduced to tokenistic celebrations of culture and difference that ultimately sustain existing inequities. The DEECD report also asserts that a 'clear' understanding of the concept of culture is necessary to support the kind of engagement with the intercultural described above.

What emerges from the discussion of the literature is that intercultural education requires teachers to mediate competing understandings of and positionalities in the world. This kind of work is iterative and unstable. Teachers and young people need to be able to traverse the 'both-and' to accept there are multiple truths that create the conditions for intercultural relations, and that intercultural education is a way to approach culturally contested spaces. I now move to examine theories of culture and difference and argue that conceptualising culture through self-other relations offers a symbiotic approach to developing intercultural understanding in local settings.

2.6 Understanding intercultural education through the concepts of culture, identity and difference

As argued above, how we understand culture and difference shapes how we think about the intercultural. Engaging with theorisations of culture and difference that account for ambiguity and instability, mobility and contestation, provides a way to develop a more dynamic concept of the intercultural. This section elaborates on how fixed notions of culture—often relied upon in translations of intercultural curriculum, or which underpin policy and curriculum in this area—enable the production of the intercultural through stereotypical representations of culture and difference. I draw on the work of Stuart Hall (1993a; 1993b; 1996; 2007; 2017) to argue that a theorisation of culture and difference that brings self-other relations to the fore is critical for the cultivation of positive intergroup relations—the central aim of intercultural education. The work of Hall offers a lens through which to consider the development of intercultural understanding as the relational spaces between situated productions of self and other. I argue that conceptualising culture and difference through the dynamics of self and other enables intercultural education to focus on the relational spaces between self and others, and the conditions that produce particular kinds of relations.

The intercultural as understanding the spaces in-between self and other

The way culture is defined by ACARA and the VCAA are important reference points for appreciating the ways the Intercultural Capability curriculum may be understood and enacted in schools. ACARA (2016) defines culture as:

> A complex system of concepts, values, norms, beliefs and practices that are shared, created and contested by people who make up a cultural group and are passed on from generation to generation. Cultural systems include variable ways of seeing, interpreting and understanding the world. They are constructed and transmitted by members of the group through the processes of socialisation and representation (p. 16).

Such a definition recognises that culture is ‘shared, created and contested’ by people within a cultural group, and that different cultures necessarily have diverse ways of ‘seeing, interpreting and understanding the world’. It also acknowledges that culture is constructed and shared through situated processes of socialisation. In addition to this definition, the VCAA defines culture as “aspects of identity shared by members of a culture that, taken as a set, mark them as distinct from members of other cultures” (VCAA, 2017). Such aspects include, but are not limited to language, food, and religious practice. The VCAA goes on to elaborate that “individuals have multiple identities and these change over time by being constructed and reconstructed through intercultural interactions”. While these definitions go some way to briefly summate the mobile processes of cultural production, representation and contestation, when paired with the language of the education goals in The Declaration, it may be easy for educators to focus on the known or familiar aspects of culture that can be generally or stereotypically represented.

In relation to cultural diversity, The Declaration states young Australians should strive to ‘appreciate and respect’ and ‘value and celebrate’ Australia’s rich social, linguistic, cultural and religious diversity—as if this diversity is largely static and ‘out there’ somewhere else. When this is placed next to the definitions of culture provided in the Intercultural Capability curriculum documents, it is feasible for teachers to focus on the ‘stuff’ of culture that can be perceived as cultural norms, rather than the processes of cultural production. This is problematic for developing intercultural understanding, because intercultural education is about understanding relational spaces between cultures, not the normative artefacts or practices of diverse cultural groups. With this in mind, it is more productive to think about culture as social action (Hall, 1993b), that is located in space and time, and the intercultural as the spaces in-between these sites.

Critical cultural studies scholars such as Hall and Bhabha argue that many theorisations of culture do not capture the complexity of culture occurring across mobile peoples and locations (Hall, 1996). Bhabha (1994) says of the localities of culture:

> The locality is more *around* temporality than *about* historicity: a form of living that is more complex than ‘community’; more symbolic than ‘society’; more connotative than ‘country’; less patriotic than *patrie;* more rhetorical than the reason of State; more mythological than ideology; less homogenous than hegemony; less centred than citizen; more collective than ‘the subject’; more

> psychic than civility; more hybrid in the articulation of cultural differences and identifications than can be represented in any hierarchical or binary structuring of social antagonism (p. 140).

Here Bhabha argues that culture is made in the everyday in response to space and time, across shared but different histories, multiple discourses, contested formations of cultural practice, and without simple origins across diaspora. As such, culture is constituted by practices embedded in familiar or shared cultural codes and systems of representation through which meaning is made and that constitute the symbolic domain of social life. Hall et al (2013) argues that meaning constructed in this way is dialogic—as "always only partially understood, always an unequal exchange" (p. xx). For Hall, culture is both symbolic and social, and always incomplete. In this way, culture is a "critical site of social action and intervention, where power relations are both established and potentially unsettled" (Proctor, 2002, p. 1). Yet, taking up the intercultural through the idea of culture as a 'critical site of social action and intervention' poses difficulties for public schools in Australia.

One challenge is that schools are often seen as responsible for teaching knowledge and skills that young people can apply beyond schooling in a range of settings—this tends to focus on so called 'concrete' knowledge and skills. Based on the construction of the intercultural presented so far, the intercultural is taken to be the relational spaces in-between sites of social action and intervention. These spaces are far from 'concrete' and teaching about and across these spaces pose conceptual and practical challenges for teachers. The relational spaces in-between culture are complex and contested, and for educators and young people to traverse these spaces—particularly with the view to improve intercultural relations in contexts where relations have eroded—would require engaging with difficult knowledge. For Zembylas and Bekerman (2019), this means engaging with "the moral values driving relations between people and communities" (p. 157). This is conceptual work and it is emotional work that is deeply influenced by individual and group histories and experience, values and worldview and—as seen in the opening vignette of this chapter—work that is conceived by some teachers as 'not their job'. While Bernstein (1970) argues education cannot be expected to compensate for society—such as being relied upon to do the work of social cohesion when the systems and structures of society that maintain inequity are not addressed—he asserts “social assumptions underlying the organisation, distribution and evaluation of knowledge” (p. 347) need to be addressed. Yet, for many white teachers, addressing their own and systemic assumptions underpinning the ‘organisation, distribution and evaluation’ of knowledge related to intercultural relations is no doubt challenging.

This leads to a second challenge for schools and teachers. To develop confidence in exploring the contested spaces in-between cultures, requires a degree of emotional capability. This challenge is two-fold: in the first instance some teachers and young people may resist navigating spaces of emotional discomfort arising from difficult knowledge; in the second, is the capacity of public and political agents to visibly engage with difficult knowledge at a national level. In relation to the first, Zembylas (2017b) states that “how to conceptualize and deal with teacher resistance to recognize some aspects of difficult histories that might be particularly discomforting” (p. 660) is an area of increased interest and importance, and an area of knowledge this thesis aspires to contribute to. In relation to understanding the intercultural in Australia, ‘difficult histories’ have overwhelmingly shaped relations between white and non-white cultural groups (see 1.4) and create the conditions in which intercultural education occurs. As such, asking teachers to address the nature of these relations through an intercultural education founded on self-other relations is confronting—particularly as the majority of teachers in Australia are white (Tu, 2019). According to Zembylas (2018) “whites express emotional resistance when they are asked to confront their whiteness as supremacy and privilege; these discomforting emotions raise insurmountable obstacles toward racial understanding and the undoing of racism” (p. 86). Yet, as identified in the DEECD (2012) intercultural field trial report, “critical awareness of racism and effective cross-cultural conflict resolution” (p. 9) are core components of developing intercultural understanding. Schools cannot do this work alone and indeed they require an active engagement with issues of racism and intercultural relations beyond schools.

This brings me to the second part of the emotional challenge. Teachers cannot be expected or supported to navigate the emotional discomfort of difficult histories if the systems and structures that maintain inequity remain unquestioned. Elder et al (2004) suggest, “in a particularly conservative era…the ‘emotional’ room allocated to exploring the effects of racism and colonialism in the nation-space is increasingly limited” (p. 208). That is, engagement with critical sites of social action of Indigenous and other non-white Australians at a national political level is not afforded. Zembylas (2017a) takes this further to argue that ‘wilful ignorance’, rather than lack of engagement, is “systematic and results from the denial of relationality and the deliberate motivation of some groups (eg. whites) to maintain their positions of power” (p. 503). Education systems and formal curriculum are constructed within this paradigm which—as Gorski (2008) argues—teachers are inculcated into. As such, for white teachers and students, understanding how their own cultural privilege—even when acquired through good fortune, contribute to the oppression of others comes with risk. However, non-white teachers and young people are constantly being asked to interrogate or account for the structures through which they understand the world in an education based on white ways of knowing. While examining the relational spaces between sites of self and other is fraught with ambiguities, contradictions and risk, understanding culture, and hence the intercultural through self-other relations acts as a lever to focus on relational processes, rather than material manifestations of culture. While significant work needs to be done to build the emotional capacity to understand relations of power and positionality in intercultural relations, the rub in these relations is the concept of difference.

The spaces in-between cultures as constituted by local productions of cultural difference

In this chapter I have established that the intercultural is about relations between diverse cultural groups. To support this notion of the intercultural, I have argued it is helpful to understand culture as local sites of social action that constitute symbolic meaning making in everyday spaces. Following this, I have argued intercultural education can be framed as a way to examine and come to understand the spaces in-between social and symbolic acts of meaning making. This section moves forward to argue that these in-between spaces are constituted by difference. These in-between spaces are equally as mobile and unstable as locations of culture and are produced in relation to local relations and practices of space. This section argues that an understanding of locally situated social relations is necessary to understand how cultural difference is produced in particular spaces, and the ways intercultural education might be approached with sensitivity to particular school settings.

Hall's (1993b; 2017) theorisation of culture demonstrates "how absolutely necessary the other is to our own sense of identity" (p. 72). Hall rejects, in the strongest terms, the notion of an essentialised self – what he describes as an "unmediated and transparent notion of the subject or identity as the centred author of social practice" (1996, p. 2). For Hall, cultural identity is not centred on the static knowing subject, rather it is focused on active social practices that identify or associate the self and others in particular ways. According to Hall, identity is an ongoing process of symbolic representation of people that draws on "the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being" (Hall, 1996, p. 4). As such, processes of symbolic meaning making are situated in space and time and are constantly in motion, under negotiation, and never final. These processes of meaning making are marked by difference, by what is left outside. Cultural identity—and identity more broadly—is therefore constructed through the exclusionary practices that mark symbolic boundaries. Symbolic boundaries are understood, created and contested through the collective norms and shared practices of individuals and groups. In this way identity is constructed *through,* not outside of difference. It requires its 'constitutive outside' (Hall, 1996), its relation to the other, a recognition of what it is not in order to be positively constructed. For Hall (1996), identities "are more the product of the marking of difference and exclusion, than they are the sign of an identical, naturally-constituted unity" (p. 4). The exclusionary practices that construct difference, however, are tied up with networks of power and positionality.

Hall argues identity is constituted by the relational practices that produce and position people. These practices operate within the politics and power structures of particular sites, whereby discourses and practices shape the ways different people or groups of people are positioned and can position themselves. Hall (1996) calls this the "politics of location" (p. 1). For Hall, identities emerge positioned "within the play of specific modalities of power" (Hall, 1996, p. 4), meaning that the positioning of difference is a product of specific power structures. Thinking about difference in this way is important for the kind of intercultural education I am proposing in this chapter because the spaces in-between self-other relations cannot be understood without first understanding the ways we are all positioned by race, age, gender, class, sexual orientation, occupation, in relation to the structures that stratify particular social spaces.

As such cultural difference is produced not only in relation to local spaces, locally situated sites of social action and locally produced relations with diverse cultural others, but also in relation to the horizons (Lefebvre, 2004) of local spaces that produce the societal norms of particular societies.

Hall argues how the neutralisation of difference imposed by dominant forces in anchoring cultural identity to the closed categories of race, ethnicity and origin "mask how deeply our histories and cultures have always intertwined and interpenetrated" (1993b, p. 72). As such, the production of cultural identity is about using the resources of 'where we came from' in order to imagine and construct an image of 'what we might become' (Hall, 1996). This can help think about intercultural education because in examining and understanding the ways histories and cultures have always intertwined it is possible to examine the conditions that have produced particular modalities of power and particular arrangements of cultural difference in particular social spaces. For example, in Australia such an examination may illuminate the conditions that produce and position some culturally diverse people as 'white', 'white-non-white' and 'white-but-not-white-enough' (Nicolacopoulos and Vassilacopoulos, 2004, p. 134). Such an examination makes use of the resources of where we came from in order to imagine what we may yet become. Gilroy (1994) suggests that engaging with the practices that produce identity and difference is "not the so-called return to roots, but a coming-to-terms-with our routes" (p. 4). What Gilroy argues is that there is not an origin to return to, but an acceptance of the particular conditions of space and time that have brought us to our present and continue to shape our future. In relation to intercultural education, this could be taken to mean that 'coming-to-terms-with our routes' that constitute the nature of intercultural relations in particular spaces today is necessary in order to shape the positive intercultural relations hoped for tomorrow.

I now want to move to think about what this might mean for local school settings because productions of cultural difference and sites of difficult knowledge will differ according to the specific social relations of particular schools. In an everyday sense, some practices of representation that mark cultural difference are demonstrated in the opening vignette of this chapter. Students and teachers at the research site are predominantly white. While being white does not equate to homogenous and other constructs such as gender and class cut across notions of 'whiteness', in relation to representations of cultural identity, signification through 'whiteness' produces a superficial commonality that constitutes a tentative sense of ‘us’. Others that sit outside this unifying phenotype of ‘Australian’ are produced as ‘them’, for example: the boy calling his friend of Malaysian origin a ‘dirty Abo’; students ridiculing Indians as ‘curry munchers’; and students mocking the Japanese language with generic Asian accents. These moments indicate some of the ways others are signified and positioned as external in efforts to reify a united sense of identity (Soutphommasane, 2017) and assert a position of privilege and power—no matter how unintended, superficial or fragile. Rather than damning these students as racist, it is important to remember that these young people are teenagers experimenting with identity formation and the practices of representing themselves and others in different ways, and that this occurs within the situated discourses of self and others encountered in their lives and taken up as meaning making resources in the moments described. These discourses operate through larger discourses and ‘horizons’ (Lefebvre, 2004) the young people described in the vignette are being apprenticed into, such as historical discourses they take up because of their backgrounds and current circumstances. The tension that is suspended between the idealism of intercultural education and the everyday struggle of contested cultural identities is the delicate tightrope teachers must navigate in enacting intercultural education. And the way these tensions play out and are traversed across diverse school settings will vary widely. A key complexity in the struggle for developing positive intercultural relations across sites of culture and difference is engaging with the difficult knowledge that position many teachers—and young people—uncomfortably. For Zembylas (2017a) a core question is “how can teachers and students become aware of their ignorance of vulnerability and relationality” (p. 512). That is, beyond knowledge and specific pedagogic tools, how can teachers and young people cultivate affective spaces that are sensitive to and supportive of cultural differences, and the ambiguities, contradictions and complicities of individual and collective positionalities in intercultural relations?

2.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I have examined the positioning of the intercultural in current Australian curriculum and policy documents and the ways the Intercultural Capability is positioned to open the way for the Capability for enacted in ad-hoc ways. In addition, this conceptual ambiguity creates a situation where the Intercultural Capability is translated as education *about* cultural diversity or that simply *celebrates* cultural diversity. Scholarship in the field, however, asserts that intercultural education broadly intends to develop positive relations between diverse cultural groups and improve understanding across sites of cultural difference. As such, intercultural education tends to be optimistically positioned as a mechanism to build socially just and cohesive futures. I argue that the opacity around the concepts of culture and difference allow the intercultural to be produced as the 'happy point' of diversity. To move beyond limited productions of culture, difference and the intercultural, conceptualising the intercultural as the spaces in-between self-other relations provides an opportunity to examine the conditions that produce relations with cultural difference in particular ways. A key challenge facing teachers, however, is how to deal with difficult knowledge and the emotional discomfort of competing moral truths in the ways we come to make meaning in the world. I argue that understanding how cultural difference is produced in local spaces provides an anchor for understanding the complexity of intercultural relations more broadly.

To further support this work, in chapter three I draw on Lefebvre and Massey to argue that space is produced socially, and that in local spaces, situated relations and practices shape productions of cultural difference and opportunities for intercultural education. I also examine the situated nature of curriculum work and present pedagogies of discomfort (Boler and Zembylas, 2003) as one way to address difficult knowledge in the cultivation of intercultural understanding.

Chapter 3

The production of intercultural curriculum work through the relations of school spaces

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I critically examined the ways the intercultural is taken up in education policy and curriculum. I argue for more coherent conceptual grounding of the Intercultural Capability in order to facilitate an examination of the conditions that produce relations with cultural difference in particular ways. In this chapter I do two things: first, I draw on the work of Henri Lefebvre (1991; 2004) and Doreen Massey (2005) to argue that space is socially constructed and that an engagement with the relational practices of space is a useful way to understand how everyday constructions of identity, and hence culture, diversity and difference are situated. This extends the argument in the previous chapter that foregrounds identity and difference as located relations between self and other and brings the relational nature of space to the fore. Second, I examine the nature of curriculum work to consider the situated operations of schools and curriculum as sites of identity production. I argue that curriculum work presents an opportunity to engage in social action that negotiates the liminal spaces between self and other (Aoki, 1984), and between ideas related to the local, national and global. I go on to argue that pedagogic practices that engage with the discomfort of difference (Aoki, 1983; Boler and Zembylas, 2003) is essential for engaging with the difficult knowledge (Zembylas, 2014) that can be associated with critical intercultural work. Combined, the ideas of self and other across culture and identity, space and time, and curriculum and pedagogy help position intercultural education beyond curriculum content and into the realm of practice that examines relations situated in-between spaces of cultural difference.

3.2 The production of education and school spaces

In the field of social geography, space is understood as social. Space is not just the physical, geographical or material areas where everyday life occurs. Everyday life also occurs in relation with the social spaces we occupy. As such, the role of space in the construction of identity is significant. Individuals construct an image of what they might become—identity—in relation to the resources and opportunities the spaces they inhabit afford. In this sense, space is not merely a backdrop or a platform upon which social action occurs. Space is constitutive of social action—and therefore, culture. Understanding the ways individuals and groups are shaped by space through social relations has important implications for the way cultural diversity is understood and intercultural understanding is developed in local spaces. If space is taken as a set of relations then, as Massey (2005) argues, individuals are shaped "not through some visceral belonging… but through the practicing of place, the negotiating of intersecting trajectories; place as an arena where negotiation is forced upon us" (p. 154). That is, spaces are constituted by the negotiation of shared symbolic and social practices through which people make meaning. It is in space where these practices are negotiated.

Lefebvre (1991) asserts "that a space is not a thing but rather a set of relations between things" (p. 83). For Lefebvre, an object or a physical space can only be grasped through the relations and attachments associated with that physical space or thing. For Lefebvre (1991), the "concept of space denotes and connotes all possible spaces, whether abstract or real, mental or social" (p. 299), spaces that are constituted by the imaginary and lived constructs that produce particular spaces in particular ways for particular people across time. For Lefebvre, space is constituted by the relations across three levels: the abstract (conceived), everyday (perceived) and the symbolic (lived). As such, his work focuses on the multi-layered ways people interact with and across space and describes the connective tissue between spaces that are "at once conceived, perceived and lived" (Middleton, 2014, p. 11). For Lefebvre, the concept of space encapsulates the pragmatic, the physical and the symbolic. As such, the act of meaning making and triadic relations of space cannot be separated and they are produced within complex networks between the local and elsewhere. I am going to examine each element of space as theorized by Lefebvre before discussing how space, as constructed in this way creates possibilities for thinking about intercultural education.

Spaces are conceived through the lens of social, cultural, historical, political and administrative structures that attribute particular functions to them. Middleton (2014) offers that "conceived spaces are abstract, mental" (p. 11) while Simonsen (2005) adds conceived spaces are constructed through the discourses of law, administration and order. Conceived space refers to the dimensions of space that determine administrative, political and functional constructs, and the division of labour related to them. The construction of conceived spaces not only denotes a school as a space for learning or a temple as a space for prayer, but also the abstract structures that direct ownership, responsibility, labour or value. A public school is a space owned and governed by the State, whose administrative structures determine the division of labour within schools—from cleaners and grounds keepers to teaching staff and leadership—and whose actions are in many ways regulated by complex networks of policies and codes of conduct. Public schools in Australia, as opposed to Independent or religiously affiliated schools, are symbolically conceived as apolitical institutions (as in not holding political influence) and must be secular (Victorian Government, 2006). Public schools are constructed in abstract ways as culturally neutral institutions (Bernstein, 1996; Berger, 2010), even though they may not necessarily be experienced this way. Public schools are not only tools of nation building through the imaginaries that curriculum and school structures produce, but schools are also populated by diverse social actors who bring their own politics and beliefs into school spaces—mobile trajectories that require negotiation (Comber, 2015; Massey, 2005). Despite public schools being conceived in universal and neutral ways, the positioned nature of schools within particular communities and as populated by particular people shapes the way the conceived spaces of local schools are perceived and acted on in the everyday lives of local people.

Lefebvre (1991) summates that perceived space "is social space – the common-sense, taken-for-granted physical/embodied world of 'social practice'" (p. 38). Perceived space relates to the particular—the activities and practices of a particular space that produce its rhythms (Lefebvre, 2004). For example, the everyday practices and functions of a specific church in a particular community; a particular classroom in a particular school; the particular practices of a family at mealtimes. Perceived space accounts for the ways social actors relate to and engage with space relationally through social practice. It is these everyday practices that shape the way a particular school or a particular class is perceived within a particular community. For example, the everyday ways schools engage with the community they serve, and the extent to which parents, carers and young people are seen to have a stake in a particular school in preparing young people for their individual and collective futures (Bernstein, 1996). These everyday relations produce particular schools as, for example, 'academic' or 'rough' or 'comprehensive' or 'privileged'. Within schools, the social practices of classes and teachers produce each as 'good' or 'bad' (despite this meaning different things for different people), as ‘fun’ or ‘strict’, ‘unfair’ or ‘boring’, as well as the way some subjects are perceived as more important or more expendable than others. The everyday relational practices of space give body to the abstract or conceived productions of space that determine utility and function. And it is in the ways these everyday relational practices of space are experienced where meaning is made and space is lived.

Lived spaces are hence produced through the meanings attributed to perceived and conceived spaces. Middleton (2014) describes how ‘lived’ space “taps into unconscious, imaginary and symbolic dimensions of experience” (p. 11). Lived spaces embody the meanings produced through social action. Lived space is what produces a particular experience of a school as, for example, focused on excellence; a particular class and teacher as committed; the art room as a safe haven; or school as a punitive waste of time. It is the triadic relation between the conceived, perceived and lived that produce particular spaces in particular ways for particular people. The production of space in this sense becomes a site of relational engagement between “the experiential, the philosophical and the political” (Lefebvre, 2005, p. 17). There is a danger, however, in assuming the production of space across these layers is final. Lefebvre (1991) cautions against characterising space as “an immediate whole, complete with its associations and connections in its actuality” (p. 37), as it is inscribed with a history that is part of the space that continues to shape the way it is perceived and lived. As with identity, space is never complete or final. Relations with space evolve, changing the way space is produced across conceived, perceived and lived dimensions. Space is not singular or fixed, but rather is a multi-layered entanglement of experience and struggle across time. As such, the shifting trajectories and intersections between the conceived-perceived-lived productions of space are far from simple or cohesive.

In acknowledging the production of space across the layers of the conceived-perceived-lived, the everyday lives of people become a complex negotiation of relational and representational practices embedded in the multi-layered production of intersecting spaces. It is not possible to occupy a ‘singular’ social space. Everyday life requires crossings between and through multiple social spaces that are deeply entangled across various levels of social and cultural codes, practices and rhythms. I now examine the tension between the production of space as at once complete and unfinalizable, and the way this contributes to situated productions of cultural difference.

Tensions between the production of space as simultaneously complete and unfinalizable

In the previous chapter I argued that identity and difference are produced locally. Productions of identity and difference occur through located relations of space – or locations of culture. Such relations are constituted by the practices and norms that are negotiated and established in space over time. While there may be a sense of unity or completeness that can become engrained in the ways relations with space are lived and made meaningful, closed productions of space tend to ignore the ways productions of space shape identity, and how constructions of identity also shape the nature of relations with space and that this process is ongoing. Massey (2005) argues that while it is important to "retain an appreciation of specificity, of uniqueness" (p. 196), as spaces are personal and imbued with meaning, this kind of conceptualisation of space is—returning to Massey—often "closed, coherent, integrated as authentic, as 'home', a secure retreat; of space as somehow originally regionalized, as always-already divided up" (p. 6). This kind of production of space, according to Massey, "can lead us to conceive of other places, peoples, cultures simply as phenomena 'on' this surface" (p. 4). What Massey is arguing, is that peoples, culture and other social phenomena occur within specific relations of space, rather than space as a backdrop to social phenomena, and these situated relations are shaped by the 'politics of location' (Hall, 1996).

As with Massey, I contend that conceptualising space as a complete unity, even if momentarily, closes itself to the intersecting histories of spaces and the people who have occupied them over time—or in other words, closed to difference. In this way, productions of space when perceived as a unique unity are closed to the possibility of alternative productions of space. Further to this, closed productions of space as 'already regionalised' (Massey, 2005) may lead to closure against competing moral truths of different relational experiences of space (Zembylas, 2018). An example of this are the many cases of bitter struggles over sovereignty and land rights between Indigenous and settler/coloniser populations. Massey's broader argument that productions of space are never final or complete speaks to Hall's (1993b; 2017) assertion against the notion of a complete or pure culture that harmoniously bypasses the complex intersections of mobile and multiple histories, peoples and culture. For Massey, while space can be conceptualised as the unique and meaningful spaces in the lives of individuals and communities, space is also an intersection, a meeting point of a world and its inhabitants in motion.

The meeting points of social actors and action that cut across the local and elsewhere contribute to the production of locations of culture. In this way, the production of space as social means social practices and entwining histories not only produce spaces in ways imbued with meaning, but also produce culture and difference. Lefebvre (1991) describes these relations, arguing:

> A social space cannot be adequately accounted for either by nature (climate, site) or by its previous history…Mediations, and mediators, have to be taken into consideration: the action of groups, factors within knowledge, within ideology, or within the domain of representations. Social space contains a great diversity of objects, both natural and social, including the networks and pathways which facilitate the exchange of material things and information. Such objects are thus not only things, but also relations (p. 77).

Therefore, it is the situated actions and relations of social actors that cultivate identity, culture and difference through sites of social action. In this sense space plays a pivotal role not only in the negotiation and practices of cultural production, but also in shaping the ways social actors conceive and understand cultural difference in particular spaces.

In recognising that productions of space are both cohesive and incomplete, it becomes clear that productions of space are always contestable. This means that productions of space cannot exist in the binaries of ‘either-or’, but rather are more productively understood as ‘both-and’ (Zembylas, 2014). Understanding productions of space as contestable requires engaging with notions of positionality and power. In examining positionality and power, it becomes apparent how the connective tissue between the local and elsewhere is constituted by dominant structures of knowledge that shape local spaces, and therefore, identity and difference. I now move to further this argument by examining the ways contested productions of space provide opportunities for critical intercultural work.

3.3 Contested productions of space as opportunity for intercultural understanding

Space is not only the setting for the stories of everyday life, but embodies the meanings and value attributed to events and encounters. Lefebvre (1991) accounts for the meanings attributed to space as a unity between the perceived, conceived and lived however, productions of space are sites of great struggle. That is, the relations between the conceived, perceived and lived are produced within the conditions created by struggles for power and agency—what Hall (1996) calls the 'politics of location'. This section examines the ways forces of social stratification produce hierarchies of power and shape the conditions for spatial relations and the construction of identity. Intercultural relations are produced under these same conditions and an examination of hierarchies of power can help understand the nature of interactions between the local and elsewhere in informing how situated relational practices represent cultural difference and shape opportunities for intercultural education.

Lefebvre (1991) argues spaces "are products of an activity which involves the economic and technical realms, but which extends well beyond them, for these are also political products, and strategic spaces" (p. 84). Space is produced out of activities related to function—such as schools as institutions for teaching and learning—but spaces such as schools are also more than this. In a political and strategic sense, public schools are intricately conceived, perceived and lived as spaces that strategically contribute to the development of national identity and dominant cultural practices (Apple, 1982; Osler, 2015; Steinberg and Kinchloe, 2009). In addition, even though public schools are not politically affiliated or influential, they are politically bound to the will of the government of the day. Schools are not passive spaces however, they are strategic and political spaces within which individuals can contest dominant productions of national identity, cultural dominance or political ideology. In this sense, schools are sites of social action. Lefebvre (1991) argues space is produced through social action between levels of the macro and micro, through mediations and mediators and that the possibilities for social action are shaped by structures of power—what Lefebvre calls 'orders'.

Spaces are constructed socially within structures of power—'orders'. For schools these so-called 'orders' structure conceived spaces in relation to function and distribution of labour—such as the policies and curriculum directives that govern teachers' work. These orders are translated and enacted in the everyday perceived spaces of school meeting rooms and classrooms, school halls and hallways through the relational practices of those spaces. It is in the experience of these relational practices of space where meaning is made and the impact of particular policies or curriculum directives are felt. In addition to the abstract orders that shape function and labour are local hierarchies of power related to professional status, cultural capital and local social hierarchies that complicate the enactments of abstract power structures. That is to say that social dis/advantage and access to cultural and knowledge capital shape participation in knowledge production and the practices of knowledge distribution through the established institutional orders. Bernstein (1996) argues "a school's ideology may be seen as a construction in a mirror through which images are reflected. The question is: who recognises themselves as of value? What other images are excluded by the dominant image of value?" (p. 7). This is important for the ways the intercultural is constructed and developed at diverse sites as, even though schools work hard to produce spaces of 'solidarity' through a shared sense of communality (Bernstein, 1996), this is occurring through institutions that are "a crucial means and an arena for struggle to produce and reproduce specific national consciousness" (p. 10). As such, schools are spaces demonstrative of broader struggles of power and agency within the social hierarchies that are situated locally and elsewhere.

This section explores how spaces are occupied and contested—symbolically, physically and materially. Contestations of space result in messy and complex vying over who is recognised as "the rightful occupants of certain spaces" (Ahmed, 2012, p. 2). Yet, this vying for 'rightful occupancy' complicates intercultural education. The spaces in-between diverse cultural groups that constitute intercultural relations are contested sites of social action that play out in national, community and school spaces. In these in-between spaces intersecting trajectories (Massey, 2005) can be taken as a platform to understand modes of social action as situated within constructs of power. These modes of social action across contested spaces can be productively understood as what Massey (2005) calls 'the event of space'. The event of space is important for this study because schools and classrooms are sites of social action. It is in school spaces where teachers and students understand and experience to what extent their status as 'rightful occupant' can be claimed and challenged. This can be productively thought of as the ‘stake’ (Bernstein, 1996) that young people have in their schooling and in different school spaces. This could include the ways young people assert their power more or less in different classes, which may be related to individual identities and/or the ways different subjects are conceived in terms of value. In this sense, students experience the event of space as they “are forced to negotiate ways of being, relationships, ways of acting and indeed ways of knowing” (Comber, 2015, p. 8) as they (attempt to) exercise their right to be included (Bernstein, 1996). That is to say, young people are engaged with the ways they relate more or less to different spaces at and beyond school to assert their own identities, allegiances and sites of social action.

For (particularly non-white) culturally diverse young people who are already excluded from or on the periphery of the national imaginary, dominant productions of knowledge and value established in school curricular, texts and administrative structures do not easily allow for diverse students to see themselves in their schooling. In this way, reproductions of dominant ways of being and knowing creates a tension between the orders and power of the system and the agency of diverse individuals. Just as Hall (1996) asserts that the symbolic boundaries of identity are provisionally shaped by the networks of power that identities are constructed within, space too is produced within networks of power whereby social action is mediated by the dominant forces that produce them. However, it is exactly in the *struggle* across contested spaces where sites of intercultural education can be productively explored.

I now examine a recent example of how the Australian national anthem—as an abstract space made symbolically meaningful through its performance—came to be a contested cultural space in an Australian school. This example demonstrates how in the struggle of this ‘event of space’ an opportunity for intercultural education emerged.

Imagining opportunities for intercultural education in confronting the difficult knowledge of contested spaces

In 2018 a nine-year-old Queensland schoolgirl refused to stand for the national anthem—Advance Australia Fair—at her school assembly. She was given a detention and reportedly threatened suspension for the act. Australian conservative politicians attacked the character of the schoolgirl, Harper Nielsen, and her parents as disrespecting ‘our country’. Major media outlets in the US and UK, took up the story and likened

Harper's refusal to stand to Colin Kaeprnick 'taking the knee' during the US anthem. In thinking about the national anthem as enacted in school spaces, I ask how this kind of symbolic space is produced and occupied? By whom? And for what purpose? And how does an action such as that of Harper's constitute a critical site of intercultural action?

A national anthem is an interesting example of space as theorised by Lefebvre. A national anthem is a thing—a song—that occupies the abstract function of representing allegiance to nation. As such, it occupies a symbolic space in the national imaginary that is embodied in the performance of the anthem. This space, however, is not lived or experienced in uniform ways and—in Australia—is a space of great struggle. Schools, however, incorporate symbols of the nation through everyday practices and rituals in ways that reproduce cultural codes and affiliations. On the ways schools reproduce a national imaginary and culturally specific identities Bernstein (1996) suggests "there are ranges of school practices, rituals, celebrations and emblems which work to this effect" (p. 10). Symbols of a nation, such as a national anthem, are experienced through schools to develop the codes and practices related to national allegiance. Southcott (2012) argues that in schools "demonstrations such as flag flying and singing the national anthem are designed to inculcate patriotic fervour in the citizens of the future" (p. 47) and the embodiment of the act of singing the anthem at a school assembly (or other significant event) is a symbolic act of perceived unity under the banner of the nation. Yet, the experience of these conceived and perceived spaces is open to a plurality of interpretations, histories and negotiated resistance—as the action of Harper Nielsen affirms.

It was reported that Harper argued "her refusal was intended as a gesture of solidarity with Indigenous Australians, whom she felt were marginalised and disrespected by a song that glorifies white Australia" (Tavan, 2018). In her refusal to stand for the national anthem, the space of the anthem as a uniting force became contested and her local school assembly became a site of social action. In that event of space, a nine-year-old school student challenged the orders governing the role schools play in cultural reproduction and cultivation of national identity, the status of Advance Australia Fair as a unifying symbol representing all Australians, and the powers held over her as a nine-year-old school student. What Harper's action exposed was the difficult knowledge that resides between different experiences of space. In this case, the difficult knowledge that the Australian anthem asserts Australia as a white nation at the expense of Indigenous and other non-white Australians. And yet, the criticism that Harper and her family received demonstrates the lack of emotional room (Elder et al, 2004) afforded to understanding the 'both-and' (Zembylas, 2014) across contested spaces of identity and experience in critical intercultural conversations in Australia (see 2.5).

Harper's act occurred amidst a growing movement in Australia (and other nations) to challenge the legitimacy of white authority and institutional cultural reproduction by using symbols of the nation (such as statues and flags) as sites of social action and resistance. This can, perhaps, be seen as part of a larger movement of 'cancel culture' where active attempts to erase or put into disrepute contested views, symbols or individuals are virulently pursued—particularly through social media. Yet, in cancelling or erasing views or symbols perceived to be offensive or one-sided, debate about difficult issues can be further silenced (Breakey, 2020). Even though many acts of resistance against national symbols—such as flags, statues and anthems—draw attention to the fact that those representations of nation and identity are contested, they also often present an 'either-or' ultimatum, rather than find room to navigate ambiguity and contradictions across the relational spaces of culture and difference. And it is in the 'either-or' construction of events or experience that opportunities for intercultural understanding are diminished.

Ahmed (2012) writes in relation to institutional diversity practices, the complexity of silencing institutional injustices or inequalities related to race and diversity lies in the ways institutions frame themselves as committed to diversity. Ahmed (2012) argues "when diversity is a viewing point, a way of picturing the organisation, then racism is unseen" (p. 146). That is, when institutions are accused of racism or inequality, the institution's reputation—as framed by diversity—is threatened and those posing threat to institutional reputation become the perpetrator of offence and are often silenced. In the case of Harper, the construction of Australia as a nation that is committed to diversity, its public education system as inclusive and secular, was threatened by Harper's afront to the national anthem. Harper's act drew attention to the racist foundations of modern Australia and caused offence to the white patriarchal imaginary and (potentially) damaged Australia's reputation. However, rather than opening a space for dialogue, Harper's act was silenced. Yet, it is exactly in the struggle between competing moral truths where the nature of intercultural relations can be examined and a reconciliation of our ‘routes’ to the present (Gilroy, 1994) can shape opportunities for cultivating better intercultural relations into the future.

In Harper’s case, I do not propose that she was attempting to erase or cancel the national anthem. Harper was engaging in social action as a form of resistance to what the national anthem represents. Yet the outraged response to her action from some sections of society seemed intent on shutting down any productive conversation and further shrunk the ‘emotional room’ afforded to difficult conversations about culture, identity and belonging. The fact that she was punished for her action and the solution has reportedly been to remove her from the assembly hall while the anthem is being sung, is perhaps evidence of this bigger problem of silencing. In dealing with Harper’s act by removing her from the symbolic rituals of nation building, Harper is positioned as the problem and opportunities for engaging in such events of space as an opportunity for intercultural understanding that navigates positions of ‘both-and’ are sadly diminished.

If democratic values and social cohesion are taken as the cornerstone of why intercultural education is important for young Australians, then it is important to ask questions about the nature of the democracy such an education contributes to, and the ways this intersects with young people’s experiences of democracy in their everyday lives. Specifically, what is young people’s experience of intercultural understanding as a democratic value at school and in their everyday lives, and how does their experience of the production and representation of cultural diversity in their lives (within and beyond school) complicate the vision of intercultural understanding as a mechanism for social cohesion produced through the formal curriculum? I would suggest that Harper has experienced the extent to which her rights as a citizen (or citizen-non-citizen because she is still considered a child (Biesta, 2011)) are granted, and the extent and limit of Australia’s commitment to reconciliation, diversity and inclusion. I suggest that the response she received is at odds with the aspiration for all Australians to participate in democratic action and fight for improvement in social environments (particularly with Indigenous Australia) as expressed in the Educational Goals for Young Australians (Education Council, 2019). Power asserted in this way is discouraging for educators and young people seeking to enact critical intercultural education and engage in difficult conversations about culture, identity and belonging.

Even though there appears to be a lack of appetite to engage with the difficult knowledge related to intercultural relations in Australia at a national level, schools are uniquely placed to function as sites of resistance and intercultural healing. Through the everyday function of curriculum work as enacted through pedagogy and practice teachers are uniquely placed to cultivate an appreciation not so much of cultural diversity, but of difficult knowledge related to intercultural relations. And even though—as discussed earlier—schools cannot be expected to fix society's ills, schools can cultivate the skills and knowledge to critically navigate the 'both-and' of competing moral truths. The next section examines how curriculum work and pedagogic practice can be strategically positioned as mechanisms to cultivate intercultural understanding.

3.4 Reimagining intercultural education curriculum work and pedagogies of discomfort

Intercultural education in this thesis has been positioned as an exploration of sites of social action and the relations in, between and across the spaces of everyday life. I now examine broad concepts of curriculum and pedagogic theory to argue for an engagement with curriculum work as a set of located and reflexive practices that act as a lever to enact intercultural education with a focus on the 'both-and' of intercultural relations.

For the purpose of this study, curriculum is conceptualised in a multi-layered way that is curated at a school level in relation to social-cultural-political orders produced across global, national, State and local levels of school governance (Lefebvre, 2004; Middleton, 2014). Curriculum is defined here as a set of plans, expectations and experiences operating relationally between the State, community and individual schools, and enacted socially in particular learning environments with particular actors. Such a conceptualisation recognises that, as Kenway (2007) argues, "on the ground, in schools, curriculum is not straightforwardly about cause and effect, actions and consequences. Indeed, less regulated knowledges arise from below, through the intimacies of the immediate, the day-by-day" (p. 5). In this thesis, application of the concept of curriculum in this way attempts to draw attention to the "actual processes" (Apple, 1982, p. 3) of curriculum curation and enactment. According to Yates (2005) "curriculum is concerned with effectiveness, but also with expansiveness and voices, and who gets a say" (p. 3). This is important for this study in relation to the Intercultural Capability in terms of understanding the constructed positionalities of selves and others through school systems and structures, who gets a say in the production of these positionalities, as well as the hidden or unintended function of these processes and relations in the production, reproduction and distribution of power.

The notion of curriculum detailed above attempts to more fully encompass the notion of labour in the act of bringing together and teaching across multiple layers of curriculum. This might also be referred to as curriculum work. According to Aoki (1983), an instrumental view of teaching—that is, teacher as technical instrument that implements a technocratically designed syllabus—"effectively strips him/her of the humanness of his/her being" (p. 115). As such, Aoki argues for a view of curriculum that is "grounded in human experiences" (p. 116). Aoki describes this as "the experiential world of the teacher with his/her students, who *co-dwell* within the insistent presence of a curriculum X to-be-implemented" (my emphasis, p. 116). Aoki's notion of 'co-dwelling' privileges the humanness, or the social dependencies of curriculum work, whereby the "always precarious intersubjectivity" (Aoki, 1983, p. 122) between actors and (curriculum and physical) spaces in the process of teaching and learning become an anchor for curriculum and pedagogic possibility. In this thesis I take the position that intercultural education programs cannot be implemented within an instrumental curriculum-to-be-implemented model, but rather as an examination of situated relational practices. That is, the intercultural curriculum directive is not a matter of curriculum content, but rather a matter of practice, or curriculum work and its relational interdependencies.

This kind of view of curriculum work that opposes notions of teaching and learning as a process that translates education policy into a series of learning outcomes that teachers implement and assess is not new. Priestly and Philippou (2018) argue, "teachers do not implement policy; they enact, translate, mediate it" (p. 153). Curriculum work is a complex set of dialogic relations between the mobile trajectories of teachers, learners, policy, curriculum directives, planned learning activities and learning spaces. The negotiations between these layers of curriculum work and pedagogic practice constitute social action and dynamic locations of culture that produce very particular conditions for personal and collective meaning making. Externally shaping this process are the everyday spaces occupied by teachers and young people and their experiences beyond school (Bernstein, 1970; Biesta, 2011; Halse et al, 2015; Moss, et al, 2019). Bernstein (1970), with specific regard for curriculum suggests "the contents of the learning in school should be drawn much more from the child's experience in his [*sic*] family and community" (p. 345), as curriculum work will "always involve a set of relations between culture and citizenship that precede and exceed any classroom" (Watkins, et al, 2015, p.4). Thinking about curriculum work through the mobile trajectories of the life worlds of teachers and young people draws attention to the web of relations within, between and beyond unique learning spaces that shape learning and meaning making. Part of the problem, however, is the way curriculum agendas function explicitly and implicitly across layers of teachers' work. Curriculum agendas operate across layers of schooling through government directives of formal curriculum, the translations of this at a school and department level through the planned curriculum, the interpretive acts of teachers' enacted curriculum, the interpretive acts of students experiencing the curriculum, the null—or excluded—curriculum, and the hidden curriculum of values and norms implicit in daily practices (Kelly, 2009). Central to the layered operations of curriculum are notions of value. For this study, acknowledging the intersubjectivity of curriculum work across layers of schooling and teachers' work is important because intercultural education agendas are, as seen in chapter two (see 2.5), saturated with values, beliefs and assumptions.

If curriculum work is taken as 'grounded in human experiences', then the value systems embedded in practices that signify, represent and validate particular ways of knowing and being must be acknowledged as contributing to the ways young people come to make meaning through schooling. According to Kelly (2009)

> to evaluate any curriculum plan or practice credibly, therefore, we need not only an understanding of the technicalities of curriculum planning and innovation but also the ability to discern the underlying values and assumptions of the curriculum specification. (p. 27-28)

In taking this proposition seriously, when schooling is understood as a mechanism of social reproduction—and in Australia, specifically the reproduction of the colonial nation—then understanding the values embedded in the ways the intercultural is interpreted and enacted is of great significance. Yet, teachers occupy a time and space where the formal, curriculum-as-text, curriculum-to-be-implemented or curriculum-as-plan is privileged (Aoki 1993), and hence carving out the emotional space to elaborate and negotiate the relational interdependencies of curriculum enactment as 'co-dwelling' may be challenging and confronting. Given the values and assumptions of school systems, school communities, and individual teachers are often hidden, or at least normalised through everyday practice, critical reflection on how these values shape learning experiences for young people in relation to intercultural understanding is important.

Hidden curriculum is referred to in the literature to attempt to capture the complexity of learning and relationality that is not necessarily accounted for through formal or official instrumentalist productions of curriculum work. The hidden curriculum refers to "the hidden messages from their [students'] participation in classroom activities, by attending school and by virtue of the context of school in society" (Print, 1993, p. 12). These 'hidden messages' account for the common-sense norms, values, attitudes and beliefs that are assumed or taken for granted in the social relations of space—such as the way cultural diversity is produced in local settings. Bernstein (1990) argues that the codes of the hidden curriculum are tacit and work to regulate the kinds of knowledge and meanings that are valued (hidden curriculum) and excluded (null curriculum). According to Bernstein (1990; 1996) the codes of the hidden curriculum are mobilised through pedagogic discourse. Drawing on Bernstein's work, Kidman et al (2013) posit that:

> Pedagogical codes regulate not only the kinds of relationships and interactions that occur in classroom settings, they also frame the kind of knowledge that is considered to be valued and legitimated by pedagogical authorities. (p. 47)

These codes are modulated according to the positionality of particular teachers and the pedagogic practices they employ. However the power relations beyond schools that produce some kinds of knowledge and meaning making as more valued and more valid than others shape the kind of knowledge and meaning making that is tacitly valued in schools. In terms of the Intercultural Capability, it is conceivable that the production of cultural diversity as non-white and as external other (see 1.4) occurs tacitly through the productions of cultural diversity in Australian society more broadly. For a local school whose social practices are shaped by the intersections of the local community and administrative requirements of State education, the hidden curriculum may be conceptualised as “the common normativity that is often at work in all diverse practices of individuals” (Boler and Zembylas, 2003, p. 75). Boler and Zembylas (2003) go on to argue this ‘common normativity’ likely “reflects emotional investments that by and large remain unexamined because they have been woven into the everyday fabric of what is considered common sense” (p. 74). This has implications for intercultural education as it is shaped by locally produced values and norms attached to cultural diversity and understood through the ways culturally diverse individuals and groups are signified and represented in everyday social practices. It is to these locally produced representations of culture and diversity, in the case of intercultural education, that teachers need to be sensitised in order to negotiate a ‘co-dwelling’ of the life worlds of young people and teachers, of intercultural curriculum plans, of curriculum enactment and of this co-dwelling of curriculum experiences as lived (Aoki, 1993). Understanding these everyday constructions of cultural difference creates an opportunity to examine intercultural relations in ways that are founded in practices that promote intercultural understanding.

An exploration of everyday constructions of cultural difference with a view to develop intercultural understanding is an opportunity to examine hidden values and assumptions about culturally diverse groups. Indeed, examining the conditions that produce different kinds of relations with diverse others is described in the Victorian Intercultural Capability curriculum as a core aim. Yet, as the critical intercultural education literature explores (see 2.2), planned intercultural education is often enacted through superficial celebrations of cultural diversity or representations of diversity that externalise difference. This indicates that curriculum work is not neutral and cannot be disentangled from the local and external social, political, cultural and economic orders and dominant values that shape it. The ways that teachers enact intercultural curriculum and engage in intercultural curriculum work could have more to do with personal views and beliefs of individual teachers and the pedagogic positions teachers adopt than the resources or professional development they have access to. I now examine how pedagogy might be implemented as a tool to disrupt intercultural curriculum work as curriculum directive, and advocate for intercultural education as social action grounded in human experience.

3.5 Pedagogic practice: Towards pedagogies of difference

The intercultural is taken as the spaces in-between diverse cultural groups. As such, intercultural education is about the ways people relate across cultural differences with the view to foster positive relations between diverse groups and work towards a socially cohesive future. In seeking to improve inter-group relations there is an implicit imperative to engage with the conditions that make for challenging, tense or volatile relations across cultural differences. For teachers and young people in schools, engaging with these conditions entails risk. This risk is related to the affective or emotional responses triggered by difficult knowledge. As such, this section engages broadly with the concept of pedagogies of discomfort and emotional labour to examine the ways these can be taken up to support a critical intercultural education.

Pedagogic practices are crucial to the work of ‘de-coding’ the socially constructed common sense (and legitimated) ways of knowing, and their so-constructed illegitimate counterparts (Bernstein, 1990; Kidman, et al, 2013). Bernstein’s (1996) notion of pedagogic practice is broad and deeply embedded in everyday social practices. Bernstein (1996) positions pedagogic practice “as a fundamental social context through which cultural reproduction-production takes place” (p. 17) with a focus on “the underlying rules shaping the social construction of pedagogic discourse and its various practices…[including] the way in which knowledge systems become part of consciousness” (p. 17). In terms of schools and teaching, the pedagogic practices of teachers engaging in intercultural work are central to the ways in which common sense knowledge can be conceived, contested, constructed and de/reconstructed. That is, the extent to which dominant ideas and values about cultural diversity are embedded in consciousness can equally become embodied or contested through pedagogic practice.

To disrupt the taken-for-granted assumptions related to cultural diversity and intercultural understanding requires a critical engagement with the values that have become embedded in consciousness. The notion of dialogic pedagogies is useful here. Alexander (2008) argues “pedagogy is the act of teaching together with the ideas, values and beliefs by which that act is informed, sustained and justified” (p. 4). In this sense, pedagogy is not simply a set of steps applied to the delivery of curriculum, as perhaps implied by pedagogical models such as DET’s Victorian Teaching and Learning Model (DET, 2020). For Alexander (2008), pedagogy is the embodiment of teaching and learning processes in relation to the personal philosophical position that informs why teaching processes are employed and enacted in particular ways and places. In this way, pedagogy can be understood as a relational act, a deliberate dialogue between the self (teacher) and other (students), between content and the real-life worlds of young people, between teaching and learning (Senior and Dixon, 2011). Aoki (1984) posits that such a practice is about "an understanding of what is beyond; it is oriented toward making the unconscious conscious" (p. 131). It is in disrupting the 'ends-means' notion of teaching and learning where opportunities for teaching as dialogic co-dwelling emerge.

To return to Aoki (1983) teaching then, as constituted by curriculum domains and practice (pedagogy) is a co-dwelling, that can be conceptualised as lived (Aoki, 1993). Acording to Aoki (1993) "this lived curriculum … is not the curriculum as laid out in a plan, but a plan more or less lived out" (p. 201). In this way, the humanness of teaching and learning as not only 'grounded in human experience' but understood as bodily. That is, through the act of teaching, curriculum is embodied through values, beliefs, emotions and relationality to "encompass both cognitive and bodily dimensions of our experience of the world" (Forgasz and McDonough, 2017, p. 54; cf. Nguyen and Larson, 2015). In response to Lefebvre, Stanek (2014) argues for a pedagogy of the body that cultivates "a practice, addressed to lived experience, to lead it to the level of the perceived world" (p. 34). As such, it is through the embodiment of teaching and learning the rhythms (Lefebvre, 2004, see 4.6) of classrooms as sites of social action can be grasped. Pedagogy in this sense is a dialogic bridge on which actors co-dwell between taught knowledge and skills, the values imbued in validating such knowledge, and the positioning of these in the worlds of young people. In a practical sense, this kind of dialogic co-dwelling requires teachers to bring into conversation her/his knowledge of students with the knowledge of her/his subject area. Yet, according to Alexander (2008), while all teaching is interactive in the most basic sense, not all teaching is dialogic.

Teaching processes such as the Victorian Teaching and Learning Model are procedural and position the teacher and teacher's view as an instrument of authoritative knowledge transmission and production (Alexander, 2008). Such models appear to silence, or at least devalue the ways knowledge production occur relationally between social actors and their diverse positionalities. In such a model, student voice and diverse ways of knowing only carry as much weight as the teacher allows it to. In contrast, a dialogic model attempts to embody not only diverse perspectives in classroom and teacher talk, but is open to alternative positionalities, alternative ways of knowing the world and making meaning in exploring the interconnection between present and past, society and culture, and between inner and outer worlds (Alexander, 2008). In this way, dialogic pedagogies can be seen as open to engaging experiences of difficult knowledge and competing moral truths through curriculum that is understood as lived. For Alexander (2008), teaching is about teaching with the 'bigger picture', but in terms of intercultural understanding, it is also about teaching with critical awareness of one's position as part of the bigger picture—one's position in relation to culturally diverse groups, and one's position in relation to difficult knowledge. According to Alexander (2008):

> For many people, 'pedagogy' means teaching *without* the bigger picture, or what teachers do in classrooms but not why they do it: action, that is to say, divested of its justifications, values, theories, evidence and – especially – divested of that relationship with the wider world that makes teaching an educative process rather than a merely technical one. (p. 1)

To this end, Boler and Zembylas (2003) argue "education explicitly and implicitly, through overt as well as hidden curriculum, shapes and changes individuals to adapt them to dominant cultural values" (p. 76). In understanding pedagogy as an embodied and dialogic practice that is not only situated in-between contested spaces, but also mediates diverse views and positionalities, then pedagogic practice can be understood as social action that mediates (Lefebvre, 1991) across, through and against dominant cultural norms. This conceptualisation of pedagogy offers a way to think about how teachers, through the embodiment of pedagogy and co-dwelling with curriculum and diverse actors, are able to negotiate, resist and challenge dominant cultural values and knowledge productions. Such practices are productive for intercultural education as a way to examine diverse positionalities and sites of social action and examine the 'politics of location' (Hall, 1996) that shape relations across difference.

Intercultural education that pushes beyond acknowledgement, identification and celebration of cultural diversity requires an engagement with questions of why this work is important—and for whom—but also, how to do this work sensitively in response to particular spaces. As Boler and Zembylas (2003) suggest "to engage in critical inquiry [of the production of difference] often means asking students [and teachers] to radically revaluate their worldviews" (p. 74). That is because engaging with education that examines relations between diverse cultural groups to foster understanding and improve relations requires—at times—engaging with difficult knowledge that may implicate teachers and young people in events that are uncomfortable. Zembylas (2017a) draws on Butler's work on affect and vulnerability to argue that schools and teachers reproduce a 'wilful ignorance' by not teaching the "pain and suffering inflicted on another group by one's own community, hence the discomfort to also acknowledge 'their' suffering" (p. 500). Zembylas (2017a) argues that by not incorporating the vulnerability and suffering of others, particularly by one's own community, relations or events that are particularly uncomfortable can be ignored. Whether 'wilful' or unintended, what Zembylas (2017a) calls the 'practice of ignorance' is a problem in schools in Australia when it comes to the emotional work of developing intercultural understanding.

Critical intercultural work requires a level of emotional labour that is not acknowledged in the curriculum framework or pedagogical model DET expect schools and teachers to apply. Emotional labour is essentially the labour entailed in emotional self-regulation through various modes of care and empathy required when working with young people. Crawford et al (2018) summate emotional work in education as "an application of a set of emotional intelligence skills such as self-regulation, social awareness and management of relationships" (p. 25) whereby teachers "have to induce, neutralize or inhibit their emotions so as to render them appropriate to the situation" (Isenbarger and Zembylas, 2006, p. 123). This is important because if intercultural education is taken to mean the critical examination of the in-between sites of social action and the conditions that produce particular kinds of relations between these sites, students and teachers need to be able to confront issues of power and equity that may otherwise remain silent in education. One way to approach this kind of work is through pedagogies of difference (see Trifonas, 2003) that navigates the discomfort of competing moral truths and attempts to engage with positionality to validate alternative—or 'both-and'—accounts of experience and events.

Embracing diverse ways of knowing and learning is easier said than done. The sustained pressures on teachers' work related to standardisation and performance culture has engendered what Alexander (2008) terms a ‘pedagogy of compliance’. The politics of culture and difference and discourses of fear towards culturally diverse others do not encourage the emotional room (Elder et al, 2004) to engage in critical conversations about cultural diversity and intercultural understanding. And in functional terms, competing educational agendas mean schools need to prioritise engagement with multiple educational imperatives based on their school community and available resources. These negotiations of administration and regulation in the conceived spaces of schools occur across and through complex social relations and structures of power, as well as within the hierarchy of value that shapes the ways dominant cultural codes and forms of knowledge are (re)produced (Bernstein, 1996). In addition, teachers hold diverse and contested views about the extent to which teaching intercultural understanding is their job. These trajectories mingle in local spaces, further enabling or constraining positions towards intercultural education. DEECD (2012) recognise that unless teachers have had access to quality professional development, and schools have comprehensive strategies and supports in place to manage the potential challenges that arise in doing intercultural work, teachers are not likely to venture beyond a superficial implementation of the Capability. Yet the pedagogic framework and resources provided to support teachers doing intercultural work do not inspire confidence to confront, prompt or respond to questions of bias, but rather seem to condone a position of neutrality (Bernstein, 1990; Dallmayr, 1996). While competing administrative and systemic pressures play into the ways intercultural education is taken up in local school settings, there is also a sense that teachers need to take some responsibility for their own positionality and practices that may enable a ‘wilful ignorance’ (Zembylas, 2017a) of difficult knowledge to be maintained.

3.6 Conclusion

In chapter two I argued that an intercultural education focused on cultivating positive relations between diverse cultural groups requires an engagement with the spaces in-between self and other. Such an examination would require engaging with the conditions that constitute particular kinds of relations between particular spaces of self and other—spaces that are local and situated. At times, this kind of examination would give rise to difficult knowledge that—in taking intercultural work seriously—needs to be confronted. In this chapter I extended this argument by examining the production of space as social. I have drawn on Lefebvre and Massey to understand space as produced relationally across conceived, perceived and lived dimensions of space. This theorisation of space enables an examination of intersections between the local and elsewhere to understand how identity and relations with cultural difference are constituted differently in different spaces. This is helpful for grasping how opportunities for intercultural education are shaped by local spaces, but also for thinking about how intercultural education might use local relations with cultural difference as an anchor for developing intercultural understanding. Following this, concepts of curriculum and pedagogy that cultivate a sensitivity to diverse positionalities in relation to experiences of cultural difference can be productively developed and applied to support a critical intercultural education.

I explore the broad concepts of curriculum and pedagogy to argue for translations and enactments of intercultural curriculum in ways that account for multiple or alternative experiences of intercultural relations—the ‘both-and’ of contested spaces. Such an approach relies on a level of emotional labour to deal with the discomfort experienced by teachers and young people when engaging difficult knowledge. The orders that govern the conceived and perceived spaces of schools add competing pressure to teachers’ time and resources. These pressures intersect with the ways local school communities shape the prioritisation, translation and enactment of educational directives such as the Intercultural Capability. While the conditions teachers are working under are complex and often constrained, teachers need to take steps to ensure their own practices do not further marginalise or discredit alternate experiences of intercultural spaces to maintain a ‘wilful ignorance’ (Zembylas, 2017a) of competing—and uncomfortable—moral truths. Pedagogies that actively engage with difference, such as Boler and Zembylas’ (2003) pedagogy of discomfort, can be taken up in relation to intercultural education to foreground affective responses to difficult knowledge. For intercultural education to achieve its democratic aims, issues related to emotional labour and difficult knowledge can be productively engaged through curriculum and pedagogies of difference. I argue that such an approach would shift the focus of intercultural education away from representations of culturally diverse groups, towards action that cultivates positive intergroup relations.

Chapter 4
Methodology

This chapter maps the details of my study design. In this study I needed to balance the complexity of the concepts of culture and difference in teachers' work, while also contain the study to a manageable scope. It took me a long time to begin to grasp the politics of different knowledge traditions and how different theoretical tools can and can't be used together. For a novice researcher, it really is a minefield. As such, this chapter navigates some of that struggle and explains my choice to call my study an ethnographic case study. I provide details on how I generated data and examine rhythmanalysis as a suitable analysis tool for grasping the ways teachers work is shaped by divisions of time and labour and social action that produce cultural difference and intercultural work in competing ways. I then introduce the site of the study—Hillside High School—and the six teachers who participated in this study, followed by a discussion of the limitations and ethical implications of this kind of study, and how the findings and discussion chapters are structured.

4.1 An ethnographic case study

This study is an examination of six teachers' experiences at one secondary school in outer Melbourne, Australia. I observed and asked these teachers about the kinds of intercultural work they do. And I observed and asked about the kinds of things that shape the nature of their intercultural work. Early on, I set out to do a narrative inquiry—I was interested in the teachers at the school as storytellers and the kinds of stories they were positioned to tell about cultural difference and intercultural understanding through their intercultural work. But the study came to be about more than this. It wasn't just the teachers and their stories that mattered, it was their experiences at *this* school and the way productions of cultural difference at *this* site shape their opportunities to engage in intercultural work. As such, it was not just the teachers and their work that was the focus of study, but the site itself and the dynamic relations of this space between teachers, young people, the physical space, teaching and learning, its rhythms and the symbolic attachments constructed across the school's spaces. In this way, the study is ethnographic. I was immersed at the school and came to understand Hillside High School, in ethnographic terms, as its own social system

(Walters, 2015). And while I was deeply engaged with the idea of doing an ethnography, I still struggled with whether my study was really an ethnography or whether it was a case study? And could it be both?

According to Cresswell (1998), ethnography seeks to understand a cultural or social group or system within its everyday setting with the aim to create a holistic portrait of that group or system. For Hammersley (2006) ethnography is “a form of social and educational research that emphasises the importance of studying *at first hand* what people do and say in particular contexts” (p. 4). This is achieved by being immersed in the daily ongoings of a community or setting over an extensive period of time. While this may be true of more ‘traditional’ anthropological ethnographers, ethnographic research in the social sciences does not always occur in this way (Hammersley, 2006). None the less, immersion is crucial in qualitative—and particularly ethnographic—research (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2003). While I was immersed at the site, I didn’t spend every hour of every day as part of the school community. According to Hammersley (2006), “many sociological ethnographers focus on what happens in a particular work locale or social institution when it is in operation” (p. 4)—that is, part-time. This also characterises my study. I spent two or three days each week at the school for half of a school year getting to know, observing and talking with teachers at the site. I had six teachers from the school who agreed to participate in my study more closely. While there were stories that came up about the families of students and school community more broadly, and I travelled via surrounding suburbs to the site, I was not immersed in ethnographic research beyond the site of the school itself.

Hammersley (2006) suggests “anthropologists have generally insisted on locating what goes on inside schools within the context of the local community in which the children, and perhaps even the teachers, live” (p. 5). That is, what goes on in schools is deeply connected to what goes on in the community. This is a stance that I explore in my thesis, but I did not spend time immersed with families and the community outside of school, I relied on the experiences of the teachers and my observations and interactions in the school more broadly to inform the interconnections between community and school. In this way, my study is somewhat bounded. Delamont and Atkinson (1980) argue in relation to educational ethnography that sociologists tend to focus on what happens inside school buildings—that is, the particular relations, groups and systems of schools as institutions. My study does this, but it also tries to understand these particular relations in the context of their social setting. As such, my study sits somewhere between the institutional and socially contextual constructions of ethnography. It is closely located in the physical school site, and recognises that teachers' intercultural work as holistic, as more than what happens in their classrooms, and as a product of complex and intersecting relations of space, identity and culture. In this way, the intercultural work of these teachers is "enmeshed in a cultural system" (Wolcott, 2003, p. 334) of the school, while simultaneously connected to spaces beyond the school. While there are aspects of this work that are deeply ethnographic, I have found it useful to think about my study as a case that draws on an ethnographic approach to participant relations, data generation and analytical writing. As such, my study is methodologically ethnographic, while the object of study is a case.

Cresswell (1998) distinguishes a case study from ethnography as an examination of a bounded system that aims to demonstrate uniqueness or an in-depth illustration of an issue. In this sense, my study examines the rich context of a bounded system—the experiences of six teachers at one school site doing intercultural work. This study foregrounds not only context, but the production of space, to understand teachers intercultural work as enacted not on the surface of space, but through situated relations of space. Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier (2013) argue that case study in educational research offers a way to "capture the complexity of learning and teaching and the contexts and communities surrounding them" (p. 3). In this way, a case is constituted by a situated examination of teaching and learning within a complex network of spatial relations. Furthering this, Dyson and Genishi (2005) argue "cases are constructed not found" (p. 2). That is, the phenomenon or object of study is not latent, waiting to be discovered, rather through close inquiry of a particular space from a particular angle, a case or in-depth illustration of a particular phenomenon can be made. As such, a case enables inquiry into local specificity while being attentive to broader social conditions or phenomenon (Geertz, 1973). In this sense, a case is the object of study—in the case of this study, local productions of cultural difference at one school as experienced by six teachers—with an aim to illustrate a broader point—the ways opportunities for intercultural work are shaped by local productions of cultural difference. As such, I have positioned this study as an ethnographic case study.

To further develop the design of this study as ethnographic in form and function, I now examine my researcher perspective as ‘insider-outsider’ and Lefebvre’s (2004) concept of ‘seen from the window’ as a way to position and foreground the concepts of space and rhythm in relation to my perspective. Once I have established my researcher perspective, I make a case for applying the particular tools and methods taken up in this study for data generation and analysis, before introducing the school site and teacher participants in detail.

4.2 Examining the ‘insider-outsider’ researcher perspective: Lefebvre’s ‘seen from the window’

The work of ethnography is referred to as a *study at first hand* (Hammersley, 2006) of the lives and experiences of others, and to interpret and represent these lives to construct meaning. It is pertinent to ask: from whose perspective is meaning being constructed, for who, and for what purpose? These questions point towards a key tension of accounting for subjectivity in a *first hand* approach to research. For Campbell and Lassiter (2015) “ethnography inhabits very particular ways of being, by which we mean ways of encountering, thinking about, interpreting and acting in the world around us” (p. 1). Such ‘ways of being’ assume a reflexivity that can both challenge and change assumptions and dispositions. In this way, Geertz, as described by Olson (1991), “rails against notions of ethnographic research that assume that researchers must be objective, detached, scientifically uninvolved in the community under investigation” (p. 246). The ethnographic researcher can be thought of as the research instrument through which the experiences and data are interpreted (Gordon, 2015). De Beauvoir (1989) argues the body “is the instrument of our grasp on the world” (p. 66). That is not to say that accountability for one’s subjectivity can be absolved, but rather it is through our own experiences and position in relation to others that we create meaning. Rosaldo (1989) suggests ethnographic researchers are ‘positioned observers’ whereby “all interpretations are provisional; they are made by positioned subjects who are prepared to know certain things and not others” (p. 8). Some, like Woods (1986) argue that it is the role of the ethnographer to “try to rid themselves of any presuppositions they might have about the situation under study” (p. 5) to observe the phenomenon in its natural setting. In any case, ethnographic research can be conceptualised as a reflexive practice whereby the researcher synthesises and analyses experiences, observations and accounts of the research object at the research site through themselves. This reflexive practice materialises through textual representations—ethnographic writing—whereby the researcher writes fieldnotes, transcribes conversations, reflects on events of space and produces texts. This iterative process brings together observation with participant accounts and subjective positionalities of the researcher and the participants in representations that are always provisional and accountable (Denzin, 1997).

One important aspect of researcher subjectivity is not only transparency about how the researcher is positioned in relation to the object of study and those involved in research activities, but a commitment to the contingencies of human relationships (Campbell and Lassiter, 2015). In chapter one I describe two events that brought me to this study—the Cronulla riots and a schoolyard incident between Kyle, Nasiba and myself. These events—one a watershed moment about larger social and cultural relations across difference, and the other an everyday and casual moment of racism and sexism—began to frame my view around the extent to which intercultural education can address deep-seeded cultural divides that materialise locally in banal and off-hand ways. As a white, working-middle class woman, I have not had first-hand experience of racism in my everyday life in Australia, but I have witnessed many racist incidents, and in ways that make me uncomfortable. Racism was an ordinary part of my experience growing up in the 80’s and 90’s in Australia. In relation to the teacher participants, I am also a teacher with recent classroom experience, yet a beginner researcher, and viewed the teachers in my study as colleagues and co-constructors—we really were trying to make sense of the research journey together (Campbell and Lassiter, 2015).

The conditions described above position me in the research and in relation to the teacher participants. At Hillside High School I occupied a space on the margins between insider and outsider. I am an insider by virtue of having been a teacher in Victorian high schools and have in common many understandings about the teaching profession. I also share many cultural norms with the teachers in my study. I am not however, a teacher at Hillside High School and I am not a local to the Hills community, and in this sense, I am an outsider, viewing that which is familiar from an external perspective. According to Hammersley and Atkinson (2003) adopting a ‘marginal position’ between two worlds can help facilitate reflexivity. For Lefebvre (2004), it is “necessary to situate oneself simultaneously inside and outside” (p. 37) in an iterative relationship between positionality within and beyond the site. According to Lefebvre (2004) “a certain exteriority enables the analytic intellect to function” (p. 37). That is, a ‘certain exteriority’ enables the particularities of a scene or event to be held in view of the conditions that shape it and is a productive way to embody the researcher position as insider-outsider.

Lefebvre (2004) uses the metaphor ‘seen from the window’ to describe the way a scene or a space can be both observed and felt. For Lefebvre, the body is crucial to understanding the ways people exist in the world, the body—through the senses—is an instrument of grasping meaning. Our body is our own reference point to the world and to others. As such, when doing qualitative research, the researcher must be close enough to feel, sense, grasp and be grasped by the energy of the space being observed, while being removed enough to see the interconnectedness of particular events and interactions within a broader scene, or what Lefebvre calls ‘horizons’ (2004). In this way, the metaphor of ‘seen from the window’ is productive. If one is looking out from an open window onto a busy street it is possible to watch and trace the movement of people, hear the sounds of cars and feet on pavement, of street vendors and roaming dogs, take in the stench of traffic or aroma of fresh bread, and feel the pulsing rhythms of people moving through space and time. From the window it is possible to both look closely at a particular interaction while simultaneously having view of the whole scene as well as the distant horizons that shape it. This approach enabled me to view across what was happening in particular spaces at Hillside High School, while being sensitive to the bigger picture and seeking to better understand the ways spaces beyond particular classrooms shape the kinds of relations and interactions that were taking place. This kind of approach encouraged a sensitivity to the tension between the particular and the conditions—or horizons—that shape the particular.

For me there was always a risk that in positioning myself, or being positioned by others, as too much of an insider, that familiar events and interactions could be taken for granted (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2003). I felt this particularly so as I have worked in similar schools with a similar demographic of teachers and young people. However, to ‘see from a window’ proved a way to focus my attention towards productions of cultural difference in different spaces at the school while maintaining a perspective that could connect these moments to broader social and cultural conditions. This proved important for conceptualising my study as an ethnographic case because, as with

Walters (2015), I take the interactions of the teachers in this study—and the young people they work with—as part of the social relations, practices and processes that shape their identity, rather than bounded solely to a particular school space. As such, 'seen from the window' was a way to bridge multiple perspectives within the frame of productions of cultural difference and intercultural work. Furthering this, the view from the window became a way to use my body as an analytical tool attuned to everything present at a given moment (Christie, 2013), to grasp and be grasped by the rhythms of social spaces, the kinds of rhythms associated with productions of cultural difference, and how these rhythms shape teachers' intercultural work. This concept of rhythm and rhythmanalysis will be introduced and discussed below (see 4.6).

4.4 Negotiating access to the school and doing data generation

Before settling on constructing my project as an ethnographic case, I had thought that I would try to access two or three secondary schools in order to understand how productions of cultural difference at different educational sites shape opportunities for intercultural work differently. I was less interested in doing a comparative study and more interested in the different ways social relations and practices intersect in schools in ways that shape teachers' work differently. I initially set out optimistically to approach a number of public schools with diverse demographics and social arrangements in urban and regional settings, but came up against notable hesitation from school leaders, and at times resistance, to a project seeking to understand cultural difference and intercultural work—an issue in itself worth exploring at another time. At the time I had been working with a teacher I met through a mutual colleague providing feedback on resources she had been developing for a professional association in relation to the ethical capability in the current Victorian curriculum. I had mentioned my study to her and she was very interested to be a part of it. Kindly, she spoke to her school principal and advocated for the study. After some negotiation I was able to access Hillside High School as my research site. Part of the criteria for site selection was demographic. I had wanted to examine the way schools with differing demographics and cultural make-ups engaged with notions of the intercultural, and to what extent the demographic context of schools shaped these engagements. Rather than having a sample of different kinds of school contexts, I had one. Hillside was predominantly 'white' and is situated in a community that has experienced very limited social and cultural change. Initially, I had some reservations about conducting my research at this one site, however, in drawing on my own experience of teaching in predominantly 'white' schools, I was confident the findings would offer rich insights into the complexities teachers face in doing intercultural work in this kind of setting. This shift to a single school site however, as with Wolcott (2003) reflecting on his experiences in coming to become an ethnographer, meant I had to find a way to write about my research with a focus on particularity, rather than the lure of generalisabilities. This has required coming to terms with what the 'data' actually says, and what I can say about it. As such, this also required reconciling my own misconceptions about what qualitative research is and the underlying value in an in-depth study of one particular site to garner something more than the obvious (Wolcott, 2003).

Hillside High is situated on the fringe of Melbourne's eastern suburbs and the village was described by the Principal as a 'rural enclave'. Hillside High School was established in 1936 and is described by Fen, one of the teacher participants at the school, as a comprehensive high school, by which he meant that the school aims to provide a comprehensive education experience, rather than focus narrowly on academic achievement, rankings and success metrics. Hillside High School is a kind of touchstone for the local community and has close connections with the local fire brigade and sporting clubs, where many students and teachers are members. All teachers at the school are white, approximately 20-30% have been teaching at the school for more than 20 years, and approximately 20% of teachers are past students of the school. The teachers in this study are broadly representative of this wider demographic. The school has approximately 800 students and almost 70 staff, with 4% of students from a language background other than English and no identified Indigenous students (ACARA, 2020).

Below is a description of my first encounters at Hillside High School, and an example of my fieldnotes, capturing my initial experiences of the school and some of its teachers:

> *Driving, winding up and around the snaking road, my car is engulfed in fog. A deep, still, quiet fog, penetrated only by the headlights of an occasional passing car. It's still early and the light bathes the hills in a blue hue. I swoop up and over a rise, around a bend to where the fog is beginning to give way to shards of weak*

sunlight, revealing the rolling hills, cattle, and forested peaks and gullies in the distance. How quickly I seem to have moved from the bustle of the 'burbs to the stillness of the bush. As I converge on the village, the school is quickly upon me and I miss the turnoff. Hillside High School (a pseudonym) is a towering 1930's red brick institution solemnly standing on the side of the foothills as if it were surveying the surrounding village and bush. Despite the steep gullies and narrow valley, it is known as the 'Flatlands'. It is not far in distance from the city, but it feels like a rural enclave. At the school, repeated significant rain events have begun to rip 'temporary' buildings in half and wash them down the easement. On this first visit to the school, plans for demolition had begun, clearing the way for new long term facilities. Parking is impossible but some construction workers at the site let me park at their site office. The Principal meets me in his office and talks about the bushfire risk looming in the steep gully outside his window, the promise and possibilities that the new facilities will provide, and the plots of land and caravans and houses hidden by the hills and trees beyond the school that provide cover for the blended families living in multi-generational poverty. These homes are neighbour to flashy, new multi-million-dollar homes with views over the flatlands and foothills to the city. We chat about the project and the school—he is concerned it will not be generative for me as it is predominantly a 'white' school—I insist that intercultural education is not about visible diversity in school communities, and we agree on a time for me to come back and present to the staff to invite teachers to participate.

After the holidays I return to the school and present briefly to a room full of teachers. Mostly they look tired, and even though some nod as I speak in some kind of tentative agreement, I feel an air of impatience to get back to the immediacy of things they need to get done. This is the first time they have met me, and I am trying to generate interest enough to recruit a handful of participants for my study. In my mind I'm telling myself not to talk too much, to be cool, don't scare people away! I speak briefly about the context for the study and then provide some administrative details. The school's curriculum team leader stands up after I present and explains or perhaps cautions that the school has taken a 'conservative' approach to the curriculum's general capabilities—including the Intercultural Capability, and as such the formal assessment of these capabilities occurs only in the languages. It feels like he is being pre-emptive of what I might find and offering some kind of olive branch. In what seems to be an attempt to be helpful to my recruitment efforts, he implores teachers from languages and the humanities to

> *join my study. The Physical Education/Health/Outdoor Education team immediately turn and high five each other—they are off the hook. For now. I try and hide my disappointment.*
>
> *Some weeks later after negotiating access and schedules with participants and the school, I return. It's 8am. I park in the temporary visitor car park behind the primary school next door as the construction works are well underway. It's early. Period 1 does not start until 8:50, and yet already students are rolling in, gathering in small groups, laughing, talking, swapping homework, handing in forms to the office. I sign in and wait for the assistant principal—Phill—for my induction. At the end of my induction Phill hands me a single sheet of A4 paper – it's the student self-assessment matrix for the Intercultural Capability component of the year 7 'Notables' project and confesses: "It's easy for teachers. It ticks the box. Do students understand the nuances of culture? Probably not."*

Across two school terms I visited Hillside High School two to three days each week, observing and participating in classes, teacher meetings, yard duty, lunchtime netball, and informal conversations about schools, teaching, learning, students and life beyond the school. My role varied depending on the situation, often moving between researcher, participant observer (Clifford, 1988), classroom assistant, colleague and teacher. In recognising the diverse settings within schools, Hopwood (2015) argues, the 'territories' in schools are multiple and diverse and often come with specific social practices. It is important for an ethnographic researcher to work with intent (Wolcott, 2005) across and between territories, and adopting appropriate social practices to avoid just being in the field (Hopwood, 2015; Wolcott, 2005). This required me to do more than simply *be* at a site expecting to garner understanding, I needed to participate in the daily rituals and practices of the site through a conscious engagement in order to experience the site 'first hand' and construct understanding relationally. During and after classes, meetings and interactions I wrote basic fieldnotes or "descriptive accounts of people, scenes and dialogue, as well as personal experiences and reactions" (Emerson et al, 2001, p. 353). These accounts do not simply record facts or attempt to mirror reality (Atkinson, 1992), but "provide a critical first opportunity to write down and hence to develop initial interpretations and analyses" (Emerson et al, 2001, p. 361). Writing my view of the landscape as an insider-outsider was an act of describing and narrating moments from my time at Hillside, I attempt to capture the rhythms of space and time that grasped me, descriptions that are positioned according to my view of the landscape as an insider-outsider. These descriptions and recounts are included throughout the thesis and are brought together with the words of my participants to provide thick descriptions of experiences of cultural difference and intercultural education at this school. This approach endeavoured not to reduce insights as fixed or final, but as provisional and positioned. Over time I have built an archive of exchanges and moments, which describe elements of Hillside's community and culture, of particular classes and particular kinds of teachers positioned and positioning themselves in particular ways. The insights and experiences from my observations fold into the questions that drive the study and the types of interactions I have had with my participants in the field.

4.5 Six teachers, one school, over six months

When I initially visited the school to speak at a whole-staff meeting about my project, I provided a brief contextual overview and outlined what my research sought to do. I explained that I would seek to observe an agreed class once or twice a week over the two school terms, and that those interested in participating would also be involved in two conversational interviews and three focus groups. After I presented, teachers were given the opportunity to speak with me for more information. Those who were interested were provided with an explanatory statement and consent form that contained further details and contact information. The six participants introduced below (see Table 4.1) volunteered directly after my presentation at the staff meeting. From that point I negotiated with each teacher a class to observe and days and times that were generally better for catching up and getting involved in the daily activities of the school. Across half a year I observed the classes of these six teachers. Below I introduce each participant in terms of their role and position in the school and I draw on interview data where they seemed to speak freely about their experiences with cultural diversity. These short portraits provide a sense of each participant and the way they positioned themselves generally in relation to cultural diversity and the intercultural. I then discuss the ways in which I worked with the teachers during my time at Hillside.

Nic – year seven Art

Nic is an art teacher and had worked at Hillside for 16 years. It's the only school she had taught at during her career. She takes art across all year levels, but I observed and participated in her year seven class—at the time she was running an Indigenous art project that she thought might be interesting for me to observe. When I first spent time with Nic it was career counselling day, and I observed the middle years team help the students with their subject selection for senior school. In between meetings with students, Nic asked me not to 'judge her' when I observed her year seven class. She explained the difficulties she had with them, the anxiety she felt getting them to cooperate and be responsible with the art materials and her approach to managing difficult students. She worried that she was, in her words, a "shit" teacher. She described her own experiences of cultural diversity in the following way:

> I'm like these guys [the students], I only had a handful of Indigenous people at my school. All I learnt in primary school was Australian history from the white man's point of view. It's only been in the last couple of years where I have a very strong group of female friends who I know through roller derby. One of them is an Indigenous American and she's super vocal and fighting, so to be an ally with her has definitely made it [my commitment to diversity and calling out racism] stronger. Also, a lot of the artists that I enjoy studying are dealing with this post-colonial discourse, and it's been about five years where I just try and teach, at least, one Indigenous artist in senior art every year.

Luke – year eight English

Luke teaches English and humanities in the junior years (years seven and eight), senior level psychology and senior VCAL, the latter being the core subject for the students studying a vocational program at the school. He was also the senior school program coordinator, which meant he looked after the administration and organisation of extra-curricular events and activities such as camps, incursions, and special events like the school formal. Luke had been teaching for more than 25 years and had been at Hillside for 20 years. I observed and participated in his year eight English class. He reflected on his experiences with cultural diversity as follows:

> In terms of me as a student, I was in a little country town where you were all white people and there was a little group of Indigenous and that was it. That was the only thing. And it wasn't a fantastic relationship with that. Like, you have your—it's not

> necessarily tokenistic if you said “I’m friends with this kid who’s Indigenous” but that’s it. But it was because you didn’t necessarily experience it, all you saw was the negative stereotype part. Then when I went to high school, my high school was the most multicultural high school in New South Wales and there were six of us who were Anglo in Year 12 and the other 80 or 90 [students] were from about 20 different countries.
>
> At school, because the Greeks had been here longer and the Italians had been here longer, you got to talk to them and hang with them. Then the Turks would hate the Greeks and they’d be at each other, the Vietnamese hated the Chinese and whatever. So it was very interesting there. Then my teaching in different schools generally, the schools I’ve taught at have been very monocultural. I taught at a country school in Pakenham – well, 20 years ago it was a country school, then I moved to the outer south-east, which was then very [country] but not now, and then coming here which still is very sort of monocultural. It’s interesting.

Fen – year nine Humanities

Fen is a senior art teacher who also teaches year nine humanities. He had a senior leadership role at the school where he was responsible for professional development. He had been teaching at Hillside since 2010, moving from another school where he had taught for a number of years. I observed and participated in his year nine humanities class. In describing growing up and moments that have shaped how he approaches cultural diversity, he said:

> I guess, no. I don’t know. I’m not sure. I don’t know. No, I don’t know. I grew up here [in the Hills], so my exposure to cultural difference was pretty limited, but we’d go into the city and go and do things at the time, typical middle-class, left-wing parents who did stuff.
>
> Mum was one of the people who set up the Chinese museum in Chinatown, so she was involved in that through Museums Victoria, so we’d be involved in that sort of stuff. We did a lot of wandering through dunes looking at fossils and did a lot of studies on various things. Mum is a historian. I remember when Romper Stomper came out and there was a lot of boys in school who were really into thinking that they can become skinheads, seeing that kind of thing and just thinking, this is a really small weird part of the world. I didn’t like it. I never liked racism. My involvement with subcultures like skateboarding – there wasn’t any

> racism in skateboarding. There's a whole lot of other issues, but you didn't have that.

Willo – year nine Japanese

Willo is and early career teacher and at the time of this project she was a second-year graduate teacher who teaches years seven to nine Japanese and year nine English. She began at Hillside when she graduated, securing a job after completing a teaching placement at the school. I observed and participated in one of her year nine Japanese classes. In describing formative moments in the way she thinks about cultural diversity she said:

> It's funny, like, I don't think there's any really one instance because, to me, it's always been there. Like, my grandparents, well there's my mum's dad, he's from Italy. So he moved here when he was 12 and so did his family. So we have the Italian background on that side, and actually on my dad's side as well. So even when I was a kid, we would be down in Brunswick and stuff or in Carlton and we'd go for coffees and he'd be talking to other people in Sicilian back and forth and that kind of stuff. And so from a very young age, just having all that kind of language, not hearing English necessarily, but hearing different languages and stuff and just understanding that I can walk down the road and get Indian food or walk down the road and there'd be Greek food and there'd be people talking different languages, it was just very normal to me just from a very young age. So I think even then when I was growing up, I was always more open to that [cultural diversity] because it was just something that was part of when I was a young kid. So it was never positioned as a strange thing or as an other or anything like that.
>
> I started out at school in the inner-north, but we moved up here [to the Hills] when I was 7 and I went to school locally. So, I moved from somewhere that was very cosmopolitan and then moved up here and it was like 'okay'. And I remember when I first moved up here I hated it because I was like, there's nothing to do, there's nowhere to go, I can't get any good food, like, what's going on? So, I don't know. Because I think, like, all these kinds of schools in this area [the Hills] are very homogenous.

Michelle – year ten international food studies

Michelle had worked at Hillside High School for nearly ten years. In addition to teaching food technology and business studies, Michelle's role at the school over the years has focused on the school's program for students with disabilities. Her current position as a learning specialist involved administering and managing the intervention programs for literacy and numeracy. I observed and participated in her year ten international food studies class. In reflecting on her own experiences with cultural diversity, she said:

> I am getting to an age now where my grandparents and my mum were post war and Second World War, that played a big part in their outlook. I probably grew up with a fair degree of distrust of Asian cultures, which I think is rooted back in that post-war sort of thinking. Coupled with the fact that I grew up here [the Hills] and there wasn't a lot of different cultures represented, apart from there's a lot of Dutch people and German people. Yeah and so as I said before, I probably didn't experience a lot of other cultures until I went to University. I would say that family thing probably initially shaped the way that I thought, but I guess alongside that was that you give people a go.
>
> My grandparents I'm talking about, had a very strong mistrust of particularly Japanese people, but people that are different, come from different countries generally. But some of their closest friends were Sri Lankan, so even for them it wasn't a blocker of getting to know people and being friendly to people. I guess those two things were sort of side by side, yes people from other countries have harmed us in the past, or whatever that attitude is, but you give people a go.

Ani – year 11 philosophy

Ani had been at Hillside High School for 11 years. She had not taught elsewhere, although she had worked closely with many other schools through her work with a professional association. She teaches senior philosophy and year nine and ten humanities. Ani was also the year ten coordinator and leading teacher responsible for student wellbeing and developing teacher pedagogic practice. I observed and participated in her year 11 philosophy class. In thinking about her experiences with cultural diversity, she said:

> Well, I would say probably up to the age of 14 I lived a pretty – actually, that's not quite true. I'll say it for the moment and then I'll go back. But quite a culturally

> isolated life. Like, I grew up in Gippsland surrounded by potato farmers. My cultural background was formed around the local football club, but predominantly it was white, Anglo culture. Then we moved to Wangaratta, the same but probably more dairy farmers in the area. My grandparents were Dutch, and my father was born in Holland but doesn't speak any – well, he came here when he was 3, but there were always stories of him being beaten up because he couldn't speak English for a long time. We celebrated Saint Nicholas, and to my horror, my auntie was Black Pete most years – now to my horror. At the time I didn't know any better. Then we moved to the United States.
>
> There's one image that never leaves me of a boy who probably would've been my age and he had some kind of condition, like cerebral palsy, quite severe, could walk but wasn't really walking, couldn't really talk, he just sort of screamed, and he was panhandling on the streets for money. And it just sort of shocked me that such a so-called great country could still allow this kind of thing to happen. When I came back to Australia and going to Melbourne and realising that it's not much better here, yeah, that really shifted my view of the world. I've been involved in a lot of political activism through Food Not Bombs in the States and here, and Indigenous stuff here in Victoria. At university I really fell into philosophy, and I just fell in love with it because even though you still come away with a lot more questions, at least it gave me a framework by which to think about things, I could at least find a pathway through my mind.

Being aware of the positionalities of these teachers is useful in order to better understand how subjectivities intersect across school spaces to contribute to the ways cultural diversity is produced and intercultural education is translated and enacted. Engaging with our own subjectivities offers a way to think about how we are all enabled and constrained in different ways to engage with issues of cultural difference and the development of intercultural understanding. In the same way, I understand the experiences of these teachers through my own experience, while they too understand situated productions of cultural difference and their role as intercultural workers through their own experiences. It is through dialogue across our differences and our unique positionalities that we constructed meaning from our shared experiences of productions of cultural difference at Hillside and how these productions shape opportunities for intercultural work in their classrooms. I now examine how I worked with teachers to generate data.

Table 4.1 – Overview of teacher participants

Teacher participants	Subject area	Years teaching	Professional position
Nic	Art	16 years	Classroom teacher
Luke	Psychology, English, humanities, and vocational studies	25 years +	Senior school coordinator; leading teacher: program coordinator
Fen	Art, graphic design, and humanities	16 years	Leading teacher: professional development
Willo	Japanese and English	2 years	Classroom teacher
Michelle	Food studies and business studies	13 years	Learning specialist: literacy and numeracy intervention
Ani	Philosophy and humanities	11 years	Senior school coordinator; leading teacher: professional practice

Doing data generation at Hillside High School

Campbell and Lassiter (2015) say of ethnographic work:

> Engaging in the complexities of fieldwork also means engaging the complexities of human relationships. Those relationships, of course, are framed by the dynamics of experience, through which we participate in people's lives and engage them in dialogue. To be open to this process is to be open to experience itself, to its often unanticipated twists and turns, and to the unexpected places it may take us. (p. 4)

Ethnographic work is messy. This kind of work is relational and constructed through shared experiences and dialogue about experiences that construct provisional meanings. In this relationship trust is crucial. Trust needs to be cultivated through relationships built as people and as teachers sharing the practices and challenges of day-to-day work. The importance of these relationships was central to the ways I engaged with teachers and established the expectations for the way I would participate in their classes, and the way semi-structured interviews and focus groups were conducted and analysed. As with Campbell and Lassiter (2015) above, I worked hard to be open to the unexpected places that these complex conversations went. Indeed, it was in part the unexpected complexities that contributed to the theoretical and methodological struggle I experienced, as the experiences of fieldwork could not neatly be accounted for.

The teachers engaged in two one-on-one semi-structured interviews and three semi-structured focus groups with groups of up to three teachers together (see Appendix 1). It was important for this study to understand the complex relations between people, school subjects, curriculum and space and as such conducting both one-on-one interviews and collegial focus groups provided opportunities for teachers to speak freely individually, while also reflect, debate and construct meaning with their colleagues. This approach provided opportunity for teachers to engage in dialogue about the nature of intercultural work at their school with and through different perspectives, resulting in accounts of intercultural work that complicate simplistic notions of curriculum and practice. Interviews occurred at the beginning and end of my fieldwork, while focus groups occurred every four to six weeks across the six months of fieldwork. Formal activities were audio-recorded. Notes were taken during these activities to capture some of the gestures and silences. While the interviews and focus groups produced a series of texts, these cannot be stripped of the shared meaning making processes at work during these interactions. These texts are an artefact of a social and relational experience, and as such capture the words that are spoken, but also the silences, the pauses, the laughter, the gestures, the rhythms and the body of the experience that forms part of the meaning making process.

A conundrum as a researcher doing this kind of interpretive work is what to do with these accounts when I accept that I "can no longer directly capture lived experience" (Denzin, 1997, p. 3) or represent experiences as finite or complete. As Scheurich (1995), in drawing on Mishler (1986) argues, "what occurs in a specific interview is contingent on the specifics of individuals, space and time" (Scheuric, 1995, p. 240). As such, I recognise that teachers' responses to the prompts I presented were situated in the interview or focus group at a particular time and space with particular teachers. This became evident to me in using similar prompts across focus groups and individual interviews and seeing the shifts in the ways participants responded when alone compared to when in a group. The existing dynamics between participants, and the relationship participants had made with me shaped the ways they responded to prompts in a variety of circumstances. In addition, as Denzin (1997) asserts, interview dialogues are "always more than what is said or seen … The unsaid, the assumed, and the silences in any discourse provide the flesh and bone – the backdrop against which meaning is established" (p. 37–38). This 'flesh and bone' provides the 'thick' descriptions (Geertz, 1973) that offer an account of experience and also say something of the subjective positionalities we all occupy. As such, it is my work as an ethnographer to produce messy and complex textual accounts that are true to the particularities of situations and experiences, and that illuminate the complexity and risk of teachers' intercultural work. This kind of work requires not only reflexive thinking, but also a reflexive writing practice that "turns ethnographical and theoretical texts back 'onto each other" (Denzin, 1997, p. xii). A kind of writing whereby the various positions of participants and my interpretations and theoretical analysis offer a range of perspectives on the central theme that aim to broaden and complicate the research question.

Data generated in this study takes the form of texts generated through fieldwork, teachers' accounts and experiences, incidental conversations, interviews and focus groups. These texts (see Appendix 4) put stock in human experience and value the insights that diverse subjects can provide in understanding complex relational work, such as teaching intercultural understanding. These data elaborate (see Appendix 2.1), enrich and challenge my insider-outsider view 'from the window' and illuminate some interconnected horizons obscured or hidden from my view. In this thesis data is represented in two ways: (1) through descriptive texts constructed from my fieldnotes (presented in indented italics) – these are my subjective reflections, and (2) participant reflections and experiences (presented as block quotes). Participant reflections and experiences are represented in the participant's voice, which at times have been very lightly edited for readability. My descriptive texts bring together notes from my structured observations with incidental comments and conversations shared outside of the formal interview and focus group activities. These texts serve to describe the rhythms of particular moments and when read alongside the teachers' reflections and experiences create a complex picture of teachers' intercultural work and the conditions at Hillside under which they are doing it. These descriptive texts attempt to fill out the 'flesh and bone' of intercultural experiences and provide a complex and messy picture of the nature of intercultural work at Hillside High School. In order to make sense of the complexities of the spatial relations that produce cultural difference in competing ways and how these shape opportunities for intercultural work at Hillside, I draw on Lefebvre's (2004) rhythmanalysis. I first provide a conceptual overview of rhythmanalysis before discussing how it has enabled me to describe and grasp the multiple layers of complex relations that constitute the intercultural work of teachers at this school.

4.6 Data analysis: Grasping the complexities of intercultural work through rhythmanalysis

Henri Lefebvre's (2004) final theoretical and methodological contribution to his theorisation of the production of space—the exploration of the rhythms of everyday life through rhythmanalysis—encourages a rethinking of the way complex interactions across and between abstract and lived aspects of everyday life are understood. Rhythm is a metric or measure of time. As with the rhythms of a piece of music, rhythm is experienced or felt in the way time is divided. In terms of the production of space, rhythm is produced through the divisions of labour that determine how time is allocated and the spatial relations that interfere, disrupt or cut across the repetitive rhythms of conceived, perceived and lived productions of space.

The work of schools, teachers and students is deeply rhythmic. The rhythms of schools are marked in many ways by the hourly and daily rhythms of the timetable and routines of teaching and learning constructed relationally in particular spaces. These rhythms of schooling occur within natural cycles of the seasons, and day and night, rhythms which also mark the division of time through holiday periods and the cultural rhythms of festivals and rituals. Social action and spatial relations create their own rhythms that are spontaneous and can disrupt or are absorbed into the regular rhythms of school life. In this way, rhythm is produced through social action in relation to time: the slow and carefree rhythms in the final days of term before the summer holidays, the frenetic energy in the lead up to final exams. These rhythms are produced through social activity, interaction, the exertion of energy, in space and time. As such, an examination of the rhythms of schools is a useful way to describe the competing ways cultural difference is produced across school spaces at Hillside—through divisions of labour across school structures and curriculum, as well as through social action. In grasping complex divisions of labour relevant to issues of cultural difference and intercultural work, it is possible to describe how these rhythms shape opportunities for doing critical intercultural work at Hillside.

In setting out on his discussion of rhythm, Lefebvre suggests starting with the body—the breath and the cycles of physiology (hunger, rest) and the cycles of maturation (infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood)—and focusing on the body's rhythms rather than function. When in good health, these rhythms are both polyrhythmic (multi-layered) and eurythmic (in harmony). That is, the living body is present to the ways diverse rhythms that are not uniform or universal work together in distinct and productive ways. In understanding the rhythms of the body, of our own body and the conditions under which our own rhythms work together in complex orchestrations, it is possible to project this thinking outward to the diverse rhythms beyond the body that shape ours and others' everyday experiences. Of course, the rhythms of the everyday are not singular. Rather, like the body, everyday rhythms are diverse and multiple in number, metric, intensity and nature. We, people, live in rhythm with, are rhythmed by, and at times in conflict with the rhythms of our everyday lives. Natural rhythms (those of the body, of seasons, of planetary orbit), social rhythms (cultural and social norms, practices and values produced in relation to space) as well as the produced and ominous political rhythms of the State are lived with fluctuating measure, intensity and tone. In moments of unrest or revolution, new rhythms emerge that disrupt and change the tone, tempo, and timbre of the times (Christie, 2013).

By starting with the body, the ways the rhythms of the body maintain balance become a constant reference point to complex networks of rhythms produced through human interaction, that are sensitive and dynamic to change, and how rhythms that cause discomfort or unease draw our attention to issues that may need addressing. As Lefebvre (2004) argues, "the theory of rhythms is founded on the experience and knowledge of the body; the concepts derive from this consciousness and this knowledge, simultaneously banal and full of surprises – of the unknown and the misunderstood" (p. 77). Lefebvre insists rhythms are produced triadically, across three axes, in space and time through the exertion of energy. He says, “time and space without energy remain inert” (2004, p. 70). It is the exertion of energy—social action—that produces rhythm. Through exertion (of varying intensity, pace and duration) rhythm is produced in relation to space to create a presence which, across the perceived spaces where rhythm is lived, meaning is made. At its core, rhythmanalysis encourages a sensitive palpation of “the rhythms of multiple and complex social relationships inherent in the production of space as continuous encounter” (Christie, 2013, p. 777). Schools, school subjects, classrooms, school values and priorities are all produced in space through continuous social action. These continuous interactions produce complex layers of rhythms that complicate teachers intercultural work.

In grasping the rhythms of local productions of cultural difference it becomes possible to describe the competing complexities that shape opportunities for intercultural work at Hillside. Rhythms of diverse productions of cultural difference appear in the way time is divided and allocated to the Intercultural Capability and intercultural work, but also through repetitious representations of cultural others, through the temporal dimensions of curriculum translation and enactment, through the way cultural rituals of school life are marked in time and symbolise value, in the ways dominant knowledge traditions are repdoruced, and through everyday relations and representations across cultural difference. As Alhadeff-Jones (2017) argues: “education is therefore shaped by heterogeneous, complimentary, antagonsitc and contradictory temporalities that rhythm the activity and the life of learners, educators, institutions, society and knowledge itself” (p. 3). Being attentive to the rhythms of schooling and curriculum work requires attention to time, or more specifically, to the competing temporalities of educational institutions, and of teachers’ and students’ work and personal lives. Rhythmanalysis then can be thought of as more than an analytical method, but rather a methodology for conceptualising spatial relations and capturing the complexities and mobilities of situated human experience. In this way, rhythmanalysis is deeply ethnographic. It is a way of ‘being in the world’ that requires an attentiveness to more than the obvious, while illuminating taken-for-granted practices (Campbell and Lassiter, 2015; Gordon, 2015; Olson, 1991; Wolcott, 2003; Woods, 1986).

Embodying a rhythmanalytical approach to understanding teachers work requires a researcher to experience the phenomenon—how cultural difference is produced in different spaces—while being removed enough to see how these productions are interconnected with other spaces of social life to shape opportunities for intercultural work. In the classroom, rhythms are produced within "an order, which comes from elsewhere … a sort of presence-absence … which is not seen from the window, but which looms over this present" (Lefebvre, 2004, p. 42). These orders can take the form of the systems of curriculum organisation and the administrative requirements of the State that rhythm those in the system through cyclic and repetitive dominations of time: class schedules, school bells, break times, and seasonal holidays; but also by assessment schedules, deadlines, extra-curricular activities and the time afforded to planning, prioritising, and learning tasks in specific classes. Interfering with these repetitious rhythms are spontaneous inflections, eruptions, interruptions and accents of social action. For example, when a student calls his friend a 'dirty Abo' or mocks Indians as 'curry munchers', these moments both disrupt the regular rhythms of teaching and learning, while also connect to the horizons that shape the lives of young people at this school. As Christie (2013) argues, to grasp this moving complexity "requires the apprehension of everything present at a particular point in time-space" (p. 777). As Lefebvre (1991) argues, to grasp and be grasped by the moving complexities of social spaces requires attuned attentiveness to "individual entities and peculiarities, relatively fixed points, movements, and flows and waves – some interpenetrating, others in conflict and so on" (p. 88). That is, to grasp and be grasped by the phenomenon, the researcher must be open to the experience and to the unexpected and unpredictability of human relations (Campbell and Lassiter, 2015).

An example of rhythmanalysis is useful at this point. In an examination of space and schooling in South Africa, and the inequalities in the kinds of education afforded according to geographical location, Christie (2013) conducts a rhythmanalysis to demonstrate how "local conditions of schooling follow different rhythms" (p. 781). Her analysis traverses two themes: the "contradictory dynamic of global/local as it plays out in education policy and practice" and "particular historical geographies of education" (p. 775). In particular, Christie maps the "spatialized relations of power…that tied race to place in structurally unequal ways" (p. 775) – an issue sharply felt in South Africa. Christie argues that "Lefebvre's concept of social space opens consideration of the different spatial practices of schooling, the representations of schooling in policy and the everyday experiences of schools in different places" (p. 775). This is relevant to my study as I examine the ways diverse productions of cultural diversity across different spaces intersect and come to life in school spaces through intercultural education. As Christie argues, rhythmanalysis "enables different rhythms in the production of space to be analysed without being conflated into a single logic" (p. 781). As with Christie, my adoption of rhythmanalysis is to enable rich descriptions of productions of cultural difference at Hillside High School and understand how these shape intercultural work at this school.

In terms of this study, I have applied rhythmanalysis through data generation practices, preliminary descriptions and interpretation, and finally analysis (see Appendix 2.2, Appendix 2.3 and Appendix 3). My experiences at Hillside were captured in detailed notes, descriptions, conversations, observations and reflections—some of these are included throughout the thesis. These descriptions capture what was going on in particular spaces at a given time as well as the way I experienced those goings on. As such, my research practices were sensitive to the ways teachers time, in relation to productions of cultural difference and intercultural work, was divided, allocated and disrupted through competing relations of space. The description of the rhythms of spatial relations and practices across the school are important data that represent the pace, tone and timbre of productions of cultural difference, and when brought into conversation with the experiences and reflections of teachers', offers a view of the broader horizons of those events and how they shape intercultural work. I looked specifically for the way rhythms related to productions of cultural difference manifest in conceived spaces—such as divisions of labour through curriculum directives and administrative requirements—and how these intersect with the perceived spaces of curriculum translation, enactment and pedagogic practice, and the lived spaces of relations and social action. This work is grounded in an ethical responsibility to representing particularities and complexities and resists the temptation to generalise the experiences of these teachers. This approach is useful for describing social complexity and dominant practices without, as Christie (2013) argues, reducing complexity to a single logic. The challenge of taking up rhythmanalysis as a researcher is tapping into the rhythms that are unseen or unheard as well as the ambiguity with which rhythms are experienced. I attempted to deal with this my presenting and bringing together a range of participant voices with my own to demonstrate the polyrhythmic nature of intercultural work. While there are broad lessons to be learned from a rhythmic approach to understanding the work of schools and teachers, those lessons are found in the complexity of particular and situated social spaces, not in their generalisability.

Finally, I turn to the ethical considerations of this study.

4.7 Ethics

> *As the school year dwindles to a close and I wrap up my final interviews, I am left with the weight of responsibility that I hold to my participants. A weight that feels much heavier in practice than what it is perceived in theory. These teachers, colleagues, perhaps even friends I have built a relationship with have trusted me in their classrooms, with their students, with their insights, and with their stories. And as I start to say my goodbyes and good lucks, I carry their trust forward as I take the data we have generated to analysis. There is no expectation from some that they will see or hear from me again, and they seem surprised that I want to come back to the school to report my findings. Others seem to feel the weight of the departure more and look forward to seeing how it all looks in the end. This makes me nervous. These experiences cannot simply be treated as de-identified data sources. These experiences are living, and my responsibility in representing the participants and their stories is far greater than I ever imagined. It is here, in the distance of my departure, in the comfort of my home office, that the ethics of ethnographic research practices are tested.*

Qualitative research is not just ethical in a functional way, ethics are deeply embedded in the ways researchers engage in the world and write about the lives and experiences of others. This chapter has, in explicit and less explicit ways, engaged with ideas related to being in the world and engaging in ethical relationships with participants. Of course, there is the ethics of data generation, of ownership and authorship, of the rights to tell and share others' experiences, of representation, of confidentiality, of relationships, of trust, of power, to conceptually thinking through how one represents and builds an ethical dialogue between the self and others through research, but what these things describe is, in an ethnographic sense, an ethical way of being in the worlds of others (Campbell and Lassiter, 2015; McLaren, 1992).

Murphy and Dingwall (2001) argue "ethical research does not just leave participants unscathed but also avoids infringing their rights" (p. 339). In qualitative research, however, the potential for harm is far more ambiguous and likely to be indirect as “the harms or benefits derive from the participant’s unpredictable response to the interactions rather than from the researcher’s intentions” (p. 340). In this study, the potential for harm to teachers from interactions with myself in sharing aspects of their everyday work was minimal. This group of teachers were not considered vulnerable and the foci of data generation was not sensitive. Participants volunteered to participate in the study, as explained above, and were given the opportunity to withdraw until the point of reporting. In addition, their positionality is not personalised as such, but rather situated as an example of social practice at this particular school site. For this study, one area of ethical consideration not touched on yet relates specifically to data dissemination.

As the pressure to disseminate research beyond the academic community builds, there is an increased “likelihood that research will be taken up in ways over which the authors have minimal control or influence” (Murphy and Dingwall, 2001, p. 341). As such, the potential for participants and schools to be identified or characterized in unintended ways may be increased. In addition to this, and perhaps of greater concern for this study, was the dissemination of findings to the school community, where participants are known and unfavourable sentiments may be more easily traced to their source, potentially causing upset or anxiety to the teachers involved and creating a sense of betrayal on my part. As part of the research process, teachers were involved in discussions regarding the development of findings and what these might mean – this is part of the dialogic approach to co-constructed meaning making taken up in this study (Campbell and Lassiter, 2015). This was an attempt to ensure that boundaries around what I could say about what the teachers’ experiences meant was agreed, even if uncomfortable. I was really anxious about sharing findings with the school. I was worried that even though the participants had been deidentified and any references from specific views removed, I couldn’t escape the fact that the teaching staff knew who participated in the study and could likely connect particular sentiments to particular participants based on their knowledge of their colleagues. As such, I framed my report and findings around a framework for thinking about intercultural education through the three axes of space (the Hills), curriculum and pedagogic practice. In this way I was able to speak in broad terms about how these axes intersect and interrelate, some strengths of existing programs and the ways they might be repositioned in relation to the school community as a whole. While this was a brief presentation of the research findings broadly, some interest was generated for opportunities to work together in the future to develop ways to practically apply the research findings in future efforts to redevelop the intercultural curriculum more in-line with the whole-school intention of the capabilities.

4.8 Conclusion

While this chapter has mapped the development of the research design over time and explained my methodological approach to data generation and analysis, this chapter has also mapped an ethics of engagement with individual and collective experiences, and my position in relation to these. Qualitative research hinges on understanding the messiness and complexities of human relations. Treating the lives and experiences of others with sensitivity and openness is a cornerstone for a qualitative, and specifically ethnographic way of being in the worlds of others. This approach allows insight into the particularities of everyday life—in this case, the experiences of six teachers at one school related to productions of cultural difference and intercultural work—and a brief window into situated social spaces. This privilege cannot be taken-for-granted.

From this point, chapters five to seven are organised into three findings and analysis chapters. These chapters are divided across three distinct but interrelated foci. Chapter five is focused on productions of space, and specifically the production of the Hills and Hills kids in particular ways as well as the production of cultural difference across school spaces. The analysis in chapter five draws on the work of Lefevbre and Massey to argue that the ways space is produced shapes the possibilities for intercultural work. Chapter six is focused on positionality and pedagogic practice of teachers, with a particular focus on how teachers are positioned and challenged differently to navigate difficult knowledge. Chapter six draws on teacher experiences to challenge neatly packaged productions of intercultural education as presented in curriculum and policy documents. Chapter six raises question of professional identity and the purpose of schooling and the ways what is valued in education can be contested by individual teachers and within school communities. Chapter seven then completes the analysis chapters by describing how practices of people and place shape opportunities for intercultural education across layers of curriculum work at Hillside High School. I examine how power is asserted through divisions of labour, allocation of time and hierarchies of value (Bernstein, 1996) to produce powerful rhythms (Lefebvre, 2004) often tied to compliance or measurable output, rather than purpose and value (Biesta, 2009). These insights are then brought together in the conclusion to consider how intercultural education might be imagined from a renewed perspective (Dervin and Gross, 2016) in ways that are supportive of and sensitive to difference.

Chapter 5

Productions of culture, difference and the intercultural across the spaces of Hillside High School

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I examine how productions of space at Hillside High School and in the wider Hills community shape opportunities for intercultural education. Following Lefebvre's triadic conceptualisation of the production of space, this chapter is divided into three sections that focus on (1) the production of the conceived spaces of Hillside High School and the place of cultural difference within this, (2) the production of everyday intercultural space through one Japanese classroom at Hillside High School, and (3) the way the productions of the conceived and perceived spaces shape lived spaces of intercultural work at the school. The first section focuses on participant descriptions of the Hills and Hillside High School (taken from interview and focus group transcripts) as particular kinds of spaces to argue that the geographical space a school occupies is not merely a context or surface for social action (Massey, 2005) but an active component that shapes curriculum work. The second section focuses on one Japanese classroom as an everyday intercultural space at Hillside High School. The discussion demonstrates how the abstract productions of space entwine with everyday productions of subject areas and physical school spaces to complicate notions of intercultural education. The analysis draws attention to how relations with cultural diversity, established over time in the abstract spaces of the Hills, entwine in classrooms and across curriculum work in the present, shaping the conditions for intercultural interactions. These two sections lead to the final section that focuses on the ways conceived and perceived productions of space come together in the lived spaces of Hillside High School. Lived spaces are where the rhythms of relational work are produced through practices established in space over time. Across the chapter I argue that the interaction between the abstract, everyday and lived spaces of Hillside High School produce cultural difference in ways that shape opportunities for critical intercultural work. Finally, I propose that productive intercultural education cannot be developed without acute attention to the spaces within which it occurs and the ways space shapes its possibilities.

5.2 Productions of conceived space at Hillside High School

The Hills identity and productions of cultural difference

'The Hills' refers to a region 35km east of the city of Melbourne, that begins at the foothills of the Dandenong Ranges. The area is heavily forested with mountain ash and tree ferns, and the small villages of the region attract tourists, weekenders, mountain bike riders and soon to be wed couples alike. The region is known for its picturesque natural setting, local produce and artisan crafts. For locals, the Hills is part of their identity, and the rhythms of living in the Hills constitute their everyday. The notion of a Hills identity is produced socially in relation to the spaces of the Hills to create an abstract sense of what it means to be from the Hills. It is this abstract notion of a Hills imaginary—and the way cultural difference is positioned in relation to it—that will be examined in this section. Fen described the Hills as follows:

> This is a unique geographical situation and the kids or the students or the families of the community have a pretty interesting kind of profile. There's a lot of very creative kids, there are a lot of parents who are probably - you know, they own their own businesses or they've developed their own businesses or they're academics or you know, the ICSEA [Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage] here is pretty high. But historically if you look at the kind of ridge and the top of the mountain, they're fairly professional class but with a lot of very low – probably borderline poverty up there. In the 70s and 80s, it was probably largely lower socio-economic families. There's a real separation. There's a real definition between the kids who come from this side of the mountain – like from the flatlands, as it's known, versus the foothills and the mountains. So, the people who live in the Hills will say 'I live in the mountains' and people who live on the mountain will go 'no, they live in the Hills'. On the other side of the mountain you'd end up with farming families or lower socio-economic housing estate families with the professional class from the mountain. So yeah, there's a really interesting - there's a lot of difference in terms of background, educational difference, political ideals, all sorts of stuff. It's really easy to go, 'oh, it's monocultural'. But it's really very different.
>
> In terms of the school, because it looks to be a pretty monocultural [white] kind of school, I think sometimes difference can be overlooked. But there's a lot of difference and there's a lot of cultural difference in the school. You know, when I

> first started working here there was a lot of discussion about – I mean, I grew up around here and I went to another local High School – so in terms of culturally, in terms of the space, my experience of growing up is probably very similar to these kids' experience of growing up. Still like the 70s in many ways, you know? Really, it's a bizarre kind of existence. But people are motivated to live here for different reasons and sometimes because it's a geographical region you can attribute a motivation for existence to everyone and you can say that there's a 'Hills mentality' you know? And it's a complete myth, I think. That's rubbish. You know, I remember someone saying to me when I first started here, 'oh, you know, they're Hills kids, they're really nice but don't expect much from them' and I said, 'well look, I'm a Hills kid so you've got to be careful what you assume!'

Fen talks about the history of the region, the geographical, social and economic borders between the flatlands, the foothills and the mountain, the envy and aspiration to live on the mountain as opposed to the flatlands or foothills, and the class divide evident in geographical location. The differences are vast between those living in "blended families and multi-generational poverty hidden amongst the trees" and "the multi-million-dollar homes on the ridge with views to the city" (Principal, see 4.2). These differences are socio-historical, socio-political, socio-economic and (less obviously) socio-cultural, and they appear to be at least partly demarcated geographically through the abstract and material division and allocation of space—understood through postcoded territories. According to Fen, the distinct boundaries of the Hills' villages and regions are marked most clearly by difference in class and material wealth, and more opaquely by educational background and politics. Fen also stated, even though the Hills looks to be very monocultural—that is to say, the majority of people are white—there is evidence of a lot of other differences, and these differences are incorporated into a common sense of what it is to be from the Hills. In this way, Lefebvre (1936) argues "a certain solidarity arises naturally in human communities" (p. 247) in the ways relations and practices of space come to constitute identity. In the Hills, Fen argues that social, material, economic, educational and political differences are not a barrier for cultivating a 'certain solidarity' within the community and this is important for thinking about the way cultural difference is signified and positioned.

The notion of a 'shared' imaginary, however, is problematised by Fen in two ways. Firstly, he suggests that simply because the Hills looks to be monocultural (predominantly white) this does not mean diverse cultural heritages and practices do not exist. This theme will continue to be developed throughout. Secondly, Fen problematises the production of ‘Hills kids’ or of a ‘Hills mentality’ to imply a lack of aspiration. Michelle talked about this too, suggesting “some staff talk about this Hills culture of kids that are not aspirational. I don’t think that’s necessarily true”. What can be taken from these reflections are the ways complex threads of identity and experience are constructed in relation to space, producing a sense of conceived ‘solidarity’. Ani recognises that there is a Hills identity, as follows, but acknowledges that this is not uniform. Indeed, the shared imaginary of the Hills is an intricate entanglement of multiple and diverse identities orchestrating together to create a sense of self and of belonging, at least for some. Ani reflected on the production of the Hills as follows:

> This is my eleventh year here. I live locally. There is a strong sense of place here [at the school]. Maybe 70% of our current teachers have been here 10-15 years, even longer. There’d be 20-30% who have been here 20-30 years. So there is a greater sense of continuity here in the faces that people see. And it’s not like a new suburb – it’s the Hills, it has an identity as well that people, can say, you know, ‘I’m from the Hills’. How they define that is going to be different, but you kind of can say you’re from somewhere. And that means something because the Hills are a little bit more special than some of the flatland areas.

Ani claims that ‘you can kind of say you’re from somewhere. And that means something’, connecting to the notion that people who live in the same region construct a shared understanding—or ‘certain solidarity’—of what it means to be from the Hills, even if that is ‘defined differently’. When I first met the Principal of Hillside he described the Hills as a “rural enclave” (see 4.4) situated geographically close to the city, but detached from the bustle and grind of the city’s suburbs. This helps to understand the Hills. As Ani says, ‘it’s not like a new suburb’ that has had to adapt and change with rapid urban development. In this sense, the geographical landscape contributes to the conceived space of the Hills as separate or detached from suburbia. The inaccessibility to large-scale urban development enables the Hills to be conceived as contained or ‘already regionalised’ to use Massey’s (2005) term. As such, social relations—as Fen admits—is ‘still like the 70s’. In this way, Hillside High School has provided a beacon of continuity for generations living in the region and in many ways has not needed to adapt to social changes that come with a changing demographic.

Luke—a leading teacher at Hillside—talked about the importance of the school as part of the fabric of the community. He said, laughing, “there’s a lot of people that live in the same area and stay here, and then their kids come here and they say ‘you taught my grandma’!” He described the school as “a nice community space” where people continue to stay connected even once they have left the school. This is indicative of the way the conceived space of the Hills has become inscribed with values and meanings woven through space and time by ‘mediations’ and ‘mediators’ (Lefebvre, 1991). In this way relations of space are influenced by geography and history, but also by “the action of groups, factors within knowledge, within ideology, or within the domain of representations” (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 77). Continuity of ‘mediators’ and ‘mediations’ produces spaces such as the school as ‘community spaces’ inscribed with a ‘strong sense of identity’ formed through a continuity of families and values over time. The continuity of social relations, of representations, of knowledge, however, can lead the production of space to be conceived as closed to change or closed to difference. Ani and Luke spoke about the continuity of staff as a thread that strengthens a sense of shared belonging of what it means to go to Hillside High School. However, they recognise that the continuity of staff is not without its challenges. Through continuity, the markers for difference signified as outside of the Hills imaginary can become fixed or produced as a threat. Michelle described part of the challenge:

> I think for some teachers, their ability to talk about cultural difference is quite limited, particularly some of the older teachers who have taught here for a long time, because they’ve never really had kids in the class with different cultural backgrounds. I mean, we’re pretty mainstream white now, but going back 20 years, we were even more mainstream white.

Michelle’s depiction of the school as ‘mainstream white’ and the limited capacity of ‘some of the older’ teachers to engage with cultural difference demonstrates the ways whiteness has a tendency to neutralise itself (Frankenberg, 1993; Steinberg and Kinchloe, 2009; see 1.5) and difference becomes externalised or foreign. This sentiment is captured in a comment made by one teacher when I first presented my project to the staff. This teacher noted that “this is not a multicultural school, so intercultural understanding is not a priority for us. Maybe you should go to a more [visibly] diverse school". This comment was typical of the way cultural diversity was regularly represented at Hillside High School, positioning intercultural understanding as the 'problem' or 'occupation' of diverse communities who are perceived to need to fit in with the mores of dominant (white) Australia (Gunew, 2004). Willo talked about this too, suggesting that:

> We're in a very homogenous area. If you walk into a classroom, it's probably not visible, the different cultures going on. I think for the most part, I don't think they [students] recognise culture and if they do talk about it I feel like it's often with a 'that's weird', 'this is strange', it's 'the other', it's different. I feel like sometimes they [the students] feel a bit culture-less, like they're zero, or that the culture they live in is the penultimate and everyone is trying to reach them. But I definitely think if it's different it's [perceived as] culture, but if it's all same-ness then, no, I don't think culture is recognised.

Willo, following Michelle, notes how visible differences (phenotype, ethnicity, religious markers) are associated with culture and cultural difference, whereas 'all same-ness'—or whiteness—camouflages and neutralises culture and diversity that may otherwise be invisible. Culture and cultural difference then become about a 'weird' or 'strange' other that, as will be discussed shortly, continues to be produced as external. What the comments from Michelle and Willo reflect is the way the Hills is conceived as a space that is 'white' and that is 'not culturally diverse', and a space that is closed to navigating or negotiating cultural difference.

Nic – an Art teacher who has been at the school for 16 years, has a unique perspective. She does not live in the Hills, and in her reflection below contends that understanding productions of cultural difference is of great relevance for these students *because* their everyday lives are sheltered from diverse ways of constructing identity and belonging. Nic stated:

> I think mostly people just don't – people are oblivious to it [racism] because out of mind out of sight. If it's not right there in front of you, you're not going to deal with it. So yeah, this intercultural stuff is super important here because otherwise you get these kids who grow up and they go into the world and they think it's okay for a swastika or say 'I was called a ranga so therefore I'm in the same boat as

> some oppressed black person'. There's also this weird – because we have so few of them [culturally/ethnically diverse students] you don't want to necessarily draw – like, when we were doing the Indigenous thing, little Sarah, and I didn't want to make it like 'how was your experience' and put a big bullseye and arrows pointing at the fact that she's different from everyone else. Conversely, in my Year 9 class last semester there was this one boy, he's half Filipino, but he calls himself 'Chinga' and his friends call him that. I tried to have a conversation with him about it and he just doesn't care, he's just a bit sort of, 'that's not racist'. It's that complete 1950s Aussie mentality like, 'this is me wog mate', and that's just the language that is used, it's just been completely normalised.
>
> I haven't seen any racism with Torrell, he's the Kenyan boy, but I almost feel people like Torrell and Amelie and the two new Maori boys, they're so different they're kind of special. They're kind of like unique and have a certain popularity. If there was maybe another 20, I don't know if it would be different but we've always just had one or two so they've always been a little bit cool and a novelty.

Nic captures many socio-cultural threads that both push against and are woven into the productions of the inclusive and communal 'vibe' (Luke) of the Hills. The notion of a '1950s Aussie mentality' is telling, perhaps evoking the prominence of a white male worldview and the colloquial use of racialised language (such as 'Chinga') to signify cultural difference and assert the primacy of the dominant group (see 1.4). Fen alludes to this also, indicating that "my experience of growing up is probably very similar to these kids' experience of growing up", referring to it as a 'bizarre kind of existence' in the context of an interconnected and globalised world. The normalisation of racialised language to signify cultural difference appears to orbit around a white patriarchal core. The repetition and reproduction of a Hills imaginary and representations of diverse others through the normalised use of racialised language positions whiteness in opposition to 'others'. It is these kinds of spatial relations across abstract spaces of identity construction that normalise racialised language as 'not racist' and position culturally diverse others as peripheral to the Hills. These attitudes ultimately contribute to the translation and enactment of intercultural education initiatives. The lack of cultural diversity in the community does not challenge the prominence of a white patriarchal worldview and the few students who are visibly identified as 'other' (than white) are few enough not to be considered a threat to dominant cultural patterns.

Rather, as Nic suggested, these students are embraced as novel or 'cool'—as an embellishment that can perhaps be paraded or exhibited (Castles et al, 1988; Gunew, 2004). This can be thought as representative of the way that the Hills is conceived as a closed space detached or isolated from the challenges of living with cultural diversity experienced by more urbanised areas.

The conceived space of the Hills as described by teachers is a powerful force that shapes the translation and enactment of education directives in local settings. This is explored further in the following section.

The Hills identity and the conceived spaces of education directives

The conceived space of Hillside High School—its abstract and administrative identity—is produced through the values and mission statements that are formalised through the four-year strategic plan and annual implementation plans. These statements and plans guide the school's priorities and constitute the heart of the conceived spaces of the school where administrative systems and structures of education curriculum and policy are translated and made meaningful at the local level. That is, the school takes the requirements of operating as a public education institution (through policy, curriculum, standards) and mediates these to school-based policies, practices and plans. In these conceived productions of the school, relationships feature. What follows are teacher descriptions of Hillside High School's general administrative and bureaucratic spaces and an exploration of how intercultural education is positioned in relation to the conceived spaces of the school and Hills community more broadly. Fen described the school's identity and focus as follows:

> I think it's a school that really prides itself or really puts the relationship with students probably as being something that's first, which I think is really interesting. I think that kind of academic – it's a comprehensive school and so with that in mind, there's a real awareness of students' individual needs as opposed to, you know, we're an ATAR [Australian Tertiary Admission Rank] factory or something like that. The flip side of that is that sometimes there can be lowered expectations around student achievement or student ability in some instances. But I think that's common everywhere.
>
> At the moment the school has been through – the last strategic plan was to look at the structural practice, particularly around teaching tactics. So, we looked at stuff

> around curiosity, around learner profile, around questioning, around Krathwohl's taxonomy, and then just teaching methodologies that have come out of that Curiosity and Powerful Learning Project around concept attainment and learning structures.

Fen identifies the nexus for the way bureaucratic spaces are mediated at Hillside High School through the prioritisation of relationships. Fen argues it's a school that puts the relationship with students first. However, Fen is concerned that the privileging of relationships and students' needs in this way may come at a cost of lowered expectations. Fen has made this comment before in relating a colleague's comment – "they're Hills kids, they're nice, but don't expect much from them" and problematises the 'flip side' as a tendency to produce lowered expectations around student achievement or student ability. This seems to resonate with the ways the lives of many young people at Hillside are constructed in ways ambiguously bound to a notion of a Hills imaginary and the opportunities afforded by the spaces of everyday life in the Hills. For example, during career counselling, I observed many parents setting aspirations for their children that did not look beyond the horizons of the Hills, sometimes creating tension between what a young person wanted and what their parents imagined as possible. In this way, education at Hillside tailors educational expectations in relation to the Hills imaginary, even at the expense of broadening the horizons of young people. This seems to be focused on functionality—as in what young people need to be able to do—rather than on who they might become. Michelle talked about this further:

> They're not the kids that have got their goal that they want to achieve by the time they're 25, but I think kids have a picture of what they want their life to be like generally, they don't have specific steps of how they're going to get there. A lot of our kids would see the city to be a long way away. Yeah, and you will have kids here in Year 9 and when they go on city program, it's the first time they've been to the city. I don't know whether that impacts on their picture of themselves at university or any other sort of learning organisation, in that they can't imagine what they would be like maybe, I don't know.

Michelle's comment points towards the way opportunity and identity is shaped by the relational spaces one occupies. For many young people at Hillside their experiences and aspirations are confined to and defined by the Hills. They have what they need in their immediate surrounds and do not appear encouraged or inspired to look beyond the Hills for alternative views of the world or opportunities for their future. While young people quite literally have the world at their fingertips through their smart devices, the teachers concurred that they could not comment on the kinds of content students access online to inform their worldviews. The teachers did express concern, however, about the way social media algorithms are designed to affirm and narrow world view. For young people whose experience, according to the teachers, does not venture far beyond the local football club, accessing different kinds of media and information is an important way to tackle narrow productions of identity and aspiration, yet this is an area over which teachers have little oversight. Ani discusses the tensions of relational work with aspiration and expectation further and highlights the importance of teachers engaging reflexively with the school's—and their own—values and priorities as part of their everyday work. Ani said:

> There's a challenge here to motivate and set aspirations for kids. Even our really good kids don't necessarily have high aspirations. So, an example would be one of the students I had last year who could have been a 40-plus [top ranking student] in most of his subjects just – all he needed was a 70 [average ATAR score] to get into his paramedic course and so that's what he did. And that's fine but yeah, there's a lot of kids just like that. It's just like they know what they need, they can do it, they don't aspire to much more, and maybe that's okay. But we've been doing that school improvement survey and working to find ways to shift that aspiration challenge. A lot of it's been around teacher practice and performance. A lot of the school improvement stuff is also just trying to figure out what our values are, but that's all connected to the work we've started doing about resilience, so that's the more student-centred bit, is the resilience. But leading that, on the day of professional development we had on that, what came out was that resilience requires relationships, and it only requires a very small handful of teachers to completely undermine a kid's capacity for resilience and yeah, we've still got that handful. Our graduates are spread in those teams and not together, it's bleeding onto them and some of our graduates are ex-students, so they look to the teacher they had, because some of them were taught by people here, and they think 'oh well, that's how I got taught, that's the way I saw that teacher relate to my class, so

> that's what I'm going to do'. There's some good new teachers and it's a real shame that that's rubbing off on them.

Ani draws a line between relationships, teacher practice, resilience and student aspiration. That is, through teacher practices that build positive relationships, aspiration and resilience can be cultivated. However, as Ani explains, cultivating aspiration and resilience relies on teachers engaging with the school's and their own values reflexively to inform their practice so as to not undermine a young person's capacity to achieve personal or academic goals. It seems clear that Ani believes teachers should strive to motivate students to be their best and be pushed beyond their comfort zone, however, as with Fen's comment earlier, it seems some teachers base their practice around lowered expectations and assumptions related to assumptions about what young people from the Hills need or can achieve. That is, relations across the conceived spaces of the Hills and Hillside High School shape the translation and enactment of education policies and plans at various levels of education at Hillside. This points to a larger issue of young people's engagement beyond the immediate horizons of the school and local community.

According to the teachers, the life worlds of many young people at Hillside High School are confined to the spaces of the Hills, shaping the ways young people imagine how they see themselves in the world. Fen talks about this further with a specific focus on intercultural education. Fen identifies 'safety training' and 'personal viewpoint' as points of tension in the pursual of intercultural education. For Fen, this seems to be compounded by the way what happens in individual classrooms is not reinforced at a whole-school level. Rather, the conceived space of Hillside High School appears to be produced in a mirror of the Hills, as a space isolated from the world 'being a bigger place' (Fen). This kind of production leans on an assumption that young people from the Hills lack drive, and as such the conceived space of Hillside focuses on individual classroom practices as a direct line to student aspiration and outcome, rather than cultivate a whole school approach to education as situated in a world that extends beyond the Hills. It is clear that the teachers in this study believe it is important for young people to engage with the world beyond the Hills. However, shifting the attitudes of other teachers and students—particularly those of families who have attended the school across generations—is difficult. Part of the challenge is in the way continuity of staff and families at the school reproduce norms and values that continue to produce the Hills as 'monocultural' and 'homogenous' (white), and where cultural diversity is understood through the visible differences that signify the Hills 'constitutive outside' (Hall, 1996). It is across these layers of conceived spaces that intercultural education can be positioned as irrelevant for the young people at Hillside.

These conditions created across complex intersections of conceived space has implications for the development of intercultural understanding. The continuity of teachers working at the school, the continuity of families attending the school, and the production of a 'Hills mentality' all entwine with shifting educational agendas to shape how education policy is translated and recast in this local setting. This relation with space influences how and to what extent priorities, such as the Intercultural Capability are taken up—this will be examined closely in chapter seven. The production of the Hills as homogenous indicates the way cultural diversity in the Hills is primarily identified as non-white. Such representations produce cultural diversity as external and create the conditions for educational priorities such as the Intercultural Capability (but also Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives) to be treated as another box to check, or simply an irrelevant side issue. These complex intersections of conceived space come to life in the everyday and lived spaces of Hillside High School.

The following section explores the ways the entrenched norms of the Hills and Hillside High School as conceived spaces come to life through the production of the material, everyday space of one Japanese classroom at Hillside High School.

5.3 Productions of perceived space: Experiencing the Japanese classroom as an everyday intercultural space at Hillside High School

The rhythms of schooling at Hillside can be grasped in the everyday spaces where social action occurs in relation to abstract productions of space. That is, the everyday spaces of Hillside—for example, its classrooms and grounds—are produced in relation to the conceived spaces that constitute them—the Hills and Hillside identity, as well as the school's administrative structures. While all space is produced relationally—such as the abstract space of a Hills imaginary produced in relation to the physical or material spaces of the Hills—rhythm is produced through an exertion of energy, a social action, in space and time to contribute to or disrupt the regular rhythms of school life. Everyday school spaces at Hillside are divided and allocated into classrooms—science rooms, art rooms, language learning rooms, open plan learning centres, the gym, canteen and ball-game courts—physical spaces established and understood for particular kinds of activity, spaces that are used at allocated times for a defined purpose and for an allocated duration. At Hillside, timetables determine how much time students spend in each subject area over a two-week cycle. School bells mark the time that students can use physical spaces, both in class and at lunch and recess, and as such the rhythms of everyday spaces in schools are felt through the ways space and time are allocated and divided, and labour is distributed.

Implicit in this division of time and space is a hierarchy of value (Bernstein, 1996). Those learning areas deemed more necessary or more highly valued, are allocated more time. Spaces that are deemed as optional or secondary are allocated less time, and at times, less space. These hierarchies are in part determined by government agendas and priorities – such as raising literacy and numeracy standards, whereby schools are expected to allocate more resources (time, space, material) towards these efforts, but also by localised priorities – such as inter-school sport or performing arts. These tensions are not new. Yet, as public schools are already stretched by multiple competing priorities, limited resources and throttled funding, second-tier subject areas—those subjects that are allocated less time and resources—are often the first to be compromised. The politics of these tussles impacts the ways subject areas are valued and produced by teachers and students and are also shaped by the influence of abstract and everyday spaces outside of the school.

In this section the ways Japanese language learning is represented through everyday productions of one Japanese classroom will be explored. At Hillside, Willo – the Japanese teacher, describes Japanese as a second-tier subject. Despite this status, the language subjects (French and Japanese) have been charged with the responsibility of teaching and assessing the Intercultural Capability. Data in this section is presented using a combination of my fieldnote narratives (in italics) and participant reflections (block quotes as above). The discussion will consider the ways the material everyday space of one Japanese classroom is produced and illuminate the way abstract constructs from beyond this classroom converge to produce this particular space, and intercultural work more broadly, in counterproductive ways.

The year 9 Japanese classroom

What follows is an extract from my fieldnotes from the beginning of a year nine humanities class with Fen. The class has had a room change from their regular room to the Japanese language room. This extract demonstrates the way the perceived or everyday space of the Japanese classroom is produced relationally to create rhythms that devalue the abstract space of Japanese as a subject area and establishes a resistive rhythm towards understanding or engaging with cultural difference.

> *Students start to gather outside the Aurora Centre – the open learning space for year nine that is flanked by a locker bay, the food studies kitchens, and the original 1930's B-block. There is a large tarmac courtyard in the centre where students play four and six square or kick a footy during lunch and recess. It's drizzling and dull, but it's not cold. Fen arrives, surprised to see me – he'd forgotten I was coming today! He raises his arm to draw the attention of his class, three boys meander over asking "where are we?" wanting to know which room their class has been moved to.*
>
> *"That's a great question" Fen replies. "We are here, in this space. What is this space? And what makes it a place?" I learn later he is drawing students into a conversation from yesterday's class. One of the boys, wearing smoky eyeliner and dyed black hair side swept over his face starts to respond quietly. For a moment he engages with the question without appearing self-conscious. Fen and the boy's friends listen, Fen nods his head, he seems impressed. When he finishes speaking, the other boys burst into laughter and the smoky-eyed boy joins in, the moment gone. Being a year nine student sucks.*
>
> *There's been a room change. Fen gets the students moving: "c'mon, we're missing out on valuable learning time", his tone dripping in sarcasm that is equally met in the response of his students.*
>
> *While making their way to the classroom Fen continues: "Geography. Yesterday. What did we do? We walked around. We talked. You kinda listened to me talk. You got hot. You complained about it being too sunny—which kinda made me worried about your futures. We watched a crazy fight between some crows and magpies."*
>
> *They enter the classroom from the outside ramp (as opposed to the indoor corridor). Students are chatty. Someone complains "not the Japanese room!" Followed by another student's cry – "can we watch a movie?"*

> *Fen waits. "Right. Concepts: Space. Place. Change. Influence over time. Sustainability. Interconnection. Environment."*
>
> *Fen invites the students to contribute their understandings of the concepts. Joel immediately asks if the class can watch 'Totoro' – the Japanese children's animation (Tonari no totoro – My neighbor Totoro), which is met with a chorus of pleas from the class. Fen turns the question into a discussion about space and place. B1 – where this class has been moved to, is a classroom, a space for learning, but it is known as the Japanese room – set up and decorated as a place for doing Japanese. The students seem to feel out of place taking humanities and geography in there and appear to want to revert to the behaviours that I observe in their Japanese class. Fen continues on and the students eventually settle.*

This extract captures the kinds of relations these year nine students have with the material space of the Japanese classroom. Amidst the students reorienting themselves physically and mentally for the room change, some students rebel using the space of the Japanese room as reason enough to dismiss the plans Fen had for the class. In my observations of the year nine Japanese class with Willo—the Japanese teacher—students commonly call out on entering the Japanese room "can we watch Totoro? Can we watch a movie?" The plea to watch a movie is indicative of the kinds of value attached to Japanese language learning, embodied through the students' response to the Japanese classroom. The Japanese classrooms is perceived by students as a space that does not carry inherent value or command authority or respect. Even though Fen is moving his humanities class to the Japanese room, the automatic response of the students is representative of the relations these students have between the Japanese classroom (perceived space) and Japanese language learning (conceived space) and the way Japanese is positioned and valued more broadly within the school. Willo talked about this further:

> In terms of languages, sometimes I feel like in general – like I'm trying to create a culture of my students to value it, but I feel like I've got to try and create a culture in the staff to value it too, which can be really hard. It's one thing to try and get a student on side, but if the teachers aren't even on side then you're like well, this is harder because students are malleable. I think students feel torn, and I feel like

there is still a lot of – I won't say ridicule – but there is still a lot of, I feel like, negativity around the idea of 'oh, do you like Japanese? Oh, are you going to continue?' I feel like it's not seen as a positive thing to study a language. I feel like you're the strange one if you enjoy Japanese. In my experience, it feels like yeah, if a student is liking it, it's like 'why? **Why** do you like it?' And it's not, 'oh, why do you like it?' It's '**why** do you like it?' You know, it's a negative kind of question that they're asking, which is kind of strange to me, but at the same time it also makes sense because I feel like a lot of these students don't necessarily have a lot of experience with culture that is different from their own. Or they might not have even left the mountain, they might not have even gone to the city before.

Tanya: Hmmm. I've noticed the way the students seem to resist the greeting you do at the start of each class, can you talk a bit about how you start each lesson and how you set that up?

At the start of each year I explain to them [students] that in Japan it's [starting the class] more formalised, the way you greet each other when you come into a classroom. Students will stand up, the teacher will greet you, you'll greet back. Everyone's standing very, very straight, there's no fidgeting. I explain to them that when we come in and we greet each other we're setting ourselves up to get into the space that we're trying to learn, and we're adding in a tiny, tiny bit of culture and it's something that they're still doing in Japanese classrooms now, so why not? Why can't we do it in our classroom and have a little bit of that culture in what we're doing? I've had those year nines for last year and this year and they're still forgetting every single time we go into class. Stay standing, we're going to greet each other. I still get them – they still sit down.

Tanya: Can you talk about that, about how you respond to that?

It's totally part of them essentially telling me non-verbally they could not give a crap. They're trying to do it in a way that's passive aggressive, but I don't pay – I don't pay any mind to it. I just go, 'oh guys, did you not hear me?'

I think some – they told me straight away 'I did this in primary school and I know I don't like it.' But their ideas are already formed. They're not willing to trust in me that we're not going to do it like that. They've already shut themselves off, they've closed that door and they're now not willing to open it. It's so layered

> though. I definitely think there's more value put in some subjects and less value in others. And, to me, that's quite obvious through a lot of the co-curricular activities that are offered [sport], and the way students and other colleagues talk about subjects – like Japanese. I think the sports culture, it's rampant. And I think because the culture around this area is so homogenous, I then think you have nothing to challenge that, it's just being reinforced everywhere you go.

The reactions of Fen's year nine humanities class about moving to the material, everyday space of the Japanese room is representative of how that group of year nine students relate to and value Japanese language learning. According to Willo, this is a product of the conceived, or abstract space that Japanese language learning occupies more broadly within the school. For Willo, having to 'create a culture in the staff' to value Japanese is a greater task than cultivating interest and value in students. According to Willo, the rhythms that devalue Japanese language learning are compounded by the productions of the Hills as 'homogenous' and where cultural norms are 'reinforced everywhere you go'. For Willo these norms manifest profoundly in the 'sports culture' of the school that seems to be constructed in opposition to subjects like Japanese and reflects a production of a Hills identity and Australian culture more broadly. In an interview Willo described Australian culture in the Hills as "we go to the pub, we play footy, mateship, that kind of thing". Willo's description resonates with Nic's characterisation of 1950's Australia and Fen describing life in the Hills as 'still like the 70s'. These aspects of identity are deeply rooted in a white patriarchal core of Australian identity that has not been challenged in the same way as other, more urbanised, communities of Melbourne's expanding metropolis. As such, the perceived material space of the Japanese classroom can be understood to signify the abstract space of the Hills 'constitutive outside' (Hall, 1996). In representing 'otherness', Japanese comes to stand for the differences that are not part of the Hills, that are unnecessary and irrelevant to being and belonging in the Hills.

The students seem to display their disaffection towards Japanese in ways that Willo describes as 'them telling me they could not give a crap'. It is these verbal and non-verbal disruptions to Willo's rhythms of teaching and learning that create rhythmic dissonance, or disruptions that work against the intention of Willo's lessons. To provide some 'flesh and bone' to Willo's perspective, I provide an extract from my fieldnotes describing the opening moments of a year nine Japanese class, as follows:

> *It's period four on a Thursday: year nine Japanese. Students linger and jostle restlessly outside the classroom. Willo, the Japanese teacher is a second-year grad. She opens the door for the class and they bump to their seats like dodgem cars before slouching in their chairs. The last student in closes the door and Willo instructs the class to stand ("hai, tatte kudasai"). Students stand complicitly, but they are not settled or attentive: boys swing their chairs on their legs, twirl pens in their fingers, smirk and poke each other; the girls pick at their fingernails, fidget with the hems on their skirts; some students leaning as if against an invisible post; heads tilted to the side; a gaze of seeming impatience at the strangeness of this performed ceremony, a bored gaze perhaps saying 'is it over yet?' Willo greets the students in Japanese, and they mumble a reply before she instructs them to sit - "hai! Suatte kudasai!" (please sit). She provides instruction on today's activity, facilitates a recap discussion and directs students towards the task they need to complete. A boy sitting near me groans "why can't everyone just speak English?" A complaint I later discover is commonly fielded by Willo and the other language teachers.*

For Willo's class of year nine students, this greeting is a performance—as opposed to a cultural practice—that is disconnected from their experiences of schooling. This performance is constituted by difference – a difference that is distant and alien, unrecognisable within the systems of meaning making of these students. Despite Willo's best efforts to 'explain the process every year', students continue to rebel in 'passive aggressive' and 'non-verbal' ways, by slouching and fidgeting, producing rhythms that disrupt and interfere with Willo's teaching and learning program. Willo identifies some factors that play into students' everyday practices, and the rhythmic disruptions felt by Willo, as a result of the value attributed to learning Japanese in teacher and student talk. In particular, the 'negative sort of question' that asks **'why** do you like it?' undermines Willo's efforts to cultivate value in language learning and produces the everyday space of the Japanese classroom as a space that can be dismissed. While rhythmic disruptions in Japanese create a kind of dissonance in Willo's lessons, they also have implications for intercultural education.

The subject area of languages has been charged with taking responsibility for the formal aspects of the Intercultural Capability—the processes of curriculum translation and enactment will be discussed closely in chapter seven. Relevant to this discussion, however, is the way the everyday space of the Japanese classroom has been established as dismissible. The Japanese classroom is not produced as a space that is central to Hillside's identity and is disconnected from the identity of the Hills more generally. In this way, by tagging the formal requirements of the Intercultural Capability to the curriculum area of languages—a space that is devalued across conceived and perceived productions of space—other teachers can be given a 'free pass' from cultivating intercultural understanding through their work. In this way, the Intercultural Capability at Hillside becomes relegated as optional or unimportant. This occurs at a high level of school administration through the value attached to particular educational activities. While some individual teachers see value in language learning and intercultural education, the normalised construction of the conceived and perceived spaces of Japanese language learning at Hillside as irrelevant produces a dominant rhythm that disrupts and limits opportunities for meaningful intercultural education to take place in this space. In the extract below Fen alludes to the tension the subject of languages face on the question of value. Fen implores, however, that finding a way to equip young people at Hillside with skills to navigate cultural difference is really important. Fen said:

> But, you know, I think the programs like LOTE [Languages Other Than English] I think make a huge difference. I think kids' experiences – and I know that sometimes that's questioned about whether or not learning a language gives – but I do think that it is an *in* to just understanding the similarities and differences of other cultures and feeling confident about, you know – I don't know, that individuals are individuals and – yeah, so I don't know, but it's an interesting thing. But the main part of it is that variance you see in kids in their upbringing, their backgrounds and their approaches and their ideas about things. I think the way they talk about difference – the way they – I mean, really, if we – most of the kids' experiences of cultural difference, of learning about cultural difference, is to do with conflict – about things which are very negative. About things which are threatening. About threats to their worldview – threats to their world order. So it's interesting, until you talk to them about food – what they like to eat! They don't – I think their desire to engage with it is limited by fear.

Fen's comments point towards language learning as an important way 'in' to 'understanding the similarities and differences of other cultures'. In the context of classrooms where there is ‘that variance you see in kids in their upbringing’ and where ‘most of the kids’ experiences of cultural difference is to do with conflict’ finding ways to build positive relations with cultural difference through school subjects and learning experiences plays an important role in the development of intercultural understanding. Yet, as Fen indicates, intercultural work is lived not simply through content or school subjects. In this way, intercultural understanding is lived through the relations between teachers, students and spaces (such as the Japanese classroom) that mediate the views and experiences from beyond school that young people (and teachers) bring to the various opportunities to engage interculturally at school. Even though the ways young people engage with culture and difference is shaped by their own diverse experiences and positions in the world, dominant productions that position cultural difference as ‘not a priority here’ appear to shape efforts to engage students interculturally.

As discussed in the last two sections, productions of conceived and perceived spaces produce rhythms that deem cultural difference and intercultural understanding as unimportant for the immediate needs and aspirations of young people at Hillside. Yet, as the teachers in this study assert, it is exactly because the experiences of young people are sheltered from navigating cultural difference in their everyday lives and their exposure to cultural difference is often couched in fear or a threat to their world view, that intercultural education is important. The dominant rhythms that reproduce cultural difference as other or as a threat, and position intercultural education as an aside present difficult conditions for teachers doing intercultural work. As such, the lived spaces of intercultural work at Hillside are compromised by social action and spatial relations that reject cultural difference and opportunities for intercultural understanding. The trouble of these lived spaces will be the focus of the final section.

5.4 The challenge of cultivating positive sites of intercultural understanding at Hillside High School

Lived space is where relations with conceived and perceived spaces come to life and meaning is made. For example, the kinds of interactions that occur between year nine students in the Japanese classroom are a product of the conceived and perceived productions of Japanese as having no or little value within the school and to students’ worlds beyond. This production is constructed through social action whereby meaning is shared by some students to sufficiently disrupt Willo's lessons. In this way, perceived, conceived and lived spaces are inseparable, they intersect and implicate each other in complex negotiations of space. In this section, rather than looking at specific examples of lived spaces of intercultural work, I reflect on the role of teachers broadly in creating lived spaces where intercultural work becomes possible. Specifically, I position teachers as 'mediators' of conflict, opinion, experience and knowledge (Lefebvre, 1991) and ask, under the conditions described across this chapter, how teachers at Hillside can do intercultural work in meaningful ways. Drawing on Fen's reflection below, I examine how opinions related to culture and difference produce lived spaces of intercultural work that are deeply challenging for teachers to navigate.

> I think it's [intercultural work] really complex. The politicisation of it [culture] I guess is the difficult one and it's kind of interesting. You think about the old – 20 years ago no one asked you what you voted and actually to even ask or discuss it was seen as being pretty rude. But now it's so different in that personal opinion, I think that's probably the really complicated part because people feel 'I'm right'. There's a rightness which is interesting and you go, 'yeah, that's fine, that's your view, whatever'. But we're [teachers] not here in this place [public schools] to say what's right. It's not really our job. We can challenge legal behaviours, so if people are discriminatory or if they're harassing or abusing then that's your role. But your role isn't to interpret whether a behaviour is – do you know what I mean? When you're confronted with other viewpoints or contrary viewpoints I think that that's where that real test is about being partial and particularly that cultural sensitivity stuff. Kids here have got just different ideas about things. I don't think you'd change anyone's mind by telling them what your viewpoint is. If anything you just confirm that they don't have the same viewpoint. They dig deeper into resisting it and I think that's part of the problem. Even if you're telling them what they know is right is problematic. Because there's a discovery. It just limits the experience of discovering ideas.
>
> I think the main part of it is that variance you see in kids in their upbringing, their backgrounds and their approaches and their ideas about things. Yeah. It's not really – it's always the discussion that's interesting, not the outcome. The outcome is not the point. It's teaching young people to be critically thoughtful. However, if that's – you know, if this stuff [cultural difference] isn't discussed, is it worse than teaching it badly? I mean, it's a really complex thing to kind of manage that

> conversation. You know, there's lots of really complicated things that you get into. I think that the one – probably around race and culture, I feel less worried about those conversations because, I think they are challenging conversations, but it's interesting, and I think the kids here need to have those conversations. I think the ones that are really hard are around culture and a religious background. I think that's a really tricky – it's very tricky. I think there's always that worrying point that you will end up with kids who are – I think it's very easy – actually, honestly, I think part of the reason it's reasonably easy to have conversations about race in a class full of white kids, is because in many ways it's an abstract conversation. Yeah, you know, it would be more complex and it becomes more complex when you have a kid who is clearly from a different background, because you've really got to set up some parametres around language and – you know, really carefully unpack conversations.

Fen's reflection describes some of the challenges of negotiating concepts of culture and difference, race and religion in moments as they arise through teachers' work. Fen identifies three main points of tension that come together in particular ways in particular spaces to shape the way intercultural moments in schools are lived: personal opinion; the role of teachers; and risk.

Fen identified earlier how he worried the Intercultural Capability was interpreted and enacted through 'personal viewpoints', that there was no 'agreement' on how to teach or approach the Capability, and that teachers had no 'safety' training. Fen sees this as deeply problematic, particularly in light of the way personal opinion can be expressed with unmediated authority and the ways some people feel entitled to assert a view that 'I'm right'. This highlights a core difficulty for developing intercultural understanding. That is the value that individuals—young people and teachers—attach to understanding difference. As seen across this chapter, the value attached to cultural difference occurs in part through the spaces of the Hills that reproduce cultural norms and position cultural and ethnic differences as external. While Fen recognises that the 'variance you see in kids upbringing, their backgrounds' constructs the worldview of young people differently and shapes their point of view, for young people in the Hills, according to Fen, their experiences of cultural difference are often negative or confrontational. When young people voice their opinions about cultural others in classrooms it is a teacher's job to mediate these conversations. These mediations, however, are also shaped by the personal views of teachers. At Hillside High School, where the dominant representations of a Hills imaginary as ‘homogenous’ and ‘monocultural’, where continuity reproduces the cultural imaginary within a kind of mirror, where cultural diversity is produced ‘abstractly’ as an issue external to the Hills and hence intercultural understanding as ‘not a priority’, views that ‘reject or detest’ (Dervin and Gross, 2016) diverse others can be sustained. Fen is adamant however, that young people ‘just hold different views’ and so for him, the role of teachers is not about legitimating their own views or those of their students, but about being ‘partial’ and creating opportunity for critical discussion. These critical discussions are constitutive of the lived spaces of intercultural work, where the productions of cultural difference in the conceived and perceived spaces of the school and the Hills can be examined and understood.

For Fen, teaching and learning is about ‘discovery’, whereby “it’s always the discussion that’s interesting, not the outcome. It’s teaching young people to be critically thoughtful”. Fen argues it is the role of teachers to mediate discussion at the intersections of contrary viewpoints, where diverse experiences and opinions come together through managed conversation. According to Fen, “that’s where that real test is about being partial”. In this sense, teachers need to be aware of and reflexive towards their own positionality when mediating difficult conversations about race, religion and culture. For Fen, facilitating a ‘discovery’ about diverse others and insights towards intercultural understanding is not about affirming the views of the teacher or those of students. This is significant. In thinking about intercultural education as discovery, the intercultural can be approached through coming to understand the relational and contradictory spaces between the self and the self’s ‘constitutive outside’ (Hall, 1996) in an ongoing reflexive practice. Yet, as will be discussed in chapter six, individual teachers cannot do this work alone in their own classrooms, particularly when those spaces are already compromised or devalued in ways experienced by Willo in her Japanese classroom.

In advocating for pedagogies of discomfort, Boler and Zembylas (2003) argue that “to gain a clarity of reality requires particularly close attention to those stories that naturalize themselves through common sense or familiar cultural myth” (p. 77). In this way, the intercultural becomes less about the external or foreign other, but rather about the neutralized self and the spaces that produce difference in particular ways through the common normativity of daily life in and beyond school. Boler and Zembylas (2003) argue difference is produced “through the social relations that constitute the lived and everyday experience of culture” (p. 81) and that in the production of a collective imaginary and common normativity, difference is ‘disciplined’ and “possibilities of inhabiting ambiguity” (p. 83) are constrained. In the everyday work of teachers, mediations of personal opinion, experience and knowledge test teacher partiality. These mediations are embodied through teacher practice and curriculum work that respond to events of space as they unfold. Mediations are shaped by teacher positionality and experience, pedagogic practice, as well as the performative response to the rhythms of lived spaces.

Specific examples of some challenges teachers face in mediating competing views and values across lived spaces of Hillside are explored in the following chapter where I examine the positioned nature of teachers and their pedagogic practice. The discussion considers the ways teachers are positioned differently to engage with the difficult knowledge that surfaces in productions of cultural difference at Hillside and what this means for teachers engaging in intercultural work at this school.

Chapter 6

Positionality and pedagogic practice: Examining the challenges and risks of intercultural education at Hillside High School

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter established dominant productions of the Hills and of Hillside High School as relatively isolated from mainstream productions of cultural diversity. This separation is constructed and reinforced through social practices that reproduce a sense of belonging through a white patriarchal core that is enacted in everyday spaces through sporting culture and casual racism. Cultural difference is then produced as ‘weird’ or ‘strange’ or ‘other’, or through young people’s experiences of cultural difference through ‘threat’ or ‘conflict’.

The production of the Hills and Hillside High School as removed from issues of cultural difference and disengagement with intercultural understanding creates the conditions for educational priorities such as the Intercultural Capability to be positioned as irrelevant to young people of the Hills. As seen in the production of the everyday space of Willo’s Japanese classroom, these conditions pose difficult challenges for teachers attempting to do intercultural work. This chapter builds on the foregrounding of productions of community and school spaces developed in chapter five to examine lived spaces of intercultural work in close detail. This chapter focuses less on rhythm and more on the way teachers are positioned and position themselves to challenge common sense knowledge and the practices that are embedded in consciousness (Bernstein, 1996). In particular, I examine how teachers are positioned differently to do different kinds of intercultural work and the kinds of risks and challenges they face in doing it.

In thinking about the teaching and learning of intercultural understanding at Hillside High School, teachers engage in intercultural work relative to their own professional and personal positionalities. In this chapter I explore the influence of personal history and identity on particular teachers’ understanding of culture and difference and how these contribute to their engagement with intercultural work. The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section explores how professional identity and personal experience shapes how participants construct and position themselves in relation to culture and difference. The second section examines the school's expectations of teacher practice as constructed within the bureaucratic and administrative spaces of Hillside High School. In particular, I examine the ways individual teachers' pedagogies align, diverge, mediate or challenge these formal school expectations. Here I argue that the ways participants enact intercultural work is a complex process of reflection and action between personal and professional experience, teaching philosophy, disciplinary knowledge and practices and values—what Aoki (1983) calls 'situational praxis'. The final section draws on one experience of navigating difficult knowledge to examine the precarity of critical intercultural work at Hillside and argues that this kind of work needs the support of the whole school.

6.2 Teacher identity, personal histories and professional obligations

In this section I examine how three teachers, Michelle, Luke and Willo, are positioned in relation to concepts of cultural difference and intercultural understanding. I explore how personal experience has shaped how participants construct and position themselves in relation to culture and difference. This section demonstrates how teachers' experiences and values come together to position them in relation to the kinds of intercultural work they are engaged in.

Cultural difference, whiteness and notions of a 'fair go': Reflections on a sheltered upbringing

Michelle grew up in the Hills and is conscious of the limitations of what she describes as her 'white bred life'. Michelle's experiences described below do two things: (1) her reflections are demonstrative of a broader trend to identify cultural difference through visual cues; and (2) she demonstrates how she practices reflexivity and the notion of a 'fair go' to focus on learners and learning behaviours, rather than on cultural identity. She described her experiences with cultural differences as follows:

> I grew up here [in the Hills] and there wasn't a lot of different cultures represented—apart from there's a lot of Dutch people and German people. So, I probably didn't experience a lot of other cultures until I went to university. I had a different career initially and worked in the CBD with a manager that was Japanese and she had a lot of guilt around what had happened during the second world war.

> She would say things like ‘it’s ANZAC Day – I don’t really like walking around, I feel bad’ and that sort of thing. Then my first teaching job was at a public school in the mid-outer east of Melbounre, so the cultural mix there is very different, and that was the first time I really came across Muslim culture. I felt like a complete idiot because kids would say ‘oh well, I might not be at school tomorrow because it’s Ramadan, and it depends on how I feel and it’s going to be hot tomorrow, and if I can’t hydrate, then dah, dah, dah.’ That was a big learning curve. I think what those things have done over time is kind of makes me focus on the person, I guess.
>
> Talking about Ramadan, you’ve got this backdrop of the cultural thing, but in front of it is the learner. You’ve got the kid who observes Ramadan, still manages to combine everything that they have to do in their life, and then you’ve got the kid that observes Ramadan, but oh, ‘I couldn’t do that because it’s Ramadan.’ I think as a teacher, the cultural part becomes a bit of a backdrop and you’re dealing with the learning behaviours—or that’s probably what you should be doing anyway I suppose. Yeah…what was the question again?
>
> I would say that family thing probably initially shaped the way that I thought, but I guess alongside that was, that you give people a go. My grandparents that I talked about [see 4.5], had a very strong mistrust of particularly Japanese people, but also people that are different, that come from different countries generally. Yet, some of their closest friends were Sri Lankan, so even for them it wasn’t a blocker of getting to know people and being friendly to people. Those two things were sort of side by side – yes these people from other countries have harmed us in the past, or whatever that attitude is, but you give people a go.
>
> In terms of my teaching capacity, I think it just made me want to know more. I realised how sheltered my upbringing was.

Michelle candidly notes how the views of her family initially shaped her relationship with culturally diverse others, describing her upbringing as ‘sheltered’ and how she ‘didn’t experience a lot of other cultures’. While Michelle appears acutely aware of the limitations of her own upbringing, the way she identifies cultural diversity is demonstrative of a broader trend to signify or represent cultural difference through visible differences, such as skin colour, visual motifs, rituals and beliefs. Michelle’s recount of her first teaching job in the mid-outer East—a suburb rich in cultural diversity—demonstrates the way ‘whiteness’ has a tendency to neutralise cultural differences between whites (see 1.5). Michelle describes her upbringing in the Hills as absent of different cultures apart from there being ‘a lot of German and Dutch people’. This is constructed in contrast to experiencing cultural diversity at University and the ‘cultural mix’ encountered in her first teaching job. The participants in the study repeatedly describe the Hills as homogeneous and monocultural. Yet, there is evidence that cultural diversity does exist in the Hills—primarily in people from Dutch and German heritage—the differences are simply not as pronounced, or visible, as in some other places. In this way, cultural difference can remain unrecognised because the majority of people are white and the cues often relied upon to signify cultural difference are not visible. In this sense, common sense knowledge about who and what constitutes cultural diversity has become embedded in consciousness in the Hills.

The tension between homogeneity and cultural diversity comes up in my conversations with Fen, who describes the Hills as ‘culturally diverse’, but in ways not easily discerned. The invisibility of diversity at Hillside enables engrained productions of culturally diverse groups as non-white others to be reproduced in unquestioned ways. Producing cultural difference through visual cues can be thought of as a product of the administrative and bureaucratic spaces that have established whiteness as the core reference point for Australian culture, while non-white others are positioned as different, peripheral or external (see 1.4). These discourses are part of longstanding constructs of national identity that have created hierarchical narratives of belonging (Anthias, 2008) based on ethnic background and the perceived distance from the white-Anglo norm. It is in this way that the Dutch and German people in the Hills—being white and of European descent—could be perceived to be closer to the dominant signifier of Australian-ness (white), and as such the cultural differences in the Hills seen as neutral.

The normalisation of identifying cultural diversity as non-white others also highlights the way productions of cultural difference in the discourses that help us understand ourselves and our place in the world are riddled with tensions and contradictions. For example—‘Muslim culture’ can be perceived as different, whereas Dutch or German culture as less so. This in many ways is tied up with Hall’s (1996) notion of a ‘politics of location’ whereby the relations with particular cultural groups are shaped by the politics of how different groups are located in relation to a normative self. Yet, despite these contradictions for Michelle, her experiences of culturally and ethnically diverse others sit alongside the notion of a ‘fair go’, enabling Michelle to reflexively understand the limitations of her own experiences. Rather than acting as a prohibitive force, the tension between a 'mistrust' of people from different countries and 'being friendly' generatively encourages Michelle to 'want to know more.' As a result, as a teacher Michelle endeavours to 'focus on the person' and the 'learning behaviours' of individuals to position herself in ways that attempt to 'understand where kids are coming from'. Michelle's ability to sit with these contradictions and ambiguities 'side by side' positions her in ways open to being sensitive and supportive of difference and demonstrates the way Michelle recognises the 'funds of knowledge' (Moll et al., 1992) of the diverse young people she teaches as an asset to understanding students and student behaviour (Kamler and Comber, 2005). This is likely further influenced by her position as a learning specialist who develops and administers the support program for students with additional learning needs, and in part by her teaching area—food studies. Michelle's reflexive disposition positions her in a productive way in relation to issues of cultural difference and intercultural understanding, even though she describes her own experience as a 'deficit'.

Relationships, reflexivity and personal viewpoint: Engaging with positionality to enable teacher practices that are open to intercultural encounters

The complex ways dominant representations of culture and diversity permeate everyday lives is evident in Michelle's reflection above. Michelle also articulates the importance of being reflexive towards her own experiences, views and values. In Luke's reflection below, he focuses on inter-group relationships throughout his own schooling experience to understand the politics of cultural identities. He identifies exposure as a key element to develop students' intercultural awareness, but argues that teachers unwilling to engage with their own prejudices is a bigger problem for intercultural education. Luke described his experiences of cultural difference as follows:

> Growing up, in primary school, I was in a little country town where it was all white people and a little group of Indigenous and that was it. That was the only thing. And it wasn't a fantastic relationship with that. Then we moved and I went to the most multicultural high school in New South Wales – there were six of us who were Anglo in Year 12, and the other 80 or 90 students were from about 20 different [ethnic] groups – you got a real sense of how the world worked in terms

> of politics, working out geopolitical conflicts and ethnic conflicts within the context of the school. Like, when the Italians used to be – they were the outer group, and then it was the Vietnamese, and then it was the Muslims – you'd work out, 'ok, if I'm friends with them then those people are going to be nasty to me because…' – you learn, yeah, you wouldn't say this or mention that to that particular group.
>
> I think the fact that we don't have a lot of different cultures means that that idea where you could be culturally insensitive and offend someone isn't necessarily there, so there's not like a catalyst to say, 'Hey, what you've just done is—' I think that if nobody's here to offend necessarily then there's less emphasis on having that changed. I mean, you get a couple of – you get people like Ron and his brother and you have the odd kid that is a different culture, but I don't know whether it's because there's not a big group of them that the kids seem to think 'well, that's just one of them.' So it's that idea of 'I don't trust all black people, but there's only one of them so they're all right, they're the exception to the rule.'
>
> I think if you've got this idea, and we talked about that idea of exposure to different things, students are more willing to come onboard and change their position. I think by the time you get to be an old crusty—particularly in the English department—teacher you're stuck and it takes a longer time to shift and it's much harder. Things I really worry about, like we were talking about before where one of the English teachers said "we're not going to teach this book because they're [Indigenous Australians] all on welfare." That's disturbing at this point in time for somebody who's a teacher. I think you should be more in line, you should be more educated.

For Luke, his experience of intercultural relationships shapes the way he understands and navigates cultural diversity. Luke does not mention the influence of his family or upbringing, but recalls growing up in a country town where it was 'all white people and a small group of Indigenous' and later moving to 'the most multicultural high school in New South Wales'. He describes the challenges of learning 'how the world worked in terms of politics'– the politics of identity and the potential consequences of identifying with different groups. More broadly, identity discourses around being 'Indigenous', 'Italian' or 'Greek,' 'Vietnamese,' 'Chinese' or 'Muslim' are in part shaped by dominant discourses that produce the 'mistrust' of 'people that come from different countries' for Michelle's grandparents described above. Even though Luke and

Michelle both appear open to cultural diversity and see no place for personal viewpoint (‘you give people a go’, ‘you should be more in line’), identity signifiers based on race, ethnicity or faith remain a normative or common-sense reference point for cultural diversity in their reflections. Luke’s description of the way groups become ‘more accepted’ by way of simply ‘being here longer’ points towards the hierarchy of belonging whereby the existence of particular cultural differences within a particular community become normalised over time and less intense or threatening. For Luke, his experiences learning the way ‘you related was different’ between different ethnic groups has played a significant role in his understanding of cultural difference and the politics of identity that has continued in his teaching work as a way of grappling with and challenging issues of race and bias with students and teachers.

In describing his teaching experience, Luke notes that ‘generally the schools I’ve taught at have been very monocultural.’ Luke describes Hillside High School as ‘very sort of monocultural’ with ‘the odd kid that is a different culture’. This tension between mono and multi-cultural is one that is recurring. The term ‘monocultural’ seems to be used synonymously to signify ‘whiteness’, again raising the issue of the way cultural difference is identified visually, while whiteness has a tendency to neutralise cultural difference. Similar to the way Michelle didn’t explicitly signify the Dutch and German people living in the Hills as necessarily culturally different, it appears that Luke’s reference point for cultural diversity also align to the visual cues that may signal a different ethnic origin. For example ‘Ron and his brother’ are Australian-Filipino and look ‘Asian’. Connecting to the perception of non-white others as a potential threat, Luke’s characterisation of students’ perceptions as ‘I don’t trust all black people, but there’s only one of them so they’re alright, they’re the exception to the rule’—an observation also shared by Nic (see 5.2)—seems to characterise the perceived ‘threat’ of culturally diverse others identified by Fen (see 5.3). These productions are deeply engrained in generational practices that produce the Hills as white and detached from the challenges of learning to live with cultural difference.

These kinds of productions of diversity, race and threat align with the observations of critical race and multicultural scholars who argue productions of ethnicity and cultural difference in this way assumes whiteness is culturally and ethnically neutral (see 1.4 - 1.5; Boler and Zembylas, 2003; Frankenberg, 1993; Steinberg and Kincheloe, 2009), and continues to position non-white others in marginalised ways (Anthias, 2004, 2008; Yuval-Davis, 2007). Further evidence of this is in the ways some teachers and teacher participants characterise the school as ‘mainstream white’ and ‘not multicultural’ and influences the ways intercultural understanding is conceptualised by some staff as ‘not a priority’. Further insight may lie in Luke’s comment that ‘if nobody’s here to offend necessarily, then there’s less emphasis on having that changed’. Nic also identified this as a hurdle to engaging or changing racist behaviour (see 5.2). That is, the imperative to engage with entrenched views of cultural identity and systems of representation is lacking in part because cultural difference is not visible. As Willo stated in 5.1, if it’s all ‘sameness’ then cultural difference is not recognised. The challenge for teachers doing intercultural work at Hillside High School is to find ways to engage with and perhaps disrupt the rhythms of relational practices that produce cultural differences in this way as productive sites for encountering difference and developing intercultural understanding.

Luke suggests ‘exposure’ to culturally diverse people is a way to challenge student views and move beyond limited perceptions of diverse others. However, what Luke sees as a bigger challenge is the ways teachers can get ‘stuck’ on an entrenched view—such as the English teacher who complained ‘we’re not teaching that book because they’re [Indigenous Australians] all on welfare’— and that views such as these are ‘disturbing at this point in time’. It appears Luke believes that to be a teacher comes with a responsibility to ‘be more in line, be more educated’, or at least, I would suggest, reflexive of the views that one holds and how those views are formed. What appears to be missing, according to Aoki (1984), is “a conscious effort to examine the intentions and assumptions underlying their [teachers’] acts” (p. 131)—a crucial component of disrupting normative behaviours through critical pedagogies.

In chapter five, Fen lamented the primacy given to personal viewpoints and argued that teaching for intercultural understanding is ‘where that real test is about being partial’ (see 5.4). If views such as those about Indigenous Australians are held even by a ‘small handful’ (Ani) of teachers at the school, these views are likely to influence teacher talk and pedagogic practice that has the capacity to undermine efforts to develop intercultural understanding regardless of whole school priorities and expectations. The way teacher talk and personal viewpoint can undermine intercultural education efforts is felt acutely by Willo in her Japanese classroom. Willo and her fellow language teachers are tasked with the formal requirements of the Intercultural

Capability, yet language learning as a subject area is actively undermined and Willo is left trying to cultivate a value for Japanese amongst staff and students. Willo's experience is examined in the next section.

"It's just different": Grappling with ways to bridge difference in one inhospitable Japanese classroom

As Willo described earlier (see 4.5) she grew up surrounded by her Italian grandparents, she learnt languages other than English from a young age and was afforded opportunities to travel throughout her schooling. For Willo, she attempts to deconstruct the notion of cultural difference as produced within an 'us-them paradigm' and attempts to find commonalities that can bridge difference in a positive way. What follows is an extract from Willo that explores how language learning can serve as an access point to understand how cultural difference is produced and constructed.

> We'd always done language learning in high school and primary school. When I got the opportunity to go – well, the first time actually – to go to Mexico, I did and I went there because I was just really interested – I was 11, turning 12 on the plane back. I didn't actually learn Spanish, I just wanted to travel and go somewhere. I loved the idea of travelling. I loved being able to go there and try different foods and see what life was like in this particular place. I ended up going on three more overseas trips in Year 10, 11 and 12. I went on my Japan tour in Year 10 which was awesome! For me, it really solidified my language learning. But also, strangely enough, it affirmed some of the stereotypes that we had been taught about Japanese people … but it also really solidified the fact that I'm like it's actually just really similar, there's nothing that, to me at least, didn't feel super strange or abnormal. When I went back [to Japan] in 2011 and 2012 it was like 'I feel really comfortable here', just like I feel comfortable in Australia. Like there was no real difference. They have stuff that is different, but it never seemed different to me … it just never really seemed a big deal. So even though I've been back to other places later after that [after the school trips], to me, those early trips were probably the most important time in shaping my view and my understandings of culture and difference within culture.
>
> When I talk to students about things, particularly things that might be perceived as weird or strange [toilet bidets or rituals around going to shrines and temples] I always just try and go for 'it's just different'. I feel like I have a more

> wider understanding so I'm not necessarily coming from a place where it is an 'us/them' kind of paradigm. The other thing too that I talk about as well sometimes is the fact that we have difference within our own little bubbles. This [intense] difference is just another facet of that. I try and pose it like 'we've already got difference, it's just that it's not as obvious because it doesn't stand out as much to you, but it doesn't mean that it's not there.'

In contrast to Rachel and Luke, Willo spent her early years surrounded by diverse cultural influences through her Italian grandparents and exposure to symbolic, representational and material productions of different cultures in the spaces of her childhood. It is perhaps unsurprising that as a Japanese language teacher, language features in her reflection, as does culturally diverse food and opportunities to travel as relished tactile experiences of cultural difference. Willo describes her experiences of cultural difference on her school trips to Japan as 'it's actually just really similar'. Her enthusiasm to travel and 'being able to go there and try different foods and see what life was like in this particular place' indicates how Willo values experiencing different cultures as a way to expand her own horizons. Willo represents her experiences of cultural difference through the things that she can grasp, such as having 'stuff that's different' and trying 'different food', this is perhaps a way for Willo to interpret and share cultural difference—particularly when working with her students—in relatable ways. It is clear, however, that Willo appreciates the complexity of culture and the nuances of 'difference within culture'. In attempting to deconstruct the 'us/them' paradigm of cultural differences by posing to students that 'we've already got difference', Willo attempts to counter constructs of Australian culture as 'we go to the pub, we play footy, that kind of thing'. I admire Willo's tenacity. She faces profound challenges in teaching Japanese at this school and even greater challenges in being tasked with the Intercultural Capability and strives to seek out spaces of common ground. This may be Willo's way to combat the general resistance exhibited by some students and teachers towards engaging with the cultural differences perceived in Japanese language.

In an earlier interview, Willo talked about language and the way the constructs of language provide clues to cultural values and ways of thinking that can help understand cultural difference. In discussing how she works with students, she said:

> I always just kind of pose it to them like it's just a different culture; this is what they value. Look at the language, look at the way that they're talking about this thing – even the way that we express, like the words that we choose to express ourselves are so different because of the values that we hold. I always try to explain the fact that within Japanese language more-so you can see the cultural values within specific words and specific phrases. In English we don't necessarily change the word or phrase that we use, but we change our tone. In Japanese, the tone changes through the words, through the phrases. And in Japanese you won't say the thing that you mean. But it takes students a little bit longer to switch on to that.

This indicates something of the way Willo understands culture and difference as signified through language and the values and signals of shared meaning making in particular contexts (Hall, 1993b). This perhaps points towards part of the difficulty for students in Willo's year nine Japanese class. Through language learning in Japanese class, students are being asked to communicate, and hence think, through difference. This is extraordinarily difficult—particularly through a language like Japanese that is so very different to English—and for some, their way of reconciling this difficulty is expressed through rebellion—such as 'can't everyone just speak English?', 'this is stupid', or 'I'll never use this'. In working with students across these difficulties, part of the challenge for Willo may be her curriculum and pedagogic inexperience as a newly graduated teacher. This is compounded, however, by the way language learning is positioned and (de)valued at Hillside High School more broadly. Willo is grappling with how to create curiosity and value for Japanese when the conceived space of 'Japanese' and 'language learning', as well as the material space of the Japanese classroom are constructed in negative ways.

The experiences of Michelle, Luke and Willo describe the diverse and complex ways individual teachers identify and engage with cultural difference. Michelle's reflection highlights the contradictions and ambiguities that exist in the ways we learn to identify and understand cultural difference. Despite these contradictions, for Michelle her experiences of culturally and ethnically diverse others sit alongside the notion of a fair go, enabling Michelle to reflexively understand the limitations of her own experiences. For Luke, experiencing the politics of cultural identity and inter-group relationships lay the foundation for his understanding of cultural difference. Common to

Michelle and Luke's experiences is the way 'whiteness' was implied as the common sense reference point for cultural difference. That is, cultural difference is identified by visual markers, such as skin colour, physical features or cultural motifs. This is demonstrative of a broader trend in Australia to identify culturally diverse groups in this way and is indicative of the 'horizons' (Lefebvre, 2004) that lend intercultural education to be taken to mean education about culturally diverse (non-white) groups. This production of cultural difference goes some way to explaining how the Intercultural Capability came to be tagged to languages at Hillside. Willo grapples with the challenge of productions of cultural difference within the 'us/them paradigm'. This can be seen in the way she attempts to deconstruct the normalised production of cultural difference by seeking out common ground through tactile experiences of cultural difference and the function of language in demonstrating cultural values and shared meaning. Without the support of the whole school, however, Willo's work is challenging on a number of fronts.

The next section teases out how administrative expectations related to teacher practice intersect with professional identity and personal experience to position teachers in relation to intercultural work.

6.3 Teacher practice and personal viewpoint: The challenge of cultivating a whole-school value for intercultural understanding

As seen in the previous section, teachers come to their classrooms and to their work with diverse experiences and worldviews that help shape how they think about and enact their everyday curriculum work. This section explores some of the ways this happens in relation to bureaucratic expectations of teacher practice. These bureaucratic expectations are mostly associated with formal requirements from the Department of Education and the VCAA and from the school's curriculum and leadership team. The DET provide a pedagogical model that it expects schools to adopt and teachers to apply to their classroom practice (see 3.5). In efforts to increase (perhaps publicly perceived) rigour and accountability related to the teaching profession, successive governing bodies have attempted to instrumentalise education (Priestley and Philippou, 2019). Through a culture of standards and performance, some teaching processes have been touted to improve student learning outcomes and teacher efficacy. However, such tools inevitably overlook the unpredictability and influence of relational practices in teachers' work (Alexander, 2008). Utilitarian approaches to teaching and learning position teachers as a 'factor' in student outcomes but, as Biesta (2015) and others have argued, "the fact that this 'factor' is a human being and, more importantly an educational professional who should have scope for judgement and discretion is all too often forgotten" (p. 75). The instrumentalization of teacher practice does two things: it reduces teaching practices to a set of technical processes and undermines the value of teachers' relational work, while failing to acknowledge the external factors that predicate teaching and learning. According to Aoki (1984) "emphasis on technical strategy as a means for efficient decision making effectively submerges the ideology of sociocultural values … [and] impoverishes us by submerging or even denying the meaning of cultural reality" (p. 128). This section demonstrates how curriculum and pedagogic directives are appropriated differently by different teachers, and how individual experience shapes the way pedagogic practice takes form in relation to subject-area knowledge, knowledge of students and bureaucratic expectations.

The challenge of personal viewpoint in developing 'agreed' teacher practices

During my time at Hillside High School staff were focused on responding to the results of a recent DET review, which identified several areas for school improvement: student disinterest in schooling, low aspiration and low confidence. Each of these areas was targeted for improvement through teaching practice (see 5.2). To address this the school developed a professional learning plan over the four years to align with the strategic plan. These plans were designed to stimulate curiosity and build resilience in students through teacher practice. Willo explained:

> Last year and this year the professional learning that we did around curiosity was more theoretical, there were some examples of other teachers kind of doing it and showing it, then you had to think about in your own time building ways that you could promote curiosity in your own classroom. Not to say that we were necessarily given time to do that, but it was the idea that cool, now you've got the theory, go do it.

Ani explained how the professional learning sessions were intended to "share strategies" and "focus on worked examples as well as organising peer observations or learning walks". Ani went on to describe some of the challenges that required careful acknowledgement when talking about this aspect of teachers' work:

> I think the biggest challenge here is we have such an older group of teachers who – yeah, they're impenetrable in terms of practice. For me [as a professional practice leader], I've been teaching for a lot less than most of them, so 20-odd years less, and none of them take on leadership positions anymore, so it's hard to push through when they obviously hold that kind of seniority of years. I mean, I kind of get it, because even in the 10 years that I've been teaching, we've had three changes in the curriculum, different strategies and things like that, so it's always like the next thing. But actually it's not. And actually, even though the names of the strategies might have changed, the strategies haven't changed that much, but that kind of gets used as an excuse – 'oh, we did that in the '70's, it didn't work then, why would I do it now?' So there's just lots of excuses for not reflecting on their own practice and people are just doing the same as what they've been doing for the last 20 years, and that's really hard to push through. So, somebody might do it [expected practice] when they're being observed, but the minute they're not, there's no peer observations, it's just back to the status quo.

Ani's perspective on the way individual teachers respond to the DET directives and what Luke and Ani describe as the school's 'expected practices' point towards how individual practice 'is hard to push through', particularly when teachers feel as though they might have 'seen it all before'. These reflections—in setting aside issues of reform fatigue, workload and time allocated to reflecting on and developing practice—demonstrate the key role teachers' personal and professional identity play in the construction of teachers' pedagogical work. There is an impossibility in the complexity here: teachers are involved in a few hours of professional development and are expected to take up new initiatives or teaching practices with, as Willo claims, no additional planning time. These tensions remind me of Bibby's (2010) claim that teachers "need to stick with the difficult necessity of walking a tightrope" (p. 135), whereby teachers are encouraged and directed to adapt to changing directives and accountabilities in relation to their own classrooms and relational work. Bibby argues "teaching is a profession that makes strongly ethical demands" where teachers are "forever in the process of balancing anxieties and realities" (p. 135). Such ethical demands become stark in the coal face of cultivating intercultural understanding. Yet, it is perhaps through acknowledging the ethical responsibilities of teacher practice, the Intercultural Capability can be productively positioned as a matter of practice, rather than content. Ani draws on her experience to suggest some teachers—particularly older teachers—are not interested in reflecting on their practice. The extracts and discussion that follow focus on intercultural understanding as an educational priority and explore the tension between institutional expectations related to professional practice and teacher identity. In his reflection below, Luke talks about the tension between the idea of 'agreed' or 'expected' practice in theory and the difficulty in managing how this is taken up in individual classrooms. Luke said:

> We talk about this all the time – there is an agreed way of doing things, we have an agreed practice on various things [teacher conduct, pedagogic practice]. What happens when you don't follow the agreed practice? What's the follow up? As a normal classroom teacher, you work to challenge unacceptable or disrespectful behaviour with kids. But it's like that ignorance thing too – if you're not exposed to it you tend to have this view that comes from a lack of knowledge rather than necessarily anything malicious. But, by the time you get to be an adult and you get to be a teacher I think there's a limit to how much you can say that. As a teacher you should know better.
>
> I think the nature of what I teach helps me—teaching humanities and psychology helps me to teach the kids about challenging ideas of where stuff comes from. I want my psych kids to be better consumers of information. I don't care if they're going to be a psychologist or not, but I want them to be able to interrogate the information they consume. I think that helps to challenge kids or being a bit of a devil's advocate when kids make a statement and you ask them to justify it.
>
> I suppose in maths that's probably harder in that you're not learning stuff that's necessarily cultural, you're learning facts and processes. Of course humanities and psych are about ideas and challenging evidence, so as a teacher you can say "I'm going to pull you up on that," whereas in maths your position as a teacher maybe is not that – if somebody makes a statement you might say "that's more a humanities thing" or the kids might deflect in terms of "you're just a maths teacher" so their position might not be one that allows them to challenge easily. It might be personality and some teachers might not feel comfortable challenging kids when they make off-the-cuff statements, but that's a huge part of the work. I think you

> should always, and that's the role of anyone, to challenge inappropriate behaviour anywhere.

Luke recognises that as a humanities and psychology teacher, his everyday work is constructed around challenging ideas and developing critical thinking. For him, this helps him to 'challenge kids' or 'ask them to justify' positions they hold or statements they make. When you bring this together with Luke's own schooling experiences navigating the politics of ethno-cultural identity (see 6.2), he appears comfortable and confident in doing this work that is complimented or strengthened by the constructs of his learning areas and the kinds of practices he adopts in his work as a teacher and team leader. Luke recognises that not all teachers are in this position—whether as a result of their own experiences or the perceived limitations of different subject areas. It is in these liminal spaces of teaching and learning where teacher practice must productively bring into conversation subject-specific knowledge with knowledge of students and their life worlds in order to co-dwell in the messy and at times uncomfortable spaces in-between the curriculum plan and the multiplicity of lived curriculum experiences (Aoki, 1993). As such, Luke recognises that challenging 'inappropriate behaviour' is 'a huge part of the work'. Agreeing with Ani's reflection about changing teacher practice, Luke argues there is a challenge when some colleagues 'don't follow the agreed practice'. Below, Luke describes the real difficulties of cultivating 'agreed practices' when disagreements based on personal viewpoints emerge:

> If you challenge somebody it takes up time and you've got to [follow through with administration] – so sometimes you'll go, 'I just can't'. Like, they were wanting to do an Indigenous book for Year 11 and there was some objection to that because they [a team teacher] had the stereotype of, 'oh, they're always whinging, why are we doing that?' – and that's really hard when it's from staff and it goes into damage minimisation – do we make sure that teacher doesn't teach it? If they're teaching it, it's going to be a disaster, so how do you manage that without – or, do you just not put it on? And then what happens there? These are people that won't move. We can't put them anywhere. Where are they the least damaging to put on? And you're trying to support and mentor these staff to improve their practice because you can't just say 'see you later'. But it's part of the job that just wears on you, you know, we [professional practice leaders] go 'why can't you just do your job, actually? Just do your job!'

Luke's reflections are suggestive of the ways personal viewpoints intersect with teacher practice. Luke's reflection on a discussion about teaching an Indigenous text in year 11 English and the way opposition from one teacher—based on their personal view of Indigenous people—triggered 'damage minimisation'. Such 'damage minimisation', according to Luke, required choosing between putting the text on and it potentially being 'a disaster' despite 'trying to support and mentor these staff'. This struggle points towards the politics of knowledge, of what schools should be teaching, and in this instance, raises questions of difficult knowledge and navigating personal emotional investments made in particular views of the world. According to Aoki (1984):

> Understanding the day-to-day life of teachers and students in the classroom requires at least understanding in terms of the meaning structures actors in the classroom give. However, to be able to venture forth together in the meaningful way Wojtyla speaks of requires not only an understanding of this meaning structure but also action rooted in critical reflection on these meaning structures. (p. 131)

Luke indicates that some of the most difficult practices to shift are those connected to personal viewpoint and positionality. This is likely because the way personal viewpoint underpins teacher practice is tacit and acting on critical reflection into personal views and assumptions is deeply confronting. Luke claims that teachers have a responsibility to make their personal views accountable and 'more in line' with the nuances of diverse lived realities – such as those of Indigenous Australians. Yet re-routing entrenched views to create a shared sense of purpose and commitment to 'partial' (Fen) practices, rather than processual or technical ones is tricky work. As Boler and Zembylas (2003) argue, this kind of work requires engaging with the emotional investments made in normative assumptions about difference over time.

Proposing to engage with normative assumptions about difference creates an interesting tension at Hillside. The school is currently focused on developing teacher practice—as Fen described, leadership 'expects a lot to happen in classrooms' (see 5.2)—but seem to struggle to engage staff to build a whole school culture of 'curiosity' or cause to reflect on the ways personal values and positions inform teacher practice. For example, the way the conceived and perceived spaces of cultural difference—for example, the Japanese classroom and curriculum area of Japanese—are produced in ways that devalue those spaces and undermine the kind of work Willo tries to do. With specific regard for developing intercultural understanding, the emotional investments required of teachers reach further than the need to develop mere teaching processes. To engage in intercultural work, teachers need to invest in understanding the possibilities of alternative truths and 'both-and' positions in relation to teaching across difficult knowledge, for example through texts about Indigenous Australians. But, as Luke and Willo indicate—pressures of time and workload often make this work more difficult and demanding.

"If I can't model the behaviours I want to see in them, why am I here?": Teacher reflexivity and developing a praxis that engages difference

A key difficulty outlined by Ani and Luke above, is the way personal viewpoints inform teacher practice and create tension surrounding what kind of texts, or in other words, knowledge, should be taught. Michelle's reflection below further teases out some of the personal difficulties for teachers and talks about the relational responsibilities of teachers beyond the processes and content driven requirements of subject area curriculum work. Michelle reflected:

> Sometimes I feel quite ignorant around different cultures. I guess from the point of view that if you know more about the historical background of things you can evaluate people's behaviour in a very different way. I think I probably feel a little poorly equipped. Kids will ask questions and you might know a vague bit about it, I say to them 'look, I'm happy to go away and have a look into that'. Whereas if you could open a debate, an informed debate on something, on the spot, it would be a different outcome. In terms of my own positioning, I suppose what I feel is a deficit.
>
> But, every year my husband and I have this debate about Australia Day and should we change the date. He will say 'oh, you can't rewrite history'. I mean, I don't have a strong view one way or the other, but I feel like we need to do something to move forward. Anyway, the other day he was listening to a song by an Indigenous hip hop act called A B Original and one of the lines is "I'm going to have a barbecue and I'm going to have it on your grandmother's grave" and I just thought 'oh crap, it's the equivalent of that'. I guess the point of telling that story is that hopefully these life events or things will just keep happening to people. I don't

> know, I feel like anything that challenges your thinking is good and yeah, that happened on the weekend so it's in my head!
>
> I do feel like I have two voices in my head. One might be my kneejerk fast view, like when someone cuts you off in traffic and they happen to be Asian, and then you're applying the stereotype. I think when some things are quite ingrained in you, your first initial thought about something often comes from that space. I don't necessarily like that voice in my head, but it's there. Or you see a tall dark-skinned person at the shopping centre, your mind goes to these stories that we incessantly hear about African gangs. But I think as a teacher and as a parent you let the other voice that says, 'you don't know anything about this person' resound. I think I do have some conservative views, which I know are rooted in my upbringing and in some ways my white bred life. I can't change that. But yeah, I think that anything that comes out of your mouth, out of my mouth, has to be heavily rooted in there 'what kind of person do I want my child to be? What kind of person do I want this kid in my class to be?' If I can't model the behaviours that I want to see in them, why am I here? I shouldn't be doing this role.

Michelle speaks very candidly about her 'conservative views' and the ways these are 'rooted in my upbringing' and yet, as a teacher she demonstrates an impressive degree of reflexivity. Michelle does not speak of other teachers, but through her own praxis she illustrates how she is able to hold her experience at arms-length and focus on her responsibilities as a teacher in developing relations and social practices that are attentive to the broader social responsibilities of being a teacher. Michelle understands the inherent social and relational work of teachers and that teacher talk—'anything that comes out of your mouth'—should model the behaviour and talk that 'I want this kid in my class to be'. Yet, if classrooms are understood to be microcosms of a bigger school and social ecology (Mansouri and Jenkins, 2010), then it can also be understood that the conditions in each classroom to develop particular dispositions or behaviours are not equal—as indicated by Luke and Ani in their reflections above.

The social practices of individual classrooms are diverse, and even when there are measures in place to develop and enact an 'agreed practice', as Ani and Luke describe, there are no guarantees that these practices will be upheld or sustained, or that developing particular teaching practices will trigger critical reflection and action on personal viewpoints. While the challenge of improving teacher practice is complicated by much larger issues—including teacher identity, job satisfaction, workloads, competing purposes and priorities, and reform fatigue—improving teacher practice in areas related to building intercultural understanding requires engaging with subjective constructions of difference and the value individual teachers attach to cultural difference. Such views constitute the nexus for intercultural teacher practices. In this way, intercultural teaching practices are a little bit different to other subject areas as they require occupying uncomfortable spaces that accept that different cultural groups experience the world differently. That is, the 'both-and' and difficult knowledge associated with understanding relations between diverse cultural groups at some point needs to be foregrounded for intercultural education to contribute to efforts to build social cohesion.

Michelle's realisation that celebrating Australia Day was akin to "I'm going to have a barbecue and I'm going to have it on your grandmother's grave" highlights how engaging with alternative experiences of the world can help to challenge thinking and 'move forward' on difficult social issues. In other words, intercultural understanding cannot be developed in young people unless teachers themselves embody intercultural dispositions—or dispositions that support building positive relations across cultural difference. Taking this position further, it seems likely that positive intercultural dispositions cannot be cultivated across the whole school at Hillside unless the spaces that produce cultural difference in negative ways are confronted. This work, as will continue to be explored, is risky. Teachers need to balance a critical engagement with issues of cultural difference, subjective assumptions and viewpoints and an appreciation of where personal views come from. But this also needs to be supported by appropriate professional development and school structures that support the emotional labour of cultivating dialogic pedagogies and pedagogies of discomfort.

The risk of this work is felt most profoundly by Willo, who experiences the impossibility of cultivating value for her subject and for understanding cultural difference while feeling like it is undermined by other staff members. Willo's position as an early career teacher also poses a different set of challenges to those described above. As a second year graduate, she is still learning her craft and navigating the power and politics of the school's administrative structures and culture, but she is also working in a subject area that is devalued and at times undermined, adding a layer of complexity and difficulty to the way she is able to build social practices that engage with cultural difference in meaningful ways. Willo said:

> I think there is kind of a feeling sometimes [amongst students] that the culture that we live in is the height and everyone's trying to reach there, so why should we do [learn / understand] the other when everyone's trying to get to us? And that to me is very, like, I don't know, like a European-centric kind of world view that 'oh no, no, everyone else is going to learn English so we don't need to [learn another language]' [said sarcastically], and I'm kind of like 'well, that's not actually the point of why we're here today'. Even, just blatant racism like 'don't they eat dogs?' or 'why should we learn a culture that talks about blah blah blah.' It's like, no, that's not, that's not it – you've actually got the wrong country, you know? And then, even that as well, the idea of mixing up Japan with other Asian countries based on, usually stereotypes, and then I've had students who do Chinese accents.
>
> *Tanya: How do you respond to that?*
>
> In those situations, depending on the student, usually – it's often a student who doesn't want to engage generally. Like, not just in Japanese, but in general, and they have like some issues getting into trouble and that kind of stuff. So, if it's that kind of student then I'll respond with something that's kind of sarcastic or jokey that gets my point across, but in a way where they don't feel like I'm attacking them. If I was to go in with a 'that's not cool, now you're being racist' they would stop listening. So, if I go in with a different way of saying it, like 'Hey, you know you're actually confusing this accent with this accent. Perhaps we should actually get more educated about this culture then we can make some informed comments'. And they kind of go, 'okay' because they don't really know how to respond to it, and I think in the end that shuts them down.
>
> There's got to be a willingness to have that conversation. If you've got different experiences, or you've travelled, then you're probably going to be more willing to talk about something that you have an experience in. If you don't have an experience in something you might not be willing to talk about it, maybe because you don't feel like you can because you don't know enough, but I feel also too it might be because they don't necessarily put a lot of stock into it. But I think, in general, I'm in quite a privileged position to be able to talk about these things with my students because of my experiences with it. That wealth of experience.

Willo’s reflections demonstrate the ways that entrenched views and values about cultural difference surface in her language classes. Willo faces a daily battle in challenging the normativity of a ‘European-centric kind of worldview’ and the ways ‘even blatant racism’ is used to disrupt her efforts to engage students with Japanese language learning and culture. Willo relies on her own experiences from her childhood and through travel as a compass that helps positions herself as an expert on matters of culture and difference. Yet not far beneath the surface of her experiences there is evidence of a struggle as she walks the tightrope ‘balancing her anxieties and realities’ of being vulnerable and dependent on others while teaching in her classroom (Bibby, 2010). In a school where the dominant student body is white and produced in homogenous ways, Willo is working across spaces where normative views and values, as Luke suggested, remain unchallenged and spaces for exploring difference are constrained or undermined. Willo recognises ‘there’s got to be a willingness to have that conversation’ but at the same time describes how casual racism or applied stereotypes makes having that conversation almost impossible. In an effort to keep students on side she responds to casual racism with ‘something that’s sarcastic or jokey’ that ultimately ‘shuts them down’. Willo is in an extremely difficult position. She recognises that if she calls out racism directly students will ‘stop listening’, but at the same time, ‘shutting students down’ potentially closes off an opportunity to have those difficult conversations about views of diverse others and where those views come from. Boler and Zembylas (2003) pose that “educators face profound ethical questions regarding the emotional effects of critical pedagogy when they engage students in deconstructing identity, worldviews and ethical beliefs” (p. 76). Yet it seems at Hillside, the construction of intercultural education as being about culturally diverse groups allows cultural difference to be constructed as an object of study, rather than an issue of professional practice. In contrast, the kind of intercultural education advocated in this study and in the literature aims to improve relations between culturally diverse groups. At Hillside, in making intercultural education about cultural diversity, ethical questions related to engaging students and teachers critically with the relational spaces they occupy in relation to culturally diverse groups can be side-lined and the complex issues of practice by-passed.

For Willo, her capacity to develop social practices where she can have difficult conversations with young people and other teachers is shaped by the ways dominant discourses about language, culture and difference come together in her classroom and that circulate in the school. That is, the conceived and perceived spaces of cultural difference and Japanese language learning are embodied in the lived space of the Japanese classroom and produce rhythms that are disruptive and produce dissonance in the rhythms of Willo's teaching work. Willo attempts to contain disruptions by leaning on her experiences of cultural difference as a source of knowledge to help navigate the everyday reality of entrenched norms, and the 'stock' (Bernstein, 1996) put into Japanese language learning. Yet, it appears that the difficulty of working through the entrenched norms of students is compounded by the school's focus on individual classrooms rather than on the cultivation of a whole school culture. This focus on individual classrooms seems to create the conditions whereby teachers are not encouraged to think about the flow-on effect of their practices in other school spaces—practices that Willo experiences as 'undermining' her efforts in teaching Japanese and intercultural understanding.

What Willo and Michelle's reflections demonstrate are the ways personal and professional values and practices are cut across by normative values and assumptions of space that influence and disrupt teacher practice in different ways. What is clear from Michelle and Willo's experiences is the need to engage with 'anything that challenges your thinking' (Michelle) and be prepared to have 'difficult conversations' (Willo), but also that this cannot only be expected to occur in select classrooms. The expectation for 'a lot to happen in individual classrooms' (Fen) puts a lot of pressure on teachers like Willo who otherwise can feel unsupported in doing intercultural work. Fen talked about the expectations around individual classroom practice; Ani and Luke talked about the difficulty of shifting practices of older teachers; Luke noted the difficulty of supporting and mentoring teachers whose personal views are racist or closed to alternative perspectives; while Willo described experiences of racism and resistance from her students; and Michelle discussed the importance of being reflexive towards personal views. From these perspectives it seems, at Hillside, finding ways to navigate the risk of examining the worldviews of teachers and young people as a whole school is a hurdle to shifting attitudes towards cultural difference and building an engagement with intercultural dispositions beyond the Japanese classroom.

6.4 Practices that risk navigating the uncomfortable spaces between intercultural relations

This section examines the risks associated with doing critical intercultural work that engages the assumptions, experiences and worldviews of young people. This section highlights the way normative assumptions and racist attitudes towards, in this case Indigenous Australians, can be carefully engaged through teacher practices that model and manage reflexive discussion. While the example described below can be held up as an example of the kind of critical intercultural work that is possible in individual classrooms, it must also be acknowledged that this kind of work is precarious. In a focus group with Luke and Fen, Ani described a one-off experience with a group of junior philosophy students and an encounter with a visiting Indigenous group from the Northern Territory. Ani described the experience as follows:

> There needs to be a combination of experiences and managed dialogue – I mean, I've only been able to do this once, and I hope there's opportunities to replicate it again. When that Indigenous group from the Northern Territory came down [speaking to Luke and Fen], Tom sent the email out and I said 'yeah, I'll do a lesson with them'. I went to my junior philosophy class – the sevens, eights and nines – and I said to them that we were going to meet up with this Indigenous group from the NT and, you know, we'd been practicing formulating questions in class, so I said – let's think of some questions we might like to ask. That was a mistake because most of the questions had some kind of underlying stereotype about Aboriginal people in them. I was like, we don't want to be asking some of these questions, it's just rude! Questions like 'do you live in a house', stuff like that – you know? Yeah, and 'do all of them burn their cars', stuff like that.
>
> So anyway, the next week they [the Indigenous group] came and they gave the presentation. It was about how they live on their land – different cultural things. They showed different tools and instruments that they'd used, and paintings, and what some of the paintings meant. And we broke up into little groups and each group had one or two of the Indigenous guys there. They were free to ask questions after the presentation. Most of the time, the group I was with, did ask reasonable questions. But one kid did

> ask ‘do you live in a house?’ But this was – it was not just my class. There were another couple of classes there. Anyway.
>
> And then, the following week – one of the videos they had shown while they were there I used again as a bit of a stimulus for our discussion. It was a video of a young group of kids from their community doing a hip-hop song about culture and alcohol. It was this cool little hip-hop song. Anyway. I used that for them to start generating questions. And most of the questions were about the idea of culture, like ‘what makes an Indigenous person feel connected to their land?’ But there was one which was ‘why do Indigenous people resort to alcoholism?’ And then, the process is – we usually vote on a question. And that was the question they wanted to discuss. In the pedagogy they were practicing we’re supposed to treat the question as genuine. Even though it wasn’t philosophical – it’s psychological – but I was like, ‘well, they want to know. This is what they want to explore’. So, we started answering it. I said ‘we’ve got to come up with as many suggestions as possible for why Indigenous people might resort to alcoholism’. So we listed all these reasons and then at some point, some kid was like – ‘oh yeah. But I know non-indigenous people who drink for that reason’. So we tested that against all the other suggestions we had put up. And it was like, yeah, non-Indigenous people also drink because of that, or that, or that, the only one that they couldn’t tag onto it was about dispossession of their land. And then the students realised their own assumptions, their own stereotype in the actual question. Yeah.
>
> But that was a very managed dialogue to get them to that point. I didn’t offer anything. I was just working with their ideas to come through that. Now, I don’t know if I went and asked that same class again how they feel about Indigenous people now whether that has actually changed anything. But it was one of the more powerful moments I’ve had in a class. Yeah. It doesn’t happen often though.

There was a kind of sadness in the way Ani recounted this experience. She told this story and then went on to highlight some of the structural obstacles to moments like this occurring more regularly in schools, such as: requiring all visitors to schools to hold a current 'working with children' check[1], increased administration related to organising incursions and excursions, increased pressures on teachers' time related to assessment, reporting and performance reviews, being 'fixed on content rather than process' (Ani), and disagreement about removing students from regular classes for one-off experiences such as the one described. These constraints point towards the bureaucratic requirements teachers experience in the course of their work, but also urges questions of purpose – *what* are students learning and *what for*? (Biesta, 2015). Ani regularly expressed her frustration with teachers' readings of the curriculum that focus on content, rather on the processes of thinking and learning, and the administrative structures that she sees get in the way of rich learning opportunities. In her final one-on-one interview Ani said "I'd pretty much scrap the main curriculum and the core of what a school does would be the capabilities, the other stuff [content] would be alongside it rather than the other way around". The experience Ani describes is evidence of this. Her focus with that class on modelling and practicing a pedagogy around questioning and surfacing assumptions and bias is a core focus of the critical and creative thinking and ethical capabilities, and in this case, is also closely linked to the Intercultural Capability. Ani's reflection is demonstrative of what she sees matters in education, even though 'it has only happened once' and she could not say 'whether that has actually changed anything' (students perceptions of Indigenous Australians). While Ani described this experience as ‘powerful’, this experience was risky as Ani and the young people she was working with were exposed and precariously positioned.

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[1] A working with children's check (WWCC) is a "screening process for assessing or re-assessing people who work with or care for young people in Victoria" (State of Victoria, 2020). The process involves taking a detailed look at the criminal history and relevant professional conduct findings of applicants to ensure young people are protected from harm. Anyone who works with young people as part of their work or as a volunteer is required to hold a current WWCC. This became a DET requirement for anyone working, visiting or volunteering in schools that came into effect in 2018. Had this requirement been in place at the time of the Indigenous group visiting Hillside, it would have very likely prevented this group from visiting. In the time since, this requirement has restricted other incursions at Hillside, including events planned with a local sustainability group and the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC).

It is clear that Ani was uncomfortable with the kind of questions that young people might have asked the Indigenous group during their visit and that her students posed in the session after the incursion, describing some of the suggested questions as ‘just rude!’ However, when the group explored the question about alcoholism in Indigenous communities, Ani brought together experience and ‘managed dialogue’ whereby the class were encouraged to embody the pedagogy ‘they had been practicing’. In this situation, Ani was managing her own discomfort and potentially that of her students as they encountered the difficult knowledge of ‘their own assumptions, their own stereotype in the question’. Ani, as a philosophy teacher and social justice activist is well placed to manage this dialogue. The space of philosophy as a subject to explore ideas openly likely contributed to this experience unfolding the way it did, but it could have, as Fen noted, ‘become a very polarised kind of conversation’ (see 7.4). Ani reflected on the space of philosophy to allow this kind of work to occur as follows:

> I think philosophy allows it to a greater degree because you’re more free to be saying ‘we’re just playing with the ideas at the moment. We’re not actually taking positions. We might take positions later on things. But there’s an openness to be able to just freely discuss things and to be honest about it, and then maybe be challenged about it.
>
> But I also think it’s a disadvantage with adults sometimes because sometimes when I contribute a particular idea or pose a question amongst staff it’s like, ‘oh, that’s just abstract philosophy stuff, I don’t need to engage in that.’ I get that attitude sometimes.

In this way, the conceived and perceived spaces of the subject philosophy are conducive to exploring the contradictions and ambiguities of relational spaces with cultural difference. It is in part the production of philosophy as a space to openly discuss ideas that enabled a ‘managed dialogue’ that uncovers assumptions about Indigenous Australians and alcoholism to occur. For Ani, her approach to unpacking the question of Indigenous alcoholism demonstrates how her practice is not only the sum of teaching processes, but also an embodiment of the values, ideas and principles that inform her practice. These practices are lived in the relational space of her philosophy class. In contrast to Willo attempting to have ‘difficult conversations’ about racism and stereotypes in Japanese class—a space that is, according to Willo, devalued and undermined—it is possible to see how complex relations of space enable and constrain intercultural work differently. In this way, it is possible to see how critical intercultural work at Hillside precariously occurs within and through situated relations of space that are subject to the disruptive rhythms of entrenched norms.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter has examined how teachers are positioned personally and professionally to engage with cultural difference and intercultural understanding. The teachers identified shifting challenges that contribute to the precarity of intercultural work, including: the primacy of personal viewpoints; the expectations on individual classroom practices; the challenge of engendering value in ‘agreed practices’ and norms; challenging normative assumptions about culturally diverse groups—particularly racism and stereotyping; varying degrees of teacher reflexivity; and disagreement around the purpose of teachers’ work. These challenges intersect with productions of space—such as the Japanese or philosophy classrooms—and contribute to the rhythms of intercultural encounters. This chapter clearly demonstrates that for the Intercultural Capability to realise its goal as a mechanism for social cohesion and improved inter-group relations, then curriculum reform must also engage with or reconfigure the relationship between teachers, students, knowledge and identity. Chapter seven builds on this analysis to examine the way processes of curriculum translation and enactment at Hillside further narrow the scope for intercultural work, suggesting the need to cultivate a whole school approach to the intercultural that is reflexive towards local productions of cultural difference while being sensitive to and supportive of cultural difference more broadly.

Chapter 7

Everyday intercultural curriculum work as negotiated rhythms of schooling

7.1 Introduction

Chapter five established the way dominant relations with cultural difference are produced through the conceived and perceived spaces of the Hills and Hillside High School. These dominant productions reinforce normative assumptions that positions cultural difference as ‘weird’ or ‘strange’, or as a ‘threat’ or through ‘conflict’. These productions of cultural difference enable intercultural spaces at Hillside—such as the Japanese classroom—to be devalued and dismissed. Under these conditions, the social acts that reject or resist cultural difference—such as casual or everyday racism and stereotyping—create rhythms that disrupt teachers’ intercultural work. Chapter six extended on this analysis to examine the complex challenges associated with navigating these spaces. The teachers talked about the need to address students’ inappropriate behaviour and the difficulty in supporting and mentoring teachers with entrenched views about diverse cultural groups to improve teacher practice and work within ‘agreed’ norms. Partiality and reflexivity were linked to ideas of the greater social responsibility of teachers’ work and teacher capacity to have ‘difficult conversations’ about culture, race and identity. However, as seen through the examples of Willo and Ani’s efforts to build intercultural understanding, this kind of work is precarious and comes with great risk. The challenge at Hillside is in navigating and challenging assumptions and contradictions embedded in views held by teacher colleagues and young people about culturally different groups. I have argued that there is a tension between expectations on individual teacher practice and the structures and practices rooted in whole school culture—as influenced by productions of space.

In this chapter I focus on how the Intercultural Capability curriculum is interpreted, translated and enacted across levels of school organisation at Hillside High School. This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section focuses on the interpretation and enactment of the Intercultural Capability curriculum as an “official-to-be-implemented text” (Priestley and Philippou, 2019, p. 1). In this section I argue that the Intercultural Capability at Hillside is treated as content to be taught, detached from the practice through which it is enacted and the values that inform practice, which is a major problem. In tagging the capability to the languages curriculum area, teachers outside of this area ‘aren’t even thinking about it’ because they are not responsible for assessment or reporting on the capability. Because they don’t have to think formally about the Intercultural Capability in their work, teachers across the whole school are not encouraged to address the entrenched relations with cultural difference produced through the everyday spaces of the Hills and Hillside High School. The second section explores the hierarchies of value (Bernstein, 1996) at work in administrative and bureaucratic processes of curriculum translation and how these forces are felt through the allocation of time and resources to intercultural education programs. I argue that the hierarchies of value within the school further narrow the scope and opportunity for intercultural education and avoid engaging with the emotional investments and difficult knowledges that produce cultural difference in deficient ways. The final section describes moments of incidental intercultural work and attempts to grasp and acknowledge the everyday ways individual teachers mediate intercultural spaces. Through the discussion I argue that intercultural education cannot be meaningfully enacted without sensitivity and support for intercultural endeavours across and between whole school and individual classroom spaces.

7.2 Administrative processes of curriculum interpretation and translation at Hillside High School

This section examines how Hillside High School’s ‘conservative’ approach to ‘covering off’ the Intercultural Capability reduces opportunities for an integrated and whole school cross-curriculum approach to intercultural education. At Hillside, the languages teaching team has been made responsible for the formal teaching, assessment and reporting requirements for the Intercultural Capability, relieving teachers from other subject areas of any responsibility for the capability and discouraging engagement with incidental intercultural work. This section elaborates each of these three arguments to demonstrate how division of intercultural labour ignores the fact that the capability is expected to “be developed, practiced, deployed and demonstrated by students in and through their learning across the curriculum” (VCAA, 2017). As such, the approach to the Intercultural Capability at Hillside continues to produce cultural diversity and the need for intercultural understanding as someone else’s problem, rather than a collective effort.

The allocation and division of intercultural labour: Responsibilising language teachers with the Intercultural Capability

In schools, formal curriculum is interpreted and translated through a number of layers. Like many organisations, schools are hierarchical, with teachers promoted to a range of positions and propelled to lead others in priority areas, such as Fen as a professional development leader, Ani as professional practice leader and Michelle as a learning specialist (see 4.5). At Hillside High School the senior leadership team are the first level of formal curriculum translation. This team comprises: the curriculum leader (who is also the Head of English), the learning enhancement and instructional practice leading teachers, the school's principal and two assistant principals. Other middle level leaders—including curriculum area and professional practice leaders—also have some input into the senior leadership group. The senior leadership group make initial high-level decisions about how the formal curriculum directives are organised at the school, what elements are prioritised, and the agreed norms and practices that are expected from teachers. These school level decisions and priorities are translated down to teaching teams—which at Hillside High School are primarily organised by year level and then by what they call domain areas, but are commonly called school subjects. These teams make more detailed decisions about what is taught (content and skills) in line with the formal curriculum, as well as how student learning is to be assessed and measured. From here, it is up to individual teachers to draw on their professional experience and various pedagogic practices, including the approaches and practices promoted by the Department and the school, to enact curriculum as they deem relevant and appropriate to their students. Below is an extract from my fieldnotes describing my first introduction to the Intercultural Capability at Hillside. I use this extract to demonstrate the cursory way the capability is interpreted and 'checked off' at Hillside, before drawing on teachers' experiences of the division and allocation of intercultural labour.

> *When I return to the school to begin fieldwork, I am swept into the Assistant Principal's office to complete an induction. The Assistant Principal, Andrew, is friendly as he rushes through the Departmental requirements—acceptable behaviour, emergency evacuation, signing in—seemingly impatient with the*

> *formalities and box checking required. Andrew tells me proudly that a number of students are first responders as CFA volunteers, and if the alarm goes at the fire-station it is not uncommon to see students running down the hill to the station. The fire risk to the school and the school's responsibility to students and community is real. Wrapping up the induction Andrew tells me that many teachers have been at the school a long time and have not worked elsewhere. He goes on to tell me that he has a "six-year policy" whereby he doesn't stay at any given school longer than six years. I took this to imply that he thought some teachers had been at the school too long. Before taking me out to show me around the grounds, he hands me the Intercultural Capability 'self-reporting' activity that year seven students do as part of the Notables Project in languages. He explains that many teachers are 'uneasy' about the Intercultural Capability and so self-reporting as part of a cross-curriculum project investigating a 'notable' person from another country has been a way to 'cover off' the curriculum requirements. He confesses: 'It's easy for teachers. It ticks the box. Do students understand the nuances of culture? Probably not.'*

This extract is indicative of a broader pragmatism that shapes the way curriculum directives are translated at Hillside. A number of challenges feed into this pragmatism. In particular, Andrew recognises teacher 'unease' as a contributing factor to the way the Intercultural Capability is 'covered off'. The experiences of teachers that follow, however, also identify the complexities of adapting to ever-changing curricular and constraints on teachers' time. At Hillside High School the Intercultural Capability is the formal responsibility of languages and is specifically 'covered off' through the cross-curriculum project 'Notables'. Andrew matter-of-factly indicates the self-reporting activity is 'easy for teachers' and 'ticks the box' on the formal requirements, demonstrating the way the Intercultural Capability is not engaged as a whole school priority, but rather produced as yet another box to check, undercutting the value and intent of the Intercultural Capability as depicted in formal curriculum and policy documents. In a focus group discussing the processes of curriculum prioritisation, translation and implementation in relation to the Capabilities at Hillside High School, the teachers suggested that there is a sense that new curriculum initiatives are slotted into existing approaches, programmes, and performance requirements with minimal disruption to curriculum and planning. Fen, a leading teacher, explained:

> Yeah, to be honest, it's one of those things that it's very hard with the number of changes to national and state curriculums that have happened in the last five to six years – it's absurd. And the implementation of these things is generally, here's the document, let's sit down and look at it, figure out what we already do, what we don't do and what we need to pick up more of.

Fen's comments point towards the realities of accommodating curriculum change and working within the rhythms that determine teachers' labour, while dividing and allocating teachers time. On a practical level, leadership and teachers need to sit down and fit changed or new curriculum directives into existing practices and programmes across the school and individual classrooms. This process of interpreting the formal curriculum documents and evaluating the school's programmes to 'figure out what we already do, what we don't do and what we need to pick up more of' is on the one hand quite reasonable. However, thinking about this approach and the way the Intercultural Capability has been tagged to languages illuminates the tension between checking the box on the required outcomes of the formal curriculum and what the purpose of those required outcomes are.

Ani reflected on the process of curriculum interpretation and allocation of the capabilities and claims 'I thought it was not a very good process.' She went on to suggest:

> If you're not having to assess it, you're not even thinking about it. It might come up in other contexts, but it's not going to come up explicitly in the curriculum if it's not tagged as something you have to assess. People are so fixed on content too, rather than process.

Ani's comments indicate the tension between the "actual processes" (Apple, 1982, p.3) of curriculum interpretation and enactment and the ways a focus on the taught and assessed curriculum through organizational and administrative structures can obscure curriculum work that is hidden—the kind of work that surfaces through teacher talk, practices and values. Fen reflected on "the arbitrary nature of who gets to report on what" and the ways that this directs and determines content and teaching in reductive ways. Ani added:

> Domain [learning] areas got together and said what they thought that they already did and then it just got tagged onto that. It wasn't like, where else could it really be – the capabilities are all still treated as another thing, they're not the main game.

In the process of curriculum organisation at Hillside High School, there appears to be a real focus on content—the 'stuff' that is explicitly taught and measured, 'rather than process'. In this way 'the capabilities are still treated as another thing'. Drawing on Biesta's (2009) proposition that schools and education systems have come to value what is measured rather than measure what is valued, the Intercultural Capability at Hillside High School appears to be checked-off for the sake of bureaucratic requirement rather than for its educative value. This contributes to the ways notions of the intercultural are already devalued through the productions of space examined in chapter five—spaces that are 'not multicultural' and where 'intercultural understanding is not a priority.' As a result, the interpretation and enactment of the Capability is produced within an authoritative metric of time and labour that allocates the Intercultural Capability to languages, because language classrooms are spaces associated with culture and cultural difference. When set against various other competing pressures within and beyond the school, allocating and dividing intercultural labour in this way is a rhythm that is difficult to disrupt. Further drawing out the 'arbitrary nature of who gets to report on what' (Fen), the structural arrangements of curriculum organisation and responsibilisation enable intercultural education to be produced as someone else's problem.

Structural arrangements delinking intercultural teacher practice from intercultural curriculum requirements

While the intercultural curriculum appears to be incorporated into teaching and learning plans in ad-hoc ways, for Fen, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) standards have triggered a greater engagement than curriculum directives towards thinking about how he can engender 'a more inclusive curriculum'. Fen explained as follows:

> I do think that the visibility of culture and the discussion around culture and the thing that has probably been more, perhaps, driven more movement toward, you know, a more inclusive curriculum is probably the AITSL standards, to be honest.

While Fen engages with the AITSL standards to reflect on the way he incorporates 'discussions around culture' into his teaching practice, this is not the case for all teachers. Michelle claimed:

> I think the performance and development program for teachers is supposed to be tied to the AITSL standards, but, when you read those standards, there's an embodiment of what a teacher should be doing at various levels. You have teachers who are supposed to be very senior and even in leadership positions, and some of the things that they will say – you can't be a senior teacher or a leading teaching and say these things, unless it's behind closed doors and you're just venting. If the AITSL standards are saying that you need to be inclusive and you need to be discussing different cultures and I suppose particularly in that sense Indigenous cultures, then you should be doing it.
>
> I'm so hesitant to say that teachers need to be more accountable in a performance and development point of view. But, yeah, I don't know, the two things don't seem to be melded together. We're supposed to have goals that are around the school's strategic plan and the principal will say 'if you're at such and such level, these are the AITSL standards that you need to be compliant with.' But I don't think people really, it doesn't turn on any lights in their head.

Meeting the AITSL standards is a school regulated performance measure—an instrument of Australia's education performance culture. That is, teachers have professional learning teams, they develop professional learning goals in line with the school's strategic plan and the level of AITSL standards relevant to them, teachers compile evidence of their learning over a school year to demonstrate how they have met the standards and this is checked off by the professional learning team leader. The evidence required and specific processes will vary from school to school, however Michelle's comments seem to indicate that the AITSL standards at Hillside High School are another example of bureaucratic boxes that are checked as a matter of due course without proper scrutiny of the kinds of practices—including teacher talk—that teachers are engaging in their classrooms. In relation to intercultural education, even though the AITSL standards state teacher practice should be inclusive and 'discussing different cultures' there are real difficulties—as Ani and Luke explained in chapter six (see 6.3)—in ensuring adherence and consistency with 'agreed' norms and standards. This is because attitudes towards culturally different groups are subjective and personal viewpoint influences teacher practice, including relational work, in tacit ways. As Ani said, “somebody might do it [expected practice] when they’re being observed, but the minute they’re not, there’s no peer observations, it’s just back to the status quo” (see 6.3). It seems that compliance measures related to inclusion and cultural difference are undercut by the emotional investments that produce cultural difference as irrelevant to the young people at Hillside High School (see 5.2) and this has implications for intercultural education.

At Hillside High the Intercultural Capability is treated as another box to tick (Assistant Principal, Andrew) in an ever-changing curriculum framework. The fact that the formal requirements have been allocated to languages alleviates other teachers from engaging with intercultural work—as Ani said, “if you’re not having to assess it, you’re not even thinking about it!” In addition, while the AITSL requirements for incorporating diverse cultural views and perspectives (particularly of Indigenous Australians) and enacting inclusive teaching practices are suggestive of “an embodiment of what teachers should be doing at different levels”, according to Michelle, for some teachers this ‘doesn’t turn any lights on in their head’. At Hillside there is a situation where the Intercultural Capability is systematically devalued by the structures that produce and allocate divisions of labour relevant to the Intercultural Capability and expected practices related to inclusion and incorporation of diverse cultural perspectives are disregarded. These conditions allow for the connection between intercultural curriculum work and culturally sensitive teacher practices to be delinked. As such, an engagement with the difficult work of maintaining partiality when it comes to ‘difficult conversations’ about culture, race and intercultural understanding can be avoided.

The production of intercultural education as someone else’s problem

The structural arrangements in place at Hillside to deal with the Intercultural Capability and culturally sensitive teacher practices enable the continuation of productions of cultural difference as ‘other’ and intercultural education for young people from the Hills as ‘irrelevant’. Willo suggested that some “teachers don’t believe that that’s why they should be teaching. I feel like some teachers think they teach the content, they love their subject, and that’s all they want to do”. Ani agreed, claiming “people were fairly adamant that this is the role of parents – yeah – because they don’t get that it’s not teaching values, it’s teaching about values”. Willo and Ani’s comments raise the question: When the formal requirements of the Intercultural Capability are allocated to languages, enabling other subject area teachers to claim intercultural work is not their job, how can value for the nuances of incidental intercultural work be cultivated across the whole school? Professional development has a clear role to play here. Yet, Michelle lamented that teachers were not given opportunities to engage in intercultural professional learning beyond the Department provided training module, which, according to Michelle, was “more high level”, was “not helpful” and “not connected to classroom practice”. This can be related back to the ways the Intercultural Capability is responsibilised at Hillside and resonates with the argument of Moss et al. (2019) that “integrated curriculum approaches have been continuously contested and undermined by the subject hierarchies” (p. 25). Not requiring the whole staff to develop their own intercultural competencies—as understood not as an instrumental skill, but as relational and dialogic practices whereby teachers and students engage in “communal venturing” (Aoki, 1984, p. 130)—enables such undermining to occur. Despite the organizational hierarchy that directs intercultural work at Hillside there are individual teachers’ who recognise that intercultural work entails more than learning about another culture in language class. Michelle commented:

> In some ways, I felt it was a bit of a cop out, at this school where we said we were only teaching intercultural capability through languages. I kind of felt like, ‘oh really? Are we saying we’re only teaching it in this class and this class’, it was a little bit tokenistic maybe I felt it might have been. There’s an element of that, ‘well we’re not going to talk about anything that relates to different cultures in PE, so it doesn’t make sense, it goes over there, that’s it’ [sarcastic tone]. You can see that totally being the case.

For schools managing competing pressures of time and resourcing and needing to fulfil formal assessment and reporting requirements it may seem to make sense to direct the Intercultural Capability to languages. In doing so however, such interpretation and enactment reduces the Capability to the teaching of content about cultural diversity, rather than acknowledging the everyday production of and relation with cultural difference that comprises a large component of the Capabilities intentions (see 2.4).

Michelle's comment above appear to gesture towards the idea that teachers do intercultural work as part of their everyday through cultural reproduction and the hidden curriculum regardless of their subject area. Michelle elaborated, stating that:

> You're going to touch on it explicitly or implicitly with how you work and what your kids, what you let kids get away with, in terms of some of these off-hand comments they might make about this that and the other.

However, 'how you work' and 'what you let kids get away with' is not easily accounted for within the stratification of school subjects, curriculum content and assessment requirements. This is the domain of professional practice which, as discussed above and in chapter six, is difficult to deconstruct when productions of cultural difference are understood as 'personal viewpoints' rather than reference points for practice and the implicit and hidden work of teachers. Yet, it is this hidden work that models the dispositions and behaviours for engaging with and relating across cultural difference. As Michelle stated, 'if I can't model the behaviours that I want to see in them [my students], why am I here? I shouldn't be doing this role' (see 6.3). This is a tricky problem to solve. Some teachers, such as Michelle and the other teachers in this study, see formal and hidden intercultural work as their responsibility and as inextricably linked. Yet, this view, as indicated by Willo and Ani, is not held by all teachers.

At Hillside, it is apparent the structural arrangements that responsibilise intercultural education to the languages team ignores the way relations with culturally diverse groups are modelled through relations of space. Allocating and dividing intercultural labour in this way disregards the formal curriculum requirement to "analyse the dynamic nature of own and others cultural practices in a range of contexts" (VCAA, 2017) and demonstrates the ways the capabilities are seen as 'add-ons' or of 'secondary importance' (Gilbert, 2019; McCandless et al, 2020). In addition, the way intercultural professional standards are 'checked off' in ways that Michelle described to lack proper scrutiny, allows entrenched attitudes towards diverse cultural groups to remain unchallenged. This then constrains opportunities to think about how understanding cultural practice and cultural diversity might be cultivated and valued by the whole school community. This is further constrained and complicated by hierarchies of power that maintain structural orders and assert authority.

7.3 The hierarchies of value that undermine intercultural education at Hillside

The previous section examined the processes that divide and allocate intercultural labour to the languages team at Hillside, creating administrative rhythms that determine teachers' work. The structural arrangements of intercultural work focus on content and assessment, or in the case of the Intercultural Capability, covering off the requirement, rather than on educative processes and their link to practice. These processes and structural arrangements signal the Intercultural Capability as devalued. As a result of these processes, non-language teachers are relieved from engaging in intercultural work because they are not responsible for explicitly teaching, assessing or reporting on the capability, and are not required to participate in professional development on intercultural teaching practices. These issues come together and are cut across by productions of space that resist or reject engagement with cultural difference and intercultural understanding. As a result, engagement with incidental intercultural work is not understood as part of the processes that formalise the connection between intercultural curriculum work and culturally sensitive teacher practices. This section extends on this argument and examines the hierarchies of value that stymie genuine engagement in the challenges of intercultural work as a whole school at Hillside.

It is clear that the Intercultural Capability is not valued by all teachers in the processes of curriculum interpretation and translation. The structures and teachers that devalue the Intercultural Capability and intercultural work more broadly are powerful forces in the school. In teaching intercultural understanding through a low-value subject, Willo and her language teacher colleagues struggle to push back against the rhythms produced through the directives of the curriculum leadership team. This struggle of power plays out in other low-value subject spaces, such as Art, and is demonstrative of a broader struggle at Hillside to engage across school spaces in collaborative and meaningful, rather than imposed and rudimentary, cross-curriculum work. As a result of the complex structural arrangements that systematically and culturally devalue intercultural work, teachers who are responsible for doing this work are left unsupported. This lack of support is felt most profoundly through the pressures and struggles over the division and use of teachers' time. This section elaborates each of these arguments to examine levels of neglect and struggle in enacting the Intercultural Capability.

The context for the production of language subjects as low-value: A brief overview

As chapter five explored, the language curriculum area at Hillside High School is conceived as non-essential learning spaces that have become devalued in the way they perceived and lived—as seen through the production of the Japanese classroom (see 5.3). For Japanese, contributing to this is the fact that language learning in Australia is in decline, and hand in hand with this decline is the devaluing of language learning more broadly. This is juxtaposed against the push from Government and policy bodies to prioritise global engagement, including the development of global competence and global citizenship (see DET, undated), and the recognition that language learning is a powerful platform from which to launch these and other international foci (Fielding and Vidovich, 2017). The tension that sits between the need to educate for a globally interconnected world and the broad decline in language learning is felt in schools where there are many other competing priorities—many with measurable and measured high stakes outcomes—such as VCE results and NAPLAN—continuing to bring to light the question of what is valued and what is measured (Biesta, 2009).

At Hillside High School, language study is compulsory only to the end of year nine (as is also the case for many Victorian public schools). As such, language as a subject does not carry the same gravity, in terms of perceived value, nor the same pressure for students to perform or teachers to take carriage of high stakes learning outcomes such as, for example, literacy. These hierarchies are dominated by subject heavyweights such as English and Math, who pay the price for their value through additional pressure and expectation, but also enjoy influence in curriculum decision-making. At Hillside High School, PE is also afforded the luxury of value without the pressures subjects like English navigate. PE brings a different kind of value, a value earned through the prestige and reputation of sporting achievements. This is connected to the centrality of sport at the school, in the communities of the Hills and as part of the Australian imaginary. At the school, teacher participants commented on how PE has license to take students from classes for various events and competitions at will, where this is made more difficult for other subjects such as philosophy, art and language. This demonstrates how value is not only attributed through performance metrics, but also by areas that are connected to a sense of self and belonging. This has implications for language subjects and efforts to build intercultural understanding, as these are not areas that are valued for the metric that can be garnered or for what they contribute to a collective sense of identity and belonging in the Hills or at Hillside High School. The production of Japanese, and language subjects more broadly, materialise in the way the Intercultural Capability is 'tagged' to languages and responsibility for the whole school to engage with the capability is neglected.

Low-value subject spaces and the struggle for genuine intercultural engagement: The case of the 'Notables' project

As already discussed, the Intercultural Capability is formally 'covered off' by languages at year seven through the language component of a cross-curriculum project called 'Notables'. Year seven students across English, humanities and their chosen language elective (Japanese or French) spend six weeks investigating a 'notable' person from the country of their language elective. The project is promoted as being founded on inquiry principles, where students generate their own questions and complete a series of mini tasks to answer these questions. These tasks are submitted to the relevant subject area, and students present parts of their project at a presentation evening with family and friends. Willo commented on the collaboration processes of the teaching team involved in facilitating the Notables project, as follows:

> I think in general it feels more top down rather than a bottom up kind of thing. It doesn't ever feel driven by languages, it feels more driven by maybe English, but still top down. So I don't know, it does feel a little imposed. We did have like one meeting. But the meeting was around what we wanted to scrap and the booklet, nothing about what we wanted to actually do or add or how we wanted to change things, and I think that was simply because there was no time. Things were left to the last minute and so they just went 'well, this is what we have from last year, lets just do this'. And so things were quite haphazard with how they were done. They're definitely not language driven.

She went on to describe the language task for the Notables project:

> They wrote a paragraph in the language [French or Japanese] about their notable person, and then if they were extended [advanced ability students] they would speak it or try to say it on the [presentation] night. So in language it wasn't necessarily at all something that was specifically looking at the culture itself. In saying that though, we pretty much gave over all our classes during that time from pretty much – I think over 6 weeks – all of them were given over to Notables. But it was only kind of this year that we ended up getting an email, like, 'oh can you guys do this Intercultural Capability thing?' And we were kind of like 'no, because this is the task we do and it doesn't relate to it'.

Willo's reflection provides insight into the ways hierarchies of value work on a number of levels. Willo says 'there was no time' for meaningful planning or negotiation of the project across learning areas—'this is what we have from last year, let's just do this'—further supporting Fen and Ani's comments that the capabilities just get 'tacked on' to existing programs. Even though the languages team have been given responsibility for the Intercultural Capability they have limited opportunities to critically engage with planning the project and the ways the Intercultural Capability could be meaningfully fitted into it. Rather, 'it was only this year we ended up getting an email' asking 'can you guys do this Intercultural Capability thing?', indicating the ways the capabilities are incorporated in ad-hoc ways. Even though Willo says the language team 'was like, 'no'' about 'doing this Intercultural Capability thing' they had no time and limited agency to disrupt or approach the Capability in a more generative way. Rather, the language teachers were expected to figure it out with no support or collaboration.

Willo and her colleagues were not productively engaged in the development of the project, they were expected to 'cover off' the Intercultural Capability, and they were expected to 'give over' all of their class-time to the project for six weeks, indicating the material ways that hierarchies of value impact learning spaces differently. It seems expected that languages fall into line by doing 'this Intercultural Capability thing' and giving over their time, but they have little autonomy over how or when it is done. The dominant structures that produce the rhythms of intercultural work in this way rhythm the language team towards compliance because they have no time to change or challenge the dominance of structural rhythms. In addition, Bernstein (1996) says "projections of a hierarchy of values" produce a "dominant image" (p. 7) of what is valued and what constitutes education through processes of inclusion and exclusion.

The fact that the Intercultural Capability component of a cross-curriculum project were put onto language and yet time was taken from their classes for other components of the project is demonstrative of these processes of inclusion and exclusion that contribute to these hierarchies of value.

The imposition of the project by the English department and the resistance demonstrated by languages pushing back when the Intercultural Capability was put onto them alludes to the way complex positionalities of people and space shape hierarchies of value at Hillside. It is worth noting that the Head of English is also the curriculum leader (Paul) who cautioned that the school's take up of the Capability was 'conservative' and who was instrumental in the ways the Intercultural Capability was organised within the school's curriculum plan. There is a significant power imbalance between Willo and Paul in terms of experience (second year graduate vs curriculum leader) and 'seniority' (a problem Ani also indicated), learning area (Languages vs English), and gender. Indeed, in a one-on-one interview Willo described her efforts to contribute to curriculum discussions as being 'dismissed' and how she "felt like I was being patted on the head". For Paul (the curriculum leader) his work as an English teacher and that of his team has not been impacted by the allocation and distribution of the Intercultural Capability. Time has not been taken away from English classes and the responsibility of teaching, assessing and reporting on a complex capability has been averted for English and other subject teachers. Under these conditions difficult questions related to the production of difference and relations with cultural diversity that occur in all school spaces are put onto others, further externalizing cultural difference to domains commonly associated with diverse cultures and reinforcing the production of the Intercultural Capability as a matter of content rather than practice.

"When do we have the time to unpack that as a school?": Intercultural work and the struggle over time and priorities

Participants noted that the whole school was not encouraged to engage with the way curriculum directives and teacher practice can be strengthened beyond individual classrooms. In this way, school subjects are treated as contained entities and curriculum decisions are made without sensitivity to the kinds of curriculum work that occur in different learning spaces and the ways these might compliment each other. Willo reflected on the challenge of engaging the whole school with intercultural work:

> It'd be nice to have more understanding around how that particular capability would be – could be seen in a classroom. Because it's all well and good to read it and be like 'yeah, cool, I understand it', but the practical ways of employing it within a classroom I don't think we've actually unpacked that as much as we probably need to in order to start making it more explicit in the classroom. I think there's opportunity for it, it would probably need more time to pop that into our actual curriculum. But when do we have the time to unpack that as a school, not just as languages, but as a school?

Willo's reflections on the administrative structures that organise the Intercultural Capability across levels of school governance and subject areas illuminate complex intersections of power and autonomy. The division and allocation of intercultural labour, the ways assessment and reporting make some teachers more responsible for intercultural work than others, the way output rather than process become a measure of value, the power struggles for collegial curriculum negotiations, the constraints on time, these forces rhythm teachers in different ways depending on their subject area and position within the school. As Lefebvre (1985) argues, "there is a dark and bitter struggle around time and the use of time… there isn't time to do everything, but every 'thing to do' has its time. These fragments have a hierarchy" (p. 215). These forces come together within the broader horizon of schooling discourses and educational policy. Reflecting on these struggles Fen stated:

> You've got such a lot of time teaching, face-to-face teaching time. That time is really great, but if you're expecting all this other stuff to happen then [pointed pause – the implied question was 'when is it going to happen?'] – and this [intercultural] capability is a really complex one and you actually need some training around it.

Michelle also talked around these issues:

> Things like the Intercultural Capability that are – it's not a skill that you're teaching and then you tick it off. You really need that ideas time to let things flow. It's highly dependent on when you get to be with your colleagues. For it to be properly implemented, it needs to seamlessly kind of fit in, and you only get that

> seamlessness if you've got lots of planning time. The other thing here is, and it's probably the same in other schools – I haven't taught year 10 Humanities here before. It's fine, I'll teach it this year, but I probably won't have it next year and I think you can enrich things a lot more if you're doing it two and three times. And then it depends on how closely you work with the teaching team.

It seems evident that temporal pressures that result from the way teachers' time is divided and expended leave teachers in an impossible position. On the one hand 'a lot is expected to happen in individual classrooms' but according to Willo, 'there is no time', yet for Michelle, 'you only get that seamlessness if you've got lost of planning time'. Teachers' time is cut across face-to-face teaching time, meetings (whole staff, teaching teams, PD, parent consultations), extra-curricular activities and planning. Time is allocated through leadership and workplace agreements, but protected time allocated for planning with colleagues is always insufficient – Michelle and Willo both estimated 'about an hour a week' is all they have to plan together with their team. These competing temporalities contribute to the production of rhythms that dominate teachers work. These competing pressures on teachers' time intersect with hierarchies influencing the way time allocated for lesser valued subject areas or educational priorities might be expended, particularly if there is a commodity (Middleton, 2014) at stake – such as a sporting pendant, the promise of VCE excellence, or NAPLAN performance. The divisions of time in this way are a product of the ways school subjects and spaces are produced within the hierarchy.

This section has demonstrated the way the Intercultural Capability, as the responsibility of languages—a low-value subject, is systematically produced as not a priority. Within the hierarchies of value that shape curriculum enactment and experiences of schooling at Hillside, language teachers struggle amidst the rhythms of imposed curriculum directives and constraints on their time to engage with the Intercultural Capability in meaningful ways. Yet, according to Willo, this should not only be the responsibility of languages, but as a school there needs to be opportunities to 'unpack' and 'understand the practical ways of employing it in the classroom' together. It is clear that the mandate of the Intercultural Capability has not provided a meaningful lever to change relational practices at Hillside. Professional development that examines the relational dependencies of intercultural work would no doubt act as a powerful anchor to shift the way the Intercultural Capability is currently conceived as a matter of content that requires ‘checking off’. Yet, to return to Willo’s assertion that understanding and enacting the Intercultural Capability needs to be a whole school priority, employing intercultural work practically in classrooms is a complex negotiation across productions of space, values of cultural difference, teacher practice and curriculum requirements (see 7.2). To engage with intercultural work in this way requires ‘co-dwelling’ (Aoki, 1983) in-between spaces of selves, others, school subjects and complex productions and experiences of curriculum. The following section demonstrates how opportunities for intercultural work occur spontaneously in the course of everyday teachers’ work—or what we could be constituted as the lived curriculum (Aoki, 1993). The discussion examines the situated complexities of these moments and how hierarchies of value create conditions that depreciate opportunities for meaningful intercultural interactions in moments as they are made. I argue that a whole-school engagement with what intercultural work actually is, is necessary to reposition intercultural education as the responsibility of all teachers and as a valuable contribution to the education of young people at Hillside.

7.4 Intercultural work as more than learning about cultural diversity

The previous sections of this chapter have demonstrated how structural arrangements that allocate the Intercultural Capability to languages devalue intercultural work and enable the Intercultural Capability to be treated as an aside or another bureaucratic requirement to be ‘covered off’. This section uses examples from Hillside to demonstrate how intercultural work is constituted by more than learning about cultural diversity or cultural difference. Through examples from Willo’s year nine Japanese class, Nic’s year seven art class and Michelle’s year ten international food studies class, the complexity of everyday intercultural moments can be examined. The examples demonstrate how everyday intercultural work entails generating interest and opportunities to explore cultural difference, managing conversations about cultural difference, and navigating normative productions of cultural difference and casual racism. This work occurs in individual classrooms and is mediated through teacher practice across spatial relations, however, the conditions that depreciate the value of intercultural education and rely on quantifiable metrics to measure value diminish opportunities to realise the opportunities and responsibilities to cultivate intercultural dispositions inherent in teachers' work and expected in teacher practice (see 7.2).

Opportunities to explore cultural difference: Exploring place and belonging through an Indigenous art project

During the time I spent in different classes at Hillside I observed many moments where teachers were doing intercultural work. This work, however, was not being documented against teacher standards or being assessed against student outcomes, this work was being navigated in moments of time and space in response to a particular set of conditions that come together from within and beyond the classroom in the process of curriculum making and constituted by the curriculum as lived. Many of these moments occurred in isolation—disconnected from other moments at the school—and demonstrate the provisionality and ambiguity of intercultural moments in classrooms. What follows is an excerpt from my fieldnotes describing the engagement of one year seven art class with an Indigenous art project to examine the kind of intercultural work occurring in art.

> *Nic is madly tidying up after period one, while explaining to me what the students are working on. I feel somewhat out of my depth in an art room as I remember the chaos of my own experiences of art classes in the junior high school years and am taken back there as the students jostle into the room. Nic directs pairs of students to specific tables and explains "We are painting today. That makes me anxious. So I need to mix up the table groups to avoid a disaster!" Students are working on an Indigenous art project exploring the significance of place and using symbols to represent life-maps—including places, people and events of significance. In talking with the students throughout the class I am struck by the silence around what they were doing. The notion of a place or tracking moments of significance a new or unfamiliar practice, and they are unable to clearly articulate, at least to me, what that might mean or look like. I remember being in year 7 and wonder how I might have responded to such a task. The students mostly traced the lines and contours of land maps to create shapes that they decorated as they wished. Some students follow the lines or dots in patterns in abstract meanderings, enjoying the flow of pencil and paint on the page; some students mark their map with an Indigenous flag and animal symbols; some students trawl google earth 'street view' looking*

> *for their house or a past home; while others don't do anything much, doodling and talking about local football. Elliot sketches a guy, "just some guy" in blue biro. He wears a swastika on his t-shirt. He tells me "it's just a guy." I ask him directly about the swastika. Elliot simply says, "he needed to come from somewhere, belong to somewhere."*

It is clear from this description that art is a space for generating interest and for exploration. In the context of the Intercultural Capability, art has the potential to provide a tangible entry point to thinking about culture and difference. Fen described the struggle of exploring Indigenous perspectives with young people, talking about the risk and worry of 'getting it wrong' or 'causing offense', and as such approaching Indigenous curriculum work as 'tentative'. This struggle is evident in the way Nic described how she set up the year seven Indigenous art project:

> We started off just talking about what is – what do we think of when we think of Indigenous art. They think of – they said they thought of stories, they thought of like symbols, dot paintings, earth colours. Then we looked at a range of different Indigenous artists and then we looked at the sort of contemporary ones and how they kind of appropriate different parts of, like, our western art sort of vernacular and things like that, so, yeah – we just had discussions about what things could and couldn't be included, talked about cultural appropriation and how do we like, you know, make art that is like in referencing Indigenous art but without just sort of doing some dodgy-looking handprints and dots and stuff like that, so – but actually, some of the things that are coming out kind of are quite nice.

In setting up the project Nic drew on the students' existing knowledge to inform and develop the discussion about Indigenous art—stories, symbols, appropriation, and referencing Indigenous art without 'doing some dodgy-looking handprints and dots'. In this way, Nic was bringing into conversation student knowledge and experience, issues around cultural appropriation, the curriculum and her own positioning as an art teacher and as an advocate. Nic was co-dwelling in-between spaces of intersecting trajectories in the act of making curriculum with her students. Through discussion and examples Nic generated interest, which, for many students, was held through the exploration and process of making their own artworks. There was only a small group of boys who, over the weeks, used the time to sketch freely or talk about local football and who presented largely as disinterested and disengaged. For the most part, however, these boys did not interfere with other students like the year nine students in Japanese, and this likely says something about the kind of space art is conceived and perceived to be. This Indigenous art project was an access point to exploring how Indigenous people understand and represent their place in the world, and an anchor for exploring Indigenous cultural perspectives and relations across difference. It is quite easy to see how this kind of project could be connected to topics or study foci in other subject areas. On this Nic commented:

> I happened to be around the year seven staff-room and they were talking about doing stories and storytelling in English and I was like, 'oh, you guys are doing stories? We could have –[done a joint project]'. And the teacher who was doing it was acting AP last year who I actually began talking about the planning for the Indigenous art project with back then. She could have said 'oh, we do stories with the year sevens, this is coming up, we can –[work together]'. Yeah, but it doesn't occur to them. A couple of years ago when they did the Notables project I got really objectionable because they just wanted, like, didn't include us in any of the planning and then were like 'oh, can you guys [art] do a heading?' Like, do a banner or some heading of a crappy poster page, and I was like 'Fuck off!' If they'd included us in the planning, but not just like some off-hand 'here's what art can do'.

Nic's reflection describes how year seven art is produced within the stratification of school subjects, similarly to Japanese, as a low-value subject. In this situation, more powerful subject areas—like English—assert pressure while appearing dismissive of the likely benefits to student engagement from incorporating differences of approach and perspective found in other subjects. Nic is quite brazen in the way she asserts the value of her subject and refuses to allow art to be reduced to doing 'some heading of a crappy poster'. However, Nic clearly recognises that working together would enrich both the year seven Indigenous art and English storytelling projects. She wants to be, however, included collaboratively in the planning rather than being on the receiving end of assumptions about 'what art can do'. The opportunities here for intercultural work appear rich, but rigid hierarchies of value and reductive productions of low-value subjects like art and Japanese inhibit these opportunities from taking flight.

In the class described at the start of the section and the classes that followed when students continued to develop their paintings, I struggled with how the intercultural capabilities of young people might be gauged or evaluated. For Michelle, she said the Intercultural Capability is "not a skill that you're teaching and then you tick it off'. She went on to argue that 'it needs to kind of seamlessly fit in' (see 7.3). In the context of an education system that measures capability through standards and benchmarks, shifting to think about the Intercultural Capability as a disposition that is developed through careful crafting of cross-curriculum programs and opportunities to cultivate intercultural *practices* is, as has been discussed, a major challenge at Hillside. It seems, however, that in engaging genuinely with what individual subject areas contribute and how they might work together could prove productive, particularly in contrast to the curriculum leader sending an email asking languages to 'do this Intercultural Capability thing'.

Food as a space of common ground to build intercultural understanding

In similar ways to how art can generate interest through tactile explorations of culture and difference, international food studies provides a way to engage with cultural difference in a positive way, by engaging with 'what they [students] like to eat' (Fen). International food studies is a year ten elective in which students explore diverse food cultures and traditions. While food studies classes are primarily about ingredients, cooking techniques and making and eating delicious food, international food studies also has a component focused on understanding the place of food in cultural traditions. It is in these theoretical discussions Michelle finds herself managing conversations about cultural difference and mediating students' stereotypes and assumptions about different cultural groups. The following fieldnote excerpt captures the way Michelle managed a conversation about Vietnamese cuisine and the plight of Vietnamese refugees to Australia in the wake of the Vietnam War.

> *It's period one. As students enter Michelle sets up the screen with a map of Vietnam. Finnlay, enters, and calls out "Vietnam number one". He and another boy, Ron, inspect the map and point to different places in South-East Asia. Ron shows Finnlay where the Philippines is on the map and points to the region he is from.*

A learning intention is already on the board with success Criteria.
'Immigration to Australia and its impact on our cuisine'

I can describe characteristics of Vietnamese cuisine.
I can compare the migration to Australia of two different groups.

In the last class students made Vietnamese spring rolls. Michelle hands out recipes for those who don't have them, and students identify the different ingredients that give the distinct sweet-sour-spicy-salty flavour of Vietnamese food. The students engage with the task with varied levels of enthusiasm. They talk about the spring rolls they made, the dipping sauce being the centre of conversation – many students would have preferred soy or plum sauce, their tastebuds not accustomed to the salty-spicy-sour-sweet combination. Their exclamations and resistance to the dipping sauce seem productive as it is in this space between their experiences of the familiar and unfamiliar where intercultural negotiations happen. Michelle moves to talk about the geographic location of Vietnam. The plight of refugees following the Vietnam War, and the treacherous trip by boat of many seeking refuge. Students grapple with having to make that choice to make that dangerous journey, and Michelle engages students in a discussion of what such a journey must have been like. Students contribute spontaneously:

"Nightmarish"
"Very crowded"
"Were there pirates? Were they from Somalia?"
"Intense"
And what about arriving here? Poses Michelle.
"Cleaner"
"better health standards"
"food safety"
"expensive"

Michelle asks the students what a refugee is. A handful of students speak over each other:
"Someone seeking refuge"
"People seeking refuge from war"

> *"People escaping their home country because of something that happened there"*
>
> *Students continue working, chatting amongst themselves to create a timeline of immigration from Vietnam. The bell goes and students disperse. Michelle reflects how two weeks ago when students made Samosa, there were boys jesting about 'curry munchers' and mimicking 'Indian' speech patterns and gestures, and the continual struggle to break stereotypes. Michelle is doing intercultural work, it is not part of her allocated curriculum requirements – she is not assessing this stuff, but she is doing it.*

Michelle has reflected previously that she feels a 'deficit' or 'poorly equipped' to engage in conversations about cultural difference. She commented previously that "kids will ask questions and you might know a vague bit about it, I say to them, 'look, I'm happy to go away and have a look into that'. Whereas if you could open an informed debate on the spot, it would be a different outcome" (see 6.3). In the food studies class described above Michelle engages the students in discussion, but it is highly managed and structured around clear learning criteria. In the previous class Michelle had shown a documentary on acclaimed author, artist and comedian Anh Do, who came to Australia from Vietnam by boat as a young child with his family. She then used his story as a hook to have some discussion around the struggles of diverse groups of people coming to Australia under traumatic circumstances. This discussion then led into an exploration of how Vietnamese food cultures have influenced Australian cuisine. In this discussion the intercultural aspects of this discussion were not made explicit despite being evident. In addition, the processes of curriculum translation at Hillside that allocates intercultural labour to language overlooks the intercultural opportunities in other curriculum areas such as in international food studies. In this lesson, it is clear that Michelle is mediating intercultural discussions. That is, Michelle navigates conversations about diverse food traditions and their connections to cultural practices of daily life, she explores how food traditions are transported and appropriated in new locations, and she examines how food cultures change over time. Michelle, through these conversations, mediates students' stereotypes or racist productions of cultural groups – such as students mocking Indians as 'curry munchers'. Yet this work is hidden because it is not a formal component of her assessment and reporting requirements. Simply because it is hidden, however, does not reduce the value of such mediations in contributing to intercultural understanding.

Compared to the spaces of art and Japanese, as an elective that students have chosen and a space established to explore cultural difference through food, it seems Michelle is positioned to tackle normative productions of cultural difference in this space in more generative ways than in other spaces that are devalued.

"Don't they eat dog?": Normative productions of cultural difference and racism in Japanese class

Despite language being made responsible for the formal requirements of the Intercultural Capability, Willo's Japanese class seems to be a space of deep-set intercultural struggle. As discussed across the findings chapters, Japanese is devalued across multiple planes of conceived and perceived space despite Willo striving against all odds to produce Japanese as a space of value. The extract from my fieldnotes below captures some of the first ten minutes of a year nine Japanese class and describes the kinds of disruptions that Willo navigates daily in her lessons with this group of students. Described are the expected rhythm of the greeting – marking the beginning of class; the rhythm of Willo's instruction – functional and task focused, perhaps metronomic; the rhythms of the students moving to get organised for the task and the interfering rhythms of some students seeking to disrupt. The Japanese class is clearly marked by tasks that need completing – even the greeting! Students provocations are indicative of the way Japanese is devalued by these students and how Japanese as a subject is not a space that is sufficiently respected or taken seriously, inhibiting Willo's ability to mediate normative productions of cultural difference and work towards developing intercultural understanding.

> *Willo stands at the front of the class: "Hai, tatte kudasai" – stand please, she instructs the students. They stand – somewhat awkwardly and disheveled – "konichiwa minasama" Willo brightly greets the class. They mumble a response in attempted unison: "konichiwa sensei" before relaxing into their seats. Oscar calls out to no one in particular "Japanese is taking over English! Japanese language is ruining our English!" Willo ignores Oscar and instructs students to prepare for a reading exercise. Students rumble around the room to collect textbooks from shelves and reorganize themselves at their tables. Willo sets up the projector with the text and tests the audio. The text scenario is about a school trip to the Hiroshima Peace Park. A student interjects "what's a peace park?" Willo briefly*

> *explains that the Hiroshima Peace Park is "in memory of the bombings" and then begins the listening activity. The listening and reading exercise is followed by comprehension and vocabulary questions. Oscar mimics Willo and mocks the Japanese language with obtuse cat cries in a generic and exaggerated Asian accent, thinly veiled as attempts to answer her questions ('chubacca', 'osaka', 'mamachari'). Willo does her best to ignore him and continue on. Zac provokes "don't they eat dog?" Willo sighs and persists with her lesson.*

Willo's classes are very much focused on the functional language tasks students need to complete. It seemed to me from my observations of this particular class that a focus on tasks was a way for Willo to manage or contain the kinds of derogatory commentary some students would make about Japanese culture and cultural difference more broadly. Willo understands her subject as one that does not carry value within the school structure—this is evidenced by the way teachers talk about Japanese in negative ways (5.3) and impose curriculum directives and time pressures without genuine collaboration (7.3). The excerpt above captures a small snapshot of the kinds of resistance and disruption that Willo is required to manage in the course of her work in every class with these students. And it seems that despite Willo's very best efforts to cultivate value and understanding across cultural difference, she is met with opposition. Willo reflected on the difficulty of mediating conversations across productions of cultural difference that undermine her efforts to build intercultural understanding. She said:

> I had one student last year that said, 'Oh, I'd be willing to do another language, but just not Japanese'. Okay. And I said, 'Well, what kind?' and they said, 'Maybe Russian, or – ' and then they gave me a language from Star Wars. And I went 'Okay, you kind of – you threw me there. I thought we were going down a path where we could, where we were properly having a conversation'

Willo's comment above illustrates how some students feel they can toy with Willo's efforts to engage them in a serious conversation about language, culture and difference. This constant heckling is a culmination of very particular productions of school and community spaces that position Japanese near the bottom of the hierarchy of value, and cultural difference as an issue for other, more diverse spaces. While there is likely ways Willo could adapt her practice to deal with some of these issues differently, it is clear that Willo is in a difficult position. Speaking to the challenges of engaging students in moments of racialised behaviour as they occur in classrooms, Fen recounted the following experience:

> I had a kid today trying to convince me that his middle name is 'Chinga'. And, the complexity of – he understands the complexity of that scenario, because he's probably been racially vilified for most of his time [here], he's turned it into an empowering thing. But he's also using it as a switch for social disruption, as, which is – how do you deal with this? It's a great game, *I'm a bit different, and I can use it!* But, what I really wanted to talk to him about was the impact that that's having on the other student in the classroom who's probably also been called the same thing, but hasn't switched it to something else. But you can't, in that space [the classroom]. How do you have that conversation? How do you talk to this kid about something, which he had obviously turned into an empowering play on words? What could prepare you for those conversations?

There are real issues for teachers in how to respond to situations such as the one Fen describes, and those Willo experiences in her year nine Japanese class. In these moments an individual teacher's history and relationship with a particular student, their worldview, experience, pedagogy, professional identity, as well as the moments that precede this one will influence a given teacher's interpretation of and ability to respond in that moment. As Christie (2013) argues, being able to respond to such moments "requires the apprehension of everything present at a particular point in time-space" (p. 777), or being able to "evaluate your response in the context of the student" – as Michelle put it. This complex polyrhythmia of classrooms plays out within the orders of layers of curriculum work and the tension between formal curriculum requirements and the more opaque work of schools and teachers in developing active and informed democratic citizens (Education Council, 2019). These rhythms orchestrate through relations with school spaces produced through hierarchies of value and shape the possibilities of developing intercultural understanding at Hillside High School. These examples demonstrate the ways identity, sense of place and levels of curriculum work intersect and has lead me to think about how teachers might come to mediate diverse views and productions of cultural difference.

Rethinking intercultural education at Hillside: Teachers as mediators across productions of cultural difference

Bringing these extracts together begins to highlight how different learning disciplines might complement each other if cross-curriculum priorities were authentically planned for across the whole school. Together, these extracts examine how everyday intercultural work generates interest and opportunities to explore cultural differences, manage potentially ‘difficult conversations’ about cultural difference and also mediate normative, stereotypical or racist productions of culturally diverse groups. These examples demonstrate how teachers doing intercultural work are required to work dynamically as mediators across productions of cultural difference. Importantly, these extracts demonstrate the centrality of teachers’ relational work in co-dwelling across and in-between student knowledge, subject-area knowledge, personal values and curriculum texts. As such, any curriculum reform agenda must not only reimagine the content of curriculum activities, but the dynamic relationships between social actors and competing sources of knowledge.

In the three classroom extracts, there is evidence of students making culturally offensive gests: Oscar and Zac mocking the Japanese language in generic Asian accents; Elliot and his portrait of a guy wearing a swastika; and the reflection on students mocking Indians. Yet, in Michelle’s international food studies class, there was also evidence of students demonstrating empathy towards the plight of asylum seekers and in Nic’s year seven art class, many students contentedly explored issues of place and belonging through Indigenous art. These instances are deeply complex, shaped by the dominant socio-cultural narratives these students are exposed to through family, school and media – including the normalisation of racialised behaviour in their everyday lives. In addition, representations of cultural others are shaped by worldview, experience, and importantly the wrestle of teenagers’ transition into young adulthood through the exploration of boundaries of identity in search of their place in the world. Michelle commented that when instances of racism or ‘off-hand comments’ occur, as a teacher it is important to “evaluate your response in the context of the student and what their motivation is”. In other words, Michelle questions what ‘funds of knowledge’ (Moll et al., 1992) inform the various positions or discourses that young people take up. In taking such an approach, Michelle does not try to excuse inappropriate behaviour, but rather recognises that the discussions that arise from such moments are best had from a place of understanding how views about difference are formed. Ani suggests: “you can’t just go, ‘oh, that’s racist’, because you just get their backs up”, Willo understood this well. Ani went on to suggest an engagement with assumptions and stereotypes “has to come through an exploration. And I think there’s risks there, and it’s got to be managed carefully”. These moments of culturally offensive, racist or inappropriate behaviour are commonplace at the school and are reminiscent of my own experiences of schooling and teaching in a predominantly white school. And yet, Fen asks: “where would you rather kids have these conversations?” For Hillside High School, the challenge of developing intercultural understanding is in part about how to support students understand the views and values that shape local productions of culture and difference. However, as Walton et al (2018) and Zembylas (2018) argued, the other part of the challenge is in how to support teachers confront these issues too.

If intercultural education is about understanding the relational spaces between diverse cultural groups and the ‘politics of location’ (Hall, 1996) that influence these, then teacher capacity to value and confront these issues is crucial. At Hillside, where normative productions of cultural difference are rooted in racial stereotypes and produced in opposition to a white patriarchal identity, supporting teachers and young people to confront the difficult knowledge that constitutes relations with diverse others is important. Mediating these spaces, however, is complex and, as Ani said, risky. As this chapter has examined, the hierarchies of value that stratify school subjects at Hillside enable normative and racialised productions of cultural difference to persist.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter has examined processes of curriculum interpretation and translation related to the Intercultural Capability. Hierarchies of value exert power and delegate responsibility for intercultural work and when examined across the intersections of normative productions of cultural difference, it is possible to see how intercultural work is systematically devalued. In addition, professional standards for teacher practice related to culturally inclusive practices are treated as another bureaucratic box to check, enabling personal viewpoints that influence intercultural teacher practice to remain unscrutinised. There is evidence, however, of teachers at Hillside outside of the languages curriculum area doing intercultural work by generating interest and opportunities to explore cultural difference, in managing conversations about cultural difference and in mediating stereotypical, normative or racists productions of different cultural groups. At Hillside, this work needs to be strengthened in a unified whole school approach that brings together intercultural curriculum work and intercultural teacher practices in explicit and implicit ways.

Chapter 8

Locating intercultural education in a praxis of difference

This project was born out of my own experiences of mediating racist and reductive productions of cultural difference in my own work as a secondary school teacher. I embarked on this study because I wanted to better understand the intercultural work of teachers and what makes it so complicated and difficult. The study has had three main research questions:

1) What kinds of experiences do teachers have interpreting, translating and enacting the Intercultural Capability?
2) What kind of evidence is there of intercultural work beyond the Capability?
3) What role do physical and social spaces play in shaping the intercultural work of teachers?

This study was framed by a Lefebvrian view that understands space to be socially constructed and constitutive of how individuals relate to others to understand themselves in the world. I have drawn on Hall's conceptualisation of culture and difference to define the intercultural as the relational spaces between cultures, or between self and other. Further to this, I have positioned intercultural education as understanding and cultivating positive relations in the spaces in-between different cultures. Mediating these spaces requires a sensitivity to the difficult knowledge that is wrapped up in the ambiguities and contradictions of personal attitudes towards difference as well as accepting that experiences of relational spaces between different cultural groups are not always cohesive. As such, teacher practice for intercultural understanding needs to somehow facilitate a discovery through the ambivalent and affective responses to 'both-and' experiences of 'competing moral truths' (Zembylas, 2014; 2018). This kind of approach to intercultural education fundamentally constructs intercultural work as a matter of practice, rather than a matter of content.

The experiences of the teachers at Hillside have demonstrated that intercultural work constitutes far more than the curriculum directive describes or is able to capture. The findings overwhelmingly suggest that even though the Intercultural Capability has been incorporated into the current Victorian curriculum as an assessable component, this has not acted as a meaningful lever to shift teacher practice at Hillside. It is clear that relations of space and local productions of cultural difference shape attitudes towards and opportunities for intercultural education at Hillside. These relations of space produce rhythms that cut across the stratification of school subjects and organisational structures of curriculum to produce hierarchies of value within which the Intercultural Capability and intercultural work more broadly are enacted. This intercultural work is also mediated by teacher practice and individual intercultural dispositions, which are shaped in tacit ways by individual attitudes and values towards engaging with cultural differences and cultivating intercultural understanding. In bringing this thesis to a close, I first summarise the lessons from Hillside High to consider how the tensions between whole-school and individual teacher practice, and positionality and notions of discovery may be bridged through praxis. I then argue a 'praxis of difference' (Moss and Metwychuk, 2000) is a useful starting point for cultivating reflective teacher practices and pedagogies of discomfort by bringing together the intercultural curriculum directive, teacher intercultural practices and exploration of the everyday spaces that teachers and young people occupy. I consider what a praxis of difference might mean for intercultural education in Australia at this time, before finally outlining the implications of this kind of approach for curriculum and teacher practice.

8.1 What counts as intercultural work and making it count? Lessons from Hillside

The teachers' experiences described in the last three chapters demonstrate that everyday relations and practices of space shape opportunities for intercultural work. I have examined how intercultural education cannot simply be contained to teaching and learning 'stuff' about culturally diverse groups. Intercultural education—as theorised in chapter two—is about cultivating positive relations between diverse cultural groups. That is, it is about understanding how identity and culture is produced differently across different sites, and the relations of power and privilege that shape the kinds of relations possible. In thinking about intercultural education in this way, the intercultural can be understood as an examination of the processes of inclusion and exclusion that produce cultural difference. In terms of the Intercultural Capability, when combined with the other capabilities, approaching this work through an examination of relational practices offers a way to understand social stratification through the lens of difference. This is difficult and risky work, as evidenced by the teachers' struggles to engage students and staff with issues of difference at Hillside High School.

The difficulties of intercultural work are not straightforward. Rather, these difficulties are embedded in complex tensions across layers of teachers' work and existence. For example, teachers at Hillside experienced the challenges of intercultural work through productions of space that distribute intercultural work to languages and position cultural difference as outside the experience of, or irrelevant to the young people of Hillside. Under these conditions, cultural difference was seen to be rejected or intercultural understanding was resisted through everyday spatial relations. This was seen by the normalisation of racialised behaviour, the devaluing of the Japanese classroom and Japanese language learning, and the reductive attitudes of some teachers towards Indigenous Australians. In this sense, the challenge of intercultural work can be understood as a whole-school problem, whereby the productions of space and its associated rhythms that resist or reject cultural difference need to be addressed at a school level. These challenges intersect with the work of individual teachers in their classrooms, where teacher practice and experience mediate assumptions, emotional investments and relations with difference in situated and spontaneous ways. For example, Willo trying to cultivate value for Japanese through her teaching while dealing with racist or stereotyping disruptions, or Michelle generating interest about cultural traditions through food, and Ani exploring assumptions about Indigenous Australians in her philosophy class. And yet, teacher practice and the development of intercultural understanding in young people is further shaped by individual positionality and reflexivity. In this sense, intercultural work is a personal and individual exploration that initiates a discovery of one's own contradictions and assumptions about different cultural groups. In attempting to bring these complexities together to better understand how intercultural work might be approached from a renewed perspective, it is productive to think about intercultural work as praxis. That is, as an ongoing process of reflection and engagement that is open to ambiguity and multiple perspectives. This idea will be developed across this concluding chapter, however I would like to ground this discussion in two final comments from first Willo, and then Fen, that foreground the complexities outlined above.

In the final one-on-one interview with teachers I asked what they thought could be done to better support the Intercultural Capability and intercultural work broadly at Hillside High School. Willo answered:

> I think, really, the school just needs to actually commit, like have a genuine commitment to those things [the general capabilities]. Especially have a commitment to understanding that we cannot incorporate intercultural capabilities in a meaningful way unless you deal with the layers that we're dealing with on a day-to-day basis. Because the layers inform the way that we are going to discuss those things and the way that the students are going to react or engage or disengage with that. Unfortunately, at the moment, there is no consideration of those layers. Maybe in an informal, like casual conversation kind of way, but definitely not in a formalised way. And that, to me, is more important because unless you deal with those things, like the casual racisms, sexism, homophobia, all that kind of stuff, then how am I even supposed to talk about culture when we've already established that these things can be undermined. I feel like a lot of the time I'm trying to tackle those things on my own in my class constantly. I feel like I'm just pushing uphill. There's a lot [of teachers] that just tend not to hear it, tend not to see it. A lot of teachers, I don't think, think that's their job or their reason for being here.

Willo invokes the nuanced and complex nature of intercultural work that is not easily accounted for through the stratification of the formal Intercultural Capability at the school. The incidental nature of many intercultural encounters presents a conundrum for teachers at Hillside High School. On the one hand, if intercultural understanding is only taught in the subject matter being studied, such as in languages, then the embeddedness of intercultural relations in the mundane aspects of everyday lives and interactions is not explicitly articulated. On the other hand, if intercultural work occurs in the social relations and practices between students and teachers in school spaces—for instance, in pleading 'can we watch Totoro' because a class has been moved to the Japanese room or calling a friend a 'dirty Abo'—the conversations that come out of these instances cannot be easily accounted for through performance cultures, assessment metrics or standardised outcomes. It is clearly difficult to measure and report on the individual social and relational practices of teachers at play in a school and attempts to address these through leadership or professional development only go part way to addressing the challenge.

Hillside High School has a focus on relationships, building curiosity and student resilience, and much work has been done in these areas. Yet, the experiences of the teachers described in this study demonstrate how difficult it is to influence the kinds of social practices that individual teachers apply behind classroom doors. Willo's reflection above departs from others' comments about pedagogic practice to point towards a much deeper and much more difficult problem to address. That is, dealing with the 'layers' of normalised casual behaviours and practices established across school and community spaces over time. Willo asks how she can talk about culture 'when we've already established that these things can be undermined'? This is a challenge when not all teachers agree whether this is or should comprise part of their work. This is where approaching intercultural education as praxis could be a useful approach as one way to develop dispositions that build teachers' capacity for understanding their own positionalities in relation to cultural difference and how this is embodied in their practices with young people. While an approach rooted in understanding the processes of constructing difference would seemingly contribute to developing practices that nurture partiality and distance personal viewpoint, the challenge remains that this is not only about developing teacher practice. This kind of approach is about teachers being open to the kind of introspection the Intercultural Capability asks of young people. It also requires rethinking how curriculum requirements can be connected meaningfully to the everyday experiences of students, and how teachers can account for ad-hoc curriculum experiences through formal curriculum accountability measures. Fen grappled with this question as follows:

> I think, if you had time to sit with kids each day and look at the news and say, 'what do you think that means to you and how does that change your perception of this?' then that would be pretty amazing. Even if it's just reacting to that. Every day in the news there is something that you could teach them. Every day there is a thing that's happening that you could discuss, that they could discuss but we don't do it because we've got the curriculum and blah blah blah, and that's fine but – I don't know. I think it's really difficult and I also worry a little bit about the agenda. I think there are some really strange problems. There are some very confusing messages. Looking at Asia and Asian societies from an Australian viewpoint and then you talk about immigration and then you talk about cultural identity and then in the media, there's just a lot of stuff about espionage and influence. That's a

> really difficult one to help kids walk through and go – it doesn't mean the family – the Chinese families in that street near you, that's not what we're talking about. We're talking about something quite – it's so complex. How do you unpack that?

In observing and being part of his humanities class, I saw how Fen was able to bring in events that were happening in the world together with the curriculum requirements of the subject to create learning opportunities that were embedded in the bigger life worlds of his students. However, in his off-hand comment 'we've got the curriculum and blah blah blah' Fen indicates how connecting the formal curriculum with the everyday experiences of young people at Hillside to explore 'the world as being a bigger place' is a challenge. Ani and Willo both spoke about the 'focus on content' and this seems to be a limiting factor for how the formal curriculum could be organised in meaningful and connected ways at Hillside. In addition to indicating the difficulties in bringing together the formal curriculum and events from the beyond the Hills, Fen's comments demonstrate the complexity of understanding and teaching for understanding relations between diverse cultural groups.

In Fen's comments, the complexity of understanding intercultural relations is rooted in the way the 'politics of location' (Hall, 1996) are used to produce particular differences in particular ways – such as how productions of 'the Chinese families in that street near you' can be conflated with the conceived space of 'China' and 'a lot of stuff about espionage and influence'. Intercultural education is about finding ways to unpack those positionalities and contradictions in ways related to the life worlds of young people. The issues that Fen identified demonstrate the tacit connections between the socio-political horizons of schools and communities, between local relations with culturally diverse groups, and personal positionality to highlight the precarity for teachers navigating these spaces with students. In Fen's example, part of the problem is the way 'China' is produced as a 'threat' and is demonstrative of the complexity of bridging productions of cultural difference between the local and elsewhere.

Bernstein (1970) cautions that education cannot fix (or be expected to fix) society's ills. This problem was established earlier in the thesis (see 3.3) in relation to the 'emotional room' (Elder, et al 2004) at a national political level afforded to understanding issues of cultural difference in relation to notions of the nation-state. In particular, there are tensions between the expectation of schools and teachers to contribute to a socially just future by cultivating positive intercultural relations through intercultural education and the current socio-political context of increased fear and threat of culturally diverse others. What education can do, however is cultivate an awareness of our own embeddedness in the structures of social stratification and develop the skills to understand complex issues rather than assume a closed or fixed position of ‘I’m right’. At Hillside the difficulty in navigating the complexity described above was diverted to the languages teaching team and intercultural education was constructed as content to be added-on or ‘covered off’ through existing curriculum work. However, I argue that conceptualising intercultural education as a practice that is sensitive and responsive to the local and distant conditions that produce spatial relations in particular school settings is a productive way to rethink intercultural education.

Thinking about intercultural education as a practice that encourages an exploration of spatial relations provides an opportunity to localise intercultural education through the life worlds and everyday practices of teachers and young people. At Hillside, this would require a redistribution of intercultural labour to include the whole teaching community and a focused re-linking of teacher practices and pedagogies with curriculum directives and objectives. However, it would also require an exploration of personal and individual cultural norms and assumptions in order to discover the ambiguities of one’s own experiences. I have already suggested that praxis is a useful way to renew approaches to intercultural education. According to Aoki (1984), praxis “is interested in bringing about a reorientation through transformation of the assumptions and intentions on which thought and action rest” (p. 132). That is, praxis brings into view and into question the assumptions and intentions that inform the ways curriculum-as-text and the curriculum-as-plan are interpreted, enacted and lived. Building on this, a ‘praxis of difference’ (cf Moss & Matwychuk, 2000) offers a useful set of principles to guide intercultural education as practice with a specific focus on spatial-relations.

8.2 A praxis of difference

Twenty years ago social geographers Moss and Matwychuk (2000) proposed the idea of a ‘praxis of difference’ as a way to push feminist thinking about research relations beyond descriptions of identity and representation and towards political action. The authors were interested in how they might address social stratification in research relations to “employ political practices that are both sensitive and supportive of differences among women and other marginalized groups of people” (p. 82). Even though the idea of a praxis of difference was not taken up in social geography as the authors may have hoped, it provides a useful starting point for thinking about reorienting intercultural education practices in the context of school education. At its core, a praxis of difference is about thinking and acting with critical reflexivity towards positioned relations. What it offers is a way of thinking about how all people are situated in relation to cultural differences and how we might act in sensitive and supportive ways to cultivate intercultural dispositions that initiate action towards a socially cohesive society.

As argued in chapter two, the intercultural is conceptualised as the relational spaces between cultural groups (Dietz, 2018). Intercultural education is positioned to develop dispositions that foster positive relations between diverse cultural groups, with a view to building respectful and socially cohesive societies (ACARA, 2016; Deardorff, 2006; Dietz, 2018; UNESCO, 2006; VCAA, 2017). This could be re-phrased to say, intercultural education is about developing dispositions that are both sensitive to and supportive of cultural differences, and that work to build positive intergroup relations. Given the intercultural is often understood as relational in curriculum, policy and scholarly documents, it is curious that translations of formal intercultural curriculum as education *about* diverse (typically non-white) others persists in schools. As previously discussed, the concept of the intercultural is “epistemologically loaded” (Aman, 2018, p. 3) and is relative to “a point of view, not a given” (Dervin, 2016, p. 2). That is, enactments of the intercultural in schools often take for granted normative constructs of identity and cultural difference—as observed at Hillside High School—this goes some way to understanding how the intercultural comes to be focused on external others. This is because in the act of constructing the intercultural as disconnected from the self, the other becomes the object of attention, rather than the *inter*-relational space between self and other. In taking seriously the proposition that intercultural education is about relationships, rather than content about diversity, and that the intercultural is also co-constructed socially in relation to local spaces, then there is merit in approaching intercultural education through a practice that accounts for diverse positionalities and arrangements of power.

In making the case for a praxis of difference, Moss and Matwychuk (2000) argue that "recognizing difference is arduous and fraught with contradictions because we are all embedded in the world we want to transform" (p. 82). Rather than shying away from the complexity of contradictions, the authors insist that this becomes a rich site of learning, as "contradictions can push us further in our politics and in our analyses of power" (p. 82). In this way a praxis of difference resonates with Boler and Zembylas' (2003) 'pedagogy of discomfort' that "invites not only members of the dominant culture but also members of marginalised cultures to re-examine the hegemonic values inevitably internalised in the process of being exposed to curriculum and media that serve the interest of the ruling class" (p. 77). As such, Moss and Matwychuk advocate a praxis of difference that is not only focused on internal reflexivity and personal practice, but as a force for mobilising change with others, even in the face of conflict. In this sense, it is useful to think about a praxis of difference as a reflexive tool to critically evaluate and improve teaching practices, examine pedagogic positioning and explore local relations of space and power. While there are elements of Moss and Matwychuk's praxis of difference that resonate with critical pedagogies that support anti-racist curriculum work (see Boler and Zembylas, 2003; Trifonas, 2003; Zembylas, 2017a/b) Moss and Matwychuk's work is particularly productive for thinking through transforming intercultural teaching practices in their articulation of two guiding principles for this work: critical reflexivity and elaborating embeddedness. I elaborate on these briefly before examining a praxis of difference as a productive starting point for intercultural education to be taken up in relation to an intercultural curriculum and practice reform agenda.

In Moss and Matwychuk's (2000) praxis of difference, critical reflexivity is both self-critical and analytical and is comprised of three elements: "(1) being critical; (2) using positionings critically; and (3) using reflexivity to make sense (and use) of power in context" (p. 84). These elements work together to describe how individuals and collectives "exist within the web of power" (p. 84). The main focus is on taken for granted productions of knowledge, power and positionality to reassess the way we are all embedded within networks of power through complex and multiple positionalities (see also Boler and Zembylas, 2003). According to Aoki (1984) "critical reflection thus leads to an understanding of what is beyond; it is oriented toward making the unconscious conscious" (p. 131). Critically reflecting on the multiple ways individuals are positioned relationally to different cultural groups through open dialogue and a 'communal venturing' (Aoki, 1984) highlights the ambiguities of assumed similarities and differences in intersubjective dependencies. Critical reflection, then, enables an image of reality as "constituted as a community of actors and speakers" (Aoki, 1984, p. 133)—an image grounded in the ambiguities and humanness of experience—to emerge. Within these ambiguities, the difficult knowledge associated with competing experiences or accounts of shared histories give rise to discomfort in accepting individual and collective complicities in reproducing dominant narratives of history or experience (eg. Zembylas, 2018). Yet, critical reflection enables such complicities to be engaged productively in ways that shape positive social action.

Critical reflection encourages a transparency around our own positionality within networks of power, as well as those of others, and so enables insights into the ways individuals and groups might work across differences towards a common goal. Moss and Matwychuk (2000) argue this approach provides "insight about new ways to effect change" (p. 85) as differences in positionality are made visible, and strategies for action can be negotiated with sensitivity to the way "power is deployed through specific sets of social relations" (p. 85). Critical reflexivity, then, attempts to "bring together" (p. 86), rather than separate ourselves in relation to diverse others—particularly those who are marginalised or silent (silenced) in the construction and exertion of power. In this way, critical reflection supports efforts to develop intercultural understanding through acknowledging the vulnerability of self and others in order to foreground aspects of shared histories or experiences that cause discomfort (eg. Zembylas, 2017a; 2017b). Taking critical reflexivity further into the realm of action is the notion of elaborating embeddedness.

Moss and Matwychuk (2000) argue that "our recognition of difference has to matter; it needs to make a difference" (p. 86). For the authors, this means elaborating embeddedness and using insights from critical reflexivity to then turn this towards political action in an attempt to 'make a difference'. The authors suggest that elaborating embeddedness has three core principles:

- Multiple positionings are nodal points in a web of power relations;
- Prominence among multiple positionings varies according to time and place; and

- The delinking and relinking of multiple positionings helps us understand the complexity of difference and sameness (p. 86).

What this means is that we each occupy multiple positions (such as gender, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, class, etc.) and these serve as ‘nodal points’ that have varying and changeable degrees of prominence according to time and place. It is in deconstructing and reconstructing these nodal points that power relations can be better understood. Elaborating embeddedness, in relation to intercultural education, is a powerful concept. The teachers at Hillside recognised that ideas related to cultural difference come up implicitly in everyday work. Fen described how teachers need tools to be able to engage students in conversations that examine embeddedness within complex interrelations across difference (7.4). In addition, chapter six examined the problematic inconsistencies in approaches to teaching and talking about cultural difference because of the differences in teacher backgrounds, experiences, personal viewpoints and values—differences that shape teacher practice tacitly (6.3). Friere (1972) urged that “all educational practice implies a theoretical stance on the educator’s part. This stance in turn implies—sometimes more, sometimes less explicitly—an interpretation of man and the world. It could not be otherwise” (p. 205-6). And it is in this way, in making explicit the ‘assumptions and intentions’ (Aoki, 1983) of educational practice that elaborating embeddedness may transform the way intercultural education is enacted and lived.

Elaborating embeddedness through curriculum work and teacher practice is an opportunity to make visible that which typically remains unseen. In doing so, Moss and Matwychuk (2000) argue “unexpected overlaps and uncertain gaps among those purporting to be different or the same” (p. 87) may emerge. This was observed in the way Ani’s philosophy students, as described in chapter six (see 6.4), discovered ‘unexpected overlaps and uncertain gaps’ in their own assumptions and stereotypes about Indigenous Australians. What Ani’s experience demonstrates is that “it is not ultimately the colour of one’s skin, one’s abilities, or one’s ethnic traditions that create difference. Rather, it is *how* skin colour, ability, and ethnicity are used to construct and reinforce relations” (Moss and Matwychuk, 2000, p. 87) with difference that matters. In terms of thinking about a praxis of difference in relation to intercultural education, this is the crux of the matter. It is not cultural diversity itself that positions culturally diverse groups within webs of social stratification, it is *how* culturally diverse groups are constructed in particular spaces that reinforces relations of power and agency across cultural difference. In this sense, intercultural education is about exploring and embracing the discomfort embedded in the conditions that produce intercultural relations and using this discomfort as a force to reconcile individual and collective responsibilities for engaging interculturally in new ways.

A praxis of difference as an embodied approach to intercultural education

Maintaining a focus on intercultural education as understanding and cultivating positive relations across diverse cultural groups, a praxis of difference offers a starting point for organising intercultural curriculum across levels of school administration while encouraging critical reflection in relation to teacher practice and individual positionality. In the many interactions I had with the teacher participants in my time at Hillside High School they reflected on three key issues:

- The absence of a whole school approach to curriculum translation and development lending the capabilities to being tacked-on to existing programs
- The lack of 'safety' training and primacy of personal viewpoint in relation to cultural diversity and intercultural education
- The focus on content and lack of time to just sit with the students and talk about things that are happening in the world, and what they mean for them.

The first issue here was the lack of a whole school approach to intercultural education, and the way issues of difference were often undermined at a classroom level through everyday spatial relations and hierarchies of value. It is evident from the teachers' reflections that they believe teachers have a responsibility to shape attitudes towards culturally diverse groups that are 'in line' (Luke) with progressive thinking. Fen suggested, "I don't think you'd change anyone's mind by telling them what your viewpoint is. If anything, you just confirm that they don't have the same viewpoint". To shift entrenched views or attitudes, the participants agreed there needs to be a 'discovery' of 'assumptions and their own stereotypes' (Ani)—the participants' experiences demonstrate this. Such a discovery is personal and individual, but is also shaped—as explored in chapter five—by the shared commonality lived in particular spaces. Exploring these spaces is complex and fraught with risk. A praxis of difference, however, offers a set of guiding principles for reflecting on individual and collective embeddedness in order to initiate action that makes a difference to the ways individuals relate across the conceived, perceived and lived spaces different cultural groups occupy.

As has been discussed, intercultural education is complicated by relations with cultural difference across the whole-school, individual classroom, and personal domains. Therefore, approaching intercultural education in a multi-pronged approach, rather than delegating intercultural education to single subject areas, is important. One important component of developing a critical approach to intercultural education is through whole school professional learning that examines constructions of cultural difference at particular school sites. The principles of critical reflexivity and elaborating embeddedness could be applied as a way to illuminate 'unexpected overlaps and uncertain gaps' in the ways teachers position themselves in relation to culturally diverse others. This approach deals directly with personal viewpoint and may be a way to unsettle normative assumptions about diverse cultural groups that shape productions of cultural diversity at particular sites. These insights could enable schools to map which 'nodal points' are more prominent than others, which 'nodal points' are more normative, and inform how these reference points might be delinked and relinked in new ways to construct new relations with cultural diversity and potentially shift the ways teachers 'talk' about culturally diverse others.

At a classroom level, the power of delinking and relinking connections and positionalities is neatly exemplified by the way Ani examined issues of alcoholism and Indigenous Australians with her junior philosophy class (6.4). Students' at the beginning of this class had linked issues of alcoholism to Indigeneity. Through discussion and exploration students discovered that alcoholism was less related to Indigenous cultural identity than it was to other external factors, many which were shared with non-Indigenous people who may also experience alcoholism. In this way, through a process of discovery, students delinked their connections between alcoholism and Indigeneity and relinked issues of alcoholism to factors unrelated to cultural identity. This kind of approach could inform professional development related to intercultural teacher practices and understanding individual positionality to embody a process of discovery. In delinking and relinking normative assumptions about cultural difference, the way values of cultural diversity are embodied in everyday relational practices may be highlighted. Theoretically, engaging a whole staff in this kind of professional learning would translate in teacher talk and curriculum work, ideally informing the way formal and hidden intercultural work is taken up.

In terms of whole-school curriculum organisation, a praxis of difference might also inform how the Intercultural Capability is interpreted, translated and integrated into subject area curriculum. For example, in the curriculum planning process for a unit of work in humanities comparing Asian and Australian political systems, teachers might critically reflect on the various positionalities and power relations at play, and how teachers and their students are embedded in these structures within the broader horizon of Australian society and politics. This kind of pre-emptive mapping of prominent nodal points and assumptions provides a critical framework for doing intercultural curriculum work by engaging with taken for granted productions of knowledge and power and the relations of these to productions of diverse others. This process of critical reflexivity, elaborating embeddedness and crucially, delinking and relinking positionalities can also be taken into classrooms to model and enact a praxis that carefully manages classroom conversations to lead young people to discover ‘their own assumptions and their own stereotypes’ (Ani). According to Aoki (1983, p. 121)

> what is equally important for teachers and students as they engage in interpretive acts is to be critically reflective not only of the transformed reality that is theirs to create, but also of their own selves. It is within this critical turn, a precious moment in praxis, that there exist possibilities for empowerment that can nourish transformation of the self and the curriculum reality…In this sense, the end of praxis is more praxis

In terms of intercultural education, through a praxis of difference young people may be encouraged to understand the nature of intergroup relations and the situated conditions that produce relations in particular ways, as well as providing young people with the opportunity to develop critical thinking and critical relational skills to initiate their own relations across cultural difference.

While the teachers in this study alluded to their own differing limitations in engaging their students with difficult conversations about cultural difference, two things are clear: (1) without the whole school on board individual efforts of intercultural education can be undermined; and (2) teachers need greater capacity to sit with the discomfort of different accounts of shared histories. It is within these foci that a praxis of difference might be developed with teachers in relation to specific school sites to take this research further. Moss and Matwychuk (2000) argue that “recognising difference is not enough; acting on difference is what makes a praxis of difference” (p. 95). This is crucial for intercultural education. It is well documented that simply identifying cultural differences or increasing awareness of cultural diversity does not initiate intercultural understanding or necessitate positive behavioural or attitudinal change towards diverse cultural people and groups (Gorski, 2008; Maylor, 2010; Walton et al, 2013). Yet the experiences of the teachers at Hillside High School demonstrated the kinds of struggles they face in attempting to engage young people and their colleagues with cultural difference in ways that make a difference. Nevertheless, it is in the promise of intercultural education as a contributor to the development of a socially cohesive future—that is through the action of teachers and young people to improve intercultural relations—that a praxis of difference can make a difference. In this way, a praxis of difference offers a set of guiding principles to help frame a pedagogic approach to intercultural education and an examination of how hidden intercultural work imbricates and implicates formal and explicit intercultural work in allusive ways.

Advocating for a praxis of difference is in line with research in the field that insists that for intercultural education to affect positive social change teachers must engage critically with issues of cultural difference—and particularly their positionality in relation to difference (Ahmed, 2012; Boler and Zembylas, 2003; Walton et al, 2018). Yet the issue of teacher positionality and personal viewpoint persists as a point of tension in developing intercultural understanding in schools. Research needs to be done with teachers to develop principles that might guide a praxis of difference as a framework for developing pedagogies of discomfort and navigating difficult knowledge. In this way, intercultural education, enacted through praxis in-between spaces of difference and sustained through intersubjective dependencies, becomes a practice for engaging with the embedded positionalities of young people, teachers and school communities with the intent to cultivate sensitivity and support for cultural differences in education.

8.3 Developing a praxis-led approach to intercultural education as a step towards a socially just future

This study has demonstrated the way space is constructed socially, and that spatial relations are central to how teachers and young people identify and relate in schools. At Hillside High, local spaces produce cultural difference and shape opportunities and possibilities for intercultural education. However, identities and spaces are not static and it is through relations of space that the possibilities of who we might become are also imagined. At Hillside, because culturally diverse people were produced as the ‘constitutive outside’ (Hall, 1996) of the Hills imaginary and, because young people at Hillside High School are not seen to ‘engage with the world as a bigger place’ (Fen), intercultural education was ‘not seen as a priority’. At this school, the racializing behaviours of some students created rhythms that rejected cultural difference in the strongest terms and asserted their own cultural nodal points as dominant. Different teachers managed these instances in different ways from Willo using irony to ‘shut it down’ to Ani ‘very carefully managing that conversation’ and Michelle suggesting while ‘what I feel is a deficit’ she believed as a teacher she has the responsibility to model the behaviours she wants to see in her students (6.3). In negotiating conversations about cultural differences in relation to the spaces teachers occupy with young people, these teachers demonstrated the challenges and the risks involved in facilitating a discovery of positionality, embeddedness and assumptions.

The experiences of the teachers at Hillside demonstrate the precarity of critical intercultural work and the difficulty (and unpredictability) in doing it well. Fen reflected that conversations that attempt to elaborate embeddedness ‘can go to a place that becomes very complex really quickly or it’s very sanitised – the potential is it becomes a very polarized kind of conversation’. The complexity Fen described, and the potential to have either a very sanitised or very polarised conversation was experienced by the teachers. Because of the way the Japanese classroom and Japanese language was devalued, Willo’s ability to engage in ‘serious conversations’ about cultural difference were limited. She risked further disengaging her students if she confronted their jests as racist, equally in ‘shutting down’ student disruptions, the kind of conversation she was able to have was quite sanitized. Ani’s experience in her junior philosophy class was different. While exploring the question of Indigeneity and alcoholism had the potential to become a ‘very polarized’ conversation, Ani was able to ‘carefully manage’ that conversation whereby students realised their own assumptions. While Ani’s junior philosophy class might be held as a success, Ani and her students were precariously positioned and Ani herself was not sure she could do it again. I’m not sure it’s useful to compare Ani and Willo’s classes, but these examples both demonstrate the different kinds of risks associated with intercultural work and the ways different school spaces differently shape the kinds of opportunities available to have meaningful intercultural dialogue.

The experiences of the teachers at Hillside demonstrate how complex intercultural work is across multiple levels of professional and personal existence. In the act of elaborating embeddedness, intercultural education can help produce a disruptive rhythm that delinks and relinks normative relations with cultural difference. In this way, an intercultural education that engages with the ways teachers and young people are actually situated in the world can create opportunities for an engagement with difference that ‘makes a difference’. It is in the examination of locally situated productions of cultural difference that the spaces in-between self and others can be understood and our own embeddedness in structures of social stratification can be illuminated. Understanding how local nodal points of difference are connected and can be rearranged provides the tools to imagine difference differently. However, teachers cannot traverse this difficult terrain or nurture these skills in young people alone. In order to engage young people reflexively with the processes of their embeddedness, teachers also need to be open to this praxis to model the kind of personal and individual discovery seen as beneficial in young people. In addition, teachers and young people are part of larger social, political and economic structures that shape opportunities differently for different cultural groups, and an engagement with these broader issues is an important anchor for understanding individual situatedness. Despite the policy and formal curricular frameworks of the Intercultural Capability, intercultural education that supports the building of positive relations between diverse cultural groups might start at the micro level of interactions situated in spaces between young people, teachers and schools. Taking the experiences of teachers at Hillside High School as one starting point, it is evident that there is a need to support teachers in developing critical reflexivity towards the ways values of cultural difference are embodied in every aspect of teachers’ work.

Given the ways diverse histories and practices intersect across time and space in messy and contested ways in schools, any approach to intercultural education must be understood as part of an ongoing process of understanding situated relations with cultural difference. And perhaps that's the point. Intercultural education actually needs to find a way to 'stay with the trouble'—to borrow Haraway's (2016) phrase—of the in-between spaces, the disparate power relations across sites of social action, and the contradictory productions of cultural difference, in order to break down barriers and understand the multiple positionalities of selves and others. In 'staying with the trouble' of the discomfort of individual embeddedness and the unexpected overlaps and uncertain gaps in productions of difference, an intercultural education that can realise its vision of contributing to socially cohesive communities in an interconnected world might be possible.

8.4 The imperative for intercultural education now and into the future

It is October 2020 and I have spent the months since March writing up my thesis from a makeshift desk at the end of my kitchen table, alongside my husband working from home and our two primary school aged children in 'remote learning'. In my home city of Melbourne, Australia, many workplaces and almost all schools are shut as Australia, and much of the world, remains in the grips of one of the most virulent health crises in 100 years. Melbourne has endured two lockdowns since March and at the time of writing, the city is emerging from 112 days of 'hard' lockdown after five million Melbournians rode out a second wave of Covid-19. Globally, social, political and economic relations are more uncertain than ever and a toxic politics of division feeds community anxiety about the virus and national security more broadly.

Back at the beginning of 2020 before the pandemic had really impacted our lives here, the coverage of Covid-19 as a 'Chinese' virus—a line continued by then US President Trump—sparked a kind of racism that was reminiscent of that seen in the representations of the 'yellow peril' in 19th century Australia. One study that tracked this phenomenon via a survey on pandemic related incidents of racism, reported 377 cases of anti-Asian racism in the two-month period to June, including verbal and physical abuse, intimidation, threats, spitting and discrimination (Zhou, 2020). These attacks were experienced by many who simply 'look' Asian. At that time, when our experiences of the virus were primarily through local and international news sources, it was perhaps easy to hold the virus at arms-length with many in the community (fuelled by social and mainstream media misinformation) believing that this virus is a condition of the ‘Asian other’, resulting from “eating bats” or that Asians are “carriers of diseases” (Zhou, 2020). As Hall (2007; cf Hage, 2014) might have said, this virus acted as a conduit to project our deepest fears onto others perceived to be a source of threat.

In June 2020, case numbers in Melbourne were quickly increasing and community transmission from insufficient infection control escalated a second wave. Adding to the growing sense of unease and instability in the weeks preceding the second lockdown the Black Lives Matter movement erupted, mostly in the US, but also with significant and widespread reach to other countries including the UK and Australia. Protests were organised to demonstrate solidarity against racial injustice and police brutality sparked by the killing of George Floyd in America. This event ignited solidarity in Australia by activists affected by Indigenous incarceration and deaths in custody. These protests were quickly countered by many who took offence that in celebrating BLM, other (white) lives then don’t matter. There was also a groundswell of activism to take down colonial white settler statues in cities, to signify an alternative re-writing of ambiguously shared histories. In ways similar to how the 2005 Cronulla riots planted a seed for this study, the deep-running divisions in the current social and political climate offer a sense of urgency as to why a critical intercultural education is so important.

Grounding intercultural education in broader social and political movements and struggles, such as BLM, the idea that we are all always grappling with relations with cultural difference surfaces. In this way, intercultural education is not just about a set of skills that might translate to workplace relations and future opportunities in a global and interconnected world—although in a functional sense, this is likely important too. Aman (2018) argues intercultural education is grounded in an assumption that we all bear moral obligations to others. That is, the relationships we have with diverse others matter and the way we act on our positioned responsibilities to others matters too. While Haraway (2016) argues we are all positioned differently in order to act on ‘response-abilities’ to others, intercultural education is one way to contribute to and cultivate an engagement with differences that can make a difference. As such, intercultural education is about staying with the trouble of ambiguously shared histories and learning from the discomfort of personal and collective cultural contradictions in order to understand our lives as deeply interconnected with those of others.

In many ways this finding resonates with the aspirations of the current Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Declaration (Education Council, 2019) and most recent Australian and Victorian curriculum frameworks. However, in articulating the complexities and precarities of intercultural work in a local school setting there is opportunity for intercultural curriculum work to be interpreted, translated and enacted across levels of school organisation and teacher practice from a renewed perspective. As people's lives become more obviously entwined and as the world becomes an increasingly divisive and polarised place, teachers and young people need to develop the skills to be able to navigate cultural complexity with poise. A praxis of difference offers a way to think about and work with teachers' knowledge, skills and reflexivity in order for them to be better equipped for engaging young people with complex conversations that grapple with the discomfort, ambiguity and contradiction embedded in relations with cultural difference. In taking this further, future research could seek to develop the core principles of a praxis of difference with teachers in relation to intercultural education and the general capabilities of the formal curriculum more broadly. Such research would seek to engender approaches to curriculum work and professional learning that actively engage with the ways schools, teachers and young people enact and embody social responsibilities to others through intercultural education as living praxis.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview and focus group schedule

Broad topics of interest:

- cultural difference and students
- cultural difference and the curriculum
- intersections of culture and difference at school
- living and learning across cultural differences
- challenging stereotypes of culture and difference at school.

Semi-structured interview #1: proposed questions and prompts

- How long have you worked at the school? What are your roles / responsibilities / subject area?
- Can you describe the school to me? How would you describe the culture of the school? What kinds of things work well/ what kinds of challenges do teachers here face?
- Can you describe any current goals, directions, developments, pressures etc. that the school is responding to? Either from within the school, or from the outside (ie: Department, community, parents etc.)
- What sorts of 'cultural differences' are at this school? Can you talk about some examples? In your view, how are these talked about / approached / addressed? Are there cultural differences you think are less visible?
- The Victorian and Australian curricula both have included the 'intercultural understanding' capability. How do you think the school is responding to this? What does this emphasis mean for you and your work as a teacher?
- In what ways does the school formally respond to or address cultural differences and the Intercultural Capability? And what happens informally? (ie: policy v teacher and student talk)
- In your own work as a teacher, how do you teach / talk about culture and cultural difference? How do students typically respond / engage? What kinds of challenges / opportunities do you face with students, other colleagues or the school? Can you give examples?
- Is there anything you would like to ad, reflect or comment on, or ask before we finish the interview?

Focus group #1: proposed questions and prompts

- What are the expectations of the school related to teaching about cultural difference? How does this affect your work?
- What are the expectations on and responsibilities of faculties and individual teachers related to teaching about cultural difference? How does this affect your work?

- What opportunities are there in and out of classrooms for students to engage in discussions / activities / curriculum / ideas / encounters with cultural difference in this school? In what kind of situations do these arise?
- What kinds of opportunities are there for you, in the scope of your work, to engage in *critical* discussions with your students about these things?
- In your view, what's the best way for students to learn about cultural difference?
- Are there topics that are difficult to talk about or off limits? Can you explain / give an example? Why do you think these topics are 'off limits'?

Focus group #2: proposed questions and prompts

- What kinds of informal or less explicit (than through the formal curriculum or school activities) experiences do students have of cultural difference in school?
- What kinds of experiences of cultural difference are your students having outside of school? How, if at all, do these shape their in school experiences?
- In your view what sort of experiences help students best prepare for engaging with difference now and after schooling?
- What role do you see other sources play, such as the media / social media / the community / family / environment / upbringing / politics, in young people's attitudes to cultural difference?

Focus group #3: proposed questions and prompts

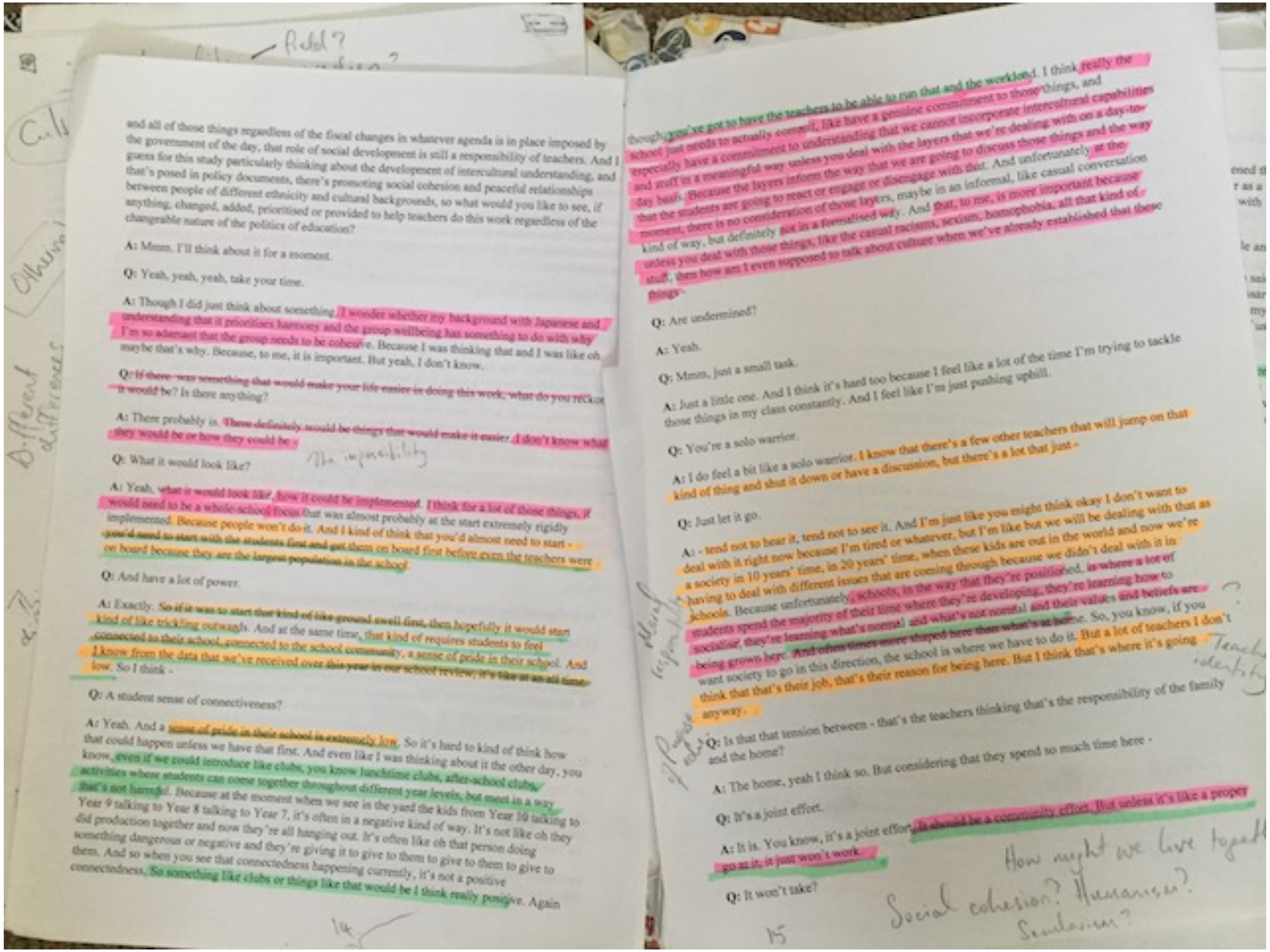
- We have explored experiences of cultural difference in and out of school, and through our conversations touched on the intercultural capability and developing intercultural understanding through teachers work. Today I want to focus on support structures and mechanisms.
- To what extent do you feel prepared and supported to develop intercultural understanding in your students?
- What kinds of resources and support structures exist in and out of school for working with cultural difference and for intercultural understanding?
- What kinds of resources and support structures would make this work less challenging?
- How might intercultural understanding be done differently? (at a personal / school / system / departmental level)

Final interview prompts

- Spend some time tracing your own past life / educational experiences with cultural difference.
    - Are there any experiences or events that really stand out in shaping the ways you think / experience / engage with / talk about cultural difference? Can you describe and talk about that a bit?

- To what extent does the way you are positioned personally shape or influence the ways you think / experience / engage with / talk about cultural difference? Can you explain this? In what ways (if at all)?
- In what ways does your professional positioning influence the ways you are able to engage with / talk about cultural difference in your work? Can you explain this a bit?
- How does the school and the system more broadly position you professionally?
  - Are there differences between the ways you position yourself and the ways the institution positions you? If so, can you explain?
  - In what ways does this shape you and your work?
- Given the changeable politics and priorities of education, fickle curriculum agendas, and the importance socially of developing intercultural understanding in students – what would you like to see, if anything, changed / added / prioritised / provided in this area?

Appendix 2.1: Sample transcript and preliminary analysis



and all of those things regardless of the fiscal changes in whatever agenda is in place imposed by the government of the day, that role of social development is still a responsibility of teachers. And I guess for this study particularly thinking about the development of intercultural understanding, and that's posed in policy documents, there's promoting social cohesion and peaceful relationships between people of different ethnicity and cultural backgrounds, so what would you like to see, if anything, changed, added, prioritised or provided to help teachers do this work regardless of the changeable nature of the politics of education?

A: Mmm. I'll think about it for a moment.

Q: Yeah, yeah, yeah, take your time.

A: Though I did just think about something. I wonder whether my background with Japanese and understanding that it prioritises harmony and the group wellbeing has something to do with why I'm so adamant that the group needs to be cohesive. Because I was thinking that and I was like oh maybe that's why. Because, to me, it is important. But yeah, I don't know.

Q: If there was something that would make your life easier in doing this work, what do you reckon it would be? Is there anything?

A: There probably is. There definitely would be things that would make it easier. I don't know what they would be or how they could be -

The impossibility

Q: What it would look like?

A: Yeah, what it would look like, how it could be implemented. I think for a lot of those things, it would need to be a whole-school focus that was almost probably at the start extremely rigidly implemented. Because people won't do it. And I kind of think that you'd almost need to start - you'd need to start with the students first and get them on board first before even the teachers were on board because they are the largest population in the school.

Q: And have a lot of power.

A: Exactly. So if it was to start that kind of like ground swell first, then hopefully it would start kind of like trickling outwards. And at the same time, that kind of requires students to feel connected to their school, connected to the school community, a sense of pride in their school. And I know from the data that we've received over this year in our school review, it's like at an all time low. So I think -

Q: A student sense of connectiveness?

A: Yeah. And a sense of pride in their school is extremely low. So it's hard to kind of think how that could happen unless we have that first. And even like I was thinking about it the other day, you know, even if we could introduce like clubs, you know lunchtime clubs, after-school clubs, activities where students can come together throughout different year levels, but meet in a way that's not harmful. Because at the moment when we see in the yard the kids from Year 10 talking to Year 9 talking to Year 8 talking to Year 7, it's often in a negative kind of way. It's not like oh they did production together and now they're all hanging out. It's often like oh that person doing something dangerous or negative and they're giving it to give to them to give to them to give to them. And so when you see that connectedness happening currently, it's not a positive connectedness. So something like clubs or things like that would be I think really positive. Again

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though, you've got to have the teachers to be able to run that and the workload. I think really the school just needs to actually commit, like have a genuine commitment to those things, and especially have a commitment to understanding that we cannot incorporate intercultural capabilities and stuff in a meaningful way unless you deal with the layers that we're dealing with on a day-to-day basis. Because the layers inform the way that we are going to discuss those things and the way that the students are going to react or engage or disengage with that. And unfortunately at the moment, there is no consideration of those layers, maybe in an informal, like casual conversation kind of way, but definitely not in a formalised way. And that, to me, is more important because unless you deal with those things, like the casual racisms, sexism, homophobia, all that kind of stuff, then how am I even supposed to talk about culture when we've already established that these things -

Q: Are undermined?

A: Yeah.

Q: Mmm, just a small task.

A: Just a little one. And I think it's hard too because I feel like a lot of the time I'm trying to tackle those things in my class constantly. And I feel like I'm just pushing uphill.

Q: You're a solo warrior.

A: I do feel a bit like a solo warrior. I know that there's a few other teachers that will jump on that kind of thing and shut it down or have a discussion, but there's a lot that just -

Q: Just let it go.

A: - tend not to hear it, tend not to see it. And I'm just like you might think okay I don't want to deal with it right now because I'm tired or whatever, but I'm like but we will be dealing with that as a society in 10 years' time, in 20 years' time, when these kids are out in the world and now we're having to deal with different issues that are coming through because we didn't deal with it in schools. Because unfortunately, schools, in the way that they're positioned, is where a lot of students spend the majority of their time where they're developing, they're learning how to socialise, they're learning what's normal and what's not normal and their values and beliefs are being grown here. And often times more shaped here than what's at home. So, you know, if you want society to go in this direction, the school is where we have to do it. But a lot of teachers I don't think that that's their job, that's their reason for being here. But I think that's where it's going anyway.

Moral responsibility

Teacher identity ?

Q: Is that that tension between - that's the teachers thinking that's the responsibility of the family and the home?

A: The home, yeah I think so. But considering that they spend so much time here -

Q: It's a joint effort.

A: It is. You know, it's a joint effort. It should be a community effort. But unless it's like a proper go at it, it just won't work.

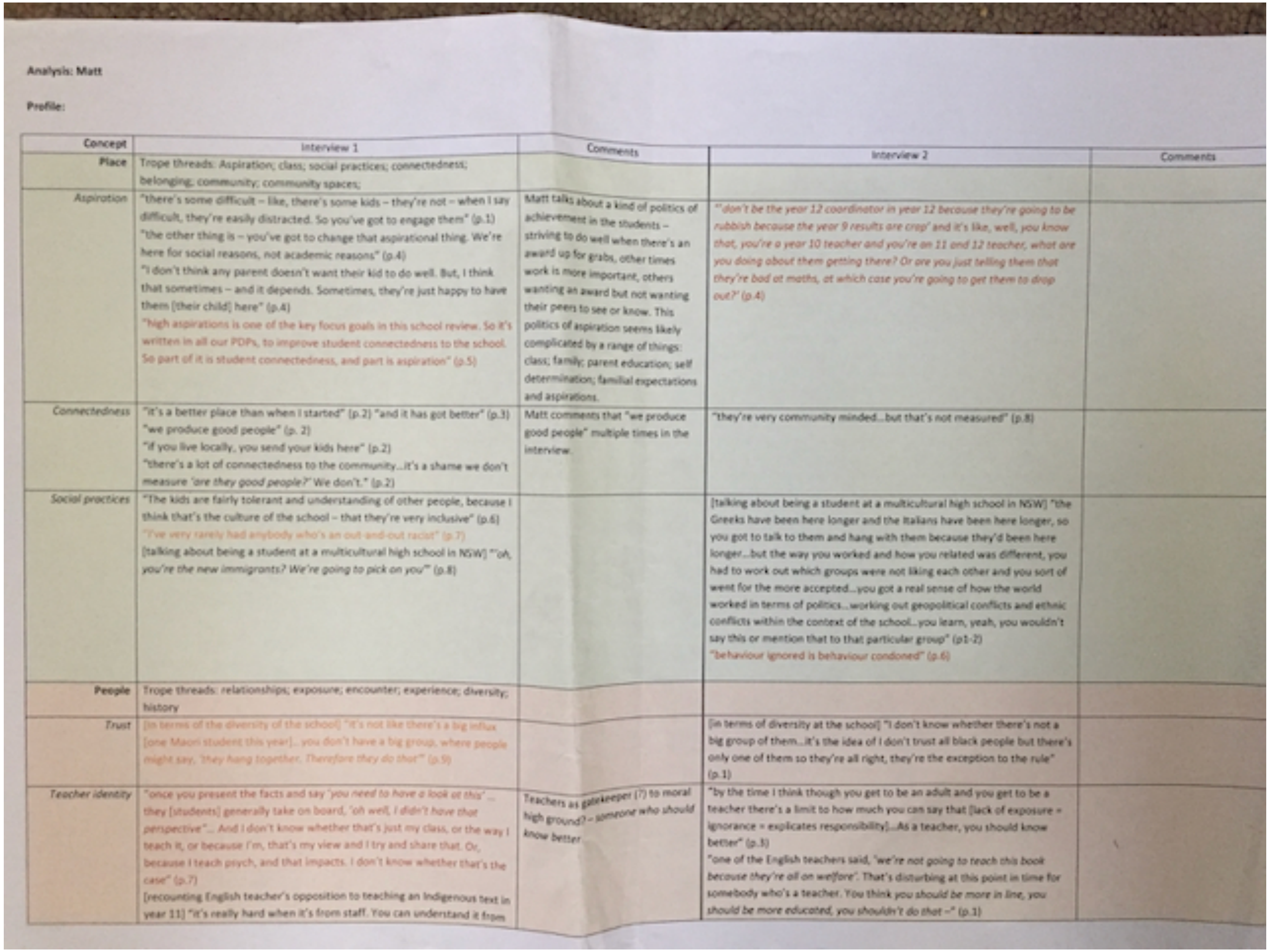
Q: It won't take?

How might we live togeth

Social cohesion? Humanism? Secularism?

15

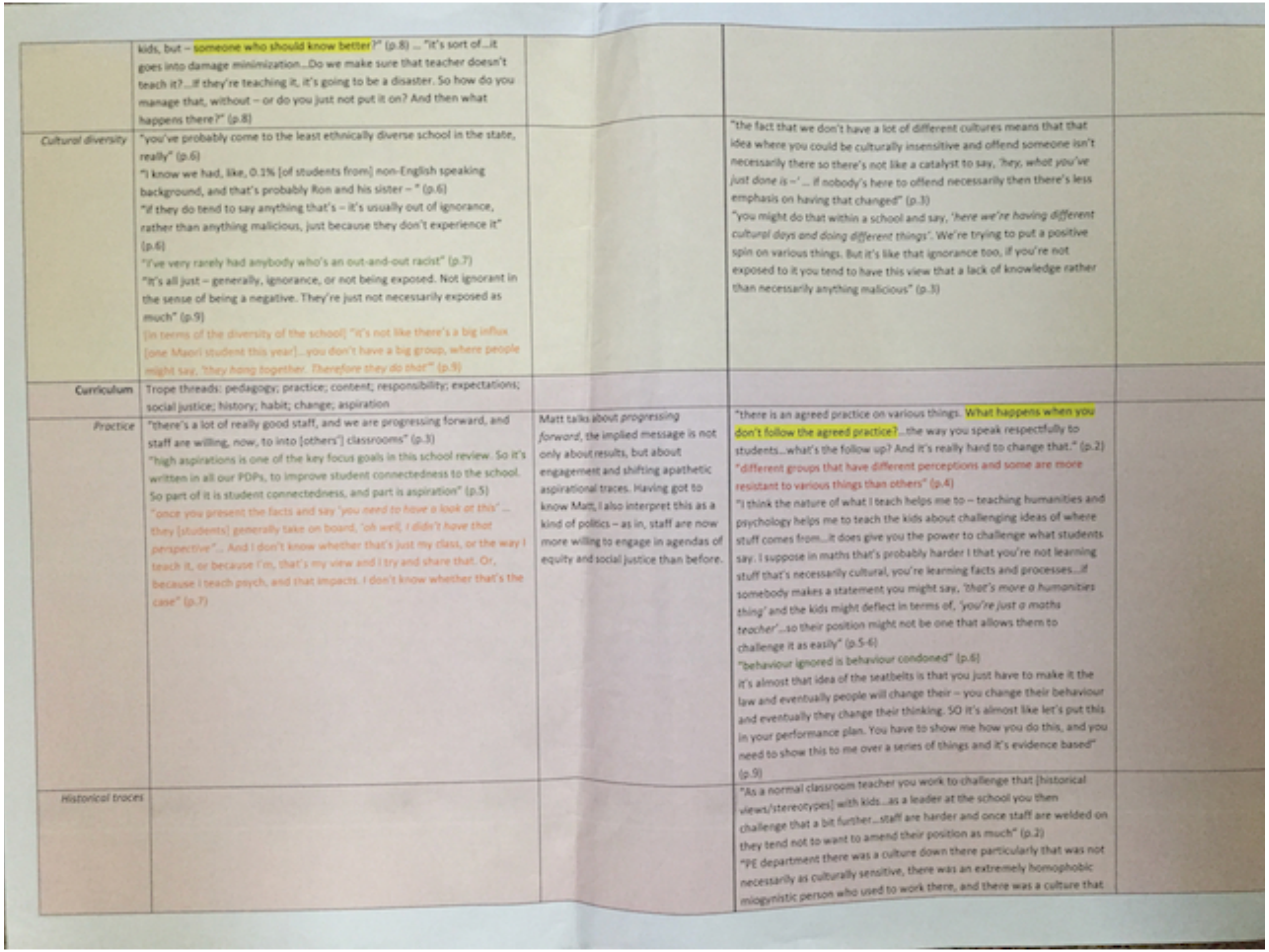
Appendix 2.2: Sample of preliminary grouping of data based on three axes



Analysis: Matt

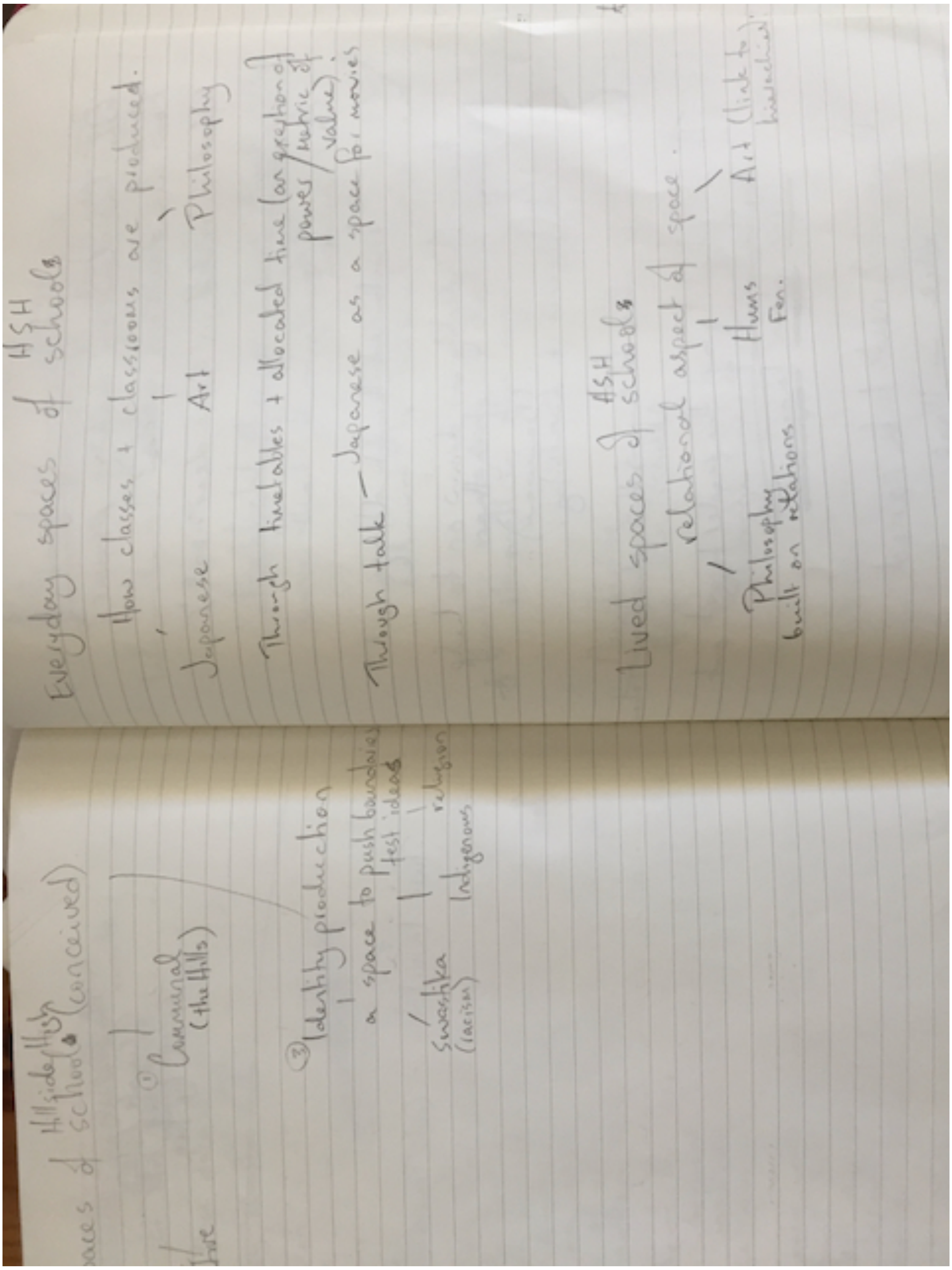
Profile:

Concept	Interview 1	Comments	Interview 2	Comments
Place	Trope threads: Aspiration; class; social practices; connectedness; belonging; community; community spaces;			
Aspiration	"there's some difficult – like, there's some kids – they're not – when I say difficult, they're easily distracted. So you've got to engage them" (p.1) "the other thing is – you've got to change that aspirational thing. We're here for social reasons, not academic reasons" (p.4) "I don't think any parent doesn't want their kid to do well. But, I think that sometimes – and it depends. Sometimes, they're just happy to have them [their child] here" (p.4) "high aspirations is one of the key focus goals in this school review. So it's written in all our PDPs, to improve student connectedness to the school. So part of it is student connectedness, and part is aspiration" (p.5)	Matt talks about a kind of politics of achievement in the students – striving to do well when there's an award up for grabs, other times work is more important, others wanting an award but not wanting their peers to see or know. This politics of aspiration seems likely complicated by a range of things: class; family; parent education; self determination; familial expectations and aspirations.	*"'don't be the year 12 coordinator in year 12 because they're going to be rubbish because the year 9 results are crap'* and it's like, well, *you know that, you're a year 10 teacher and you're an 11 and 12 teacher, what are you doing about them getting there? Or are you just telling them that they're bad at maths, at which case you're going to get them to drop out?'* (p.4)	
Connectedness	"it's a better place than when I started" (p.2) "and it has got better" (p.3) "we produce good people" (p. 2) "if you live locally, you send your kids here" (p.2) "there's a lot of connectedness to the community…it's a shame we don't measure *'are they good people?'* We don't." (p.2)	Matt comments that "we produce good people" multiple times in the interview.	"they're very community minded…but that's not measured" (p.8)	
Social practices	"The kids are fairly tolerant and understanding of other people, because I think that's the culture of the school – that they're very inclusive" (p.6) "I've very rarely had anybody who's an out-and-out racist" (p.7) [talking about being a student at a multicultural high school in NSW] "*'oh, you're the new immigrants? We're going to pick on you'*" (p.8)		[talking about being a student at a multicultural high school in NSW] "the Greeks have been here longer and the Italians have been here longer, so you got to talk to them and hang with them because they'd been here longer…but the way you worked and how you related was different, you had to work out which groups were not liking each other and you sort of went for the more accepted…you got a real sense of how the world worked in terms of politics…working out geopolitical conflicts and ethnic conflicts within the context of the school…you learn, yeah, you wouldn't say this or mention that to that particular group" (p1-2) "behaviour ignored is behaviour condoned" (p.6)	
People	Trope threads: relationships; exposure; encounter; experience; diversity; history			
Trust	[in terms of the diversity of the school] "it's not like there's a big influx [one Maori student this year]… you don't have a big group, where people might say, *'they hang together. Therefore they do that'*" (p.9)		[in terms of diversity at the school] "I don't know whether there's not a big group of them…it's the idea of I don't trust all black people but there's only one of them so they're all right, they're the exception to the rule" (p.1)	
Teacher identity	"once you present the facts and say *'you need to have a look at this'* … they [students] generally take on board, *'oh well, I didn't have that perspective'*… And I don't know whether that's just my class, or the way I teach it, or because I'm, that's my view and I try and share that. Or, because I teach psych, and that impacts. I don't know whether that's the case" (p.7) [recounting English teacher's opposition to teaching an Indigenous text in year 11] "it's really hard when it's from staff. You can understand it from	Teachers as gatekeeper (?) to moral high ground? – *someone who should know better*	"by the time I think though you get to be an adult and you get to be a teacher there's a limit to how much you can say that [lack of exposure = ignorance = explicates responsibility]…As a teacher, you should know better" (p.3) "one of the English teachers said, *'we're not going to teach this book because they're all on welfare'*. That's disturbing at this point in time for somebody who's a teacher. You think *you should be more in line, you should be more educated, you shouldn't do that* –" (p.1)	



	kids, but – someone who should know better?" (p.8) ... "it's sort of...it goes into damage minimization...Do we make sure that teacher doesn't teach it?...If they're teaching it, it's going to be a disaster. So how do you manage that, without – or do you just not put it on? And then what happens there?" (p.8)			
Cultural diversity	"you've probably come to the least ethnically diverse school in the state, really" (p.6) "I know we had, like, 0.1% [of students from] non-English speaking background, and that's probably Ron and his sister – " (p.6) "if they do tend to say anything that's – it's usually out of ignorance, rather than anything malicious, just because they don't experience it" (p.6) "I've very rarely had anybody who's an out-and-out racist" (p.7) "It's all just – generally, ignorance, or not being exposed. Not ignorant in the sense of being a negative. They're just not necessarily exposed as much" (p.9) [in terms of the diversity of the school] "it's not like there's a big influx [one Maori student this year]...you don't have a big group, where people might say, '*they hang together. Therefore they do that*'" (p.9)		"the fact that we don't have a lot of different cultures means that that idea where you could be culturally insensitive and offend someone isn't necessarily there so there's not like a catalyst to say, '*hey, what you've just done is –*' ... if nobody's here to offend necessarily then there's less emphasis on having that changed" (p.3) "you might do that within a school and say, '*here we're having different cultural days and doing different things*'. We're trying to put a positive spin on various things. But it's like that ignorance too, if you're not exposed to it you tend to have this view that a lack of knowledge rather than necessarily anything malicious" (p.3)	
Curriculum	Trope threads: pedagogy; practice; content; responsibility; expectations; social justice; history; habit; change; aspiration			
Practice	"there's a lot of really good staff, and we are progressing forward, and staff are willing, now, to into [others'] classrooms" (p.3) "high aspirations is one of the key focus goals in this school review. So it's written in all our PDPs, to improve student connectedness to the school. So part of it is student connectedness, and part is aspiration" (p.5) "once you present the facts and say '*you need to have a look at this*' ... they [students] generally take on board, '*oh well, I didn't have that perspective*'... And I don't know whether that's just my class, or the way I teach it, or because I'm, that's my view and I try and share that. Or, because I teach psych, and that impacts. I don't know whether that's the case" (p.7)	Matt talks about *progressing forward*, the implied message is not only about results, but about engagement and shifting apathetic aspirational traces. Having got to know Matt, I also interpret this as a kind of politics – as in, staff are now more willing to engage in agendas of equity and social justice than before.	"there is an agreed practice on various things. What happens when you don't follow the agreed practice?...the way you speak respectfully to students...what's the follow up? And it's really hard to change that." (p.2) "different groups that have different perceptions and some are more resistant to various things than others" (p.4) "I think the nature of what I teach helps me to – teaching humanities and psychology helps me to teach the kids about challenging ideas of where stuff comes from...it does give you the power to challenge what students say. I suppose in maths that's probably harder I that you're not learning stuff that's necessarily cultural, you're learning facts and processes...if somebody makes a statement you might say, '*that's more a humanities thing*' and the kids might deflect in terms of, '*you're just a maths teacher*'...so their position might not be one that allows them to challenge it as easily" (p.5-6) "behaviour ignored is behaviour condoned" (p.6) it's almost that idea of the seatbelts is that you just have to make it the law and eventually people will change their – you change their behaviour and eventually they change their thinking. SO it's almost like let's put this in your performance plan. You have to show me how you do this, and you need to show this to me over a series of things and it's evidence based" (p.9)	
Historical traces			"As a normal classroom teacher you work to challenge that [historical views/stereotypes] with kids...as a leader at the school you then challenge that a bit further...staff are harder and once staff are welded on they tend not to want to amend their position as much" (p.2) "PE department there was a culture down there particularly that was not necessarily as culturally sensitive, there was an extremely homophobic miogynistic person who used to work there, and there was a culture that	

Appendix 2.3: Sample of emerging themes



aces of Hillside High schools (conceived)

ive

① Communal
(the Hills)

③ Identity production

a space to push boundaries
test ideas

swastika
(racism)

Indigenous

religion

Everyday spaces of HSH schools

How classes + classrooms are produced.

Japanese

Art

Philosophy

Through timetables + allocated time (an expression of powers / metric of value).

Through talk — Japanese as a space for movies

Lived spaces of ASH schools

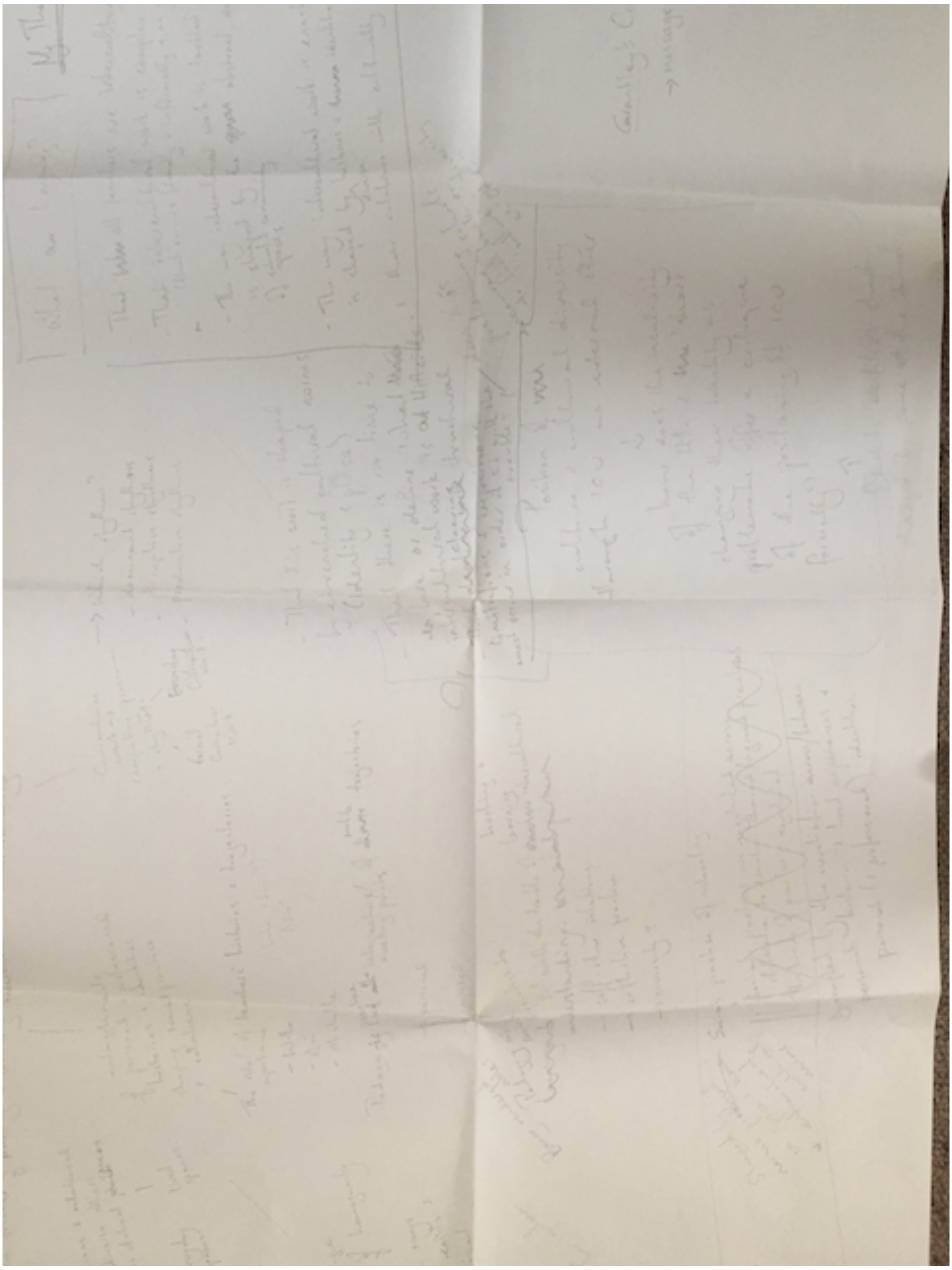
relational aspect of space.

Philosophy
built on relations

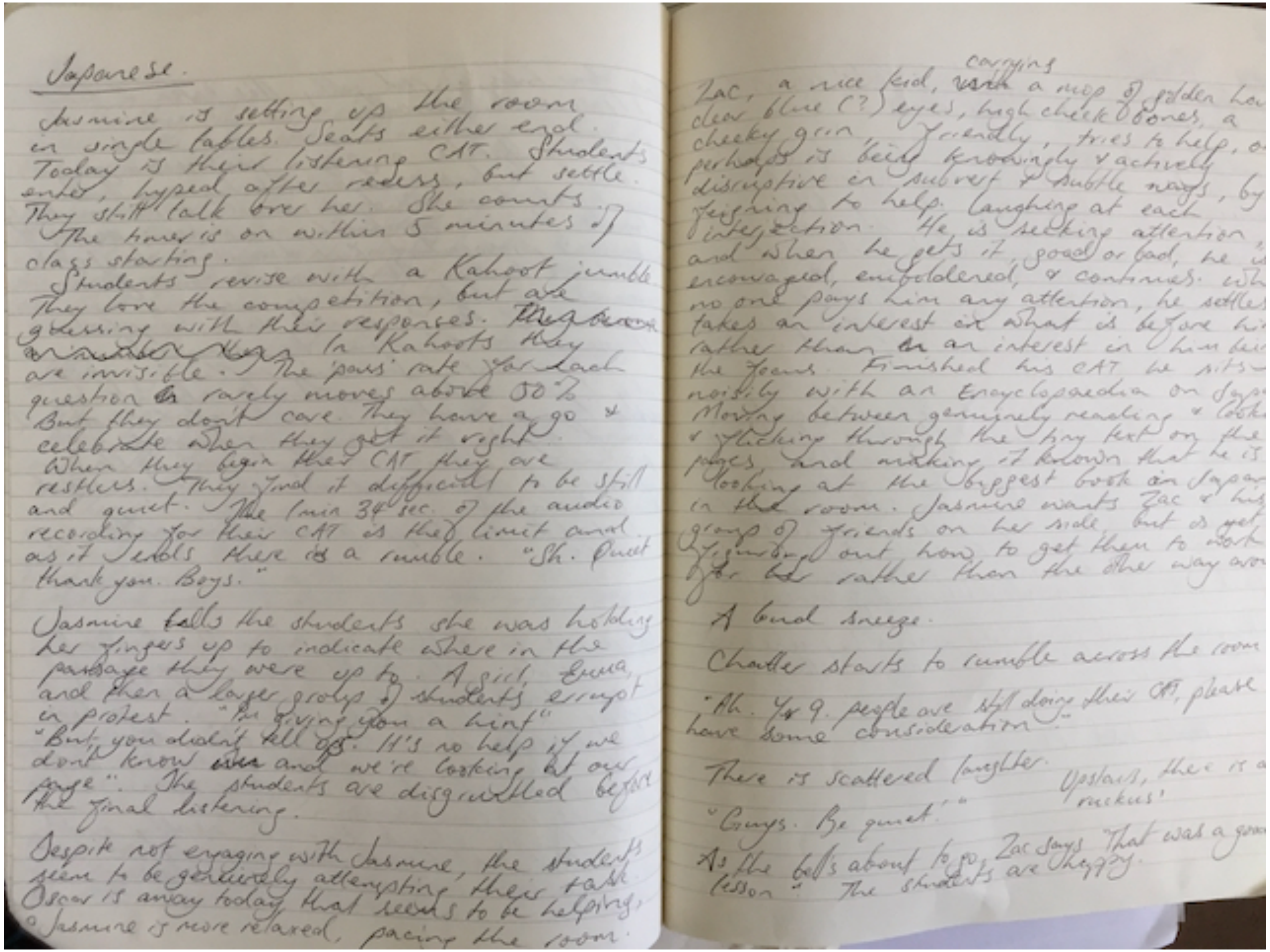
Hums
Fen.

Art (link to hierarchies).

Appendix 3: Sample of preliminary mapping of data and theory



Appendix 4: Sample fieldnotes



Japanese.

Jasmine is setting up the room
in single tables. Seats either end.
Today is their listening CAT. Students
enter, hyped after recess, but settle.
They still talk over her. She counts.
The timer is on within 5 minutes of
class starting.
Students revise with a Kahoot jumble
They love the competition, but are
guessing with their responses. [illegible]
[illegible] In Kahoots they
are invisible. The 'pass' rate for each
question rarely moves above 50%
But they don't care. They have a go &
celebrate when they get it right.
When they begin their CAT they are
restless. They find it difficult to be still
and quiet. The 1 min 34 sec. of the audio
recording for their CAT is the limit and
as it unfolds there is a rumble. "Sh. Quiet
thank you. Boys."

Jasmine tells the students she was holding
her fingers up to indicate where in the
passage they were up to. A girl, Emma,
and then a larger group of students erupt
in protest. "I'm giving you a hint"
"But you didn't tell us. It's no help if we
don't know and we're looking at our
page". The students are disgruntled before
the final listening.

Despite not engaging with Jasmine, the students
seem to be genuinely attempting their task.
Oscar is away today that seems to be helping,
& Jasmine is more relaxed, pacing the room.

carrying
Zac, a nice kid, with a mop of golden ha
clear blue (?) eyes, high cheek bones, a
cheeky grin. Friendly, tries to help, o
perhaps is being knowingly & actively
disruptive in subvert & subtle ways, by
feigning to help. Laughing at each
interjection. He is seeking attention,
and when he gets it, good or bad, he i
encouraged, emboldened, & continues. Wh
no one pays him any attention, he settles
takes an interest in what is before hi
rather than an interest in him bei
the focus. Finished his CAT he sits
noisily with an Encyclopaedia on Japa
Moving between genuinely reading & look
& flicking through the tiny text on the
pages and making it known that he is
looking at the biggest book on Japan
in the room. Jasmine wants Zac & his
group of friends on her side, but is yet
figuring out how to get them to work
for her rather than the other way aro

A loud sneeze.

Chatter starts to rumble across the room

"Ah. Yr 9. people are still doing their CAT, please
have some consideration".

There is scattered laughter. Upstairs, there is a
ruckus'

"Guys. Be quiet."

As the bell's about to go, Zac says "That was a goo
lesson". The students are happy.