

Critical Studies of Education 13

Tiffany Jones

# A Student-centred Sociology of Australian Education

Voices of Experience

 Springer

# Critical Studies of Education

Volume 13

## Series Editor

Shirley R. Steinberg, University of Calgary, Calgary, AB, Canada

## Editorial Board

Rochelle Brock, University of North Carolina, Greensboro, USA

Annette Coburn, University of the West of Scotland, Hamilton, UK

Barry Down, Murdoch University, Rockingham, Australia

Henry A. Giroux, McMaster University, Hamilton, ON, Canada

Bronwen Low, McGill University, Montreal, QC, Canada

Tanya Merriman, University of Southern California, California, USA

Marta Soler, University of Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain

John Willinsky, Stanford University, Stanford, CA, USA

We live in an era where forms of education designed to win the consent of students, teachers, and the public to the inevitability of a neo-liberal, market-driven process of globalization are being developed around the world. In these hegemonic modes of pedagogy questions about issues of race, class, gender, sexuality, colonialism, religion, and other social dynamics are simply not asked. Indeed, questions about the social spaces where pedagogy takes place—in schools, media, corporate think tanks, etc.—are not raised. When these concerns are connected with queries such as the following, we begin to move into a serious study of pedagogy: What knowledge is of the most worth? Whose knowledge should be taught? What role does power play in the educational process? How are new media re-shaping as well as perpetuating what happens in education? How is knowledge produced in a corporatized politics of knowledge? What socio-political role do schools play in the twenty-first century? What is an educated person? What is intelligence? How important are socio-cultural contextual factors in shaping what goes on in education? Can schools be more than a tool of the new American (and its Western allies') twenty-first century empire? How do we educate well-informed, creative teachers? What roles should schools play in a democratic society? What roles should media play in a democratic society? Is education in a democratic society different than in a totalitarian society? What is a democratic society? How is globalization affecting education? How does our view of mind shape the way we think of education? How does affect and emotion shape the educational process? What are the forces that shape educational purpose in different societies? These, of course, are just a few examples of the questions that need to be asked in relation to our exploration of educational purpose. This series of books can help establish a renewed interest in such questions and their centrality in the larger study of education and the preparation of teachers and other educational professionals.

More information about this series at <http://www.springer.com/series/13431>

Tiffany Jones

# A Student-centred Sociology of Australian Education

Voices of Experience

 Springer

Tiffany Jones  
Department of Educational Studies  
Macquarie University  
Sydney, NSW, Australia

Critical Studies of Education

ISBN 978-3-030-36862-3

ISBN 978-3-030-36863-0 (eBook)

<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-36863-0>

© Springer Nature Switzerland AG 2020

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are reserved by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.

The publisher, the authors, and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, expressed or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

This Springer imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG  
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introducing Sociology of Education</b> . . . . .	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Designing a Comparative Sociological Education Study.</b> . . . . .	<b>17</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Basic Demographics for Voices of Experience Participants</b> . . . . .	<b>25</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Paradigm: Australia’s Largely Liberal and Conservative Schools</b> . .	<b>39</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Age: Australia’s Staging of Ageing via Spiral Curricula.</b> . . . . .	<b>63</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Sex and Gender: Australian Schools Shout Sex and Whisper Gender</b> . . . . .	<b>95</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Sexuality: Australian Schools’ Sexuality Wars.</b> . . . . .	<b>129</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Social Class: Australian Schools Won’t Merit the Need</b> . . . . .	<b>185</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Race: Australia’s Critical Racial and Cultural Curricula</b> . . . . .	<b>213</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>News Media: Australian Schools on Fake News and Media Objectivity</b> . . . . .	<b>245</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Popular Culture: Teaching Traditional Canons vs. Playing with Post-Modern Pastiche.</b> . . . . .	<b>275</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>Technology: Australia’s Phone Bans and Educational Use.</b> . . . . .	<b>301</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>Conclusion and Recommendations</b> . . . . .	<b>329</b>
	<b>Index.</b> . . . . .	<b>341</b>

# Chapter 1



## Introducing Sociology of Education

I am attending an all-girls Catholic high school, the rules are extremely strict. Both in the class room, and outside in the playground. A lot of teachers prefer the students working in silence and loud classes are frowned upon; even during group tasks ‘whispering to each-other’ is encouraged. Despite being in year 10, some (rarely any but still present) teachers believe that seating plans are necessary even if only a small selection of girls aren’t acting how the school would prefer. Self-expression is also frowned upon which is portrayed through the rules of no jewellery, hair tied back and specifically off the face, and skirt lengths below the knees – any of these broken result in being sent home until the issue is addressed and fixed. The school clearly prioritises their reputation on how the girls look over our actual education which we pay for through our school fees. (Alice, 15 years old, on her conservative school)<sup>1</sup>

### Key Points

- The sociology of education is the study of social elements of education including the experiences and representations of individuals, groups, contexts and policy trends.
- There are four main orientations to social elements of education: conservative, liberal, critical and post-modern.
- The conservative orientation has been historically dominant prior to modern history.
- The *Voices of Experience* study focused on *understanding students’ experiences of conservative, liberal, critical and post-modern approaches to social phenomena in education.*
- Research questions broadly considered the dominant approaches to education for different identity-based social issues; the approaches most useful for different types of students; and how students imagined improving schools.

---

<sup>1</sup> Participants were not asked their name and were only asked to select from an age range of a few years. Pseudonyms and ages within the age range selected have been randomly applied by the researcher to humanise anonymous quotes.

## 1.1 What Is the Sociology of Education?

Sociology means the study (ology) of the social (interaction within a collective). Applied to education, it covers the study of social elements of education. Sometimes pre-service teachers first assume this means:

- The relationships between students
- The relationships between students and their teachers

These would be very small visions for the sociology of education, though they are certainly important components of the larger picture! The sociology of education also includes the study of:

- Social factors in student, staff and education-focused political actors' experiences
- Identity traits impacting learning
- Learning around identities and social engagement
- Social elements within official and unofficial curricula
- The social context of the classroom
- The social context of the school
- The social context of broader society and its impact on schools
- The social assumptions informing school features (such as the gender assumptions behind the provision of 'female' and 'male' uniforms)
- Comparative social factors across different education systems and their policies and practices
- The political factors and trends in social policies influencing national education movements
- Transnational education movements, trends and debates
- Social conceptualisations and representations of schooling in media, art, literature, philosophy and daily conversation and much more

In contemporary civil societies, one dominant view of education is as 'a basic human right' for all people, recognised in the 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (United Nations, 1948). This right is enshrined in the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (United Nations, 1996) and the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* (United Nations, 1989). The importance of ensuring that this education occurs within safe, secure and non-violent learning environments has been emphasised in these and other treaty bodies and conventions including in CRC General Comments, in the UNESCO *Convention on Discrimination in Education* and in ongoing resource provision by UN bodies (UNESCO, 2016). However, education has not always been conceived in this way. The current assumption of classroom-based mass education only emerged in the last few hundred years (Tait, 2012). Historically, education was many different things, including:

- A privilege offered only to elite boys in ancient Egypt
- A way to refine citizens with knowledge of the arts, science, math and politics in ancient Greek city-states save Sparta



- A way to produce a military in Sparta where boys endured harsh military schooling and girls learned to kill people and defend their homes when the military was away
- Formed as individualised tutoring for noble children or a combination of petty/dame schooling (in the local housewives' homes) and grammar schooling with literary and religious teachings mostly just for boys (run by masters and local guilds) in European history

Even in a single country like Australia, different versions of education are in operation with different goals:

- Some Indigenous groups' distinct education discourses on country or in both-ways learning
- International entities' provisions sometimes taught in multiple languages
- National and/or state governments' provisions
- Denominational and non-denominational religious organisations' provisions
- Independent bodies' own philosophies for provisions (e.g. Steiner, Montessori etc.)
- Home-schooling provisions and so on

As different visions for education have emerged, risen in popularity and competed with other visions, past conceptualisations have not 'died out' completely. They continued influencing, and battling with, other education discourses.

## 1.2 Why Is the Sociology of Education Useful?

Sociology of education is particularly useful in understanding why goals for, and experiences of, education are so wildly different across times, places and individuals. It explains why different groups and individuals experience their different goals for and assessments of education as obvious truths yet struggle to understand the goals and assessments of education offered by people different to themselves. Foucault's anti-humanist archaeology of human sciences from sociology and psychology through to sex education showed that all eras, histories and research programmes have specific central conditions of so-called truth (Foucault, 1969a, 1969b, 1970, 1979, 1980, 1981). These conditions change in relatively sudden major shifts, from period to period, showing truth and meaning as relative, temporal and contextual productions (Caputo & Yount, 2006; Foucault, 1972). Foucault analysed the way we talk about and research histories of education and educational discursive formations comprising a vast organised dispersion of statement events in particular paradigms. Such paradigms have been tied to concepts of learning. For example, Gilbert (2004) agree that any curriculum in any school is a selection from a particular culture, and the values of that culture are central to understanding and participating in it (p.93). These sorts of paradigms translate loosely into earlier models of 'orientations to education' which actually present ideas from older and more funda-

mental philosophies in education that warrant revisiting and revision in light of newer appropriations. In the 1980s, the influential booklet *Orientations to Curriculum* (Kemmis, Cole, & Suggett, 1983) proposed three particular ‘education orientations’ that appear in wide use: vocational neo-classical, liberal-progressive and socially critical. Each can be seen as a different valuing process, based on different beliefs about the aim of education, and aligning with different pedagogical approaches. Hoepfer and McDonald discuss these three orientations as they apply to education and values, shortening them to ‘conservative, liberal and critical’ (Gilbert, 2004, pp. 24–26). In discussing ideological orientations to the school subject area of history (Hoepfer, Henderson, Hennessey, Hutton, & Mitchell, 1996), historians note an additional fourth category: ‘post-modern’ (pp. 197–214). The post-modern orientation is now a widely acknowledged and commonly used term (Bryson & De Castell, 1993; Morton & Zavarzadeh, 1991). This orientation was included in the author’s summaries of how the four education orientations were used in a previous study of values education discourses (Jones, 2007, 2009, 2013). This section describes how dramatically the goals and processes of the four orientations to education differ (see Table 1.1). These approaches have competing ideals for education and help us understand the ‘education wars’ in staffrooms, ongoing curriculum revisions, policy debates and media stories in the Australian and international press.

### 1.2.1 *Conservative Education*

Whilst it still manifests throughout the field of education today, the conservative orientation to education strongly reigned prior to the 1960s in modern history. Researchers have discussed the dominance of this orientation in education as a field generally (Kemmis et al., 1983; Ladson-Billings, 1998); in education policies produced in places such as Singapore, England, South Africa and the United States as tied to particular administrations (Bee Bee, 2001; Deacon, Osman, & Buchler, 2010; Gillborn, 2005; Haffner, 1992; Irvine, 2002); and in particular policies such as the *Australian National Framework for Values Education in Schools* (Jones, 2009). Within this orientation, schools and teachers take an authoritarian approach and inculcate students with the *dominant values, beliefs and practices* of the time. Students are merely passive recipients of this knowledge and constructed as the ‘empty vessel’ or ‘blank slate’ to be filled with knowledge, a perspective in use in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century educational philosophers John Locke and Jean-Jacque Rousseau’s work on human learning and ‘tabula rasa’ (Bell, 1979; Bennett, 1971). Education is understood as preparation for work (Kemmis et al., 1983). Thus, the education discourses within policies stemming from this orientation focus on shaping students to fit current social, civic, religious and vocational conventions. Centralised leadership-led sweeping and prescriptive top-down policies and pass/fail benchmarking processes protect internal strengths of the focal education institution and ban or rescind perceived threats to the institution and the dominant traditions and group it serves (Dale, 1989; Gillborn, 2005; Kenyon, 2007;

**Table 1.1** Orientations to education

<i>Orientations</i>	Conservative	Liberal	Critical	Post-modern
<i>Time of origin in modern education</i>	Since pre-1960s	Since 1960s	Since 1970s	Since 1990s
<i>Belief about education</i>	Education should maintain the status quo. It should identify, describe and reinforce the prevailing values, beliefs and practices of society and 'transmit' them to students <i>Neo-conservative:</i> Education should shore up the threatened status quo with a 'return' to former values, beliefs and practices	Education develops the individual potential of all students, rewarding achievement and encouraging competitive activity. It is based on developing knowledge and skills, especially inquiry and decision-making skills <i>Neo-liberal:</i> Education choice and service for the individual's self-interest should not be hindered by the state's self-interest	Education can help create a 'better' society/reality challenging the status quo by encouraging students to identify values and practices that are unjust or unsustainable, to propose alternatives redressing broader marginalisation and to take appropriate action to begin bringing those alternatives to fruition	Education can demystify 'truth'/'reality' and problematise knowledge. Theories of the social are explored – such that the hegemony (or discursive assumptions of a time or culture) are revealed, allowing new possibilities and conceptual play
<i>Goal of educators</i>	To maintain social stability and protect the existing interests of dominant groups in society	To promote individual excellence and social progress and reward students according to their performance	To bring about a more peaceful, just and sustainable world through students' actions	To develop in students a critical oppositional position in relation to the dominant order, self-reflexivity and awareness of partiality
<i>Policy production and processes</i>	Centralised sweeping and prescriptive leadership-run top-down policies and processes protect internal strengths and ban or rescind perceived threats	Leadership-initiated client-focused 'policy products' impacted by 'consumer' use deliver users externally competitive options and choices and opportunities to be informed and upskilled	Localised or adaptable community-driven bottom-up policies and processes holistically reform structural determinants of oppression and social injustice	Highly contextualised and fluid community-network-developed policies support the post-modernist understanding of education as composed of different 'life-worlds' occurring at multiple sites and evolving malleably

(continued)

**Table 1.1** (continued)

<i>Orientations</i>	Conservative	Liberal	Critical	Post-modern
<i>Role of students in shaping curriculum</i>	Students leave unquestioned the dominant values and practices of society	Students identify aspects of society in need of reform but leave untouched questions of radical change to beliefs or practices	Students ask probing questions about the most deep-seated values and assumptions in society	Students can both deconstruct and co-construct values, as all knowledge is seen as constructed and relational. Students are placed in an oppositional subject position through which they can interrogate reality and intervene in its reconstitution
<i>Classroom pedagogical practice of the teacher</i>	Characterised by the undisputed authority of the teacher, the relative passivity of the students and the unproblematic transmission of authorised knowledge	Characterised by the teacher's role as leader and facilitator, active inquiry by students and an emphasis on understanding the reasons for social phenomena	Characterised by more democratic relations between teacher and students, high levels of collaboration and learning that involves ideological critique	Characterised by the teacher's role as deconstructor and facilitator; approach favours the teaching of multiple perspectives and co-creation of knowledge
<i>Sociology of education research trends</i>	Leadership-funded inquiries designed to assist policy-makers to solve status quo problems through a systemised policy into practice translation, applying positivist frames or 'grand narratives'	Rational, constructivist or economy-based studies testing and evaluating strategies for market competitiveness, parent/client consensus, competitive best practice and creative interpretations	Research applying emancipatory frames (critical analysis, Marxism, post-colonialism, feminism, gay liberation etc.) to challenge the power dynamics, social regulation and outcomes of education	Deconstructive or co-constructive research applying post-modern frames (post-structuralist analysis, post-identity feminist analysis, queer theory and others) to reveal and reorder education's cultural hegemonies, discourses and conceptual frameworks

Developed from Jones, 2009, 2013

Raab, 1994). Policy is informed by leadership-funded sociology of education inquiries directly designed to assist policy-makers or aimed at solving a problem within schools or society as perceived by the status quo/education leadership through the best policy/best systemised policy into practice translation, often applying positivist frames or ‘grand narratives’ (Jones, 2013; Ozga, 2000; Simons, Olssen, & Peters, 2009). Classroom pedagogy is seen as ideally characterised by the undisputed authority of the teacher and the unproblematic transmission of authorised knowledge (Jones, 2013). Methods include lectures or sermons, stories, viewing of texts, enforcing of behavioural rules and pledges. Neo-conservatism is included within the conservative orientation, differentiated by generally ‘emergent’ conservative perspectives through a retrospective focus. Apple describes neo-conservatism as guided by an equitable vision of the conservative ‘strong state’ but with a goal of ‘returning to’ this ideal within *a romanticised view of the past or previously established strong states* (where people ‘knew their place’ within the ‘natural order’ and ‘real knowledge/morality’ based on patriarchal Western structures reigned supreme). This promotes ‘residual’ ideological and discursive forms (Apple, 1998, p. 12). Important to this strand of the conservative orientation is the fear of the ‘other’ and concepts of ‘cultural pollution’ – the belief that (for example) student bodies, values curricula, history or language taught within schools (and as treated in society more generally) have become polluted by the inclusion of migrants, bilingualism or multiple cultural and political positions (Apple, 1998, p. 13). The aims of returning to idealised ‘original’ policies and curriculum positions and within a systematically streamlined national curricula and testing structure (and far greater policing of teacher training and autonomy) often overlook or mystify the inherent social contentions and inconsistencies around these positions historically (Apple, 1990, 1998; Levine, 1996).

### 1.2.2 Liberal Education

The liberal orientation was first popularised in education policy in the 1960s (Kemmis et al., 1983). The initial rise of liberalism within education policy in the West has been widely acknowledged by researchers (Ball, Maguire, & Macrae, 2000; Fraser, 1993; Giroux, 1993; Olssen & Peters, 2005; Weiler, 1993; Youdell, 2004). It has been linked to ‘human capital theory’ and the shift in post-industrial societies where preparation for a single career has been replaced by multifarious ‘upskilling’ of individuals to allow for a competitive, flexible and insecure workforce (Bauman, 2005; Beck, 1992; Francis, 2006). Trends of raising educational standards and the marketisation of education have spread from the United States internationally, having an impact on education policy in Britain, Canada, Australia and other countries (Ball et al., 2000; Fleming, 1991; Francis, 2006; Gill, 2008; Youdell, 2004). Within this orientation, schools and teachers act as facilitators of students’ development of knowledge and skills, particularly relating to academic inquiry and personal decision-making (Jones, 2009). This orientation is concerned

with preparing the ‘whole’ student for ‘life’ rather than simply for employment (Beck, 1992; Kemmis et al., 1983; Youdell, 2004). Thus, as in the framings of educational theorists such as John Dewey and Joseph Schwab, in the liberal orientation schools and lessons are ideally focused on nurturing students’ abilities to choose their own beliefs and values, as well as their intellectual, emotional, social and other living skills (Schwab, 1978). Whitehead (1949) particularly warned against forcing ‘inert ideas’ on students that did not inspire their *hearts or minds*; liberal education embraces engagement of the affective and intellectual domains. Leadership-initiated client-focused ‘policy products’ developed across implementation and revision/adaptation processes by parent/teacher ‘consumer’ stakeholders or ‘users’ deliver externally competitive options and choices and opportunities to be informed and upskilled (Giroux, 1993; Weiler, 1993). Policy is informed by rational, constructivist or economy-based sociology of education studies testing and evaluating strategies for market competitiveness, parent/client consensus, competitive best practice against international standards and creative interpretations (Jones, 2013; Ozga, 2000). Classroom pedagogy is characterised by competitive, creative democratic settings where the teacher’s position is as a facilitator, active inquiry by students and an emphasis on understanding the reasons for social phenomena (Jones, 2013). Whilst authority is recognised to some extent, an element of authority in this orientation of policy shifts to the individual (e.g. the particular teacher or student) (Bauman, 2005; DuGay, 1996; Rose, 1999), who may be informed and influenced by institutions (such as the state, religious bodies, scientific organisations) and cultural/political theories, but makes their own choices. Students can identify aspects of society in need of reform but leave untouched questions of radical change to beliefs or practices. Methods include class discussion, writing personal reflections, expression of feelings and opinions, debates, role-play, testing knowledge and practising skills. Neo-liberalism is included within the liberal orientation. It is differentiated from more general ‘progressive’ and ‘Victorian’ liberal perspectives with their assumption there *is already a clear separation of the state (governments) and an autonomous individual* – and insistence on the *pre-availability of choice* (Burchell, 1993). It instead promotes the idea of a ‘weak state’ (Apple, 1998, p. 6), described as intentionally ‘positive’ by neo-liberal theorists such as Buchanan, in trying to engineer the market for efficiency purposes. Simply put, neo-liberal agendas centre on further separating what they see as the *overly merged state and citizen*, as a precondition for *greater choice*.

### 1.2.3 Critical Education

The *critical* orientation emerged within education movements in the 1970s and is linked to wider reform pushes such as class-system reforms, post-colonialism, feminism and gay liberation (Kemmis et al., 1983, p. 129). Examples of linked policy movements discussed in research include socialist moves in education policy in Germany and Soviet Russia (Beckmann, Cooper, & Hill, 2009; Carlson, 1992;

Rabinbach, 1973; Sauerteig & Davidson, 2009), civil rights and ethnic revival movements in the United States (Mayo, 2005), various feminist education reform movements (Elia, 2005; Feltey, Ainslie, & Geib, 1991; Hekman, 1999; Tuttle, 1986), anti-discrimination and inclusive education movements (D'Augelli, 1998; Lipkin, 1994; Macgillivray & Jennings, 2008; Magrab, 2003). Within this orientation, whole-school reform approaches are seen as necessary for the inclusion of particular non-dominant/'marginalised' social groups. Teachers aim to engage students more actively in social issues and action, and students are ideally empowered to promote alternative principles, question deep-seated social values and unjust practices and undertake actions to lead to a more equitable society (Jones, 2009). Education is understood as having the potential to *revolutionise society* and even the world (Kemmis et al., 1983), *challenging marginalisation and established social orders*. Thus, the education discourses within policies stemming from this orientation focus on reforming schools to fit the needs of marginalised groups and local communities and may suggest new equitable or alternative visions of the world wherein perceived 'repressive power hierarchies' are challenged (Beckmann et al., 2009). Localised or adaptable community-driven bottom-up policies and processes holistically reform structural determinants of oppression and social injustice (Beckmann et al., 2009; Raab, 1994; Sabatier, 1986). However, this is not always the case, and a critical approach may evolve within particular policy types over time or through leadership influence or legislation changes. Policies can be localised or adapted to meet specific issues/student body needs or community types (Beckmann et al., 2009; Noddings, 1992). Policy is informed by sociology of education research pushes applying emancipatory frames (critical analysis, Marxism, post-colonialism, feminism, gay liberation etc.) to challenge the power dynamics, social regulation and outcomes of education (Jones, 2013; Ozga, 2000; Simons et al., 2009). Classroom pedagogy is student-centred and action-based and characterised by high levels of collaboration between teacher and students (Jones, 2013). Traditional authorities can be directly called into question, with learning employing ideological critique of mainstream notions from a marginalised perspective and the use of alternative sources and accounts. Methods include critical analysis of popular culture texts and images, viewing and creation of alternative texts/posters/pamphlets, real-world student activism and specific classroom equity reforms.

### ***1.2.4 Post-modern Education***

The most recently developed orientation to education is the post-modern orientation. Emerging in the 1980s, it has been making increasing impact on education policies and education discourses since the 1990s. It stems from post-structuralism vanguard movements of French literary intellectuals and philosophers who were critical of grand narratives and structuralism during the 1960s and 1970s, which swiftly spread to academics around the globe (Carlson, 2005, p. 635; Leitch et al., 2001, p. 21). This orientation can manifest at different and sometimes discrete

points in policy processes, sometimes erratically evident in policy implementation by particular teachers or schools or in a section of a policy document rather than throughout the entire text, for example. However, some examples of education movements it strongly manifests in include discursive values education movements that encourage the teaching of analysis or ethical inquiry (Freakley & Burgh, 2002; Mikulics, 1998; Veugelers, 2000), the teaching of deconstructive analysis (Carlson, 2005; Fonow & Marty, 1992), knowledge theorization units (Cole, Ullman, Gannon, & Rooney, 2015) and queer theory in sexuality education (Britzman, 1995; Bryson & De Castell, 1993; Duggan, 1992; Pinar, 2005; Talburt & Steinberg, 2000). In the post-modern orientation, schools are seen as socio-culturally situated sites, wherein smaller communities form from intersections within larger society and engage in meaning-making (Nudzor, 2009; Trowler, 1998). Students and teachers engage together in the deconstruction and co-construction of ‘cultural truths’, ‘reality’ and ‘hegemony’, and knowledge is seen as constructed and relational. Education is thus understood as providing a space where culture and identity can be *opened up for re-organisation and creative change*. Thus, the education discourses within policies stemming from this orientation focus on deconstructive principles, providing multiple perspectives or frameworks for consideration of issues and knowledge, and an inquiry approach to demystify ‘hegemonic truths’ (deep-seated cultural assumptions) and problematise knowledge. Highly contextualized and fluid community-network-developed policies support the post-modernist understanding of education as composed of different ‘life-worlds’ occurring at multiple sites and as evolving malleably over time (Nudzor, 2009; Trowler, 1998, p. 75; Yeatman, 2007). Policy is informed by deconstructive or co-constructive sociology of education research applying post-modern frames (post-structuralist analysis, post-identity feminist analysis, queer theory and others) to reveal and reorder education’s cultural hegemonies, assumptions, orders of discourse and conceptual frameworks (Jones, 2013; Ozga, 2000). Classroom pedagogy is seen as ideally characterised by exploration of multiple theoretical perspectives and conceptual play (Jones, 2013) and teachers sometimes playing ‘devil’s advocate’ in relation to students’ perceptions of reality and self, acting as the ‘deconstructor, not a mere supporter’ (Morton & Zavarzadeh, 1991, p. 11). Not only are particular authorities questioned, but *the very notion of ‘authority’, ‘authorisation’ and grand narratives are called into question*. Methods include student engagement in a range of theories and historio-cultural perspectives, class theorising, vocabulary invention, deconstructive analysis and intellectual games.

### 1.3 Research Frame and Aims

The application of the four education orientations can differ across school type (Jones, 2013). There can also be inconsistencies in how schools address different social issues (including issues of age, gender, sexuality, social class, values education and so on). One school may take a conservative approach to gender and a



critical approach to social class. Another school may exhibit liberal approaches to both phenomena and yet be different to another largely liberal school. However, understanding the orientation of the approaches does offer information on what goals are valued and whom they privilege. My past works collected information on how schools applied conservative, liberal, critical and post-modern approaches for values education (Jones, 2013), for LGBTI sexuality education (Jones & Hillier, 2012) and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (Jones et al., 2016) or in relation to teachers on social class (Takayama, Jones, & Amazan, 2017). However, the samples were of different restricted target populations (e.g. some were LGBTIs or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders only), sizes (small groups vs. thousands of students) and types (teachers in a programme vs. anonymous students online). It was difficult to make comparisons, then, of how schools approached the different issues in relation to each other. Moreover, a lot of commentary on the approaches is *policy-based or political* paradigmatic education analyses (Apple, 2006; Ball & Exley, 2010); there was no data on *students' experience* of education orientations on the ground crossing *several issues*.

In order to refine teaching around the sociology of education, we have long needed clarity on which issues schools most often take conservative, liberal, critical and post-modern approaches to and how and how experiences of these different approaches impact students. The *Voices of Experience* project aimed to generate understanding of students' experiences of conservative, liberal, critical and post-modern approaches to social phenomena in education. Research questions broadly included:

1. What have Australians experienced as the dominant approaches to education (of conservative, liberal, critical and post-modern) overall?
2. What have Australians experienced as the dominant approaches to education (of conservative, liberal, critical and post-modern) for different identity-based social issues (age, gender, sexuality, social class, race and new media)?
3. Which approaches are useful for different types of students (including in relation to social impacts like bullying and wellbeing)?
4. Do Australians want schools to improve their responses to social issues? Which and how?

### **Tutorial Questions**

- In one sentence, what is sociology?
- In one sentence, what is the sociology of education?
- What topics might a sociology of education essay cover?
- What type of education (conservative, liberal, critical or post-modern) is probably dominant in your country and state?
- What type of education (conservative, liberal, critical or post-modern) do you like the sound of most, at this stage? Compare your reasons for this choice with someone sitting next to you or online.

## References

- Apple, M. W. (1990). *Ideology and the curriculum*. New York: Routledge.
- Apple, M. W. (1998). Knowledge, pedagogy, and the conservative alliance. *Studies in the Literary Imagination*, 31(1), 5–23.
- Apple, M. W. (2006). *Educating the right way*. New York: Routledge.
- Ball, S., & Exley, S. (2010). Making policy with ‘good ideas’: Policy networks and the ‘intellectuals’ of New Labour. *Journal of Education Policy*, 25(2), 151–169.
- Ball, S., Maguire, M., & Macrae, S. (2000). *Choices, transitions and pathways: New youth, new economies in the global city*. London: Falmer Press.
- Bauman, Z. (2005). *Work, consumerism and the new poor*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.
- Beck, U. (1992). *The risk society*. London: Sage.
- Beckmann, A., Cooper, C., & Hill, D. (2009). Neoliberalization and managerialization of ‘education’ in England and Wales – a case for reconstructing education. *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies*, 7(2), 311–345. Retrieved 12.12.09 from <http://www.jceps.com/?pageID=article&articleID=170>
- Bee Bee, S. (2001, 2–6 December). *A critical discourse analysis of the mission statement of education in Singapore – SNG01002*. Paper presented at the AARE 2001 Conference, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.
- Bell, R. Q. (1979). Parent, child, and reciprocal influences. *American Psychologist*, 34(10), 821–826.
- Bennett, J. (1971). *Locke, Berkeley, Hume: Central themes*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Britzman, D. (1995). Is there a queer pedagogy? Or, stop reading straight. *Educational Theory*, 45(2), 151–165.
- Bryson, M. & De Castell, S. (1993). Queer pedagogy: Praxis makes im/perfect. *Journal of Education*, 18(3), 285–305.
- Burchell, G. (1993). Liberal government and techniques of the self. *Economy and Society*, 22(3), 267–282.
- Caputo, J., & Yount, M. (2006). *Foucault and the critique of institutions*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Carlson, D. L. (1992). Identity conflict and change. In J. T. Sears (Ed.), *Sexuality and the curriculum: The politics and practices of sexuality education* (pp. 34–58). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Carlson, D. L. (2005). Poststructuralism. In J. T. Sears (Ed.), *Youth, education, and sexualities: An international encyclopedia* (pp. 635–638). London: Greenwood Press.
- Cole, D., Ullman, J., Gannon, S., & Rooney, P. (2015). Critical thinking skills in the International Baccalaureate’s ‘Theory of Knowledge’ subject. *Australian Journal of Education*, 59(3), 247–264.
- D’Augelli, A. R. (1998). Developmental implications of victimization of lesbian, gay, and bisexual youths. In G. M. Harek (Ed.), *Stigma and sexual orientation: Understanding prejudice against lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals* (pp. 187–210). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Dale, R. (1989). *The state and education policy*. Milton Keynes. Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Deacon, R., Osman, R., & Buchler, M. (2010). Education policy studies in South Africa, 1995–2006. *Journal of Education Policy*, 25(1), 95–110.
- DuGay, P. (1996). *Consumption and identity at work*. London: Sage.
- Duggan, L. (1992). Making it perfectly Queer. *Socialist Review*, 22(1), 11–13.
- Elia, J. P. (2005). Sexuality education. In J. T. Sears (Ed.), *Youth, education, sexualities: An international encyclopedia* (pp. 785–789). London: Greenwood Press.
- Feltye, K. M., Ainslie, J. J., & Geib, A. (1991). Sexual coercion attitudes among high school students: The influence of gender and rape education. *Youth & Society*, 23(2), 229–250.

- Fleming, T. (1991). Canadian school policy in liberal and post-liberal eras: Historical perspectives on the changing social context of schooling, 1846–1990. *Journal of Education Policy*, 6(2), 183–199.
- Fonow, M. M., & Marty, D. (1992). Teaching college students about sexuality from feminist perspectives. In J. T. Sears (Ed.), *Sexuality and the curriculum: The politics and practices of sexuality education* (pp. 157–170). New York: Teachers College.
- Foucault, M. (1969a). *The archeology of knowledge and the discourse on language*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Foucault, M. (1969b). What is an author? In D. F. Bouchard (Ed.), *Language, counter-memory, practice: Selected essays and interviews* (pp. 113–138). New York: Cornell University Press.
- Foucault, M. (1970). *The order of things*. New York: Pantheon.
- Foucault, M. (1972). *The archaeology of knowledge*. New York: Pantheon.
- Foucault, M. (1979). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books.
- Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/knowledge*. New York: Pantheon.
- Foucault, M. (1981). *The history of sexuality (Vol 1)*. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books.
- Francis, B. (2006). Heroes or zeroes? The discursive positioning of ‘underachieving boys’ in English neo-liberal education policy. *Journal of Education Policy*, 21(2), 187–200.
- Fraser, N. (1993). Clintonism, welfare and the antisocial wage: The emergence of a neo-liberal political imagery. *Rethinking Marxism*, 6, 9–23.
- Freakley, M., & Burgh, G. (2002). *Engaging with ethics: Ethical inquiry for teachers*. Katoomba, Australia: Social Science Press.
- Gilbert, R. (2004). *Studying society and environment, a guide for teachers* (3rd ed.). Victoria: Thomson Social Science Press.
- Gill, J. (2008). Social inclusion for South Australian schooling? Trying to reconcile the promise and the practice. *Journal of Education Policy*, 23(5), 453–467.
- Gillborn, D. (2005). Education policy as an act of white supremacy: Whiteness, critical race theory and education reform. *Journal of Education Policy*, 20(4), 485–505.
- Giroux, H. (1993). *Border crossings: Cultural works and the politics of education*. New York: Routledge.
- Haffner, D. W. (1992). Sexuality education in policy and practice. In J. T. Sears (Ed.), *Sexuality and the curriculum: The politics and practices of sexuality education* (pp. vii–viii). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Hekman, S. (1999). Identity crises: Identity, identity politics, and beyond. *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, 2(1), 3–26.
- Hoepper, B., Henderson, D., Hennessey, J., Hutton, D., & Mitchell, S. (1996). *Inquiry 2: A source-based approach to modern history*. Milton, Australia: John Wiley & Sons Australia Ltd..
- Irvine, J. (2002). *Talk about sex: The battles over sex education in the United States*. Berkeley, California; London: University of California Press.
- Jones, T. (2007). Framing the framework. In R. Brown, G. Finger, & C. Rushton (Eds.), *Education research: Who needs it?* (pp. 47–70). Teneriffe, Australia: Post Pressed.
- Jones, T. (2009). Framing the framework: Discourses in Australia’s national values education policy. *Educational Research for Policy and Practice*, 8(1), 35–57. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10671-008-9058-x>
- Jones, T. (2013). *Understanding education policy: The ‘four education orientations’ framework*. Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer.
- Jones, T., & Hillier, L. (2012). Sexuality education school policy for GLBTIQ students. *Sex Education*, 12(4), 437–454. Retrieved 14.3.14 from <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14681811.2012.677211>
- Jones, T. T., Posthausen, K., Carter, G., Landrigan, K., Bennell, B., et al. (2016). *Improving services to aboriginal and Torres Strait islander students: A critical study*. New York: NOVA Science.
- Kemmis, S., Cole, P., & Suggett, D. (1983). *Orientations to curriculum and transition: Towards the socially critical school*. Melbourne, Australia: Victorian Institute of Secondary Education.

- Kenyon, T. (2007). Conservative education policy: Its ideological contradictions. *Government and Opposition*, 30(2), 198–220.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1998). Just what is critical race theory and what's it doing in a nice field like education? *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 11(1), 7–24.
- Leitch, V., Cain, W., Finke, L., Johnson, B., McGowan, J., & Williams, J. (2001). *The Norton anthology of theory and criticism*. New York: Norton.
- Levine, L. (1996). *The opening of the American mind*. Boston: Beacon.
- Lipkin, A. (1994). The case for a gay and lesbian curriculum. *High School Journal*, 77(1), 95–107.
- Macgillivray, I. K., & Jennings, T. (2008). A content analysis exploring lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender topics in foundations of education textbooks. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 59(2), 170–188.
- Magrab, P. (2003). *UNESCO open file on inclusive education: Support materials for managers and administrators*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Mayo, C. (2005). Multicultural education. In J. T. Sears (Ed.), *Youth, education and sexualities: An international encyclopedia* (pp. 561–565). London: Greenwood Press.
- Mikulics, M. (1998). *A systematic classification of approaches in values/ethics/moral/character education*. (Doctor of Education). United States International University, San Diego.
- Morton, D., & Zavarzadeh, M. (1991). Theory pedagogy politics: The crisis of 'the subject' in the humanities. In D. Morton & M. Zavarzadeh (Eds.), *Theory/ pedagogy/ politics: Texts for change* (pp. 1–32). Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Noddings, N. (1992). *The challenge to care in schools*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Nudzor, H. P. (2009). Re-conceptualising the paradox in policy implementation: A post-modernist conceptual approach. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 30(4), 501–513.
- Olssen, M., & Peters, M. (2005). Neoliberalism, higher education and the knowledge economy: From the free market to knowledge capitalism. *Journal of Education Policy*, 20, 313–345.
- Ozga, J. (2000). *Policy research in educational settings: Contested terrain*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.
- Pinar, W. F. (2005). Queer and queer theory. In J. T. Sears (Ed.), *Youth, education, and sexualities: An international encyclopedia* (pp. 673–675). London: Greenwood Press.
- Raab, C. D. (1994). Theorising the governance of education. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 42(1), 6–22.
- Rabinbach, A. G. (1973). The politicization of Wilhelm Reich: An introduction to 'the sexual misery of the working masses and the difficulties of sexual reform'. *New German Critique*, 1(1), 90–97.
- Rose, N. (1999). *Powers of freedom*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Sabatier, P. (1986). Top-down and bottom-up approaches to implementation research: A critical analysis and suggested synthesis. *Journal of Public Policy*, 6(1), 21–48.
- Sauerteig, L. D. H., & Davidson, R. (Eds.). (2009). *Shaping sexual knowledge: A cultural history of sex education in twentieth century Europe*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Schwab, J. A. (Ed.). (1978). *Science, curriculum and liberal education: Selected essays*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Simons, M., Olssen, M., & Peters, M. (Eds.). (2009). *Re-Reading education policies* (Vol. 32). Rotterdam, Netherlands: Sense Publishers.
- Tait, G. (2012). *Making sense of education*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Takayama, K., Jones, T., & Amazan, R. (2017). Thinking with/through the contradictions of social justice in teacher education: Self-reflection on our NETDS experience. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, Accepted, 27(03), 17.
- Talbur, S., & Steinberg, S. (2000). *Thinking queer: Sexuality, culture and education*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Trowler, P. (1998). *Education policy: A policy sociology approach*. Eastbourne, UK: The Gildridge Press.
- Tuttle, L. (1986). *Encyclopedia of feminism*. London: Arrow Books.
- UNESCO. (2016). *Reaching out vol 1: Preventing and addressing school-related gender-based violence in Viet Nam*. Paris Ha Noi and Bangkok: UNESCO.

- United Nations. (1948). *The universal declaration of human rights*. Paris: United Nations.
- United Nations. (1989). *Convention on the rights of the child*. New York: United Nations.
- United Nations. (1996). *International covenant on economic, social and cultural rights Article 27 Resolution 2200A (XXI)*. Geneva, Switzerland: United Nations.
- Veugelers, W. (2000). Different ways of teaching values. *Educational Review*, 52(1), 37–46.
- Weiler, K. (1993). Feminism and the struggle for a democratic education: A view from the United States. In M. Arnot & K. Weiler (Eds.), *Feminism and social justice in education* (pp. 210–230). London: Falmer Press.
- Whitehead, A. N. (1949). *The aims of education and other essays*. New York: The New American Library.
- Yeatman, A. (2007). Postmodernity and revisioning the political. In B. Lingard & J. Ozga (Eds.), *The Routledge-Falmer reader in education policy and politics* (pp. 11–22). New York: Routledge.
- Youdell, D. (2004). Engineering school markets, constituting schools and subjectivating students: The bureaucratic, institutional and classroom dimensions of educational triage. *Journal of Education Policy*, 19(4), 407–431.



# Designing a Comparative Sociological Education Study

My school is quite progressive, and involves a creative learning opportunity for students to find their own style of studying and learning. We are encouraged to find our own way of thinking and competition. FtM and MtF transgender kids/teens are allowed to have their uniforms changed. But non-binary/genderqueer kids have to stick with their assigned genders clothes. I would like to see a change. (Dany, 17 years old, on their liberal school)

### Key Points

- The ‘*Voices of Experience*’ survey was designed based on the theory of educational sites as informed by conservative, liberal, critical and post-modern paradigms.
- The project used an anonymous online survey.
- Ethical approval considered issues of ensuring the intrinsic motivation of participants to contribute above prize-based or other types of motivations.
- Recruitment ran across 10 days in September of 2018.
- Social media recruitment strategies were primarised including paid Facebook advertising.

## 2.1 Reference Group

When conducting critical and post-modern sociological education research, or even education research with an amount of criticality to it, it is important to consider the potential for ‘real-world’ impact of the work (Jones, 2013; Rogers, Malancharuvil-Berkes, Mosley, Hui, & O’Garro Joseph, 2005). There are a variety of stakeholders in Australian education, and it was important to consult with a cross-section of stakeholders to understand the different types of sociological data they may find useful. This project benefitted from the insights and advice of ten members of an education stakeholder reference group pulled together from the researchers’ associates including school principals, teacher educators and sociology of education academics, practising and pre-service teachers, education policy-makers and students past and present who encouraged the inclusion of research on various issues of

interest in their work and schooling experiences. As the participants had very different amounts and types of demands on their time, the reference group was offered a combination of face-to-face meetings, phone and Skype calls and emails as media for making contact and offering feedback and ideas for the project. All of the media were used, and all of the participants used more than one medium to pass on their thoughts. The reference group mainly aided the generation of the key themes for the survey and examples of the kinds of results they would be able to use in their work (whether they wanted to see statistics or stories for particular topics – mostly it was a combination of both). The reference group also aided the researcher (e.g. a white cisgender academic of middling age) in checking the semantics and sensitivity of sample questions from a range of perspectives and in piloting the survey to check for ways it could be improved. Their data was excluded.

## 2.2 Overall Approach

The critical post-structuralist research project used an emancipatory approach. This means it aimed to conduct research on, with and for Australian students and school stakeholders. The study was aimed at serving social justice goals for the community (rather than simply to generate knowledge for its own sake) – particularly bringing forth the voices of students rather than other community stakeholders in what thus constitutes a critical empowerment approach interested in ‘insider’ experiences (Mertens, 1998). This is combined with a clear theoretical four orientations to education framework (Jones, 2013) broadly explained in chapter one which informed the development of questions and particularised further again in the reporting of findings. This framework of analysis is also deconstructed and co-constructed using the project participants’ comments throughout its application, in ways that constitute a post-structuralist approach continually interrogating and exposing its own ideological structures and modifying its meaning and application (Carlson, 2005; Peters & Burbules, 2004). The project was particularly geared towards topics relevant to legislative and policy advocacy that have emerged locally and internationally in recent years and envisioning service and resource needs for education communities and marginalised communities.

## 2.3 Data Collection Tool

This project collected quantitative and qualitative data towards answering the broad research questions, using an anonymous online survey hosted by Qualtrics. The survey questionnaire contained both forced-choice (quantitative) and open-ended (qualitative) questions developed by the researcher and advised on by the reference group, through drafting and redrafting sessions held in 2018. This was an appropriate approach for gaining larger-scale data, so that comparisons central to the research

questions of the study could be more reliably made without compromising the anonymity of participants. Further, it allowed privacy when discussing demographic topics like sexual orientation relevant to the research questions which may be sensitive for younger participants. The target group was Australians aged 14 and over. It was considered important to include students aged from 14 years, so that their experiences could be compared to older and past students and so that trends in education approaches and impacts could be compared over time (including comparison to reports on students aged 14 and over) (Jones & Hillier, 2013; Smith et al., 2014). Younger and older peoples' experiences may differ (around social dynamics, curricula, technologies etc.) and must not be overlooked when considering measures appropriate to current schooling. Qualtrics estimated the survey completion time at under 15 minutes. Participants could choose to answer mainly multiple-choice questions on their demographics and both multiple-choice and written-answer questions on their experiences of school regarding age, gender, sexuality, social class, race, media, technology and popular culture (see Appendix A). The multiple-choice questions derived from past discourse analyses and literature on how education orientations approached key topics (Jones, 2009, 2011, 2013; Jones et al., 2016). The survey reduced these approaches to their simplest identifiable forms for young participants. It mainly focused on the four orientations where possible, rather than further breakdown of discourses.

## 2.4 Terminology Use in the Study

Terminology is difficult in sociology of education as some terms can be very well known in particular social groups and crucial to their understanding of schooling, yet completely unheard of outside of the social group. Where possible, difficult jargonistic terms were avoided in the survey, particularly where these related to the researchers' own education orientation theories and taxonomies (which young people would not be exposed to or indeed people broadly outside of sociology, adult education stakeholder groups or education research networks). Descriptions were used to capture a 'best fit' sense of conservative, liberal, critical and post-modern pedagogies for example. However, sometimes terms not everyone might know needed to be used to demarcate a demographic in the data. For example, the Transgender Studies term 'cisgender' was used as an oppositional term to 'transgender', referring to people who felt their gender identity aligned with their sex marker as allocated to them at or since birth (Serano, 2007). The term was defined in simple wording and piloted with young people to ensure it was relatable. The Intersex Studies term 'intersex variations' was used as a descriptor for medically diagnosed somatic variations to ones' chromosomes, anatomy and/or hormones that did not neatly align with restricted traditional views on sex traits. Past studies found the term is best defined by examples, so some common variations were listed beside it in parentheses, and the question was worded around 'receiving a diagnosis' which would be easier for youth to negate where not relevant to them (Jones et al., 2016).



Social class is an incredibly difficult concept to study, as even academics disagree on what it entails – it can include both financial income and cultural capabilities (Takayama, Jones, & Amazan, 2017). In this study, it was measured in the ways a young person might experience their social class at school – in terms of having enough ‘wealth and resources’ to ‘get by’ in relative comfort, or not. The three levels – low, middle and high – broadly related to the levels of income, wealth and resources described in complex ways in wider Australian census data groupings (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017). However, it is notable that this could be interpretive. Indeed, social class is to an extent *always relational and interpretive*. It was agreed with the reference group that for all these social identity factors, it was more important to try to measure their relationships with schooling experiences, albeit imperfectly, than to give up on the opportunity altogether due to perfectionistic beliefs that an ideal measure could be found and used.

## 2.5 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained for this project from the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee (5201833963958). The first ethical consideration for this research (and perhaps this will be important for some other new works in this field) was around ensuring safety of participants. The survey was situated not in schools but online, to support age comparisons and support current students’ safety in commenting on schools without the school’s influence. Hard copies were made available for equity. Participants supplied their own consent, as past work has shown some student groups (e.g. LGBTIs) relevant to the study may not be out and may not be able to talk about some of the key issues of the study with their parents safely (Hillier et al., 2010). The second ethical consideration for the project was around the need to ensure support for those participants who found particular questions triggered negative emotions. Questions on social impacts of different schooling approaches included brief questions on issues like bullying and wellbeing; it was crucial to understand the relationship of school approaches to these issues, and appropriate support contacts were provided in the survey (e.g. the contact details and links for contacting Kids Helpline for those under 18 years and Lifeline for those over 18 years). Young people deal with stressful issues of bullying and self-harm in school environments, and it was important to show respect for their resilience and ability to discuss these issues directly and with insights adults may not have. However, the survey was carefully designed with the reference group to end on ‘pro-active’ topics, asking participants which issues they thought should be improved in schools and how (answering Research Question 3) – so they could leave the survey feeling empowered. Another important ethical consideration was the level of freedom and control participants would have in engaging with the study. All participants had the right not to answer any (or all) questions in the survey and the right to withdraw and the ability to comment on questions or advise the researchers on their wording and so on. Some participants did not answer some questions or

commented on questions they did not feel like answering, but otherwise the overwhelming majority participated with enthusiasm and made positive comments about the survey.

## 2.6 Sampling

The target group was Australians aged 14 and over. Participants needed to self-select to be part of the research. The intention was to gather at least 500 participants so that comparisons for different questions could be made across identity groups and school types and so forth. However, the aim was also to be representational by school state and sector where possible and to ensure a range of people of different identities participated. Online advertising was deemed the most appropriate method given the broad, general group targeted by the study.

## 2.7 Study Concept, Recruitment and Promotion

In celebration of the variety of people who might participate in the survey and the likelihood of variation in their stories about school which would make them useful to record and share in teacher training units and sociology of education lectures, the survey was titled the ‘*Voices of Experience: Secondary School Experiences Survey*’. This name was also used for its inclusivity and its descriptive nature. There were several ideas for the logo, but to avoid using the stereotypical school experience imagery suggesting a positive or negative experience, eventually the reference group argued that the most appropriate image was simply the Macquarie University logo which affirmed that this was a university-based study (Fig. 2.1).

The survey was opened in September 2018, when active recruitment began. It was closed after a total of 10 days. Facebook advertising was used to promote the project. An advertisement was uploaded onto Facebook newsfeeds and pages of Australians aged 14 and over, which they could click to access the survey. Figure 2.2 shows the advertisement text which accompanied the logo.

**Fig. 2.1** The *Voices of Experience* logo



**Fig. 2.2** The survey announcement text for the Facebook website

**Are you Australian? Aged 14+?  
Click [HERE](#) to share your school  
experiences & improve teacher training!**

## 2.8 Data Analysis and Reporting

Final data were downloaded and collected. The data were screened and cleansed; those participant surveys that did not fit the target group were excluded (the many people who had done the survey by mistake or out of curiosity, in falsified or abusive attempts and so on). The data were then transposed into quantitative (SPSS v10) and qualitative (Leximancer, Excel) computer programmes. Descriptive and comparative statistical analyses were undertaken for the participants with identity variations and grounded thematic analyses of their written responses. All written short-answer open responses were always preceded by a closed answer question categorising the participants' response to the open question (their school or its approach to a specific social phenomenon) as either conservative, liberal, critical or post-modern. In Leximancer, therefore, analyses were run on *grouped responses by the open answers' categorisation against the previous closed answer category* – all conservative, liberal, critical and post-modern approaches were thus grouped so they could be internally analysed and externally compared against each other.

The default settings were primarily used in Leximancer to enhance reproducibility of the orientations-based content analyses of participant comments by other researchers. However, in Leximancer, concepts *were* edited to a minor extent: all plural and singular concepts of the same word (e.g. schools and school); present/past/future tense versions of the same word (e.g. schooling and schooled); capitalisations (e.g. School and school); and italicisations (*school* and school) were merged. This was achieved to avoid unnecessary overcomplication of the data, based on a software's inability to see that variations of a word constituted 'the same' word/concept. Synonyms were not merged as these can have conceptual differences in ideological discourse pertinent to an analysis of education orientations (e.g. a master and a teacher are synonyms, but one implies an inherent conservative power dynamic): only exact word variants were merged. Also, in Leximancer analyses the 'visible concepts' settings for concept maps were always moved to 100% so that all concepts automatically derived in the software were visible. All map theme sizes were moved to 50%, as opposed to the default settings, to ensure that whilst in the figures produced all concepts were visible, they were explored only in relation to the most dominant themes for the response group in a consistent way across all maps. The theme synopses and concept rank data were downloaded and are commented on alongside the comments, where relevant to understanding specific schooling approaches.

The journeys of many participants are also displayed within this report through direct quotation and description. The quotes are selected by their relevance to the Leximancer software's analyses so that the most 'typical' quotes were used according to Leximancer where possible, with occasional inclusion of alternate examples of interest to counter the dominant narratives or views and show the diversity in experience. The participants have been assigned a pseudonym in line with their current gender identity which is used for the reporting of their direct quotes, along with aligned pronouns as needed (including they/their for non-binary individuals).

An indication of the participant's age (an age that fits within the age bracket they selected) is given to show the 'currency' of their experience. This is important to distinguish whether their comments related to current schooling experiences (for those aged 14–19 years) or past schooling experiences in the rarer examples and comments given by older participants. Other pertinent information is reported on only to the extent that it deepens explanation of an individual's quote. For example, it may be pertinent in some chapters to indicate sexual orientation or racial background when discussing sexuality and race supports at the school; however, identifying information (precise age, school, name etc.) was not asked for in the survey to ensure anonymity and is never given in this report. The 'voices' of respondents (their quotes) are kept pure of corrections where possible. Spelling and grammar errors, colloquialisms, emojis and swearwords are part of respondents' writing in surveys and part of the experience of Australian schooling in general. These are left in for authenticity.

### Tutorial Questions

- If you were studying a social theme in schools, which (age, gender, sexuality, social class, race or another theme) interests you most? Why? Compare your answer with your peers' answers.
- If you were studying this social issue, what source would give you the most accurate information (laws, school policies, principals, staff, parents, students, media, another source)? Why? Compare.
- This book mainly focuses on students' experiences of schools. Why does it focus on them most?
- What might students overlook? How can you get the other views on what schools are like?

## References

- Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2017). *6523.0 - Household Income and Wealth, Australia, 2015–16*. Retrieved 13.9.17 from <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/6523.0~2015-16~Main%20Features~Characteristics%20of%20Low,%20Middle%20and%20High%20Wealth%20Households~10>
- Carlson, D. L. (2005). Poststructuralism. In J. T. Sears (Ed.), *Youth, education, and sexualities: An international encyclopedia* (pp. 635–638). London: Greenwood Press.
- Hillier, L., Jones, T., Monagle, M., Overton, N., Gahan, L., Blackman, J., et al. (2010). *Writing themselves in 3: The Third National Study on the Sexual health and wellbeing of same-sex attracted and gender questioning young people*. Melbourne: ARCSHS. Retrieved 2.2.11 from [http://www.latrobe.edu.au/ssay/assets/downloads/wti3\\_web\\_sml.pdf](http://www.latrobe.edu.au/ssay/assets/downloads/wti3_web_sml.pdf)
- Jones, T. (2009). Framing the framework: Discourses in Australia's national values education policy. *Educational Research for Policy and Practice*, 8(1), 35–57. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10671-008-9058-x>
- Jones, T. (2011). A sexuality education discourses framework: Conservative, liberal, critical and post-modern. *American Journal of Sexuality Education*, 6(2), 133–175.

- Jones, T. (2013). *Understanding Education Policy: The 'Four Education Orientations' Framework*. Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer.
- Jones, T., Hart, B., Carpenter, M., Ansara, G., Leonard, W., & Lucke, J. (2016). *Intersex: Stories and statistics from Australia*. London: Open Book Publisher.
- Jones, T., & Hillier, L. (2013). Comparing trans-spectrum and same-sex attracted youth: Increased risks, increased activism. *LGBT Youth*, 10(4), 287–307.
- Jones, T., Takayama, K., Posthausen, G., Carter, K., Landrigan, B., Bennell, D., et al. (2016). *Improving services to aboriginal and Torres Strait islander students: A critical study*. New York: NOVA Science.
- Mertens, D. (1998). *Research methods in education and psychology: Integrating diversity with quantitative and qualitative approaches*. Newbury Park: Sage.
- Peters, M. A., & Burbules, N. C. (2004). *Poststructuralism and educational research*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Rogers, R., Malancharuvil-Berkes, E., Mosley, M., Hui, D., & O'Garro Joseph, G. (2005). Critical discourse analysis in education: A review of the literature. *Review of Educational Research*, 75(3), 365–416.
- Serano, J. (2007). *Whipping girl: A transsexual woman on sexism and the scapegoating of femininity*. Emeryville, CA: Seal Press.
- Smith, E., Jones, T., Ward, R., Dixon, J., Mitchell, A., & Hillier, L. (2014). *From blues to rainbows: The mental health and well-being of gender diverse and transgender young people in Australia*. Melbourne: Australian Research Centre in Sex Health and Society.
- Takayama, K., Jones, T., & Amazan, R. (2017). Thinking with/through the contradictions of social justice in teacher education: Self-reflection on our NETDS experience. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, Accepted, 27(03), 17.



# Basic Demographics for Voices of Experience Participants

My school made an lgbtq+ day, we have this one teacher that if you are being discriminated against because of your race you can go to him and he'll help you, we have a multicultural day. I live in a place that is mostly white atheists, although it could be considered a hippy town. My school is very connected with the community and we are constantly getting support from them, and vice versa. We have many assemblies about other races. We have an area called 'biriban' and in there you must follow aboriginal laws, such as men not going in the women's area and women not going in the men's. We have a group for aboriginal girls who learn traditional skills and stuff. There are many other things this is just off the top of my head. In HSIE we talk a lot about race issues. In yr9 PE you learn about sexuality and transgender all of that, you do a whole term about it, we talk about how we must support all gender identity and sexuality. Bc of where I live most people have been brought up being told that who someone loves isn't a problem so there are very few homophobic people (Alain, 14 yrs, on his critical school).

### Key Points

- 2500 Australians ranging in age from 14 to 79 yrs participated in the *Voices of Experience – Australian Secondary Schools Survey* project; the 14–19-year group was the largest participating age bracket.
- At least a fifth of participants came from culturally diverse backgrounds – 16.54% of participants came from homes where languages other than English were spoken and almost a tenth were born overseas; and 4.63% were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.
- 77.2% of the participants were allocated a female/'F' sex at birth, 22.2% male/'M', and less than 1% a non-binary/'X' sex or another option. Most were cisgender; however, there were also participants with a non-binary/genderqueer (5.34%), female-to-male/FtM transgender (1.90%) and male-to-female/MtF transgender (1.53%) or other identity (1.43%).
- All Australian state sectors were roughly proportionately represented in the study, as were public, Catholic and independent education systems.
- The survey reflected the tendency of research that is mostly online to over-represent younger, white, female and affluent participants and under-represent people with disabilities.