Investigating Multiculturalism as Policy and Practice in the Middle Years of Schooling

An Australian Study

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Abstract: Definitions and policy intents of multiculturalism have been contested in the public sphere at international and national levels; however the term has remained in use in Australia since the 1970s. In policy frameworks, successive Australian governments have promoted societal pluralism as a national goal over a period of 21 years. Recent federal and state policies relating to multiculturalism have featured terms such as 'social capital' and 'productive diversity', as well as 'inclusivity' and 'accountability'. At the level of middle schooling, understandings of the term and its enactment have varied. Within a wider, ongoing study, sociocultural data were collected from metropolitan schools that publicly espoused multiculturalism as foundational to their school philosophy and teaching practice. Analysis of interview data from teachers and school management explores accounts of 'good practice' in these schools. While some schools consider multiculturalism to be a domain within the curriculum, others are employing a whole-school approach. Implications are drawn for the enactment of multiculturalism in the middle years of schooling.

Keywords: Middle schooling, Multicultural Education, Multiculturalism

Introduction

MULTICULTURALISM AND **MULTICULTURAL** education' are constructs that hold different foci in different regions in the world. In this paper, we reflect on conceptual approaches to multiculturalism, specifically as it pertains to the field of education in Australia and the USA. We aim to link theory and practice by exploring how international theoretical trends and national policies are enacted in Australian middle schooling (Years 4-9). In doing this, we draw upon talk data from a wider, ongoing study which examines Australian educators' conceptions of multicultural education in practice. In doing this, we ask: What is 'multicultural education' in the Australian context?

Multiculturalism in Australia

Successive waves of migration have contributed to the social composition of the six states and two territories in Australia's constitutional federation (Brändle, 2001; Jupp, 1988, 2001). Anderson (1993) defined multiculturalism as "an officially endorsed set of principles designed to manage ethnic diversity" as well as a "harmonious metaphor for fashioning a concept of nation" (p. 75). Liffman (1988) noted that Australia's history has held a "visible tension between those urging diversity and those calling for adherence to a dominant, Anglo-Saxon value system" (p. 914).

According to Hill and Allan (1998), since World War II Australia has been host to more than 500,000 refugees with the humanitarian program numbers never falling below 11,800 in any year between 1990 and 1995 (p. 29). Of these, the priority groups were identified as people from the Gulf area of the Middle East and Yugoslavia (p. 29). As a result the government put policies in place to facilitate the access of refugees to the Australian community. The perceived post-war tolerance was tested in this changed climate by a political reaction against multicultural policies by groups such as the One Nation party (p. 31). The federal parliament condemned racism unanimously but the ramifications of such movements have been felt domestically and internationally into the new millennium.

Further debate has centred on issues such as multicultural citizenship with an emphasis on enhancing social cohesion in a framework of shared fundamental values (Soutphommasane, 2005). Multicultural citizenship has been defined as a trichotomy composed of individuals, identity groups and the state (Shachar, 1999, p. 89) focussing on integration and inclusion, as opposed to fragmentation (Kane, 2000; Jayasuriya, 1997).

The current realities of globalisation and internationalisation invalidate claims for the relevance of an Anglo-dominated Australia. However, as Brändle (2001) noted, the multicultural policies of the 1980s and 1990s have not resulted in a real alternative so-

cietal model. Cope and Kalantzis (1997) traced the emergence of the notion of 'productive diversity' from 1992 as a development of multiculturalism as a national policy (p. ix). Whether it can be seen as an 'alternative societal model' is debatable but the authors argued that this work went beyond the national agenda to create a paradigmatic shift in 20th century approaches to management. This was envisaged through application of the notion of 'productive diversity' which was based on the metaphor of "cohesion through diversity" (p. 17). An underlying principle of 'productive diversity' is that effective workplaces are as diverse as the local and global environments in which they operate (p. x). In later work they described this as an "unholy but pragmatic alliance of the discourse of social justice and the discourse of economic rationalism" (Kalantzis & Cope, 1999, p. 252).

Cope and Kalantzis (1997) saw advantages of the productive diversity paradigm in harnessing the range of language skills, communication styles, international networks, country knowledge, and life experience that people bring to organisations. They characterised the key elements as:

1. flexibility in technology - being constantly open to local diversity and global connectedness;
2. multiplicity in the division of labour - promoting internal diversity;
3. devolution of management - balancing diversity by coordination;
4. negotiation of organisational culture - using diversity as a resource for achieving shared goals;
5. pluralism of the social order - using internal cultural diversity as a resource for negotiating diverse local and global environments (pp. 17-18)

Further, they argued that national interpretations of 'productive diversity' promote a form of citizenship which is described as 'civic pluralism' (p. 20). However, debate has continued with notions of integration challenged by calls for a need to re-interpret civic pluralism (Kelly, 2000). Of interest to the study described below was that its inception arose from a school principal expressing concerns from a 'productive diversity' perspective. The principal identified as problematic the fact that the school's predominantly monocultural composition did not reflect local and global environments. The 'workforce' (teachers, ancillary staff and students) were in the majority from an Anglo-Australian ethnic background with little access to other languages or ethnic cultures. This prompted a research-based investigation into the elements of successful multicultural education and the implications for schools which were in the majority monocultural. In what follows, we map the Australian educational territory in relation to the

teaching of culture. We then briefly explore some data from the study.

Multicultural Education in Australia and the USA

Adjusting to cultural change and promoting intercultural understanding are challenging topics for all members of a multicultural society (Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002). In their recent review of multiculturalism and multicultural education in Australia, Hill and Allan (2001) identified three main historical phases from the 1940s to the 1990s:

- From 1945 to 1972: from passive to active assimilation. A period characterised by the greatest influx of immigrants and a passive assimilation approach in education. Immigrant children were defined as "problems" needing to adapt to existing school curricula (p. 22);
- From 1972 to 1986: from immigrant to multicultural education. started to view multiculturalism as a potentially enriching phenomenon (Galbally, 1978). The focus changed from ESL to community languages and bilingual programs as a means of strengthening ethnic identity. The number of ethnic schools teaching in first languages increased (p. 22);
- From 1986 to 1993: the economic imperative. The slowing down of the economy affected funding towards education and multiculturalism initiatives. Funds were withdrawn from the Multicultural Education Program (MEP), which was abolished. Harsh economic conditions and high unemployment rates also translated into a public resentment to funding channelled to special interest groups (p. 22).

This agrees, with slight variation in the third phase, with work by Kalantzis and Cope (1999). They identified three associated pedagogical models arguing that the initial assimilation approach was accompanied by a 'traditional transmission pedagogy' while the second, pluralist approach was accompanied by a 'progressivist pedagogy' and finally, they identified an emerging postprogressivist pedagogy that "lives between the paradigms" (p. 262) and provides an "explicit pedagogy for inclusion and access" (p. 253). They added the caveat to this historical view of multiculturalism in Australian society and education that the divisions between these historical trends and associated pedagogies cannot be neatly delineated and that "all three pedagogies are still alive and well" (p. 253). The study reported here supports this perception of a multiplicity of pedagogic approaches and associated theoretical frameworks operating synchronously.

Recent work by the authors (Poyatos Matas & Bridges, 2005) identified that policy definitions of multiculturalism from 1992-2006 reflected a movement from mostly humanist notions to the addition of economic principles (p. 5). This shift to an economic argument was led by the 'productive diversity' movement identified above and its currency is reflected in recent government policies such as *Multicultural Queensland : Making a world of difference* (Queensland Government, 2005). This policy adopted the productive diversity argument with the establishment of a "plan of action" for all government departments, including education, with key strategies that were strongly linked to performance outcomes (p. 3). This application of the principles of 'productive diversity' made explicit the perceived relationship between global movement, language, cultural diversity and economic benefit.

In education, the economic imperative is also tied to theoretical developments in the teaching of culture with a trend towards notions of 'intercultural education' in Australia. As Hill and Allan (1998) noted:

For economic rationalists, it was becoming clear that intercultural education was not a middle-class luxury, but a contributor to a favourable trading climate. At the same time, there was a growing awareness that tolerance is easier to sustain in societies where that [sic] seemingly permit all to share equally in the benefits of economic transformation. (p. 32)

Common elements in Australian multicultural education identified above include notions of productive diversity, multiculturalism as national policy and intercultural education. Kalantzis and Cope (1999) identified four principles for a 'postprogressivist pedagogy'. These are: a) positive identification of the "cultural stakes in education" with cultural diversity as a resource for access; b) explicit pedagogy without prejudice to diversity; c) education of all students for cultural and linguistic diversity so that they can effectively deal with difference; and d) specification of the "asymmetrical relationship of teacher and student" (pp. 262-264). Further useful elements in defining multicultural education can be traced from the literature from the USA. While these definitions and their enactment in the USA are linked historically to issues of civil rights and identity (Gollnick, 1992; Torres, 1998), we see their theoretical utility for the Australian context.

USA definitions of multicultural education encompass a broad definition of culture incorporating variables such as gender, age, social class, locality, ethnicity, religion, primary language and ability (Banks, 2003; Au, 1998) with a focus in equity of access. As Torres (1998) noted, the tension of democracy, citizenship and multiculturalism in the

USA were between identity and diversity on the one hand and class supremacy on the other (p. 215). He argued that the theories of multiculturalism that had emerged in the past twenty years were not only in response to the "pedagogical subject in schools" and as "the interaction between the pedagogical subject and the political subject in democratic societies" but also as a way "to identify the importance of multiple identities (and hence narratives, voices, and agency) in education and culture" (p. 3). Au (1998) argued that in discussion of multicultural education "ethnicity, social class and primary language – stand out as posing a challenge in terms of students' academic achievement" (p. 117).

More recent theoretical trends in the USA have taken a radical approach to multicultural education with positions taken for 'critical multiculturalism' (Bennet, 2003; Ali & Ancis, 2005), 'feminist multiculturalism' (Lauter, 2000; Goings et al., 2000; Sinacore & Enns, 2005), 'critical democratic multicultural pedagogy' (Green, 1998) to name a few. Ali and Ancis (2005) identified two major strands of American literature on multicultural education. These were a) educating students at all levels "about issues of diversity", and b) "alternative teacher education approaches" which were seen also as having a strong "social justice agenda" (p. 69). These two broad trends are identifiable in the recent Australian studies outlined below.

Related Australian Studies

Recent studies in Australian multicultural education have explored issues related to ethnic and cultural social capital in schools; approaches to multicultural education; as well as implications for teacher training. Hickling-Hudson (2003) found that while official policies in education in the state of New South Wales from 1990 to 1999 promoted multiculturalism, "it is hard to change the monocultural, ethnocentric tradition in schools" (p. 385). Building from this assertion, she identified three types of ethnic profiles in Australian schools. They were: a) "a preponderance of indigenous students", b) "a multicultural mix of ethnic groups including white ethnicities" and c) "a preponderance of students of British and European descent" (p. 384). In addition, she proposed a second way to classify schools according to their social capital. These were *Culturally Problematic Schools* and *Interculturally Proactive Schools*. She defined a *culturally problematic school* as catering for an Anglo-Australian audience, whose staff is trained with a narrow-minded, monocultural approach which as a result encourages ethnocentric perspectives and victimises students from ethnic minorities (p. 385). Such schools might attempt multiculturalism in a shallow fashion, such as organising ethnic festivals and celebrations, which in turn reinforce and promote

ethnic stereotypes (p. 387). In contrast she argued that an *Interculturally Proactive School* is one where the staff is skilled to teach interculturally, using a critical pedagogy approach (p. 387). She identified three component strategies of “successful intercultural schools”: a) community liaison, b) critical sociocultural study within the curriculum, and c) education in home languages (p. 388).

Another issue identified in recent Australian literature is in teacher preparation and capacity-building. A study by Dooley (2001) suggested a critical sociological approach in teacher preparation programs to minimize disadvantage for children and to re-invigorate the social justice agenda. Santoro (1999, 2000) also argued that it is unlikely that racism will be reversed until ethnically diverse educators access the Australian schooling system as powerful role models. She saw these overseas-born student teachers as a precious resource for the Australian education system, while noting that extra training should be incorporated to compensate for the intercultural gap between their education and the Australian schooling system (Santoro, 1999).

Work by Dooley (2003) has called upon the challenges that different ethnic groups are experiencing in Australia. Her study identified the Chinese community in Australia as a distinctive group in need of special consideration, in the context of the reconceptualized understandings of equity. Moreover, Windle (2004) called for future research targeted at more specific conditions of the heterogeneous mix of students in Australia and at the demands they face from the Australian education system. The study described below has attempted to explore issues of heterogeneity and homogeneity in primary schools and the implications of this for multicultural education.

The Current Australian Study

The study presented here was conducted in the capital city of Queensland, Australia. Ethnographic research began in 2003. First, literature and policies focusing on multicultural education and intercultural communication in primary schools were reviewed. Second, operating local models were mapped through school website searches and participant schools were selected. Five primary schools (Years 1-7) were identified from their public self-representation as schools promoting multicultural education and were invited to participate in the study (see Table 1). Third, sociocultural data were collected during school visits from February to July, 2005. These data consisted of school documents and teacher interviews. School documents included brochures, newsletters, policies, and curriculum plans, in addition to the web pages previously analysed. Focus group interviews were conducted with key stakeholders (principals, curriculum leaders and teachers) in the selected primary schools. The interviews explored the five schools’ enactments of their multicultural approach. They provided information on: their local contexts and the challenges and affordances offered by these; their philosophy on ‘multiculturalism’ or ‘cultural and linguistic diversity’ as they relate to education; their strategies and resources for promoting intercultural understanding; their approach to fostering an Australian identity in a multicultural society; and their professional development needs for the teaching and learning of multicultural awareness and intercultural communication.

Table 1: Profiles

School/ Time of visit	Participants : Focus group composition	School profile: Ethnic, linguistic diversity (from interview data)
School A (Feb, 2005)	Principal & 3 classroom teachers	The school caters for a diverse range of cultural backgrounds including Aboriginal, Samoan, Tongan, Maori, Thai, Vietnamese, Chinese, New Zealander, French and Central American. Children belong to different socio-economic backgrounds.
School B	Principal & 3 specialist and support teachers	The school features children from over 34 countries, the majority of whom arrived within the last five years. The most dominant

(Mar, 2005)	(English as a Second Language, Human Relationship Education, LOTE *)	cultures are the Bosnian and Serbian. Other ethnic groups include Aboriginal, Sudanese, Philippine, Chinese, and South African. Many refugee status children.
School C (Apr, 2005)	Principal & 2 specialist and support teachers (LOTE*, Equity)	There are 54 nationalities represented within the school community, including refugee children. Children come from diverse environments, from low-rental accommodation to high-end property market, from traditional families to single parent families and same sex partner families.
School D (May, 2005)	Principal, 4 classroom teachers & 1 curriculum leader	1995-1998 the school saw an influx of migration from Bosnian-Serbs, Pakistanis, South Africans, Zimbabweans, Koreans, Chinese and Taiwanese. The migration patterns have somewhat slowed in the last few years.
School E (May, 2005)	Curriculum leader & 4 classroom teachers	A very diverse school catering for the Greek community which historically populated the area since the 60's. More recently it has received children with traumatic backgrounds, who migrated as a consequence of wars, like the Vietnamese, Cyprian and Bosnian groups, as well as ESL children from upper-class, professional migrant families.
* Languages Other Than English (LOTE) – a curriculum teacher of additional languages		

To date the study has yielded significant data and researcher field notes. In the following section, we share our first analytic 'pass' through the data set.

Data Analysis

In analysing the data, we explored current theoretical frameworks that linked the concepts of 'multiculturalism' and education. Analysis has been informed by the theoretical trends and research studies outlined above. In addition, established theoretical frameworks (Banks, 2003; Bennet, 2003; Torres, 1998) assisted in applying a critical lens to analysis of data from the study. These frameworks are outlined briefly before presenting the analysis.

Torres (1998) identified four varying strands of major goals of multicultural education. These were: a) "from developing ethnic and multicultural literacy...to personal development"; b) "from changing attitudes and clarification of values ... to promoting multicultural competence"; c) "from developing proficiency in basic skills... to striving to achieve simultaneously education equity and excellence"; d) "from pursuing individual empowerment to achieving social reform" (p. 181).

In recent work, Bennet (2003) also identified links between multicultural education and the politics of multiculturalism by defining multicultural education as "an approach to teaching and learning based upon democratic values and beliefs and that affirms cultural pluralism within culturally diverse societies in an interdependent world" (p. 14). Her conceptual framework of multicultural education consisted of four dimensions: a) equity pedagogy (achieving equal opportunities for all students); b) curriculum reform

(expanding curricula from monoethnic to multicultural); c) multicultural competence (developing competence in different cultural milieus); and d) teaching towards social justice (eradicating cultural myths and stereotypes) (p. 14). In enacting a multicultural curriculum, Bennet identified five main goals: a) understanding multiple historical perspectives; b) developing cultural consciousness; c) developing intercultural competence; d) combating racism, sexism and other prejudices; e) developing social action skills (p. 32).

Similarly, Banks (2003) defined multicultural education as having three elements: a) an idea or concept for providing equality in learning; b) an education reform movement seen in whole-school rather than subject/curriculum specific approaches; and c) an ongoing process which can never be "over" (pp. 3-8). The latter departs from Torres and Bennet but reflects the idealism associated with multicultural education. As an ideal and a goal Banks (2003) argued that multicultural education is akin to the concepts of liberty and justice in that humans aspire to these goals but can never fully attain them. He proposed a multidimensional model of multicultural education which contains five key dimensions: a) content integration; b) knowledge construction process; c) prejudice reduction; d) an equity pedagogy; f) an empowering school culture and social structure (pp. 19-24).

While the research team saw that all three frameworks held potential resonances to varying degrees with the Australian context, we decided to use Banks' (2003) framework in an initial pass through the data set. Underlying this selection was sympathy with Banks' (2003) notion of schools as a 'social system'

and his goal for multicultural education “to help students acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to function effectively within the national macroculture, their own microcultures, and within and across other microcultures.” (p. 11). In the study outlined above, site visits and analysis of ethnographic data supported the notion of schools operating among a complex set of variables from policy to curriculum to community participation.

We acknowledge that the schools participating in the study were selected as ‘interculturally proactive schools’ (Hickling-Hudson, 2003). As such, the teachers and school leaders interviewed held specific and generally positive views regarding multiculturalism and education. Indeed, much of the reported work of these schools was in productively exploiting their school community’s cultural social capital in order to create a multicultural-rich learning experience. With this in mind, the study’s limitations are seen in that:

1. this is a small data set from one metropolitan area and so generalisability is limited;
2. the schools were positively disposed towards a philosophy of multicultural education; and
3. the data is based on self-reporting from these interculturally proactive schools.

Our aim in the following section is to illustrate possible alignment with and departure from Banks’ (2003) framework. First, talk data from across the data set are provided as illustrative samples of how Australian schools can be seen as ‘doing’ multicultural education. While some samples confirm the relevance of the five dimensions identified by Banks, we also recognise that the mapping is not entirely a neat ‘fit’ in the Australian context. Second, we explore how the principles of productive diversity (Cope & Kalantzis, 1997) are represented in the data.

As noted above, Banks (2003) proposed five key dimensions in a multidimensional model of multicultural education. In the following, we provide a brief description of each dimension and illustrate its local relevance with sample talk from the data set.

Content Integration

Banks (2003) identified content integration as “the extent to which teachers use examples and content from a variety of cultures and groups to illustrate key concepts, principles, generalisations, and theories in their subject or discipline” (p. 20). Participating schools acknowledged this ‘content integration’ approach through meaningful inclusion of cultural knowledges embedded in the core curriculum. A teacher from School E describes a process of starting *from the ground up*.

School E Teacher	... you could still do your values and beliefs statement on your-on what is Australian, you know what is Australian identity, what’s a multi-cultural, you know and you could still build on it from there. Because it really is built in, there’s no...there’s no token-you don’t do anything just for the sake of doing it here it’s more, you know when we sit down to construct a unit it’s built from that, it’s not you’re trying to fit the multi-cultural stuff in, ‘Oh, we haven’t done any multicultural stuff, let’s fit it in, let’s fit it in’, whereas it starts from the ground up...
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Knowledge Construction Process

Banks (2003) defined the ‘knowledge construction process’ as “the extent to which teachers help students to understand, investigate, and determine how the implicit cultural assumptions, frames of references, perspectives, and biases within a discipline

influence the ways in which knowledge is constructed within it” (p. 20). The sample from School C reflects how one school encouraged a critical approach. This was achieved by analysing cultural assumptions associated with *food pyramids*. In exploring the ‘frames of reference’ the school drew upon the cultural resources of its community to foster a *wide angle view* of what constitutes healthy eating.

School C	... the teachers are aware of the different cultures that exist within the school and within their classrooms and so forth um when they’re doing units of work and I guess this gets
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Principal	back to what we've-when I said that within our um curriculum structure we focus on certain sorts of cultural elements and issues and we just had some classes for last term, they did this big unit on healthy eating and healthy food and what have you. Now approaching that from a very wide angle as for the background, is not particularly useful for us because there is such a range of healthy foods and things that are out there that we might not consider to be um traditional food for us and so when they started talking about things like the food pyramids and, you know all those sorts of things, um the contributions from the class then, became quite diverse in relation to well yeah, well when we're talking about, you know breads and cereals, we're not just talking about breads and cereals and pastas and stuff we're also talking about this and this and this... and then they engaged various um community members to come up and to actually do some cooking with the kids and talk to the kids about the food from their cultural background and these-this is what they ate at home and that sort of thing. So um by engaging the community in what's happening in the classroom too we get a richer experience for our kids so um that's probably the most obvious way that-that it happens.
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Prejudice Reduction

In defining 'prejudice reduction', Banks (2003) identified "lessons and activities teachers use to help students develop positive attitudes toward different

racial, ethnic, and cultural groups." (p. 21). The teacher from School B provides an account of how the culturally sensitive issue of *touching* was treated proactively as a part of the school's prejudice reduction strategy.

School B Teacher	Can I talk about the camp thing, just really briefly....the touching. You know with the different um...and so () it's only just come up and I think it's.... we've talked about it and it sounds like it's a misunderstanding of what's... you know, Italians hug and kiss hello and that sort of thing. So for Harmony day, Thursday and Friday, we are looking at the different ways that cultures greet each other and personal space issues and that sort of thing, so that there's less of a.... and more of a just 'Oh, OK', you know that we're all different, like 'don't invade my personal space'....Oh, well it's only just come up so Harmony day is the big focus, we're going to make a big focus of it but I'd written it into my term one planning to look at that anyhow but I haven't got to it. So Harmony day, the camp, that some people were misunderstanding the touching thing, so yeah it's just all come to a head now....There were a couple of touching sort of issues and in our culture it's sort of not as accepted as, you know the African [culture]...
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An Equity Pedagogy

Banks (2003) saw an 'equity pedagogy' as one that "exists when teachers modify their teaching in ways that will facilitate the academic achievement of students from diverse racial, cultural, gender, and social-class groups" (p. 21). A teacher from School A de-

scribes a conceptual and pedagogic shift since working with ethnically and linguistically diverse students. With this shift came an understanding of how *unique* each student and *family experience* is. This account of accessing and valuing such experiences in classroom discourse reflects banks' definition of 'equity pedagogy'.

School A Teacher	...I'm used to having, you know a rainbow in front of me and when I'm talking about things I'm used to saying, 'some people believe this, some people do that, what does your family do?' ... I think I also changed the way that I taught in simplifying language to deal with children who were having difficulty with language concepts and I started using an awful lot more hand movements and body movements and ... we were talking before today about... kids can actually start talking about how unique they are and how unique their family experience is and everything they do, because when we start going around the class, everybody's got a different story. So nobody sits there thinking 'Oh, I don't want to share because I'm the odd bod here'...
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An Empowering School Culture and Social Structure

Banks (2003) argued that “a school culture and organisation that promotes gender, racial, and social-class equity” (p. 22) was an important dimension of

multicultural education. Project data supported this notion with schools indicating various methods and approaches. Sample data from the principal of School D illustrates the promotion of an *inclusive policy* approach with specialist support teaching based on a *team approach*.

School D Principal	... the school has an inclusive policy that we encourage all the teachers to include and so therefore the support teachers, I mean we name the ESL support teachers or our physically impaired and intellectually impaired support teachers, they'll also work with kids that are outside their scope to give that inclusivity and to-as a support person with a classroom teacher so that it's seen as just support rather than 'Oh I'm here to work students of an ESL background and I'm not dealing with' ... you know it's a team approach and that's the way it's been set up...
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Productive Diversity in Action

While there was a good fit between the five domains identified by Banks' (2003) framework, additional data analysis and interpretation showed that infused across the data set was the enactment of the principles of 'productive diversity'. While the USA models are linked to radical and social justice pedagogies, the concept of 'productive diversity' binds cultural diversity to social and economic capacity building. As noted above, the 'productive diversity' paradigm was established as an approach to organisational management not for education per se although applications for education were explored by the authors in 1997 and in later work (Kalantzis & Cope, 1999). We found that the five key elements of flexibility, multiplicity, devolution, negotiation, and

pluralism (Cope & Kalantzis, 1997, pp. 17-20) were identifiable across educational contexts in the data set. Educators' accounts reflected that students, teachers, ancillary staff and the wider school community held linguistic and cultural resources that were seen as social capital. This social capital was then productively exploited to enrich learning experiences within the classroom. Illustrative samples from the interview data are indicated in the table below. Further analysis and discussion will be presented in a future paper. However, these brief samples from across the data set illustrate the point that the principles of 'productive diversity' permeated much of the talk from the schools. Indeed, as noted in the account from School B's principal under the element of 'negotiation', their multicultural image was seen as a marketing strategy and a basis for school selection.

Table 2: Examples of Productive Diversity in Action in Schools

Flexibility	<p>... some of these kids have very exciting lives and very full passports, so its not uncommon for kids to go and spend six months in China with their parents and go to school over there.</p> <p>C: You can have pretty interesting discussions from the holidays, photo albums and that sort of thing.</p> <p>G: I've got kids going to London and Italy next term.</p> <p>P: So it's really rich from that point of view isn't it, from the multicultural=</p> <p>M: =yeah and that excites them, overseas travel, they're really thrilled by that whereas you know, you can get a lot of kids who see that as a holiday to the coast, you know it's the same sort of thing. (School E, Teachers)</p>
Multiplicity	<p>...we do have a number of bilingual staff as well. We specifically recruit bilingual teachers' aides in particular, because I have a little bit more control over internal staff recruitment. So we try to ensure that we have someone on staff that covers the main languages.(School B, Principal)</p>
Devolution	<p>... I'm going through the staffing cycle every now and again I'll be looking for a teacher who has particular sensitivities or understandings within certain cultural contexts so that we can try to provide the support that ... they're conversations that happen at staff meetings and um conversations that occur as perhaps the issues arise and teachers are-are sort of going 'I don't understand why, you know this child's just not swimming or why this child is doing this'. .. (School C, Principal)</p>
Negotiation	<p>We did a triennial school review in 2003 and the chief factor that people identified as the thing that they liked best about the school was its multicultural diversity. So parents are choosing this school because they're saying 'we like our children to grow up in a diverse [environment]'. (School B, Principal)</p>
Pluralism	<p>I think richness is the key word, you know because the children in the class do come from so many cultures they just have so much to offer about, you know 'In my family or in my country or in my culture or in my language', so it just presents to all the other children in the class, you know this rich variety. (School B, ESL teacher).</p>

As educational organisations, these schools were effectively operating under what Cope and Kalantzis (1997) referred to as the principle of 'strategic optimism' where schools saw that even though they were operating in a social system that was 'endemically inequitable', it was possible to 'strip off some of its blind prejudices' (p. 282). A further issue beyond this sample is to consider how predominantly monocultural schools can employ the principles of 'multicultural education' and 'productive diversity'.

Conclusion

As established in the introduction to this paper, a key question is: What is 'multicultural education' in the Australian context? In addressing this question, we have provided a brief overview of definitions of multiculturalism and multicultural education; theoretical orientations and frameworks; and examples of studies across Australia and the USA. We then applied an established generic framework (Banks,

2003) as an initial analysis of school-based accounts. These accounts came from interviews held in five 'interculturally proactive schools' (Hickling-Hudson, 2003). As a second layer of analysis, we briefly mapped the data against the principles of 'productive diversity' as an organisational paradigm (Cope & Kalantzis, 1997).

We found that while the term 'multicultural education' is not as widely applied in Australia as, for example in the USA, it holds currency but in a different form. The five dimensions of multicultural education (Banks, 2003) were clearly identifiable in the data set. Additionally, we identified a strong influence from the 'productive diversity' paradigm as a distinctly Australian characteristic permeating each of the domains identified by Banks (2003). In ensuing papers, we will document the strategies and practices identified within the data. We invite readers to comment on our approach and their conceptualisations of 'multicultural education' in their local contexts.

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